

Revitalising The Character of Indigenous Counselors in Indonesia Through Integrating the Teachings of Serat Wedhatama: A Hermeneutic Approach

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Abstrack

This study aims to identify and analyse the ideal character of indigenous counsellors in Indonesia based on moral and spiritual teachings in Serat Wedhatama. Gadamer's hermeneutic approach is used to explore the deep meaning of the Serat Wedhatama text and contextualize it within the framework of modern guidance and counseling. The primary source of Serat Wedhatama was analysed using a qualitative approach, focusing on the reduction process, data presentation, and conclusions. The Miles and Huberman approach was used in the data reduction and presentation process, which allows the identification of the ideal counsellor character based on Serat Wedhatama. The results of the research, based on the analysis of the Serat Wedhatama text, indicate that Characters such as humility, patience, perseverance, compassion, self-awareness, caution, surrender to God, and remembering the afterlife are identified as important attributes of indigenous counsellors. These findings provide a significant contribution to counselling practice in Indonesia, especially in developing a multicultural counselling model that is more relevant to the local cultural context and spiritual values. By combining traditional principles with a modern approach, this study helps build a more holistic and morally grounded counselling model. This research enriches the literature on multicultural guidance and counselling, while offering an alternative indigenous approach that is more appropriate to Indonesian society.

Keywords: indigenous counsellor, *serat wedhatama*, guidance and counselling, gadamer's hermeneutics, spiritual values

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi dan menganalisis karakter ideal konselor adat di Indonesia berdasarkan ajaran moral dan spiritual dalam Serat Wedhatama. Pendekatan hermeneutik Gadamer digunakan untuk mengeksplorasi makna mendalam teks Serat Wedhatama dan mengontekstualisasikannya dalam kerangka bimbingan dan konseling modern. Sumber utama Serat Wedhatama dianalisis menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, dengan fokus pada proses reduksi, penyajian data, dan kesimpulan. Pendekatan Miles dan Huberman digunakan dalam proses reduksi dan penyajian data, yang memungkinkan identifikasi karakter konselor ideal berdasarkan Serat Wedhatama. Hasil penelitian, berdasarkan analisis teks Serat Wedhatama, menunjukkan bahwa karakter seperti kerendahan hati, kesabaran, ketekunan, welas asih, kesadaran diri, kehati-hatian, penyerahan diri kepada Tuhan, dan mengingat akhirat diidentifikasi sebagai atribut penting konselor adat. Temuan ini memberikan kontribusi yang signifikan terhadap praktik konseling di Indonesia, terutama dalam mengembangkan model konseling multikultural yang lebih relevan dengan konteks budaya dan nilai-nilai spiritual setempat. Dengan menggabungkan prinsip-prinsip tradisional dengan pendekatan modern, penelitian ini membantu membangun model konseling yang lebih holistik dan berlandaskan moral. Penelitian ini memperkaya literatur tentang bimbingan dan konseling multikultural, sekaligus menawarkan pendekatan alternatif yang lebih sesuai dengan masyarakat Indonesia.

Keywords: konselor indigenous, *serat wedhatama*, bimbingan dan konseling, heremeneutik gadamer's, nilai spiritual.

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INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia has undergone significant developments, including the integration of guidance and counselling services into the formal education system. Initially, guidance and counselling services were developed through non-formal education with the main purpose of providing advice to learners (Nur, 2019). However, with the influence of the Western education system, the concept of guidance and counseling in Indonesia has become more systematic, structured, and comprehensive, thereby supporting better education and assisting in individual development (Satriah, 2020). Humanistic approaches, for example, emphasise the importance of understanding individuals holistically with a focus on personal potential and strengths (Joseph, 2021). Meanwhile, the psychodynamic approach underlines the importance of understanding an individual's internal conflicts that may stem from past experiences (Cieri, 2022). On the other hand, the cognitive behavioural approach focuses more on how behaviour can be changed through positive reinforcement and conditioning techniques to alter an individual's negative thinking (Pavlacic & Young, 2020). All of these approaches have proven effective in the context of guidance and counselling services in Indonesia.

