

The Role of Christian Education Teachers as Counselors in Reducing Adolescent Stress Levels

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ABSTRACT

This study discusses the role of Christian Religious Education (PAK) teachers as counselors in helping adolescents overcome stress, especially those caused by family conflict. This study uses a qualitative method with a case study approach, through in-depth interviews with Christian Religious Education teachers and literature reviews from books, scientific journals, and other relevant sources. The data collected were analyzed descriptively to understand the meaning and relevance of the role of Christian Religious Education teachers in the context of counseling. The results show that most Christian Religious Education teachers have not been optimal in carrying out their role as counselors due to limited time, understanding, and facilities. Christian Religious Education teachers have the potential to become spiritual companions through Christian counseling based on prayer, empathy, and Biblical values, in order to support the psychological well-being of adolescents holistically.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a developmental phase that is full of dynamics and challenges. Physical, psychological, and social changes often cause teenagers to experience pressure or stress. One of the main causes of stress in teenagers is conflict in the family, such as disharmony between parents, or between parents and children. Meriana, 2016 quoted by Oktavia Mutmainna "Stress is a psychological state of an individual caused by the individual being faced with internal problems such as family problems, for example a child who does not want his parents to divorce but his parents still want to divorce, and external problems such as environmental factors." How a family has a very big impact on its family members, one with another has a close relationship. If one experiences stress, it is possible that it can affect other family members. In addition to being felt by parents, parenting stress is also felt by children. This stressful condition can last for a long time during the parenting process (Lestari,, 2012).

The family is the heart of society. In the family, all ideas, attitudes, beliefs, and feelings begin. What happens in the family determines what happens in the church, in the school, in the community, and in a nation (Narramore,, 1985). Conflicts that occur in the household if not resolved will be like a snowball, starting from a small ball on top of the peak and rolling down to form a giant snowball so that its size exceeds the size of a human. So it takes a long time to destroy it. This disharmony has a direct impact on the psychological condition of adolescents and can disrupt their learning process and social development in the school environment. Christian Religious Education (PAK) teachers have a strategic role as educators and spiritual guides. Amidst the complexity of problems faced by adolescents, Christian Religious Education teachers are required to provide guidance that is not only academic but also spiritual and emotional. Therefore, the role of Christian Religious Education teachers as counselors is important in helping adolescents overcome stress, especially that which stems from family conflict.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding Christian Religious Education

According to Josep Stalin, education is a weapon whose impact depends on the hand that holds it and on who it is aimed at. (Stalin, 2008). Education in general is a necessity for every individual. Meanwhile, according to John Dewey, quoted by Marten Sahertian in the journal "Christian Religious Education in John Dewey's Perspective", education is a supervised or guided transformation from an uncertain state to a certain state. According to church figure Augustine (345-430) said that Christian Religious Education is education that has the goal is that everyone can commune with God through a heart that is open to every word of God, resulting in knowledge and understanding (Boehlke, 2002). This proves that Christian Religious Education is the basis of knowledge of God through the fellowship that is built so as to obtain good changes for a person's life.

However, according to Calvin (1509-1664), Christian religious education is one that involves all the sons and daughters of the church in studying the Bible which is guided directly by the Holy Spirit. Taught and equipped to be responsible under the leadership of God for His glory. However, it is different

from the opinion of Robert W. Pazmino (1998), that Christian religious education is a deliberate effort systematically and supported by spiritual and human efforts to gain knowledge, attitudes, Christian values and skills and so on, to carry out renewal with various changes with group or personal breakthroughs and even the framework of the power of the Holy Spirit, with the aim that students live according to the word of God (Pazmino, 1988).

According to Werner C. Graendorf, Christian Religious Education is a teaching and learning process that is based on the Bible, Christ is the center and depends entirely on the Holy Spirit, who will continue to help and guide each individual to experience growth, by teaching according to the development of the times towards the recognition and experience of God's plan and will through Christ Jesus in all aspects of life and to prepare effective service, so that students can become spiritually mature (Graendorf, 1981).

