Narrative review: strengthening students’ self-identity through Christian values-based guidance and counseling services

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Abstract

Adolescence is an important stage for self-identity discovery. Thus, effective guidance and counseling strategies are needed in shaping students’ self-identity. One of them is by integrating Christian values in guidance and counseling services. This article is aimed to analyze the shaping of self-identity through guidance and counseling services based on Christian values. Narrative review is used to compile several published articles and research studies from Google scholars with the key words “guidance and counseling services based on Christian values” and “integration of Christian values in counseling and psychology”. Hence, 80 journals from 54 national and 26 international journals are collected, with 7 national journals selected with the PRISMA model. The result of this article covers 4 key areas in guidance and counseling services with Christian values: 1) Guidance and counseling services can be applied through prayer and Scripture reading that are suitable for students’ needs, 2) Guidance services are conducted to help students to be independent and discipline, 3) Counseling services can be done through pastoral counseling and discipleship, 4) School counselor has an important role to instill Christian values in shaping students’ self-identity.

Keywords: Guidance and counseling services; Christian values; self-identity

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a transition from childhood to adulthood. It is a stage in finding the true identity based on one’s personality. One of the factors that raise internal conflict in adolescence is the identity crisis that may lead to mental health problems and juvenile delinquency. Moreover, adolescence is a time when individuals seek self-identity to understand themselves. At this stage, adolescents try to explore their identity, get to know themselves further to discover life goals in the future (Tamalawe, 2019). In the process of searching for identity, schools and teachers have an important role in strengthening students’ identity.

The identity and personal growth of students are related to the teacher’s role in guiding, training and directing students to excel in knowledge and moral ethics. Teachers need to instill moral values and behavior that are aligned with religious norms and state law (Intarti, 2016). Based on the teacher’s role in forming students’ identity, the guidance and counseling teacher or counselor has an important role in facilitating students with appropriate counseling services to help students in maximizing their potential, recognizing their identity and being independent (Babtista et al., 2021). The purpose of guidance and counseling services is to assist students in developing their personalities, helping students to have the right self-concept and self-identity, transforming students’ behavior to a better direction. Furthermore, guidance and counseling services also assist students in maximizing their potential, taking responsibility for their decisions and life goals (Sartika & Yandri, 2019). Thus, in reaching its purpose, effective strategy in guidance and counseling services needs to be done. One of the strategies to strengthen students’ identity is by integrating religious values into guidance and counseling services. The integration of religious and spiritual aspects in counseling has become a crucial factor in dealing with problems faced today, because the counselor also plays an important role in providing a cultural approach that is in accordance with the...
counselee’s needs, by reaching out to the counselee’s beliefs (Timbers & Hollenberger, 2022). Exploring religious and spiritual aspects in counseling can provide a view that the counselor respects the counselee’s beliefs as well (Henriksen et al., 2015).

Religious values is an individual’s relationship with something that contains holy, honorable and great elements (Sianturi & Dewi, 2021). Religious values play an important role in an individual's life, which refers to its potential in strengthening students’ identity. Based on Christian perspective, Christian values are the values derived from Bible verses which are embodied into action. This refers to the Bible as the basis of Christian values (Krobo, 2021). Integrating Christian values in counseling services has shown real implications in overcoming problems faced by counselees, one of which is through contemplation of prayer and reading the Bible (Sutton et al., 2016).

This study aims to: 1) analyze guidance and counseling services based on Christian values to strengthen students’ identity, 2) give contribution for further studies by integrating Christian values in guidance and counseling services, especially for counselors in schools who apply character building through Christian values.

METHOD

The research method used is Narrative Review (NR) which descriptively describes previous research on a particular topic (Torre et al., 2015). NR aims to identify and conclude the research that has been carried out and see the possibility of further studies from previous research. NR has a function to deepen several related research results. Therefore, the facts obtained can be used as a decision making or reference for policy making. The process of searching for the results of previous research and articles that have been published uses the PRISMA model (Xie et al., 2023), which includes 3 stages: 1) identification, 2) screening, and 3) inclusion. Several steps were taken: 1) identification: data search using Google scholars with the keywords “Christian values in counseling services”, “guidance and counseling services based on Christian values” and “integration of Christian values in counseling and psychology”. The author found a total of 80 journals consisting of 54 national and 26 international journals in the period of 2013-2023, 2) screening: at this stage, screening was carried out to see journals related to strengthening the identity of adolescent students. Based on that criteria, 40 research journals that consist of 32 national and 8 international journals were selected. From this amount, several journals are screened out and simplified based on titles and abstracts into 25 journals, consisting 19 national and 6 international journals, 3) inclusion: quality checking is carried out to examine the quality of the journals obtained to be analyzed further, whether the journal has a span of 10 years with a minimum of 10 literacy references, whether the research results in the journal are related to the main topic, etc. Then, it narrows down to 7 selected national journal publications to be analyzed further in the discussion section. The discussion based on the grouping of the data is then examined in depth in order to obtain conclusions to answer the objectives.
The diagram of the literacy search process from previous research is as follows:

**Diagram 1. PRISMA Diagram**

- Total search database of Google Scholars (n = 80)
- Screening (n = 40)
  - Journal selection based on title and abstract (n = 25)
  - Final journals to be analyzed according to the purpose and formulation of the problem (n = 7)
- Selection of journal content related to the topic: strengthening students’ self-identity.
- Selection criteria:
  1. Selection related to objectives: guidance and counseling services based on Christian values to strengthen students’ self-identity.
  2. Journal with minimum 10 references.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**The role of Christian values in guidance and counseling services**

Guidance and counseling services play an important role in individual change. Judging from the aspect of Theology and the story of Creation, man was created as an individual who is completely dependent on the Creator, where his existence, purpose and meaning of life depend on God. Moreover, humans were created in the image and likeness of God, which means God’s attributes are passed down to humans. It is quoted in Genesis 1:22-27 which refers to the divine attribute in man that projects the substance of God, such as rational and good moral. However, when humans fell into sin, those good divine qualities became corrupted by sin. Therefore, a process is needed for the restoration of human characteristics in accordance with divine nature (Sihombing et al., 2022).

The integration of Christian values into counseling services helps counselors see counselees as God’s noble creations. Thus, the counseling services provided are expected to guide individuals to rediscover a complete picture of who they really are before God. Integrating Christian values can also be carried out in handling individual personal struggles towards the process of self-seeking, reconciliation and handling moral issues, which require a deep phenomenological dimension. The counselor also assists the counselee in the process of
changing good behavior in accordance with divine nature, as humans being who were originally created by God. The integration of Christian values in counseling services can be carried out through prayer contemplation and Bible reading, in order to help counselees rediscover their position before God, which can trigger real changes in behavior. Some examples are doing prayer and breath meditation which reminds the counselee of the process of creation, when God created humans through the breath of His life, as described in Genesis 2: 7 (Koenig, 2023).

Contemplation through prayer and Bible reading is also used in research at SMAK Kalam Kudus Mekar Wangi Bandung for personality development based on Christian character. The research was carried out by means of learning assistance through training and face-to-face counseling. Activities are carried out by knowing the spiritual condition of students who have problems, which is accompanied by prayer with hope for God’s help. In this study, teachers and parents were also equipped with training on their role in education, according to the Bible teachings in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 which are meditated on as the shema or creed (Simanjuntak et al., 2022).

Guidance and counseling services based on Christian values through prayer contemplation and Bible reading are mostly done for the sake of strengthening students’ identity. Some of the approaches taken are adjusted based on the Bible readings that suit students’ needs, in order to help students in reflecting on the Bible readings given. It is hoped that these prayers and Bible readings can answer the problems faced by students in making the right decisions for significant changes of behavior.

**Strengthening students’ self-identity through Christian values-based guidance and counseling services**

In the last few decades, the integration of spirituality and religion has become an important focus in counseling (Daniels & Fitzpatrick, 2013). Counseling theories focus on human nature, the importance of socializing with others, the purpose and the struggles of human life, where all these aspects are inseparable from the core concept of spirituality and a religious perspective. On the other hand, religion and spirituality cannot be separated from the aspects of thoughts, emotions and human relationships with other people (Stewart-Sicking et al., 2017). The spiritual aspect is important to see counselees as whole individuals who have spiritual needs, especially when individuals are faced with tough life challenges, such as life crises, loss of loved ones and painful experiences (Matise et al., 2018). The emphasis and integration of religious and spiritual aspects in counseling has become a special focus in dealing with the problems faced today. This is shown through results of research where there is a positive relationship between mental health and religious aspects (Captari et al., 2018). Moreover, there is a strong need for multicultural counseling related to religious and spiritual aspects as well.

As an applied science, guidance and counseling integrates with the influence of other sciences. Especially for the implementation of guidance and counseling in Indonesia which is rooted in philosophy and religion (Habsy, 2017). The religious aspect is seen as an important element in implementing guidance and counseling in Indonesia, because Indonesia is consist of people with different cultural backgrounds and beliefs. Counselors need to be aware of the
fundamental factors of spiritual-moral development as the key to students’ aspirations in counseling, so that counseling programs based on aspects of faith can provide comprehensive training for the development of a better identity for the students.