However, the success of guidance and counselling services doesn't depend only on the approach or theory used but is also strongly influenced by the character and competence of the counsellors themselves. Counsellors who have empathy, good listening skills, and a humble and patient attitude tend to be more successful in building good relationships with learners. A strong relationship between the counsellor and the counselee is one of the main keys to success in the counselling process (Clements-Hickman & Reese, 2023). Therefore, in addition to mastering counselling theories and methods, the development of the counsellor's character is a crucial element in the success of guidance and counselling services in Indonesia. Counsellors who can integrate an upbeat personality with a formal approach will be more effective in helping learners overcome their problems and achieve optimal personal development (Cross & Cross, 2021). The combination of professional competence and strong moral character makes counsellors a reliable figure in supporting the educational development and psychological well-being of learners in Indonesia.

Today, personality theory emphasises the importance of indigenous factors in understanding and addressing individual problems. The indigenous approach aims to better adapt the counselling process to the local cultural context. In Indonesia, the use of indigenous theories is becoming increasingly relevant, given the country's diverse cultures, religions, and values, which differ from those found in Western societies. However, the character of an indigenous counsellor in Indonesia still needs to be redefined, as the ideal character of a counsellor has been referred chiefly to Western theories that may not fully fit the local context or Islamic religion (Nur, 2019). Islam has become an integral part of Indonesian life, shaping behaviour, culture, and value systems that have been deeply rooted in society. The long history of Islam's spread in Indonesia can't be separated from the journey of Islamic kingdoms that developed in the past, such as the Kingdom of Samudera Pasai, Demak, Islamic Mataram, and other kingdom fragments. One of the kingdoms that still exists today is the Kadipaten Mangkunegaran, which is part of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom.

The Duchy of Mangkunegaran played an important role in integrating Islamic teachings with Javanese culture (Purbaningrum & Kusairi, 2022). The leaders of the Mangkunegaran Duchy, especially Mangkunegara IV, possessed the wisdom to incorporate Islamic values into the lives of the Javanese people, who were rich in local



traditions and culture. This can be seen in how Islamic teachings were absorbed and explained through various cultural forms, such as tembang or macapat, which is one of the Javanese ways of conveying spiritual and moral values.

The integration of Islamic teachings into Javanese culture in Mangkunegaran not only adds a layer of spirituality to local traditions but also enriches the way people interpret life and daily behaviour. Thus, Islam in Java isn't only understood as a religious teaching, but also as a moral guide that influences every aspect of life, encompassing the social, cultural, and spiritual realms. The Duchy of Mangkunegaran is an example of how religious teachings can be harmonised with local wisdom, creating a harmony that strengthens the identity of Islamic society in Java. An understanding of the role and character of counselors in Indonesia should reflect long-established local values rooted in the community's culture (Wibowo, 2018). Indigenous counsellors must be diligent in assisting counselees and strive to continuously improve the quality of services provided. By adopting the values from Serat Wedhatama, the character of indigenous counsellors can be more aligned with the local culture. This won't only increase the relevance of the counselling approach but also help create a more holistic counsellor model, encompassing the moral, spiritual, and cultural dimensions that play a crucial role in the well-being of individuals in Indonesia.

