

Student Perceptions of Religious Value-Based Guidance and Counseling Services in the Character Building Process

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Article Info

Article history:

Received July 21, 2025

Revised August 27, 2025

Accepted October 22, 2025

Keywords:

Counseling Service, Character Building, Religious Values, Student Perceptions

ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine student perceptions of religious value-based guidance and counseling services in the character building process. This approach uses a qualitative case study method. The results showed that students have a positive perception of counseling services that integrate religious values, because they are considered capable of providing moral and spiritual direction that has an impact on character building, such as responsibility, honesty, empathy, and discipline. This service is also considered to help students in dealing with inner conflict and academic pressure with a more humanist and religious approach. This shows the importance of strengthening religious values in counseling practices to support students' personal development.

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INTRODUCTION

Character building is an important aspect of higher education because it plays a role in shaping the personality, moral values, and social attitudes of students. One of the services that support this process is guidance and counseling (BK) services. BK services function as a means of helping individuals develop their potential and solve problems faced, both personally, socially, learning, and career (Rudiyanto, M., & Kasanova, 2023).

Education has a crucial role in shaping individuals who not only have intellectual intelligence, but also have good character and morals. In the national Long-Term Development Plan (PJP) 2005-2025, the government has set a vision to create ethical, cultured, and civilized individuals based on the ideas of Pancasila. One way to achieve this vision is through character education, which seeks to build a national identity that emphasizes the importance of norms, ethics, and social values in life. In Islam, character education must be in line with the concept of morals taught in the Quran and hadith (Suriadi, n.d.). Islam emphasizes the importance of values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, compassion, and justice as guidelines in human life. Rasulullah SWA said:

إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ صَالِحَ الْأَخْلَاقِ.

"Indeed, I was sent to perfect noble character" (H.H. Ahmad).

National education has a very important role, not only to educate the nation, but also to form individuals who are faithful, pious, independent, and responsible. Although many individuals have higher education, the reality is that there are often cases of dishonesty and abuse of authority. Some ethical violations, such as abuse of power and dishonesty, often involve those with higher education backgrounds. This shows that intellectual intelligence alone is not enough; strong character development and noble morals are needed to prevent such unethical behavior. Therefore, it can be concluded that intellectual intelligence needs to be balanced with religious values so that good behavior is reflected in daily actions (Rudiyanto, M., & Kasanova, 2023).

In this context, Islamic values include fundamental principles such as honesty (*sidq*), trustworthiness, justice (*'adl*), compassion (*rahmat*), and patience (*sabr*), which become the moral foundation in guiding individuals. These values are the core in shaping the personality of Guidance Counseling (BK) students who are not only able to solve problems, but can also guide counselees towards spiritual goodness and good morals.

In Islam, religious values themselves but consist of a set of beliefs in a belief system that explains actions that should be done or avoided by individuals, as well as things that are considered acceptable or not acceptable, adopted, and believed. Character education not only aims to form individuals who are good in front of other individuals, but also as a form of obedience to Allah SWT. The concept of piety, which means full awareness of the presence of Allah and every aspect of life, is the basis for the formation of good character for each individual. A pious Muslim will always try to do good, honest, and fair because individuals realize that all actions will be accountable to Allah SWT (Jamilah, n.d.).

Counseling students as prospective counselors have an important role in integrating these values. Therefore, understanding and knowledge of Islamic values is a very important thing to study. This understanding not only shows the extent to which students understand the spiritual and moral aspects of counseling services, but also makes a reflection of students' readiness to integrate Islamic teachings into counseling practice.

In the era of globalization and increasingly fierce competition, individuals are required to have a strong personality, resilience and integrity. Character education that is in line with Islamic values in guidance and counseling services has an important role in equipping students with the social and emotional skills needed to face various life challenges (Yuliana, & Sari, n.d.). Therefore, character education must be integrated into the higher education system, by making Islamic values the main guideline in forming a noble generation. In this case, religion has a very important role as a moral guide that shapes the attitudes and behavior of students to always adhere to the values of goodness and truth (Omeri, N., Negeri, S., & Makmur, n.d.). Therefore, counseling guidance services based on Islamic values are expected to not only function as a solution to psychological problems, but also be able to foster morals and shape character. This is reinforced by the concept of piety in Islam, which means full awareness of the presence of Allah SWT in every life. This awareness becomes the main reference in shaping superior character based on faith and morality (Zaman, 2025).