As explained above, Christian Religious Education must be taught to all individuals without being limited to a certain age, because in Christian religious education there are Christian values that can change bad habits into good habits, through knowing and experiencing God who is the center of everything.

The Purpose of Christian Religious Education

In his book Christian Religious Education written by Homrighausen, he states that Christian Religious Education (PAK) is based on the fellowship of God's people. Christian Religious Education began when Abraham was called as God's chosen people and even centered on God himself as an educator for His people (Homrighausen, 1985).

Basically, Christian Religious Education aims to lead students step by step to the introduction of supernatural events contained in the Bible and the teachings given by Him, guide students in how to carry out the basic truths of the Bible for the salvation of their entire lives and encourage them to practice the principles of the Bible in order to build a strong and convincing Christian character so that they recognize that the truths and principles of faith show the way to solving moral, social and political problems in this world (Homrighausen, 1985).

Christian Religious Education guides students to recognize the purpose of life and God's plan in their lives so that they are increasingly equipped in their service life. This is in line with Wenner's statement that guidance to students according to their level of development with contemporary education leads to the recognition and experience of the purpose and plan of God in Christ through aspects of life and equips them so that the service is more effective (Nuhamara, 2009).

Then, something similar to the statement above was also expressed by Sariaman Sitanggang that the goal of Christian Religious Education is to introduce God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and His works so that the faith and belief of students can grow and emulate the Triune God in their lives, instilling an understanding of God and His works in students so that they are able to understand and experience them (Sitanggang, 2008). In this case, the achievement of the goal of Christian Religious Education is to introduce students

to God and invite them to understand the concept of the Triune God and all of God's works, besides that it also aims to instill Christian values both in the social environment and for individuals.

Christian Religious Education is part of the national education goals, which means it must involve all elements of human growth and development, namely starting from physical, psychological, social, intellectual and mental spiritual aspects, etc.; including faith in God, namely Jesus Christ. Because Christian Religious Education is related to faith in God, Allah and through Jesus Christ, Christian Religious Education teachers are specially prepared; meaning that before they teach, they must undergo a theological education process, specifically Christian Religious Education.

In the Gospel of Matthew 28:19-20 the purpose of Christian Religious Education is a Great Commission delivered by the Lord Jesus which must be carried out by His disciples when Jesus' resurrection occurs. The Lord Jesus stated to His disciples that they must go and make all nations His disciples and baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is where the purpose of Christian Religious Education lies, besides introducing the person of the Triune God, Christian Religious Education also aims for every individual who has believed in Jesus Christ to submit themselves to be baptized in the name of God, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the method used is a qualitative method that explores a particular case in more depth by involving the collection of various sources of information. The first characteristic of the qualitative method is its emphasis on the natural environment, where data is obtained by being in the place where the research is conducted. The qualitative method is a valid method in research (Deak, et.al., 2022). Researchers conduct interviews, and conduct literature reviews from books, scientific journals that are relevant to the research title being studied. After all the data is collected, researchers make interpretations to capture the deepest meaning and explain it with other scientists' research that was made previously and then will be presented as valid data (Deak, et.al., 2022).

RESEARCH RESULT

Based on the interview results, it shows that most Christian Religious Education teachers have not carried out their role as counselors optimally. This is due to limited time, facilities, and understanding of counseling techniques. Meanwhile, teenagers prefer to tell their peers because they feel more comfortable and are not judged. Christian Religious Education teachers who play the role of counselors need to have competencies such as confidentiality, moral integrity, and the ability to understand the psychological conditions of adolescents. Christian counseling techniques such as praying together, empathetic listening, applying God's Word, and developing life strategies are part of the comprehensive spiritual mentoring process.

