

## The Role of Buddhist Teachers in Improving Students' Emotional Regulation

Novianti

Buddhist Religious Education Study Program, Department of Dharmacarya, Sekolah  
Tinggi Agama Buddha Negeri Raden Wijaya, Indonesia<sup>1</sup>

Email: [camellianovianti@gmail.com](mailto:camellianovianti@gmail.com)<sup>1</sup>

Correspondent Author: Novianti, [camellianovianti@gmail.com](mailto:camellianovianti@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

Adolescents often have difficulty in overcoming and controlling the emotions they face, resulting in aggressive behaviour such as breaking rules, coming late, and behaviour that violates religious values and norms. The study aims to describe the role of Buddhist religious teachers in improving students' emotional regulation abilities. The study employed a qualitative descriptive method, collecting data using purposive sampling techniques with informants, namely Buddhist religious teachers who teach in Wonogiri Regency to high school students. The results of the study showed that teachers have played a role in improving students' emotional regulation by directing students who behave aggressively to calm down, practicing meditation practices, namely regulating breathing in and out, motivating to behave well, being a good listener when students tell their problems, being patient, showing attention, and not getting tired of giving advice and motivation. The roles carried out include teachers as teachers, mentors, administrators, role models, motivators, and educators. Buddhist religious teachers have developed the competencies of a teacher as pedagogical, social, leadership, and professional competencies.

**Keywords:** role, teacher, Buddhism, regulation, emotion

### Abstrak

Remaja sering mengalami kesulitan dalam mengatasi dan mengendalikan emosi yang dihadapi, sehingga muncul perilaku agresif seperti melanggar aturan, sering datang terlambat, perilaku yang melanggar nilai dan norma agama. Penelitian bertujuan mendeskripsikan peran guru agama Buddha dalam meningkatkan kemampuan regulasi emosi siswa. Penelitian menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif, pengumpulan data menggunakan teknik purposive sampling, dengan informan guru agama Buddha yang mengajar di wilayah kabupaten Wonogiri pada siswa sekolah menengah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan guru telah menjalankan peran dalam meningkatkan regulasi emosi siswa dengan mengarahkan siswa yang bersikap agresif untuk tenang, melatih praktik meditasi yaitu mengatur napas masuk dan keluar, memberikan motivasi untuk berperilaku baik, menjadi pendengar yang baik saat siswa menceritakan masalahnya, bersikap sabar, menunjukkan perhatian, dan tidak bosan untuk memberikan nasihat serta motivasi. Peran yang dilakukan diantaranya guru sebagai pengajar, pembimbing, administrator, teladan, motivator, dan pendidik. Guru agama Buddha telah mengembangkan kompetensi seorang guru yaitu kompetensi pedagogik, sosial, kepemimpinan, profesional, dan sosial.

**Kata kunci:** peran, guru, agama Buddha, regulasi, emosi

### Article info

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The emotional development of everyone is unique. Emotional development in adolescents is characterised by a more sensitive personal tendency (easily crying, anxious, or frustrated), reacting easily or tending to be aggressive to disturbances that arise from outside themselves, and some have a tendency to disobey their parents and choose to spend time with their friends (Sary, 2017). Adolescence is an important time in the quest for identity. Adolescents sometimes experience confusion about themselves and struggle with adapting to their environment.

Adolescents are junior high school and high school students who are in the process of development towards maturity (Yusuf, 2012). Students in the adolescent phase tend to have difficulty controlling and overcoming the emotions they face, so they give rise to aggressive attitudes such as violating school rules, often arriving late, so that these behaviors can affect the learning process at school (Halik et al., 2022). Adolescents who have emotional maturity are seen behavioral characteristics, namely being emotionally independent, able to accept their own circumstances and the circumstances of others, having the ability to express emotions according to conditions, being able to control negative emotions and avoiding problems (Folastri & Prasetyaningtyas, 2017). According to Aderson as quoted (Asih & Pratiwi, 2010) emotional maturity has characteristics, namely a) having affection, b) being emotionally controlled, c) being open to emotions so that they are willing to accept advice and even criticism from others. Thus, adolescents who possess these characteristics are mature in their emotional regulation, meaning they can effectively manage their emotions.