Religious education does not only focus on the cognitive aspect, namely teaching about religious teachings, but also plays a role as a foundation in shaping personal morals. Values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, tolerance, and empathy are important and cannot be separated in building students' ethics and character. Through a guidance approach based on religious values, it does not only aim to solve individual problems, but also to build students' awareness of the importance of ethics and morals in everyday life. Counseling guidance is a process of assistance provided by someone who is professional. Guidance is an assistance provided by someone to others with the aim of helping to make the right choices, as well as fulfilling solutions to the problems that are being faced. According to Hallen A (2020: 4) guidance plays a role in supporting a person to be able to make decisions that suit his needs, improve adaptability in various situations, and in facing challenges that arise in his life. As beings who have the mind and potential to develop, each individual faces various challenges and problems that can affect their character and personality. Therefore, guidance and counseling becomes a necessity in helping students achieve optimal development in various aspects of their lives. In this context, religious values are a strong reason for the implementation of guidance and counseling, because they are able to direct individuals to attitudes and behaviors that are in line with moral and spiritual norms (Salisah, S. K., Darmiyanti, A., & Arifudin, 2024).

Student character can be shaped through various factors, including exposure to the social environment, campus culture, health conditions of the learning environment and habits in carrying out daily activities, as well as filling free time productively and modeling positive behavior. In the context of education, guidance and counseling does not merely act as an additional element, but is an inseparable part of developing a strong character. Through effective guidance and counseling services, students can be assisted in developing positive values, increasing self-awareness, and forming mindsets and behaviors that are in accordance with applicable norms and ethics. In the Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System emphasizes that education aims to develop the potential of students to become human beings of faith, piety, noble character, and have intelligence and skills, in line with these objectives, guidance and counseling

based on religious values has an important role in guiding students to grow into individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have good morals with integrity.

Islamic guidance and counseling has a role in helping students understand themselves, overcome the problems they are facing, and instill awareness of the importance of spiritual values in life. More than just providing solutions to problems, this approach teaches students to make religious teachings a guide in behavior. By instilling piety to God, students are expected to be able to control their emotions, make wise decisions, and have mental resilience to face various life situations (Sartika, 2019). In the world of education, guidance and counseling is not only based on moral values but also as a means to prevent moral deviations that are increasingly prevalent among the younger generation.

Education that is only oriented towards cognitive aspects without paying attention to moral and spiritual aspects risks producing individuals who lack social and ethical concerns. The lack of character education in schools also worsens the moral condition of students (Hudi, I., Purwanto, H., Miftahurrahmi, A., Marsyanda, F., Rahma, G., Aini, A. N., & Rahmawati, 2024). Therefore, the integrity between education, guidance services and religious values is key in forming a complete and balanced student character. As formal educational institutions, universities have a great responsibility in shaping student character, including in instilling religious values. In addition to providing academic education, the campus also functions as a forum for the moral and ethical formation of students through campus policies, academic culture, and various religious activities. A higher education environment that supports religious values can help students understand the importance of religious teachings in their lives and apply them in their daily social lives (Omeri, N., Negeri, S., & Makmur, n.d.).

Therefore, guidance and counseling services in higher education need to integrate religious values in practice. This study aims to dig deeper into how students perceive religious value-based counseling services and how these services contribute to their character building process.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative narrative approach that aims to explore student perceptions of guidance and counseling services based on religious values in the context of character building. The narrative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to reveal the direct and in-depth experiences of the respondents. Through the narratives of the respondents, researchers can understand the process of integrating religious values in counseling services and their contribution to student character building. The steps in narrative research that have been carried out in this research are:

1. Determining problems related to the research to be carried out which leads to student perceptions of religion-based counseling services;
2. Selecting 10 respondents with the aim of studying students' views on religion-based counseling services;
3. Collecting information and experiences from respondents;
4. Reconstructing the respondents' narratives chronologically and completely;
5. Analyzing the data and making a report;
6. Reflecting on the respondents' stories.

The respondents in this study were 10 students of the Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. HAMKA. The selection of respondents was based on three main considerations: (1) relevance to the field of study, namely respondents' knowledge of counseling services that can provide a more in-depth view related to the research theme, (2) academic environment, Muhammadiyah Prof. Dr. HAMKA University is an institution based on Islamic values, this provides a context that is in line with the theme of this research, (3) ease of access, respondents who are under the same institution facilitate data collection, so that researchers can focus more.

