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Guidance and Counseling Management for Strengthening Student Character amid Digital Disruption in Papua, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Character education has become a central priority in Indonesian schools as digital disruption reshapes students' behavior, social interaction, and moral development. Guidance and counseling services occupy a strategic position in this effort, yet studies on how these services are managed to strengthen student character remain concentrated in Java and other accessible regions, leaving Papua's distinctive cultural, geographic, and institutional context comparatively unexamined. This study investigated the management strategies of guidance and counseling services for strengthening student character at SMA Negeri 1 Serui, Yapen Islands Regency, Papua Province, focusing on planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation. A qualitative case study design was employed, drawing on in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis involving 15 participants, comprising the principal, the vice principal for student affairs, guidance and counseling teachers, religious education teachers, and students. Findings show that planning is developed collaboratively around students' needs, organization is structured through a grade-based division of responsibility, implementation is realized through religious, disciplinary, and extracurricular activities integrated into daily school life, and evaluation is conducted periodically to refine ongoing programs. Character development proved most effective when guidance and counseling services were embedded within school culture rather than delivered as an isolated program. This study contributes to guidance and counseling management theory and character education literature by showing how habituation-based frameworks operate under conditions of cultural plurality and limited institutional infrastructure in a digitally disrupted Papuan school setting.

Keywords: *Character Education, Digital Disruption, Guidance and Counseling Management, Papua, Secondary School Students*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of information and communication technology in the era of digital disruption has reshaped multiple dimensions of human life, including education (Haleem et al., 2022; Timotheou et al., 2023). Digital platforms now allow students to access learning resources with a speed, breadth, and flexibility unmatched by earlier generations, and they have encouraged the development of innovative, interactive, and adaptive pedagogical models suited to twenty-first-century learners (Awidi & Paynter, 2024). At the same time, these same technologies expose students to declining learning discipline, reduced face-to-face social interaction, increasing dependence on mobile devices, and the misuse of digital media, developments that recent studies link to adverse effects on students' moral development, social behavior, and psychological well-being (Livingstone & Stoilova, 2021; UNESCO, 2023).

Within this global landscape, character development has become a central concern of educational policy rather than a peripheral one. Contemporary education increasingly measures success not only through academic attainment but through students' digital literacy, social responsibility, and capacity for critical thought. Research conducted by the OECD indicates that twenty-first-century educational outcomes depend heavily on students' socio-emotional competencies and their ability to sustain positive character values while navigating rapid social and technological change (OECD, 2021). Schools therefore carry a strategic responsibility to cultivate technological competence without allowing it to displace the cultivation of character.

Indonesia has embedded this priority within national policy. The Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2018 concerning the Strengthening of Character Education directs schools to cultivate religious values, nationalism, integrity, independence, and mutual cooperation throughout the educational process, extending character formation beyond classroom instruction into the broader culture of the school and involving the entire school community (Sakti et al., 2024).

Guidance and counseling services occupy a strategic position within this policy architecture. As a core component of the educational system, guidance and counseling supports students' development across personal, social, academic, and career domains and helps them build the self-understanding required to make informed and responsible decisions (Xiong et al., 2023). Empirical evidence further links well-delivered guidance and counseling services to stronger character outcomes, more effective regulation of digital behavior, and improved socio-emotional competence among students navigating technology-saturated environments (Flori & Raulea, 2025; Zhao & Watterston, 2021). Comparable findings from Indonesian elementary schools show that character education gains the greatest traction when embedded across exemplary practice, habituation,

school-climate conditioning, and cross-curricular integration rather than delivered as an isolated program (Aningsih et al., 2022).

The effectiveness of character development through guidance and counseling nevertheless depends on how systematically these services are managed. Reba and Mataputun (2021) argue that guidance and counseling programs require deliberate execution of the management functions of planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation if they are to support student development in a sustained way. From the standpoint of character education theory, Lickona's (1992) framework, comprising moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, remains widely cited in Indonesian scholarship, although the framework predates the digital disruption context to which it is often applied and has since been extended by relational accounts of character development that treat classroom relationships and socio-emotional learning as active drivers of character growth rather than as fixed, internalized traits (Thomas et al., 2022). Evaluation research on a character education strengthening program published in SUJANA similarly demonstrates that context, input, process, and product components must each be assessed before a program's effectiveness in shaping student character can be assumed rather than simply implied by its implementation (Suparmanto et al., 2023).