DISCUSSION

Christian Religious Education (PAK) aims to form individuals who know and experience an encounter with God through Christ. In this process, Christian Religious Education teachers are not only material deliverers, but also role models and guides who lead students to the growth of Christian faith and character. Adolescents who live in disharmonious families are very vulnerable to stress that can develop into serious psychological disorders such as PTSD. This stress often appears in various forms such as withdrawing from the environment, decreasing motivation to learn, and even juvenile delinquency. Therefore, early intervention through a counseling approach is very important. Christian counseling has a distinctive approach based on love, forgiveness, and biblical wisdom. Christian counselors can play this role through empathetic engagement, being good listeners, and providing direction based on God's Word.

Christian Religious Education Teacher

Christian Religious Education teachers are people who provide knowledge but must be able to be channels of blessing, leading each student to do what they have learned that is related to the Christian faith.

Meanwhile, according to John M. Nainggolan, a Christian religious teacher is a person who is able to see himself as a trained person, prioritizes the interests of others and adheres to work ethics, and is always ready to position himself to meet the needs of his students (Nainggolan, 2010). Boehlke, quoted in the journal Ester Rela Intarti, explained that a Christian education teacher is someone who is an advocate, experienced in learning and ready to utilize various sources of knowledge, one of which is books, statements, equipment and objects to help many people in their knowledge of the Christian faith.

Furthermore, in the view of Homrighausen and Enklaar (2005: 164), which was again quoted in the journal Ester Rela Intarti, said that Christian Religious Education teachers are evangelists, who carry out their duties by giving themselves to become followers of Christ so that they seriously follow Christ, who are active and loyal. And a teacher must not be complacent before his students become true followers of Christ.

In contrast to Serrano's opinion (2009: 37) who said that a Christian Religious Education teacher is someone who carries out teaching and educating duties in the field of Christian Religious Education who relies on abilities and characters that lead to the person of Jesus Christ as the Great Teacher. However, according to Belandia (2009: 1), a Christian religious education teacher is a teacher who establishes a foundation for the development of the personality and character of students.

Based on the opinions of several experts above, Christian Religious Education teachers are people who channel their educational blessings to students through their life experiences with God, in addition, a Christian Religious Education teacher is also responsible for directing students' faith in Jesus Christ as a strong foundation in their lives so that they become true followers of Christ. Therefore, Christian Religious Education teachers should not feel quickly satisfied in the teaching area if there is no change in the personality of the students.

Role of Christian Religious Education Teachers

In the Oxford dictionary the word 'role' means function or task (Oxford Dictionary, Tt). However, in KBBI it has a different meaning, namely a film actor (actress), a person who likes to joke, a behavioral device that is expected to be owned by people who have a position in society. The role of Christian Religious Education teachers is not only teaching, educating and training, because in fact Christian religious learning is an effort to direct students into the learning process so that students achieve learning goals according to what has become the target of achievement.

According to Arozatulo Telaumbanua, Christian Religious Education teachers have various roles, the following are the roles of Christian Religious Education teachers, namely: first, as educators, teachers must have a measure of personal quality that is able to be responsible, charismatic, disciplined and independent. Second, teachers as mentors, based on their knowledge and experience, teachers are required to guide and be responsible for the journey and development of students. Third, teachers as educators, namely teachers are required to be able to manage activities so that their students learn.

Meanwhile, according to Mulyasa, teachers have a very important role in helping the development of students in achieving their life goals optimally. Talents, interests, abilities and potentials possessed by students cannot develop optimally without the help of teachers (Mulyasa, 2007).

From these statements, it is clear that the role of a Christian Religious Education teacher is one of the tasks or functions which is not only to be a teacher but also to participate in the spiritual growth, development of interests and talents of students so that they can achieve God's goals and plans in their lives.

The Role of Christian Religious Education Teachers as Counselors

Prayitno and Erman Amti said that guidance is a part of the educational process that is systematic and literary to help adolescents grow in their strength to determine and direct their own lives (Prayitno, Amti, 2004).

AJ Jones argues that guidance is one of the assistances given by one person to another in determining the choice of adjustment and problem solving. Guidance has the aim of helping the recipient to increase their ability in being responsible for themselves (Gunarsa, 2007).