The data in this study were collected through interviews, which is the main method in qualitative research (Rachmawati, n.d.). Interviews in this study have the purpose of exploring useful information and allowing participants to describe their personal information in detail. Some of the questions given by the researcher in this interview are: (1) What is your view on the importance of religious values in counseling services? (2) How can religion-based counseling services be a means of deepening moral and ethical values? (3) Do you think that counseling services with religious values can help shape positive character? (4) In your opinion, what are the advantages and disadvantages of the religious approach in the counseling process? (5) How relevant do you think religion-based counseling services are to help students face challenges? After the data was collected, the researcher analyzed the data with the NVIVO 12 application with the project map feature so that readers could read the results easily.

The following will present a research flowchart with the title "Student Perceptions of the Role of Religious Values in Guidance and Counseling Services for Character Building", where the research stage begins with identifying the phenomenon of religious value-based guidance and counseling (BK) services

experienced by students, especially in the FKIP UHAMKA environment. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with students who had received religious values-based counseling services. The data were analyzed using an interactive analysis model to obtain information about students' perceptions of religious values-based counseling services, their meaning of the integration of religious values in the counseling process, and its influence on student character building. Summary table of research methods:

Component	Description
Research Type	Qualitative narrative
Research Objective	Exploring student perceptions of religious value-based counseling services in character building
Participants	10 Students of Guidance and Counseling Study Program FKIP UHAMKA
Sampling Technique	Purposive sampling based on academic relevance and ease of access
Data Collection Technique	Semi-structured interview
Research Instrument	Interview guide containing 5 main questions about perception, morale, relevance, and impact of religious values in counseling services
Data Analysis Technique	NVivo 12 software-assisted thematic narrative analysis (coding, themes, project map)
Data validity test	Source triangulation, member check, and peer debriefing

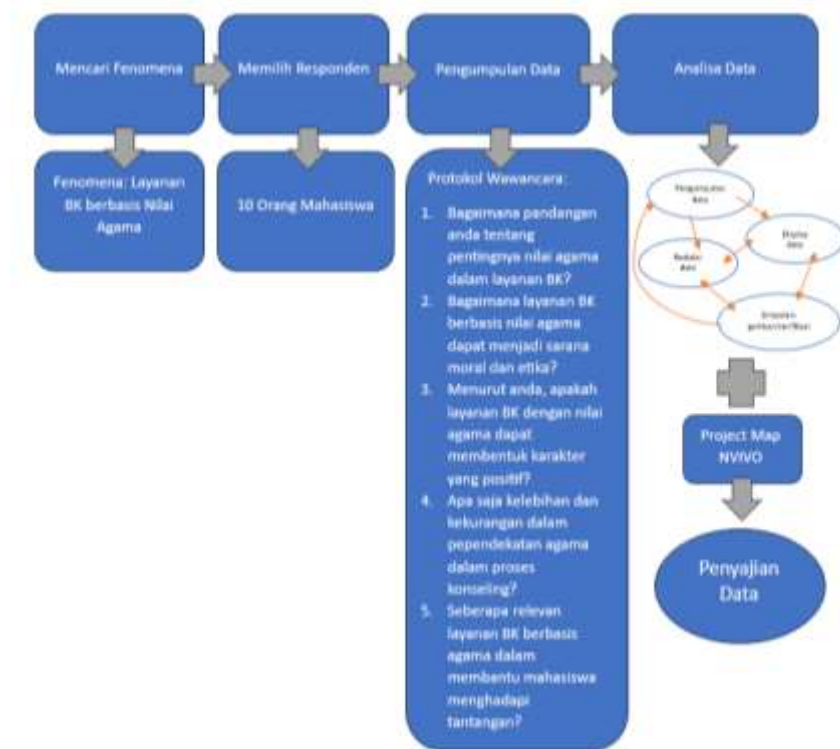


Figure 1. Research flow diagram

RESULTS

Based on the results of data analysis using an interactive model and utilizing the project map feature in NVivo 12 software, the following findings were obtained:

1. Views on the Importance of Religious Values in Counseling Services

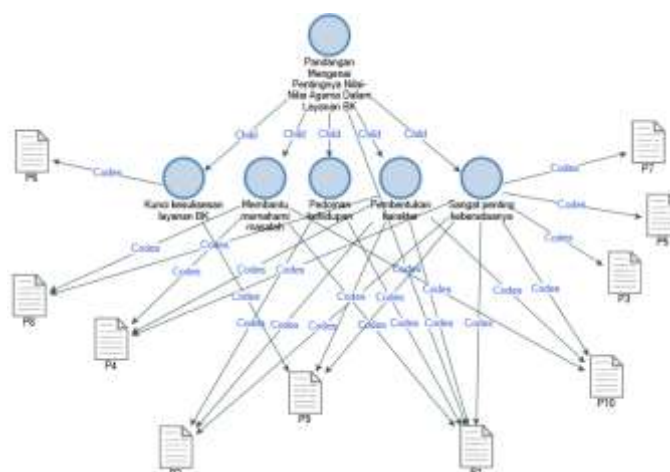


Figure 2. The Importance of Religious Values in Counseling Services

Based on the data results, respondents considered that the integration of religious values is not only a complement, but also a fundamental element in the counseling process. In the respondents' view, religious values can help shape character, provide direction in life, and be the key to the success of a counseling service.

Most respondents said that religious values are key to the success of counseling services. These values are considered an important foundation in the implementation of effective counseling services. This view asserts that values such as. Honesty, empathy, and sincerity in helping others are believed to be able to create a counseling environment based on trust and sincerity.

Furthermore, respondents also attached that religious values contribute in helping both counselors and counselees in "understanding the problem". Through a spiritual approach, self-reflection is considered easy to do, with the hope that problems can be understood from a broader perspective including in the context of an individual's relationship with God. In the respondents' perspective, religious values are also seen as "life guidelines" that provide direction in life (Nasution, 2023), both for the counselee and the counselor. This illustrates the belief that religious values provide the right moral guidance in establishing life, as well as a reference in helping counselors make meaningful life choices.

In addition, religious values are also considered to have an important role in "character building". Counseling services integrated with religious values are considered capable of interpreting and instilling values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy. This statement is in line with the views of the majority of students who emphasize that religion has an "important role" in counseling practices.

This is reinforced by one respondent's statement: "religious values are very important in counseling services because it can be one of the foundations in. Forming character attitudes, behavior and how to deal with problems" and similarly another response revealed that: "important, because religious values become moral guidelines that can later help counseling not only from the emotional side, but also spiritual, thus encouraging the formation of positive character and attitudes. The majority of students emphasized that religious values have an important role in the practice of counseling guidance.

2. Religious Value-Based Counseling Services as a Means of Deepening Moral and Ethical Values

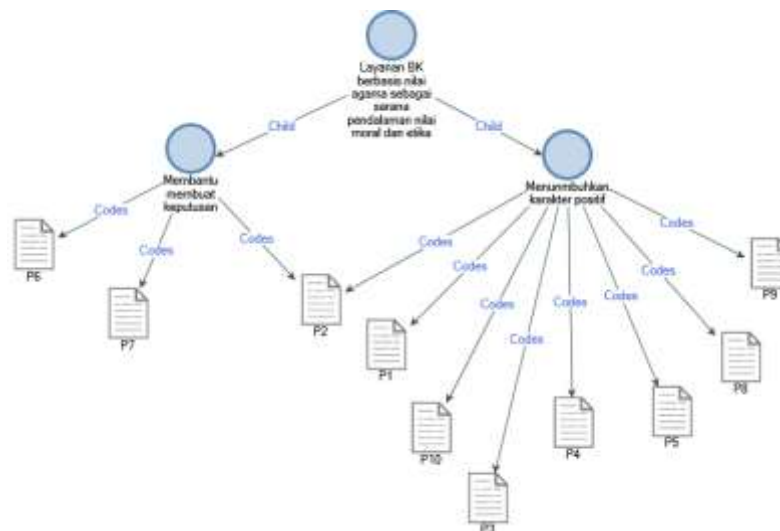


Figure 3. Religious Values as a Means of Deepening Moral and Ethical Values

Overall, respondents expressed similar opinions. This is illustrated by the two main categories that emerged in the analysis, namely "helping to make decisions" and "fostering positive character".

In the first category "helping to make decisions", it indicates that religious value-based counseling services provide a strong moral foundation for dd8k participants in making appropriate choices. This indicates that religious values are not only a cognitive aspect, but also provide a reflective basis in a more ethical decision-making process.