SMA Negeri 1 Serui, located in Yapen Islands Regency, Papua Province, confronts these same pressures. The school serves approximately 1,061 students, and its character development initiatives depend on collaborative and systematic management strategies. Current programs include weekly religious activities held according to students' respective faiths, discipline programs governing attendance and flag ceremonies, supervision of mobile phone use during instructional hours, and extracurricular activities such as martial arts, marching band, volleyball, the student flag-raising unit (Paskibraka), and the arts.

Existing scholarship on character education in Indonesia remains concentrated in Java and other more accessible regions, leaving management strategies for guidance and counseling services in Papua comparatively underexamined (Susilo et al., 2022). This gap carries particular weight because Papua's education system operates under conditions that differ markedly from those documented elsewhere in Indonesia, including pronounced cultural and linguistic diversity across Indigenous communities, geographic remoteness that constrains access to teaching resources and professional training, and localized socio-economic conditions shaped by the region's distinct policy context (Fiharsono et al., 2024). Research conducted within Papua itself indicates that service delivery and educator performance in the region are shaped by these distinctive conditions in ways that findings drawn from other parts of Indonesia cannot fully capture (Mahdi et al., 2023).

Despite this context, no study to date has examined how guidance and counseling services are managed to strengthen student character specifically within Papua's digitally disrupted, culturally plural school environment. This study

addresses that gap by analyzing the planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation of guidance and counseling services for character strengthening at SMA Negeri 1 Serui. Its novelty lies in situating a management-function analysis of guidance and counseling within a religiously and culturally plural Papuan school setting shaped by digital disruption, an intersection that existing literature on character education, whether centered on Java or drawn from international settings, has not directly addressed. In doing so, the study offers both a contextually grounded account of Papua and a basis for reconsidering how established character education frameworks operate under conditions of cultural plurality and limited institutional infrastructure.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design to examine in depth the management strategies of guidance and counseling services in strengthening student character in the era of digital disruption at SMA Negeri 1 Serui. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables a comprehensive understanding of social phenomena, experiences, and meanings constructed by participants within the context of guidance and counseling service implementation in schools. Furthermore, qualitative research facilitates the exploration of behavioral dynamics, social interactions, and character development processes in their natural settings (Creswell & Poth, 2024; Yin, 2018).

A case study design was adopted because the research focused on an in-depth investigation of a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, specifically the management strategies of guidance and counseling services for character strengthening in the digital era. This approach allowed the researcher to obtain detailed and contextualized information regarding the planning, implementation, and evaluation of guidance and counseling services within the school environment (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The study was conducted at SMA Negeri 1 Serui, located in Yapen Islands Regency, Papua Province, Indonesia. The school was selected because it serves a relatively large student population and has implemented various character development programs integrated with guidance and counseling services. In addition, the school faces challenges associated with rapid technological advancement and digitalization, which influence students' behavior and character development and therefore require adaptive and systematic intervention strategies.

Research participants consisted of the principal, the vice principal for student affairs, guidance and counseling teachers, Islamic education teachers, Christian education teachers, and several students. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, whereby individuals were chosen based on specific criteria relevant to the objectives of the study. The selected participants possessed direct knowledge, experience, and involvement in the implementation of guidance and counseling

services and character development programs within the school (Denny & Weckesser, 2022).

Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured in-depth format to obtain detailed information regarding the management strategies of guidance and counseling services in strengthening student character. The semi-structured interview format provided flexibility for the researcher to explore issues more comprehensively while maintaining alignment with the research objectives (Denny & Weckesser, 2022).

Observations were carried out to examine directly various character development activities conducted within the school environment. These activities included religious programs, disciplinary practices, flag ceremonies, the regulation of mobile phone use during instructional activities, and extracurricular programs related to student character formation. Observation enabled the researcher to gather empirical evidence regarding the implementation of guidance and counseling services as well as students' social interactions within the school setting. To complement and strengthen the data, document analysis was also conducted. Relevant documents included guidance and counseling work programs, schedules of student development activities, school regulations, activity reports, photographs of school activities, and other supporting documents related to the focus of the study.