According to Abraham Tefbano (2018), the role of Christian Religious Education teachers as counselors is to be able to divide their time and energy with totality in their lives to guide and direct teenagers towards maturing their faith in God in Jesus Christ (Tefbano, 2021). Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that the role of Christian Religious Education teachers as counselors is:

a. Giving His Time and Energy

E. Rela Intarti (2023) said that the first thing that Christian Religious Education teachers must do as counselors is to be able to create an atmosphere and accept stories from teenagers, which must be filled with wisdom and educate about change and growth in faith, apart from that, they can provide special time to accompany teenagers (Intarti, 2023).

Zenita, Malik, Hasahatan are of the opinion that as a counselor you must have the responsibility to share your time, energy, thoughts and various efforts to achieve success (Simanjuntak,, 2021).

b. Directing Teenagers' Faith in God

Christian Religious Education teachers must guide and direct teenagers because Christian Religious Education has a big influence on the growth of adolescent faith. In guiding adolescent faith, the right and effective way is needed, namely Christian Religious Education teachers must be examples and role models, provide sufficient affection, as well as full attention and supervision of everything that teenagers do in their daily lives.

Yunardi Kristian Zega said that there is a need to create various spiritual activities in schools that can foster adolescent faith in God, it is necessary to summarize the review of the education curriculum to support the growth of adolescent faith, and observe the growth of faith possessed by each adolescent both cognitively, affectively and psychomotorically.

c. Guiding Teenagers to Take Responsibility for Themselves

Christian Religious Education teachers, with all their limitations and advantages, must also have the ability to guide teenagers so that they find a way out of the struggles and problems they face.

Counseling is not only aimed at accompanying teenagers out of trouble, but also as a guide so that they can live independently and continue their lives for the better. Personal guidance is important to help teenagers who are experiencing difficulties from various conflicts, which can come from themselves starting from friends, family members (siblings or brothers) especially from their own parents. A Christian Religious Education teacher has an important role. As a counselor, a Christian Religious Education teacher has an obligation to share time and energy with teenagers outside of teaching hours, namely giving time and energy more than they should, not only that, teachers are also required to accompany teenagers in directing their faith in God, namely helping teenagers in giving direction or guidance to have full faith in God and guiding teenagers to be responsible for themselves and not others.

Teacher Competence as a Counselor

Christian Religious Education Teacher as a counselor is a professional educator who is tasked with providing expert counseling services. One of the services provided by counseling teachers is to support the development of teenagers ranging from social, career, academic to personal matters of teenagers. The competence of teachers as counselors is:

a. Counselee Dependency

In general, counseling aims to make the client independent, therefore, in counseling practice, various strategies that encourage the client's dependence should be avoided, such as giving suggestions or advice that will make the client dependent on the teacher who acts as a counselor.

b. Manipulation

Teachers who act as counselors in schools who see themselves as agents of adolescent control will be prone to manipulation of the client. Manipulation can be done, for example, by leaking the results of the client's discussion with the counselor (teacher), so that the client is powerless to do what the counselor wants. The code of ethics also stipulates that in fact counseling teachers or counselors "will not force the provision of assistance to someone if there is no permission from the party concerned (the client)".

c. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is important in the work of a school counselor. All types of data from the client are confidential and must be stored in a very safe place (locked), only the counseling teacher (counselor) and the person concerned (counselee) can access it. Data is not always in the form of counseling interviews, but also various forms of test results, recordings, correspondence and so on. All types of information about the client can only be told to parties who are interested in the client with the client's permission.

Competence and Moral Integrity

Competence is an issue in a counselor's profession. As a profession that requires special education and a high level of education, therefore people who work in this profession are people who are able to redesign themselves and are open to various changes that exist, lack of competence from counselors will be detrimental to the client. Because there is nothing neutral in counseling services, counseling can be beneficial or even detrimental. Therefore, both personal, social or professional competence is very important, whether the counseling carried out is detrimental and carried out ethically or not. Teachers who act as counselors should not handle cases or problems in which they are not educated to do so. Counseling teachers or counselors also do not act 'know it all' and underestimate counseling, because this can be detrimental to the client.