In addition to explaining the ideal character, Serat Wedhatama also warns about characters that people should avoid. One of the negative traits mentioned is the tendency to talk excessively without meaning (Desantoro & Waryanti, 2022). Individuals who like to talk at length but without substance are considered unwise, and such behaviour can disrupt harmony in society and reflect a lack of deep understanding of life. Another character trait to avoid is imitating the Prophet's behaviour just for show or vanity (Astuti, 2018). Such an individual is described as one who observes religious teachings, but only to gain social recognition or praise from others, rather than out of spiritual awareness or sincere intentions. This arrogance that arises from inauthentic religious actions is strongly condemned in the teachings of Serat Wedhatama. In contrast to these characters, Penembahan Senopati in Serat Wedhatama is portrayed as an exemplary human being who possesses positive traits in achieving his goals (Nugroho & SH, 2020). He is described as humble, diligent, and patient in his approach to life, and always prioritizes sincerity and submission to God. These characters demonstrate how one should live with strong moral principles, focus on meaningful life goals, and remain grounded in deep spiritual values.

Serat Wedhatma is also regarded as an essential aspect of Javanese mysticism, rich in spiritual and philosophical values (Harini & SI, 2019). This is based on the view that in Serat Wedhatama, the philosophy of Sufism and its noble concepts are very prominent. Therefore, suluk fibres such as Serat Wedhatama are classified as Kejawan Islamic Mystic literature. This concept emphasises that the relationship between man and God isn't a separate relationship, but is integrated into every aspect of life. Humans are expected to always realise God's presence in themselves and their surroundings. The view of mysticism in Serat Wedhatama is evident in the concept of Catur Sembah. The teaching of catur sembah in Serat Wedhatama includes four forms of respect: sembah raga, sembah cipta, sembah jiwa, and sembah rasa. Sembah raga is realised through physical actions that reflect obedience to God. It is done through thought and creativity, while the worship of the soul involves the depth of the soul to always be in tune with the truth. Sembah rasa is honouring through intuition and empathy. These four practices must be followed in their entirety to achieve harmony between body, mind, soul, and emotions, and to gain



spiritual enlightenment and a meaningful life. In addition, by understanding and applying the teachings of chess worship, individuals are expected to attain a higher level of spiritual awareness. This will lead them to enlightenment and a deeper understanding of the meaning of life and their role as God's creatures. As such, the Serat Wedhatma isn't only a literary text, but also a spiritual guide that provides direction for those seeking balance and perfection in life (Putro et al., 2021). These teachings remain relevant in the modern context, given the importance of moral and spiritual integrity amidst life's complex dynamics.

The integration of local values from Serat Wedhatama into guidance and counselling practice can enrich the counsellor's approach, making it more effective and meaningful for learners. It can also enrich personality theories and counselling approaches by incorporating local wisdom values that are relevant and effective in the Indonesian cultural context. Overall, this integration is a crucial step in developing more holistic and adaptive guidance and counseling services in Indonesia, making them more systematic and grounded in the rich and diverse local cultural values. To understand and interpret the teachings in Serat Wedhatama, a hermeneutical approach can be used. Hermeneutics is the study of understanding and interpreting texts, particularly those with philosophical and moral significance (Hamidi, 2011).

Serat Wedhatama is one of the classic Javanese literary works rich in moral and spiritual values (Rachmadi et al., 2023). It consists of several sections of songs, namely Pangkur, Sinom, Pocung, and Gambuh, each of which contains deep meanings about the phases of human life (Prabawa & Mukti, 2022). This work isn't only an ethical and spiritual guide but also serves as advice passed down from generation to generation on how to live life wisely. Tembang Pangkur comes from the word "mungkur," meaning retreat (Nurkhalissa & Sulistyati, 2023). This section describes the phase of human life when their physical condition begins to weaken, no longer as strong as when they were young. In this phase, humans typically begin to realize the importance of drawing closer to God Almighty. Tembang Pangkur is often interpreted as a symbol of a person's maturity and readiness to face the final phase of his life. Pangkur serves as a reminder to people of the importance of maintaining a calm heart and mind in preparation for drawing closer to the Creator. This phase also teaches that a calm and peaceful life, free from worldly desires, can bring true happiness (Darsono, 2019).