Data were analyzed using the interactive model developed by Miles et al. (2020), which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data reduction involved selecting, simplifying, and focusing information relevant to the research objectives. The reduced data were subsequently organized and presented in narrative form to facilitate the identification of patterns, relationships, and meanings emerging from the findings. The final stage involved drawing conclusions and verifying interpretations based on the collected data.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, source triangulation and methodological triangulation were employed. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from different participants, including the principal, guidance and counseling teachers, religious education teachers, and students. Methodological triangulation was achieved by comparing data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The use of triangulation enhanced the credibility, validity, and consistency of the research findings, thereby ensuring their scientific rigor and trustworthiness (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Planning Strategy of Guidance and Counseling Services for Strengthening Student Character

The findings indicate that the planning of guidance and counseling services at SMA Negeri 1 Serui is carried out through the development of service programs tailored to students' needs and the school environment, with the process led by the guidance and counseling teachers in collaboration with the principal and the vice principal for student affairs. As the principal explained, “Program layanan bimbingan dan konseling disusun setiap awal tahun berdasarkan kebutuhan siswa dan program sekolah dalam pembinaan karakter” (The guidance and counseling service program is prepared at the beginning of each year based on students' needs and the school's character development program). This account was corroborated by a guidance and counseling teacher, who similarly explained that “Perencanaan layanan dilakukan dengan melihat kebutuhan siswa serta permasalahan yang dihadapi peserta didik di sekolah” (service planning is carried out by examining students' needs and the problems faced by learners at school). The resulting programs encompass religious activities, discipline enforcement, supervision of mobile phone use, and character-building extracurricular activities, and the involvement of multiple stakeholders in this process reflects a collaborative approach to strengthening student character in the era of digital disruption.

These accounts affirm that needs-based planning constitutes an essential component of guidance and counseling service management. Reba and Mataputun (2021) argue that guidance and counseling programs should be systematically designed by considering students' developmental needs and the characteristics of the school environment, a pattern reflected directly in both the principal's and the counseling teacher's description of an annual planning cycle grounded in identified student needs. This finding is also consistent with evidence that structured guidance and counseling provision supports students' self-understanding and informed decision-making across personal, social, academic, and career domains (Xiong et al., 2023). Read together, the planning strategy implemented at SMA Negeri 1 Serui reflects a deliberate attempt to translate general management principles into a locally grounded, needs-responsive program rather than a standardized template detached from the school's specific conditions.

The findings are also consistent with international studies highlighting the importance of counseling program planning in promoting student character development and well-being. Flori and Raulea (2025) explain that school counseling services in the digital age should be designed adaptively to address behavioral changes resulting from technological advancement, and the explicit inclusion of mobile phone supervision within the planning stage at SMA Negeri 1 Serui indicates that this adaptive orientation is present even in a geographically remote Papuan school, rather than being confined to the urban, better-resourced contexts in which much of this literature originates. Well-planned programs of this

kind can help students develop self-regulation, digital ethics, and social responsibility in technology use, reinforcing the view that guidance and counseling planning functions not merely as an administrative requirement but as a preventive strategy against the negative effects of digital technology on character development.

The involvement of school leaders and student affairs personnel in the planning process further highlights the importance of collaborative leadership in the successful implementation of character education programs. Forsberg et al. (2021) argues that effective character education depends on strong collaboration among teachers, school counselors, school leaders, and the broader educational environment, a relationship visible here in the joint role played by the principal, the vice principal for student affairs, and the guidance and counseling teachers in shaping the annual program. Such collaboration enables character development initiatives to be consistently integrated into school culture, regulations, classroom instruction, and extracurricular activities, functioning at SMA Negeri 1 Serui as a critical factor in fostering an environment that supports religious values, discipline, responsibility, and cooperation among students.

The findings further reveal that planning incorporates character development through extracurricular activities and social habituation programs, consistent with Lickona's (1992) view that character education should be implemented continuously through authentic experience and daily practice rather than isolated instruction. This alignment should nonetheless be read with some caution, since Lickona's model predates digital disruption as a distinct challenge to character formation, and more recent relational accounts suggest that the classroom and school relationships surrounding a planning process, rather than the plan itself, are what ultimately drive character change (Thomas et al., 2022). Considered in this light, the planning documented at SMA Negeri 1 Serui appears to extend rather than simply confirm Lickona's framework: it does not treat moral habituation as a fixed sequence of knowing, feeling, and acting, but builds habituation activities around the relational structure of collaboration among the principal, counseling teachers, and student affairs personnel described above. This pattern is broadly consistent that character education programs require attention to design and process, not only intended outcomes, before their effectiveness can be assumed (Suparmanto et al., 2023). The planning strategy of guidance and counseling services at SMA Negeri 1 Serui can therefore be understood as a systematic, relationally grounded effort to foster character development amid digital disruption, situated within a Papuan school context that existing character education literature has rarely examined directly (Fiharsono et al., 2024).