Strengthening students’ identity is crucial, especially for adolescents. Adolescents with a strong personality and identity have the right self-confidence and self-concept to actualize all the potential that exists in them (Longkutoy et al., 2015). Many adolescents currently have a self-identity crisis due to changes that occur in the globalization era and human life which affecting their lifestyle. Adolescents who witness various realities of life need a proper guidance to make good decisions based on strong values and life principles, as a process of self-actualization to have the right self-concept and ideal self-identity (Awang et al., 2021). In this case, the foundation of the truth on God’s Word can be used as a reference for true values and principles of life.

In accordance with the objectives regarding the strengthening students’ self-identity through guidance and counseling services based on Christian values, further discussion is emphasized on the previous studies as follows:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Authors and Publishing Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Results</th>
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| 1  | Kathryn et al, 2021 (Kathryn et al., 2021) | Implementasi Bimbingan dan Konseling sebagai penunjang pembentukan Godly character mahasiswa Universitas Pelita Harapan | 1) Implementation of guidance and counseling services is carried out by developing strategies, objectives, implementation and evaluation in accordance with the existing UPH’s vision and mission.  
2) The form of counseling services provided is pastoral care.  
3) Several forms of implementation carried out are as follows:  
   a) Approach through institutional regulations : functions as deterrent to prevent students from taking actions against moral values. This prevention also aims to form students’ self-discipline;  
   b) Advice : serves to help students who have problems in learning, personal and social aspects;  
   c) Discipleship : serves to emphasize the values of God’s word. Guidance is given for the spiritual growth of students; |
d) Learning by doing: serves to provide guidance to build students’ empathy to local community by carrying out service learning projects;

e) Institutional collaborative guidance: counseling services are provided in collaboration with experts according to the needs of the students.

f) Academic support: functions to form students’ self-reliance.

| 2 | Ottu & Triposa, 2021 ((Ottu & Triposa, 2021)) | Peran guru Bimbingan Konseling (BK) dalam membentuk karakter siswa Kristen. | 1) Schools have a role in building students’ character by providing a foundation of moral values to help students carry out their roles in the society.

2) The role of counselor is to assist students in developing themselves optimally and being independent.

3) Counselor can help students through character building by instilling the right values and moral principles. In this case, the Bible can be used as a moral compass that can be embodied into real action. One of the references that can be used is from the verse of Luke 6:31.

| 3 | Hutagalung & Ferinia, 2021 ((Hutagalung & Ferinia, 2021)) | Pengaruh dekandensi moral terhadap pendidikan karakter dan Bimbingan Konseling (BK) pada siswa Kristen. | 1) This study aims to look at the effect of moral decadency on character education and guidance and counseling services, as well as the effect of character education on guidance and counseling services in overcoming the moral crisis in High School.

2) The results of the study show moral decadency has a positive effect on character education and guidance and counseling services, but character education has a negative effect on guidance and counseling services.

3) Inconsistent character education causes moral decadency towards students which makes students need counseling interventions. Thus, it can be concluded that consistent and relevant character education
Implementation of character education can be done by integrating faith and spirituality, including character education carried out by guidance and counseling teachers.

1) Christian guidance and counseling teachers are needed for the process of forming student character, provide personal guidance and assistance to strengthen students’ identity in order to develop moral values in their lives.

2) The role of guidance and counseling teachers can be a guide, motivator and friend. Guidance for students can be done by instilling the Word of God as a guide for students to have a transformation in behavior.

3) Counseling education using religious aspects needs to be carried out by guidance and counseling teachers in dealing with students delinquency.

4) Christian counselors need to have a good understanding of God’s Word when conducting counseling based on religious values. Bible truth is seen as a guide in helping students cope with life’s challenges.

5) The counseling process can be carried out through prayers before and after the counseling session. It is aimed to help counseling process to be done properly.

6) The counselor needs to disciple the counselee by helping the counselee to become a better person. Through counseling process, the counselees are expected to know themselves better, to understand what is happening in their lives and focus on their life goals as a form of responsibility to God.

7) In overcoming mental health issues, a process of recovering self-concept is needed. Through a positive self-concept, teenagers can prevent themselves from serious mental health problems.

8) Theological approach is given because adolescents with strong faith can control
Pembelajaran Jarak Jauh.

3) The psychoanalytic approach is given to restore the function of the adolescents’ ego which is useful as a regulator in order to help adolescents to make adjustments and make the right decisions when facing life’s difficulties.

7 Simorangkir et al, 2020 (Simorangkir et al., 2020)

Penguatan resiliensi remaja bermasalah melalui pengembangan materi modul Bimbingan dan Konseling

1) Research conducted on high schools in the Tarutung sub-district in dealing with troubled youth, including youth who are unable to motivate themselves when faced with life’s challenges.