Meanwhile, the second most dominant category was "fostering positive character". The respondents indicated that guidance and counseling (BK) services that integrate religious values directly contribute to the character building of students. The positive characters include honesty, responsibility, empathy, and discipline. As one respondent said: "faith-based BK services foster the importance of being honest, responsibility, empathy, and ethical decision-making. Learners are directed to become individuals with character, morals and integrity" Another respondent also emphasized that: "Religious value-based counseling services play a role in guiding counselees to distinguish between right and wrong. Through a spiritual approach, this service can later help students understand and integrate moral and ethical values such as honesty, and a sense of responsibility."

3. Counseling Services with Religious Values in Positive Character Building

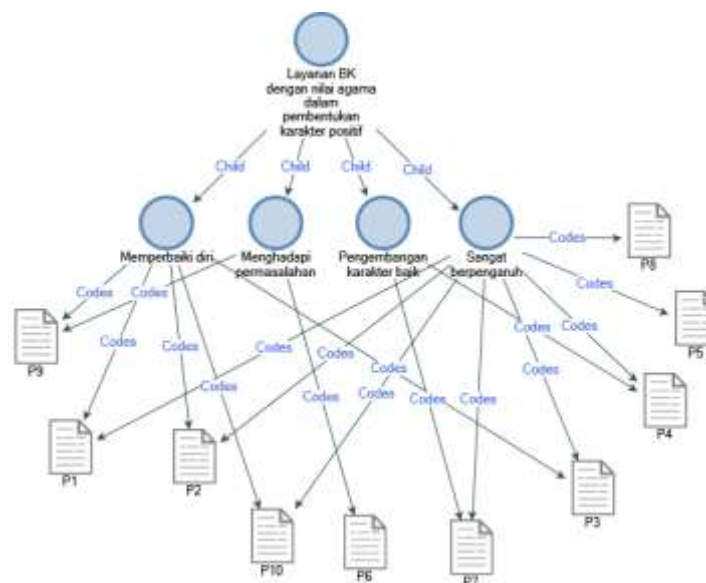


Figure 4. Religious Values in Positive Character Building

Respondents had similar views on the role of counseling services that integrate religious values in determining positive character. The majority of respondents saw religious values in counseling services as having a major impact on self-improvement, dealing with problems, and in the formation and development of good character.

Respondents described BK services as not only helping to solve student problems, but also providing a space for self-reflection that includes moral and spiritual values. As illustrated in Figure 3, there are four broad categories that emerge, namely "self-improvement", "dealing with problems", "good character development", and "very influential" these four categories indicate that the opinions given are consistent across the various views of respondents.

As stated by some respondents below: "counseling services that overcast religious values are very influential in shaping good student character. As a student, I see that religious values can be an important foundation in building good attitudes, honesty, patience, and a sense of responsibility". Another opinion also emphasizes the importance of character building. "Religious values are basically about goodness, such as honesty, responsibility, compassion, hard work and mutual respect. When these values are instilled through B services, students are not only guided to solve their problems, but also directed to become morally and spiritually better individuals."

4. Advantages of Religious Approach in Guidance Counseling

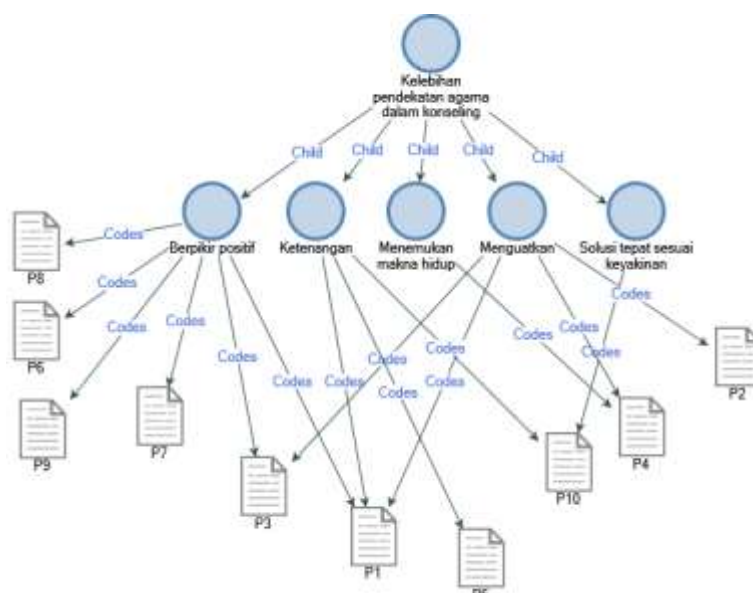


Figure 5. The advantages of the religious approach in counseling

In general, the respondents were of the view that the religious approach in counseling services provides many advantages. These advantages are not only for problem solving but also in the formation of ways of thinking, inner peace, and spiritual closeness. The respondents agreed that this approach provides deeper mental and emotional strengthening.