Organizational Strategy of Guidance and Counseling Services for Strengthening Student Character

The findings indicate that the organization of guidance and counseling services at SMA Negeri 1 Serui is carried out through a clear division of

responsibilities among the three guidance and counseling teachers, each assigned to a specific group of students by grade level. This division is intended to facilitate service coordination, strengthen the effectiveness of student support, and ensure that each student receives services appropriate to their developmental needs, reflecting a deliberate management system designed to support character development amid the pressures of digital disruption.

This arrangement is consistent with evidence that comprehensive school counseling programs depend on well-defined organizational structures, coordinated task distribution, and support from across the school community to achieve their intended developmental outcomes (Wilkerson et al., 2013). Effective organization of this kind enables guidance and counseling teachers to perform their professional roles more efficiently in supporting students' personal, social, academic, and career development. In the context of SMA Negeri 1 Serui, assigning responsibilities by grade level also allows counseling teachers to develop a deeper understanding of the specific characteristics and challenges of the students in their charge, supporting more continuous character development efforts than an undifferentiated caseload would allow.

Beyond this internal task allocation, the findings also reveal collaboration between guidance and counseling teachers, the vice principal for student affairs, and religious education teachers in implementing character development programs, indicating that these services are not delivered in isolation but constitute a shared responsibility distributed across the school community. This pattern is consistent with international evidence that collaboration among school counselors, teachers, and school leaders contributes significantly to the success of character education programs and student well-being (Hilts et al., 2023; Kearney et al., 2021). The organizational structure observed is also consistent with the whole-school approach to character education, in which character formation is distributed across the entire school culture rather than confined to specific teachers; Forsberg et al. (2021) argues that a positive, collaborative school climate of this kind strengthens students' moral development, discipline, and social behavior.

From the standpoint of facilities and infrastructure, the findings indicate that guidance and counseling services are supported by a dedicated counseling room and other supporting resources, consistent with evidence that a supportive physical environment encourages students to communicate more openly about personal and social issues (Ziomek-Daigle, 2016). This finding nonetheless warrants a more cautious reading than the original data allowed, since the adequacy of facilities was described in general terms by school informants rather than assessed against a defined standard; whether current facilities meet the demands of a Papuan school serving a large, diverse student body under conditions of geographic remoteness remains an open question rather than one the present data can resolve (Fiharsono et al., 2024).

The organization of services also demonstrates the school's adaptive response to the digital era. Flori and Raulea (2025) emphasize that strengthening school counseling services in the digital age requires organizational structures that are flexible, collaborative, and responsive to students' socio-emotional needs, and the grade-based division of responsibility combined with cross-stakeholder collaboration documented here reflects an attempt to build this responsiveness into a comparatively small, three-teacher counseling team. Whether this structure is sufficient to sustain such responsiveness as student numbers and digital pressures grow is a question the present arrangement does not resolve, illustrating a practical constraint distinct from those typically reported in better-resourced school systems, and one that further underscores the value of examining guidance and counseling management specifically within under-resourced regional contexts such as Papua.

Implementation Strategy of Guidance and Counseling Services in Student Character Development

The findings indicate that the implementation of guidance and counseling services for strengthening student character at SMA Negeri 1 Serui is carried out through a range of developmental activities integrated into the school's daily programs. One primary form is the organization of religious activities every Friday according to students' respective faiths: Muslim students attend Friday prayers at the mosque, while Christian students participate in worship services in the school hall under the supervision of religious education teachers. These activities are an important component of cultivating students' religious, moral, and spiritual values, consistent with the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2018 concerning the Strengthening of Character Education.