Emotion regulation has an essential meaning in the development stage of students, as it is related to the possibility of negative impacts if the student is not able to regulate their emotions appropriately (Astuti et al., 2019). . Adolescence is an active time in society; students spend almost all their time interacting with friends, which forms the basis of various social behaviours. The social behaviour of the student can be influenced by how the student regulates his emotions. If students cannot regulate their emotions appropriately, negative social behaviour can appear. Adolescents need the ability within themselves to manage negative emotions that arise, so that they can navigate adolescence well, namely, the ability to regulate emotions. (Tejena & Sukmayanti, 2018).

Poor emotional regulation in adolescents is prone to cause depression and anger, making adolescents tend to fall into adolescent delinquency and difficulties in academics (Santrock, 2007). The fact is that some teenagers who fall into juvenile delinquency are indeed unable to control their emotions. According to Thompson (1994) the literature, aspects in emotion regulation include a person's ability to monitor emotions, evaluate emotions, and modify emotions.

Religious education, in addition to being taught in home, is also an essential subject in schools, one of the primary goals of which is to shape the character of students. Based on the results of research, Islamic education can be a strong foundation to form students to have maximum emotional intelligence, be able to manage emotions wisely, empathize with others, and be able to face life's challenges with a good attitude (Kasiati, 2023). The results of the study (HM, 2016) show that positive emotions in children can be created by teaching cultural values according to their place of residence, developing and honing children's emotions that seem to stand out, introducing emotions from an early age both verbally and non-verbally, practicing discipline consistently, teaching emotional expressions that can be shown to others and can be accepted by the surrounding environment, show good attitudes or behaviors that deserve to be imitated directly, as



well as fostering children's empathy for others. Buddhist education is an effort to help students grow and develop character, spiritual attitudes, self-potential, and physical, moral, social, mental, and wisdom development. Cognitive development, as a form of consciousness cultivated through effort, attention, and meditation, is proper, supported by rituals, and living in accordance with the teachings of truth. Cognitive development can produce awareness, mental health, concentration, emotional intelligence, love to learn, and the willingness to improve one's inner qualities (Jimo & Taram, 2021). Teachers play a role in training students to recognize emotions and train children to be skilled in managing emotions, and to be able to express emotions experienced appropriately (Denham et al., 2002).

Based on the results of observations, student behaviour tends to be aggressive, such as skipping school, student fights, being easily emotional, behaving impolitely, and falling into wrong associations, such as drug use, drinking, and even free sex. One of the cases of student brawls that occurred in 2023 was a brawl in Rengaspendawa Village, Larangan District, Brebes Regency which caused one student to die due to being hit by a sharp weapon (Setiadi & Khairina, 2023). Another case of drug abuse in Ciwareng, Babakancikao District, Purwakarta Regency, is a 15-year-old teenager who is in junior high school arrested by the Purwakarta Police because he was known to be a drug dealer (Firmansyah, 2023). This event shows that students do not yet have good emotion regulation skills.

This phenomenon should be a concern for teachers, especially those in religious education. Students spend a lot of time at school, such as socialising and developing knowledge, so teachers have a role in helping students grow and supporting those who experience problems (Halik et al., 2022). In addition to teaching science, teachers also need to teach students to behave well in accordance with Buddhist teachings. The learning process in Buddhist and Ethical Education as an effort to shape students into Pancasila students can be carried out with three elements, namely history, rituals, and ethics (Jimo & Taram, 2021). The importance of emotional regulation in a person so that it can direct student behaviour to avoid evil deeds. Previous research Putranto et al (2022) indicates that adolescents' self-control can be enhanced when they have an appreciation for religious values or religiosity and a strong faith. Therefore, the research conducted aims to describe the role of Buddhist teachers in teaching Buddhist Education and ethics, to improve students' emotional regulation.