The second section in Serat Wedhatama is Sinom, which translates to "young leaves." Sinom symbolises human youth, a period filled with enthusiasm, hope, and big dreams. Sinom teaches that youth should be filled with learning and seeking wisdom as capital to face future challenges. It is also a reminder that youth is the best time to build a strong moral and spiritual foundation (Darsono, 2019; Esti, 2020).

Tembang Pocung describes the final stage of human life, which is death and the return of man to God. The word "pucung" is taken from a term that refers to a person who has died and is in the grave. In this section, humans are depicted as already being in the afterlife, where they will be held accountable for all the deeds they have committed while living in the world. Tembang Pocung often contains wise advice on how humans should be in harmony with nature, the environment, and God. Pocung teaches humans to live life with the realisation that every action will have consequences in the afterlife (Bashith et al., 2021). The final section of Serat Wedhatama is Gambuh, which literally means "match" or "mate. Gambuh describes the compatibility between man and his chosen life, as well as the ability to live life in harmony. It also symbolizes the harmony between humans, each other, the environment, and God. Wisdom is a major theme in Gambuh.



Wisdom refers to the ability to put things in their proper place, to be fair, and to make decisions with long-term effects in mind. Gambuh teaches the importance of harmony in living life, both in personal relationships and in relationships with the universe. Overall, Serat Wedhatama offers profound moral guidance on the various phases of human life, from youth to old age. In the context of Javanese culture, Serat Wedhatama is one of the main sources that teaches the importance of balance, wisdom, and spirituality in living life (Bashith et al., 2021).

In the context of this research, hermeneutic studies can help researchers contextualize the teachings of Serat Wedhatama within a modern guidance and counselling framework. By combining the hermeneutic approach and local understanding, a theoretically relevant and culturally appropriate indigenous counsellor can be developed. The integration of local values from Serat Wedhatama provides two main benefits: (1) increasing the relevance of guidance and counselling to the local culture, so that the counselee more easily accepts it, and (2) enriching the counselor's insight in understanding the counselee's problems, especially related to cultural and social aspects. This research aims to integrate local values in shaping the character of indigenous counsellors who are more effective in the Indonesian context.

METHOD

This research is a qualitative study that employs Hans-Georg Gadamer's hermeneutic approach to explore and analyze the ideal attributes of indigenous counselors based on Serat Wedhatama, a classic Javanese literary work written by Mangkunegara IV. Gadamer's hermeneutics is a philosophical approach that focuses on the process of understanding texts through continuous deep interpretation between small parts of the text and the whole text. In this case, the central concept of Gadamer's hermeneutics, namely the "hermeneutic circle", becomes the foundation for understanding and interpreting the character of indigenous counsellors taken from Serat Wedhatama.

In this study, the "hermeneutic circle" refers to the iterative process of understanding, where the researcher must return to the parts of the text to understand the meaning of the whole, and vice versa, to understand the whole text to interpret each part. This is important because Serat Wedhatama isn't just a text that conveys moral teachings, but also reflects the traditions, culture, and philosophical values of Javanese society. Therefore, this hermeneutic approach enables researchers not only to focus on the literal meaning of the text but also to explore deeper philosophical and moral values relevant to the context of guidance and counselling in Indonesia.

Through an iterative process of hermeneutic understanding, this study identifies various characteristics of the ideal indigenous counsellor, as reflected in the moral teachings contained in Serat Wedhatama. The use of Gadamer's hermeneutics in this study also takes into account the historical and social context in which Serat Wedhatama was written. Mangkunegara IV wrote this work in the 19th century, when religious teachings and local traditions heavily influenced spiritual and ethical values in Javanese society. Serat Wedhatama was itself written as moral advice for the younger generation, so it contains very relevant messages to help individuals live their lives wisely. As such, this research not only examines the text from a modern scholarly perspective but also tries to understand how these teachings can be applied contextually in the world of guidance and counselling.