The competence of a teacher as a counselor is very important and needs to be known so that there is no loss experienced by the client. The need for self-development by studying counseling competence and the code of ethics as a counselor.

Difficulties and Challenges of Christian Religious Education Teachers as Counselors

In interviews conducted by researchers with Christian Religious Education teachers as counselors, the difficulties they experienced were mostly due to limited time, teenagers who found it difficult to be open in telling their problems so that counselors found it difficult to understand the root of the problem. In

addition, there was also a lack of understanding of the steps of counseling, as well as ethics in counseling so that teenagers did not want to have counseling anymore. In addition, there were limited facilities that were not adequate, such as rooms (BK, 2025). Some challenges in counseling that are often faced by Christian Religious Education teachers are limited resources, such as in terms of providing time, tools and facilities provided in carrying out maximum counseling services. In addition, Christian Religious Education teachers often face a very high workload, considering that Christian Religious Education teachers must handle teenagers with various problems and different needs.

The difficulties and challenges faced by Christian Religious Education teachers as counselors are mainly inadequate resources, suboptimal tools or facilities, and the workload as Christian Religious Education teachers who teach. In addition, other difficulties are teenagers who do not have the courage to be open about their personal problems, so teachers continue to try to find out the root of the problem.

Christian Counseling

In biblical Christian teachings it is said that the purpose of human life is to be useful and to help each other and to support each other for those who are weak or helpless. Christian counselors are people who carry out their functions, achieve counseling with the foundation of God's word, glorify God, and have a harmonious and biblical view.

Christian counseling has a relevant influence to influence adolescent emotional intelligence through several complex procedures. Inviting adolescents to reflect on how Christian faith and values become a strong foundation in every challenge in life (problem), this is one approach that provides context and moral and spiritual values so that it can form a deeper understanding of emotions and how to manage them.

Counseling is not a learning activity in the context of a teaching scene that is appropriate for teachers to do as a subject area learning, but rather an expert service in the context of making students independent. Counseling is an expert service by a counselor (counseling teacher). A counselor is one of the educational qualifications, namely educational personnel who have a specialty in the field of counseling, who participate in organizing education. Here are the steps of biblical Christian counseling:

Prayer as a Foundation

Prayer before starting a counseling session is very important for Christian counselors. Because prayer is a way for counselors to invite God's presence and ask for wisdom from God in conducting counseling. When the counseling process is about to begin, pray together, because God is the source of all wisdom and ability. Someone who wants to be a counselor for others in the field of counseling must be a person who is diligent in praying.

Listening with Empathy

The key to counseling is listening carefully and empathizing. Giving full attention to the client, capturing every emotion felt by him/her and making the

client feel heard and understood. Active listening is one of the keys to understanding the problems faced by the client. Caring for the client and giving them the attention, they need, observing their body language, tone of voice and emotions. A Christian counselor in this case a Christian Religious Education teacher must be empathetic in the sense that he/she must be there and take part in the problems of the person being counseled.

Applying God's Word

In Christian counseling, the use of the Bible as the main authority and reference is equally important. The Bible is the main source that must be used by a Christian counselor. A Christian counselor should not advise, provide guidance if he does not use the Bible as the main guidebook. A Christian counselor must also be a person who lives and is led by the Holy Spirit so that every guidance, advice has definite authority and authority and can bring the client out and face his problems with full faith and hope.

Guidance in Prayer

A Christian counselor in terms of Christian Religious Education teacher must be able to bring the person being counseled to learn to have a more intimate relationship with God through their daily lives. A Christian Religious Education teacher must be able to teach the client to pray, read the Bible as a foundation in their daily lives.

Help Develop Strategies and Action Plans

Helping clients develop an action plan based on biblical principles. Identifying concrete steps, they can take to address the issues they are experiencing. Helping clients understand the consequences of every action they take. Reminding clients to be responsible for the actions they take and their long-term implications.