## METHOD

The research employs a qualitative descriptive method, focusing on Buddhist teachers in Wonogiri Regency as the object of study. The researcher selected informants using the purposive sampling technique; informants were selected based on criteria and objectives in accordance with the research. In this study, the informant is a Buddhist teacher serving in the Wonogiri Regency area, who teaches students in adolescence, specifically at the junior and upper secondary levels. The data was collected using interviews and documentation. Interviews are conducted with Buddhist teachers in carrying out learning that leads to efforts to improve students' emotional regulation.

In terms of analysing the data, the researchers chose the analysis techniques of Miles and Huberman, Spradley and Yin. The researcher decided to use a combined data analysis technique from the three analysis techniques because, from the view of the three experts, the researcher can find out how to analyse data thoroughly and in-depth in qualitative research. The combination of the three data analysis techniques is divided into



five steps (Afrizal, 2014), namely, first, providing field records from the results of conducting interviews, observation results, and other data sources in full; second, making data interpretation from the field records and then compiling their classification and interpretation; third, presenting data in the form of research findings based on the results of field records that can be given in the form of matrix; fourth, building assumptions; Fifth, test the validity of assumptions or classifications that have been constructed based on data collected from the results of in-depth interviews repeatedly until the data can answer the research formula.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

As the authority in schools, teachers also carry out responsibilities such as fostering and guiding students, both individually and in groups inside and outside the school (Djamarah, 2000). The definition of a teacher according to (Dewi, 2019) is a professional educator who has the task of educating, teachers are in charge of teaching a science, providing guidance, being able to train, carry out assessments, and carry out the evaluation process for students. A teacher is professional in his field. As an experienced educator, he not only teaches science but also guides students, effectively trains them, conducts objective assessment activities, and implements an evaluation process for student learning.

According to Regulation of the Minister of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia Number 16 of 2010, it is explained that Religious Education Teachers are professional educators with the primary task of educating students, teaching, guiding, directing, training, setting an example, assessing, and evaluating students. Buddhist teachers are professional educators who teach Buddhism to students. In addition, Buddhist teachers are also tasked with providing direction and guidance to students, setting an example for them, training them effectively, and offering objective and careful assessments to evaluate the learning of religious education in schools. Teachers as professional educators have the main task of educating, directing, training, and conducting assessments and evaluations (Lamatenggo & Uno, 2016). According to Dewi (2019) teachers, they have roles including as teachers, as educators, as guides, as motivators, as role models, as administrators, as evaluators, and as inspirations.

The learning process in the classroom is an crucial factor in the overall learning experience. Teachers need to create a classroom environment that supports the development of students' emotional regulation. Teachers play a role in providing a conducive learning environment to support children's development and growth optimally (Jumrawarsi & Suhaili, 2021). The role of teachers as teachers is to convey new or unknown knowledge to their students and teachers must have clear learning objectives, make rational decisions so that students understand the skills that must be achieved in learning (Mulyasa, 2021). The results of interviews related to the learning methods applied by Buddhist teachers to teach students how to overcome negative emotions show that Buddhist teachers have created safe and comfortable learning for students. Buddhist teachers have employed various learning methods, including the use of practical methods during devotional puja, dhamma classes, meditation practice, and reading paritta translations. Learning methods, such as Project-Based Learning, Problem Solving, and group discussions, are also carried out with empathy and love during the learning process. The real form of empathy is an effort to help others to be free from suffering or misery (Novianti, 2022).