These advantages are reflected in the five main categories generated from the data, namely: positive thinking, inner peace, meaning of life, self-efficacy, and solutions that are in line with beliefs. As one respondent said: "a religious approach can be a source of inner strengthening, provide hope, and calmness in facing problems. Religious values provide clear guidance about good and bad, thus helping clients make ethical and responsible decisions."

5. Disadvantages of Religious Approach in Counseling

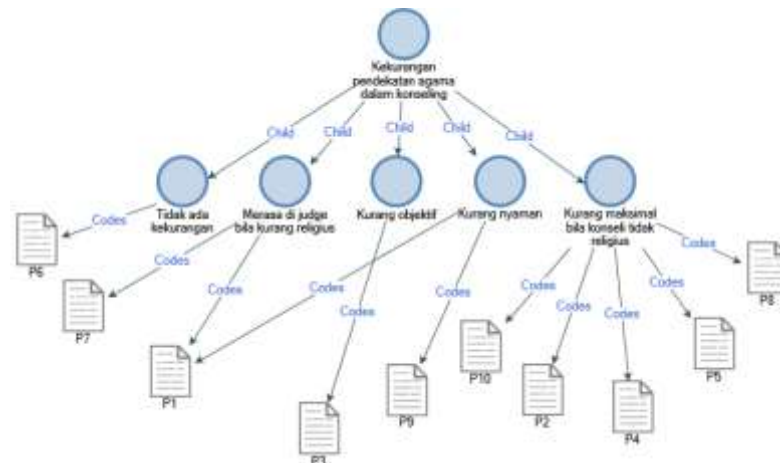


Figure 6. Disadvantages of Religious Approach in Counseling Services

Overall, respondents had varying views on the shortcomings of the religious approach in counseling. There were concerns raised in response to an approach that was perceived as not fulfilling spiritual needs.

Some respondents said below. They did not see any shortcomings in the religious approach. This suggests that this emphasis as an individual is helpful in the counseling process. However, most respondents felt that there were limitations. For example, there was a fear of feeling judged if they were considered less religious. Another concern is that this approach is considered to be objective, where the counselor is considered to carry certain values that reduce the neutral space for clients to express their problems freely.

In addition, this approach is also considered to make the counseling atmosphere less comfortable, because the involvement of religious values sometimes creates emotional distance between the counselee and the counselor. And some respondents stated that counseling supplies that are not religious are not optimal. They feel that under a religious approach, spiritual values that are important for personal functioning are neglected, so counseling is felt to touch the deepest aspects of the root of the problem.

This was emphasized by one respondent who said that "the drawback is that it can be less effective for non-religious students, sometimes it is too rigid on the rules, and in fact requires caution so as not to appear to force certain values.

6. How Relevant Religion-Based Counseling Services are for College Students

Overall, the majority of respondents indicated that religion-based counseling services are considered to have a high level of relevance for students. Respondents conveyed the various benefits they felt, both in the aspect of spiritual life and psychology. This service is not only used as a place to feed their grievances, but also as a direction in life.