Providing Support and Accountability

During the counseling process, the counselor in this case the Christian Religious Education teacher provides emotional and spiritual support to the client. Affirming that God is present wherever he is and always helps them in all circumstances. A counselor must always be present to provide support and peace in every problem faced by the client. Counseling carried out by the Christian Religious Education teacher is the instillation of moral values based on the word of God, in addition to inviting teenagers to reflect on the word of God and helping teenagers to manage emotions and also providing moral support to teenagers, helping teenagers in developing strategies and actions in decisions that will be taken. Not only that, counseling activities carried out by Christian Religious Education teachers are activities outside of school hours, therefore teachers are needed who are willing to provide their time for teenagers who have problems.

Biblical Basis

Christian Religious Education teachers must be able to recognize the abilities and interests, development levels, strengths and experiences of their students, so that Christian Religious Education teachers can guide teenagers well. This is what makes teachers function as counselors.

The Bible provides an example of how counseling practices are carried out by God's people. Counseling conducted by Jethro, Moses' father-in-law. The counseling that Jethro did where he as a counselor involved in helping Moses as a client in providing counseling (Exodus 18) is explained when Jethro visited Moses who was at the foot of Mount Horeb at that time Jethro was looking at Moses serving the nation of Israel from beginning to end. then in the book (Exodus 18:17-18) Jethro greeted Moses and said "It is not good as you are doing. You will become very tired, both you and the people who are with you, for the work is too heavy for you, you cannot do it alone". Jethro gave advice or input to Moses by saying "As for you, represent the people before God and present their cases to God. You teach them decisions and report to them the way they should go about. Also, the work that must be done. Investigate people who are intelligent and fear God, people who are trustworthy, who can lead. They must be able to handle small problems themselves, but they can bring big problems to you" (Ex. 18 :19-22).

From the description above, it can be an example of counseling that is very much needed in order to help and provide advice to others. Like Jethro to Moses, it can be an example of counseling that can be trusted to everyone who has the expertise to be able to help with counseling work.

New Testament

Counseling conducted by Jesus as a counselor to the scribes and Pharisees (John 8:1-11) regarding a morality case, a woman who was falsely accused of committing adultery and then the scribes. The scribes quoted the appropriate punishment for the morality case. Jesus said "Let anyone who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her" (verse 6). Then the Lord Jesus made this woman an example for everyone and the scribes with the strategy of exemplifying this woman for everyone. In this case the Lord Jesus taught the scribes and everyone to first look at themselves, to find out who is wrong? who am I? To learn not to blame others and to correct yourself, this is the way of guidance and healing and counseling that Jesus did.

Romans 12:8 explains, "If it is the gift of exhortation, let us exhort. Let him who gives, do it with sincerity; let him who directs, do it diligently; let him who shows kindness, do it with joy."

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Teenagers are an age group that is very vulnerable to stress, especially those from the family environment. When the family fails to be a safe and loving place, teenagers need other figures who can guide them, one of which is a Christian Religious Education teacher. The role of Christian Religious Education teachers as counselors can help teenagers cope with the pressures of life through spiritual guidance, empathetic counseling, and instilling Christian values. Although there

are still many challenges faced, such as limited facilities and time, Christian Religious Education teachers have great potential as helpers for teenagers in dealing with the identity crisis and stress they experience.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Every research certainly has limitations, and so does this research. One of the main limitations is the scope of the subjects which is limited to a number of Christian Religious Education (PAK) teachers in a particular environment, so that the results cannot be generalized widely. In addition, the qualitative approach used is highly dependent on the subjective interpretation of the researcher and the openness of the respondents during the interview. Time constraints and access to more in-depth data are also challenges in exploring the overall dynamics of the role of Christian Religious Education teachers as counselors.

For further research, it is recommended to conduct studies using a quantitative or mixed methods approach to obtain more comprehensive data, as well as expand the research area so that the results are more representative and can be applied more widely in the context of Christian education.

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