The inculcation of empathy values in group discussions and Buddhist learning activities is expected to make students feel the feelings of other students, for example students who are experiencing problems and cannot control their emotions, with the value of empathy instilled by other students is expected to be able to understand so that they do not create an atmosphere that clouds the state of the emotional students. In line with the statement that as a teacher, teachers must carry out their duties in planning and carrying out the learning process in schools (Surahman & Mukminan, 2017). The role of Buddhist teachers as teachers has been carried out very well. Buddhist teachers have developed a learning plan that incorporates various learning methods tailored to the material being taught. Through the practice of meditation in schools, Buddhist teachers have taught students to learn to control their emotions. Buddhist teachers, who already hold the role of teachers, possess the pedagogical competence of religious teachers, namely, mastery of theories and learning principles. This is in line with the results of previous research (Hariyanto, 2022), which stated that Buddhist teachers need to integrate the principles of Buddhism with the values of local wisdom so that students can understand the application of Buddhism in their environment.

The results of the interview related to the teacher's steps in helping students recognise and understand emotions show that the Buddhist teacher in the learning process has approached the students and directed the students to identify their character, nature, attitude, behaviour, realise their strengths and weaknesses and give direction and motivation to do good. This is in accordance with the statement (Dewi, 2019) that as a supervisor, the role of teachers is to be able to direct students to stay on the appropriate path to achieve educational goals. Buddhist teachers have helped students in recognising and understanding their emotions. The step is taken by advising students who are constructive in nature. If the student cannot control their feelings, the teacher slowly understands the problem at hand and then helps and directs the student to find a way to solve the issue. If students have behaved positively, teachers are always willing to provide support. Buddhist teachers, in carrying out their role as supervisors, also possess the pedagogic competence of religious teachers, namely the ability to understand the characteristics of students from moral, social, cultural, emotional, physical, and intellectual aspects.

As administrators, teachers are the ones who know the development of students and record the development of students during the teaching and learning process (Dewi, 2019). In line with the regulation that Buddhist teachers must be able to develop pedagogic competencies, including by developing the potential of students to be able to actualize their potential in the field of religious education, then as administrators, Buddhist teachers have carried out their role well. As a result of the interview about the teacher's knowledge of student development, the Buddhist teacher explained that in the process of activities in the school, in teaching and learning, the teacher always observes student activities both in individual and group assignments. The teacher provides a space for students to discuss, see student cooperation, or interactions that occur during discussions. Through these discussions, teachers can find out the development of students' speaking skills in front of the class.

Teachers must possess personality competencies, including presenting themselves as steady, stable, mature, wise, and authoritative individuals. The results of interviews related to how teachers help students cope with emotions show that Buddhist teachers ask questions about the problems faced by students, help calm them, act as good listeners when students share stories, and sometimes put themselves in a role not as teachers but





as friends. This step is taken so that students can more comfortably convey the problems they face. The attitude shown by Buddhist teachers is in line with the statement of the role of teachers as role models, that teachers are good role models for their students (Dewi, 2019). Teachers as role models will be a figure who students always idolise, so the behavior shown in daily life must display a good, polite, wise and authoritative personality. According to Fimala et al (2021), teachers can approach through inspirational stories based on their own experiences or other figures to foster students' motivation so that they can improve themselves and develop their potential.

Adolescents tend to have difficulty controlling and overcoming the emotions they face, resulting in aggressive attitudes (Halik et al., 2022). The results of interviews with Buddhist teachers related to the challenges in overcoming students' emotions that arise during learning, that for students who behave more aggressively than others, it can be seen in the conditions that seem anxious in the classroom. Buddhist teachers overcome it by inviting children to calm down for a while, managing their breath in and out. If they are somewhat calm, the child is asked to tell stories. The activities carried out by teachers are a form of practising Buddhist teachings in schools, namely practising meditation with breathing objects. The object of breathing meditation is a meditation object commonly used in conjunction with normal breathing, where Buddhists observe the characteristics of the breath as it enters and exits. People who are used to meditation easily control themselves, including controlling their emotions (Sugianto, 2019).