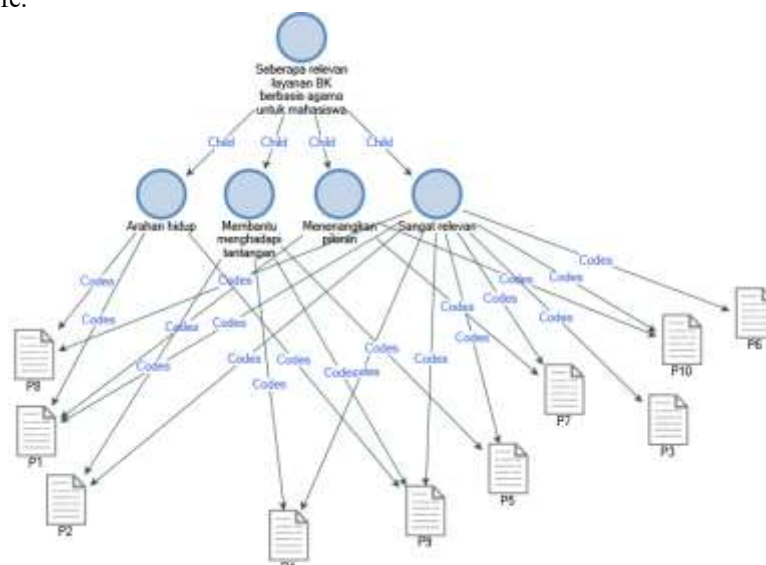


Figure 7. Relevance of Religion-based Counseling Services for Students

Some respondents indicated that religion-based counseling services provide "life direction". In this case, the religious approach is seen as being able to strengthen moral values, explain life goals, and assist students in making decisions in accordance with spiritual principles. Some respondents also stated that religious value-based counseling services are very relevant in helping students face various challenges of campus life, such as academic stress, social conflict, and identity crisis. With the spiritual dimension, students feel calmer, more directed, and have a handle on problems. Overall, these findings confirm that faith-based counseling services are highly relevant in the context of student character development. In addition to providing moral and ethical understanding, this service is also a source of inner strength that can help students in living academic and social life more meaningfully.

The results of this study indicate that students view religious value-based guidance and counseling (BK) services as having a central role in character building and providing meaningful life direction. This finding is in line with the thoughts of (Suriadi, n.d.) who states that in Islam, character education must be based on noble moral values such as honesty, responsibility, and compassion.

The integration of religious values in counseling services is not only understood as a complement, but as a moral foundation that directs counselees to reflect on problems from a spiritual perspective. This reinforces the findings of Zaman (2024), which states that awareness of God's presence (takwa) is able to influence the way a person thinks and behaves in dealing with life's problems, which in turn affects their decisions and actions in social and academic contexts.

In line with (Rendi Wibowo, Y., Salfadilah, F., Rahelli, Y., Martha Ayunira, n.d.), respondents also mentioned that religious values such as justice ('adl), mercy (compassion), and patience (sabr) are important references in shaping student character. Counseling services that contain these values are felt to be able to guide students not only emotionally, but also spiritually, which in turn helps them become individuals with resilience and integrity, as affirmed by Sartika (Sartika, 2019), who emphasized that religion-based counseling guidance can be a medium for spiritual strengthening in facing the pressures of academic and social life.

Religion is basically an inherent part of every individual's life, becoming a source of value that affects the development of one's personality and potential. In the context of education, religion functions not only as a moral foundation, but also as a learning substance that internalizes good values. Therefore, in the context of education, religion must be a functional part that accompanies the entire educational process, both in character building and a more holistic counseling approach to integration.

However, respondents' concerns about potential judgment, lack of neutrality, and uncomfortable counseling atmosphere were also noted. These shortcomings indicate the need for counselors to have intercultural competence and an inclusive approach, as stated, which emphasizes that counselors must be able to adapt their approach to the context of student diversity so that there is no resistance or inequality in the relationship between the counselee and the counselor.

Furthermore, students' perceptions that faith-based counseling services can shape positive character show harmony with the goals of national education, as stated in Law No. 20 of 2003, which aims to produce students who are faithful, pious, and have noble character. This study also confirms the findings of (Rudiyanto, M., & Kasanova, 2023) that faith-based character education is very effective in shaping a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also morally and socially strong.

Thus, these findings confirm that the religious value-based counseling service approach has a strong theoretical and empirical foundation, both in the context of character building and as a counseling approach oriented towards the meaningfulness of life and the development of students' moral potential.

CONCLUSION

The results showed that students perceive counseling services based on religious values as an important and relevant approach in supporting the character building process. Religious values are not only considered as a complement, but also as the main foundation that can strengthen BK services as a whole. Students consider that religious values such as honesty, empathy, responsibility and spiritual closeness are able to assist in the process of self-reflection, decision making and positive attitude formation.

Religious-based counseling services are considered to be able to provide life direction, strengthen moral values and help students face the challenges of academic and social life. Although some respondents also emphasized the need for an inclusive approach in order to provide a balance between psychological and spiritual support. This can be used as a first step for the development of counseling services that are more holistic and spiritually valuable. For future research, it is suggested that the focus be broadened by involving respondents from diverse religious backgrounds and considering differences in levels of religiosity. Or it can also explore the role of counselors in implementing religious values adaptively according to the context of the students served.

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