This implementation demonstrates that guidance and counseling services are directed not only toward addressing students' problems but toward the continuous cultivation of moral and spiritual values, consistent with Lickona's (1991) view that character education should be realized through the habitual practice of moral values in daily life. As in the Planning subsection, this alignment should be read alongside more recent evidence that it is the quality of the relationships surrounding such habitual practice, rather than the practice alone, that predicts change in students' character over time (Thomas et al., 2022); the weekly, teacher-supervised structure of these activities suggests the relational conditions. Thomas et al. (2022) identify as necessary are present, though the present data cannot establish whether they are sufficient. International studies have nonetheless shown that integrating spiritual and moral values within school environments can enhance students' empathy, self-regulation, and prosocial behavior, lending indirect support to this approach (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004).

In addition to religious activities, student character development is reinforced through school discipline programs: students are required to arrive before 7:00 a.m.

and to participate in weekly flag ceremonies every Monday, measures intended to instill responsibility, discipline, nationalism, and respect for school regulations. This finding is supported by Fitriyani et al. (2023), who argue that character education plays a vital role in developing individuals with strong moral values, ethical awareness, and social responsibility, and that such education strengthens social resilience in the face of societal and technological change.

The implementation of school discipline as part of guidance and counseling services is further supported by studies emphasizing the role of school culture in shaping student behavior. Forsberg et al. (2021) explains that a positive school climate and consistent rule enforcement contribute to discipline, responsibility, and self-regulation. Within this study, flag ceremonies and time-discipline policies function as forms of social habituation, extending Thornberg's argument to a setting where such habituation must also compete with the disruptive pull of unsupervised device use outside school hours.

The findings also indicate that guidance and counseling services are implemented through a collaborative approach involving religious education teachers, student affairs personnel, and extracurricular programs, an arrangement essential for holistic character development. Saud et al. (2025) found that multicultural guidance and counseling services require the support of all school stakeholders to ensure effectiveness within culturally and socially diverse educational settings, a finding directly relevant given Papua's considerable cultural diversity and varied student backgrounds. Lelyemin et al. (2023), studying character education grounded in the values of Pope John XXIII, similarly found that character development is fostered through the promotion of humanity, solidarity, tolerance, social responsibility, and peace. Read together, these findings indicate that guidance and counseling services function not only to develop individual morality but to cultivate tolerance and social concern within the broader school community, an emphasis that appears particularly salient given Papua's documented cultural and linguistic diversity (Fiharsono et al., 2024).

In the context of digital disruption, the school monitors students' use of mobile phones during classroom instruction to minimize its negative effects on behavior and discipline, responding to evidence that uncontrolled digital technology use can adversely affect students' mental health, concentration, and social behavior (Livingstone & Stoilova, 2021). Saragih et al. (2023) argue that the rapid development of digital technology has transformed patterns of social interaction and lifestyle among younger Indonesians, requiring institutions to integrate character development with positive technology use, while Flori and Raulea (2025) emphasize that counseling services should help students address the accompanying socio-emotional challenges. Taken together, implementation at SMA Negeri 1 Serui reflects the school's effort to cultivate students who are religious, disciplined, responsible, tolerant, and adaptive to technological change, even under the resource conditions typical of a remote Papuan school.

Evaluation Strategy of Guidance and Counseling Services for Strengthening Student Character

The findings indicate that the evaluation of guidance and counseling services at SMA Negeri 1 Serui is conducted periodically by the principal, the vice principal for student affairs, and guidance and counseling teachers to assess the effectiveness of character development programs delivered through religious activities, discipline policies, digital technology supervision, and extracurricular activities. Through this process, the school identifies both achievements and challenges, using the results as a basis for refining future programs.

These findings affirm that evaluation is an essential component of guidance and counseling service management. Reba and Mataputun (2021) explain that program evaluation is a critical stage because it enables schools to assess the extent to which service objectives have been achieved while facilitating continuous improvement, functioning not only as a measure of effectiveness but as a means of reflecting on the suitability of service strategies.

The findings further reveal that evaluation is conducted collaboratively through the involvement of school leaders and guidance and counseling teachers, reflecting the school's commitment to program quality. Evidence suggests that evaluation involving collaboration among counselors, teachers, and administrators can improve service effectiveness and promote students' socio-emotional development (Hilts et al., 2023; Kearney et al., 2021), and collaborative evaluation of this kind also enables schools to obtain more comprehensive insight into student needs and implementation challenges.