The attitude of Buddhist teachers in helping students overcome aggressive behaviour in the classroom by guiding them to practice meditation as a means an emotional control is a form of leadership competence that a teacher must possess. In line with the results of previous studies (Tejena & Sukmayanti, 2018) that regular meditation can improve adolescent emotional regulation, the experimental group showed significant changes in emotion regulation after a month of meditation training, while the control group, which did not receive meditation training, did not show a substantial change in emotion regulation ability. One of the criteria for leadership competence that Buddhist teachers must develop is the ability to plan for the cultivation of religious teaching experiences and noble moral behaviour as part of the spiritual learning process in the school environment. Buddhist teachers also face challenges in the form of students who tend to be quiet and indifferent during learning.

The best approach is to be patient, show attention, and refrain from getting tired of giving advice and motivation, so that students become enthusiastic. In line with the opinion Dewi (2019) that on the role of teachers as motivators, teachers are individuals who provide encouragement and motivation to their students in the learning process. According to Ramadhani & Muhroji (2022) a vital role, the teacher plays as a motivator. Furthermore Ratnaningsih & Nastiti (2018) , they added that if teachers are good motivators, then students will develop a greater desire to learn more diligently. Buddhist teachers have demonstrated attitudes that serve as motivators for students who struggle to regulate their emotions by offering guidance, motivation, mindfulness, and meditation practices to help them control their emotions.

A teenager who has positive emotional regulation can think positively about an event experienced. In contrast, low emotional regulation can make a person tend to think negatively about an event (Silaen & Dewi, 2015). Teachers have a role as educators have the responsibility to understand values, moral norms, and social norms so that they need to direct student behavior in accordance with norms both at school and in community life (Mulyasa, 2021). As a result of the interview regarding the role of Buddhist education in



improving students' socio-emotional abilities, Buddhist teachers stated that they have played an active role in enhancing students' emotions because they realize that it is indeed part of an educator's job. Teachers realise that if students can understand and apply all the positive values that exist in the subject matter of Buddhist education, then their socio-emotional abilities can increase, which means that the students' emotional regulation increases.

In line with the results of previous research Jumrawarsi & Suhaili (2021) , one of the conducive learning environments is the creation of a socio-emotional climate in the classroom, where interpersonal relationships between students and teachers, as well as among students, are conducted in a humane manner. The learning atmosphere will be more passionate, happy, and calm in learning. One of the competencies that Buddhist teachers must develop is professional competence. Based on the results of interviews with Buddhist teachers, the Buddhist education curriculum can be used to improve students' socio-emotional skills, because in the learning material discusses positive examples that can be implemented in personal and social life. This means that Buddhist teachers have developed professional competence in terms of mastery of competency standards and basic competencies in Buddhist education subjects.

Furthermore, Buddhist teachers have developed social competence, namely in educating non-discriminatory based on gender, as evidenced by the results of interviews which state that the Buddhist teachings on brahma vihara (metta, karuna, mudita and upekkha) can support students both male and female in improving their socio-emotional life, for example karuna Students can learn to understand the feelings of people who are in distress, and then students can help them. Thus, Buddhist teachers have carried out the role of educators, namely, people who educate students so that the behaviour they do looks good in accordance with values and norms in society. (Dewi, 2019).

## CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that Buddhist teachers have fulfilled several roles in the learning process of Buddhist Education in schools. The roles that teachers have carried out include those of teachers, supervisors, administrators, role models, motivators, and educators. The role of teachers that have been implemented has helped in improving students' emotional regulation, including by directing students who are aggressive to calm down, practicing meditation practices, namely regulating the entry and exit of breathing, providing motivation to behave well, being a good listener when students tell their problems, being patient, showing attention, and not getting tired of giving advice and encouragement. Meanwhile, the competencies that Buddhist teachers have developed and demonstrated in supporting the role of teachers include pedagogic competence, social competence, leadership competence, and professional competence. Furthermore, Buddhist teachers need to improve their role as evaluators and innovators so that learning outcomes can be maximised.

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