2) The content of the module integrates the Christian religious values based on Bible, aligned with youth development tasks.

3) Counselor develops guidance and counseling materials from Biblical character such as Gideon, Jephtah, Jabez and David which emphasizes God’s power to strengthen students in facing life’s challenges.

Based on some of the research described above, it can be seen that adolescents need to develop a true self-identity because adolescents are in a period where they face many choices in life that are vulnerable to challenges. In the process of fostering an accurate identity, it is necessary to build character which cannot be separated from instilling accountable moral values (Novrian Satria, 2018). Adolescents’ self-identity needs to be fostered based on the right foundation, not because of other external influences and it has to be started by having the right self-concept. One of the foundations that can help adolescents in building the right self-concept is through the Word of God (Dupe, 2020). In the aspect of self-identity based on Christian faith, it is illustrates that self-identity is not based on physical appearance, educational background, career and position, ethnicity, achievement or economic level, but self-identity based on how God perceives humans (Koehuan et al., 2022). This is formed based on how adolescents carry out self-assessments by seeing themselves as valuable creations of God, more valuable than external judgements based on physical condition, achievement and social status.

The guidance and counseling teacher plays an important role in instilling Christian values based on the Word of God. The guidance and counseling teacher also needs to be a role model who can instill correct moral principles, remind students of their self-image before God, to help students in developing self-esteem and give a solid foundation in forming self-identity. The figure of guidance and counseling teacher can be a guide and motivator for students.

Guidance and counseling services based on Christian values, help students in strengthening self-identity by having the right self-concept: 1) guidance services help
students to be more independent and discipline which is aligned with the identity based on the truth of God’s Word, 2) counseling services in the form of pastoral counseling and discipleship approaches can be a corridor for students to return to their original divine nature, as God’s precious and noble creations. Strengthening students’ self-identity can help students to make responsible decisions and direct students to develop good behavior, in order to avoid deviant behavior such as juvenile delinquency, identity crisis and mental health issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT
The contribution of Christian values in guidance and counseling services can be a good alternative in helping counselees in the future, especially to answer the needs of students in religious and spiritual aspects. Thus, further research studies in this field need to be carried out on an ongoing basis, especially for counselors in schools based on Christian values.

CONCLUSION
Based on several explanations that have been put forward in the research results, it can be concluded as follows: *First*, Strengthening self-identity through counseling services based on Christian values can be done using a prayer approach and Bible reading. Selection of the prayer contents and Bible readings can be adjusted based on the needs of students in the school. The content of prayers and Bible readings that are aligned with the needs of students is expected to be used effectively in dealing with challenges faced by the students. *Second*, In the process of strengthening the adolescents’ self-identity, guidance services can be used as a form of prevention against deviant behavior, as well as assisting students in developing self-discipline and independence. Some materials related to strengthening self-identity such as: 1) self-concept, 2) self-confidence, 3) setting goals for the future and 4) character building, should be used in learning guidance, personal-social guidance and career guidance services. This form of guidance also needs to be implemented consistently in order to prevent deviant behavior. The Word of God can be used as a source of material in strengthening self-identity, to help students in developing the right identity. Self-identity is built not based on physical appearance, achievement, social and economic status, but based on the truth of God’s Word, because all students are valuable in God’s eyes. *Third*, Counseling services to strengthen students’ self-identity can be started with an analysis of the students’ background, especially those with family background that is not conducive, such as divorced families, being raised by a single parent, orphan students, etc. Schools can take a role in helping students face life’s challenges by providing pastoral counseling and a discipleship approach. Counselor can also integrate counseling models and techniques based on Christian religious values that are appropriate to be applied in dealing with problematic students. *Fourth*, The role of guidance and counseling teacher also plays an important role in strengthening students’ self-identity. In carrying out counseling services, counselor needs to be role models, provide guidance and instill proper values in helping students to have a true self-identity. Guidance and counseling teacher can also collaborate with experts and other teachers to give support in instilling the right values to students. Counselors need to be equipped with specific skills and competencies in carrying out counseling services based on Christian values.
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BIODATA

Inggar Anggita is a Cambridge certificate teacher and had experience in guidance and counseling for 13 years. She graduated as Bachelor of Psychology from Atmajaya Catholic University in Jakarta and currently taking a Postgraduate program for Education – Guidance and Counseling in Universitas Negeri Malang. She is taking the role as the guidance counselor and mental health advocate at thebridge.asia education consultant (https://thebridge.asia) based in Singapore. She is also become the book author to build mental health awareness and the importance of social and emotional learning skills for young generation.

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