Within the context of character education, evaluation plays a strategic role in ensuring that the values a school promotes are genuinely reflected in students' behavior. Forsberg et al. (2021) argues that evaluating school culture and student behavior is essential for assessing the effectiveness of efforts to develop morality, discipline, and responsibility. The evaluation practices described in this study, however, rely primarily on the judgments of school leaders and guidance and counseling teachers rather than on independent measures of student behavior, a distinction worth noting: internal, staff-led evaluation is well suited to identifying implementation gaps but less well suited to establishing whether character outcomes have genuinely changed, a limitation this study shares with much of the broader school-based character education literature.

The findings also indicate that evaluation functions as an adaptive response to digital disruption. Flori and Raulea (2025) emphasize that evaluating school counseling services in the digital era is essential to ensure programs remain responsive to the social, emotional, and behavioral changes students experience as a result of technological advancement, and evaluation at SMA Negeri 1 Serui should accordingly be viewed as a strategic mechanism for adaptation rather than a purely administrative process. Evaluation also contributes to the professional development of guidance and counseling teachers. Wilkerson et al. (2013) show

that regular program evaluation can help school counselors improve the quality of interventions and student support practices, and periodic evaluation at SMA Negeri 1 Serui appears to serve a comparable function.

Taken together, the evaluation strategy at SMA Negeri 1 Serui reflects the school's systematic efforts to maintain and enhance the quality of its character development programs. Periodic, collaborative evaluation functions as a key factor supporting service effectiveness in the era of digital disruption, even as the reliance on staff-led rather than independently measured evaluation, and the comparatively limited institutional resources characteristic of Papuan schools (Fiharsono et al., 2024; Mahdi et al., 2023), point to concrete directions for strengthening evaluation practice in this and similar settings.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the management strategy of guidance and counseling services for strengthening student character in the era of digital disruption at SMA Negeri 1 Serui is implemented systematically through the four core management functions of planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation. Planning is developed around students' needs and the school context through the joint involvement of guidance and counseling teachers, the principal, and the vice principal for student affairs. Organization is carried out through a clear division of responsibilities among guidance and counseling teachers by grade level, supported by collaboration with student affairs and religious education staff. Implementation is realized through religious programs, disciplinary practices, supervision of digital technology use, and extracurricular activities integrated into daily school life, while evaluation is conducted periodically and collaboratively to assess and refine these efforts. Together, these findings demonstrate that a well-structured, collaboratively managed guidance and counseling system functions as a central strategy for strengthening student character amid the pressures of the digital era.

Beyond confirming the relevance of the four management functions individually, the synthesis of these findings suggests that character development becomes most effective when guidance and counseling services are woven into school culture, disciplinary practice, religious life, and extracurricular activity rather than delivered as a standalone program. Character values such as religiosity, discipline, responsibility, and cooperation are internalized through everyday practice rather than through conceptual instruction alone, and this internalization depends on the relational collaboration among school leaders, counseling teachers, and religious educators documented across all four management functions. In the specific setting of Papua, this collaborative, relationally grounded model also appears to compensate, at least in part, for the resource constraints and geographic

isolation that distinguish Papuan schools from those in more extensively studied regions of Indonesia.

This study contributes to guidance and counseling management theory by demonstrating how the planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation functions operate as an interdependent system rather than as discrete administrative stages, and to character education theory by showing that established habituation-based frameworks extend, rather than lose relevance, when reframed around the relational structures that sustain them under digital disruption. It further contributes to the broader literature on character education by offering an empirical account grounded in a religiously and culturally plural, non-Western, and institutionally under-resourced school setting, a context in which guidance and counseling management has rarely been examined directly. Future research employing mixed-methods designs across multiple Papuan schools, and incorporating the perspectives of parents and the wider community, would help establish how far these findings extend beyond the single-site context examined here.

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations. First, it was conducted in a single school, which limits the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts, particularly those outside Papua. Second, the study concentrated on perspectives from within the school and did not explore the views of parents or the broader community regarding character development in the digital era. Third, the study did not quantitatively measure change in students' character following the implementation of guidance and counseling programs, so the relationship between the management practices described here and actual shifts in student behavior remains inferential rather than demonstrated. Fourth, one of the researchers has prior institutional familiarity with guidance and counseling practice in this regional context, which may have shaped the interpretive lens applied to the findings despite efforts to represent participants' accounts faithfully.

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