Gadamer's hermeneutic approach in this research allows for a dialogue between the past and the present. The text of Serat Wedhatama from the past is reinterpreted to



address contemporary challenges in the world of guidance and counselling, especially in the context of Indonesian society. In this way, the local values contained in Serat Wedhatama can be integrated into guidance and counselling practices that are more culturally relevant. This dialogical process of interpretation also ensures that local values are not applied rigidly but are adapted to the evolving needs of society and individuals in the present.

Data Collection Instruments

Data collection in this study employs the documentation method of text analysis, focusing on the meaning of the text. The researcher aims to understand the ideal character of indigenous counselors based on Serat Wedhatama. Therefore, a hermeneutic approach is employed, as it enables reflection and interpretation of the perfect attributes that indigenous counsellors should possess. Through an in-depth understanding of the text, the researcher hopes to identify relevant values and principles that can be applied in counselling practice. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to the development of an indigenous counsellor model that is appropriate to the cultural and social context of the local community. The results of this study are also expected to enrich the knowledge base in the field of counselling and assist practitioners in understanding the importance of a culturally oriented approach.

Data Collection

The initial type of data used in this research is secondary data. The secondary data used was Serat Wedhatama, which describes the life values of Javanese society. Based on the content of Serat Wedhatama, the ideal attributes of indigenous counsellors were investigated. The researcher used data obtained from the text's content. Serat Wedhatama is a life teaching addressed to the successors of Kadipaten Mangkunegaran. Serat Wedhatama originated from the Duchy of Mangkunegaran, which was a fragment of the Islamic Mataram Kingdom in Indonesia. The main character in Serat Wedhatama is Panembahan Senopati, who was the first king and founder of the Islamic Mataram Dynasty in Indonesia.

Data Analysis

Regarding the interpretation of indigenous counsellor attributes based on Serat Wedhatama, the researcher categorised them into three stages: (1) whole understanding, (2) parts understanding, and (3) implicit meaning understanding. Data analysis techniques employed in this research include data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research aims to identify and analyse the ideal character of indigenous counsellors in Indonesia based on moral and spiritual teachings in Serat Wedhatama. Using Gadamer's hermeneutic approach, this research explores the meanings contained in the Serat Wedhatama text and contextualises them into a modern guidance and counselling framework. The following are the results of the research on the ideal character of indigenous counsellors

The first characteristic of indigenous counselors is humility, not arrogance. In Serat Wedhatama this character is written in the Pangkur section with the words "*Jinejer neng Wedatama, Mrih tan kempa kembenganing pambudi, Mangka nadyan tuwa pikun,*



Yen tan mikani rasa, yekti sepi asepa lir sepah, samun, Samangsane pasamuan, Gonyak ganyuk nglilingsemi" means freely Presented in the Serat Wedhatama, so as not to be poor in knowledge even though you are old and senile if you don't understand the true taste (batin), it will be empty useless like dregs, useless in vain, in every meeting, often acting carelessly embarrassing. In the next section, it is also mentioned: *"Nggugu karsaning priyangga, Nora nganggo peparah lamun angling, Lumuh ing ngaran balihu, Uger guru aleman*, meaning Following your own will, when you say without consideration (just sound), But don't want to be considered stupid, always expect to be praised. The statement in this part of the pangkur illustrates that the arrogant and high-minded human being is an indigenous counselor who wants to always be praised, even when carrying out counseling that isn't in accordance with scientific procedures and rules.

The second indigenous counsellor character is patience. Patience is key in the counseling process (Ridley et al., 2021). Indigenous counsellors must be patient in listening to the counselee's problems, providing guidance, and waiting for positive changes that may take time. In Serat Wedhatama, it is written in the pangkur section that *"Bungah ingaran cubluk, Sukeng tyas yen denina* means Don't languish being called stupid, stay happy if insulted". This statement suggests that the character of indigenous counselors is patient and does not easily feel hurt or offended when being called stupid, and even when insulted, they can remain happy. In the pocung section, it is also mentioned *"Sarwa sareh saking mardi martatama* means always patiently trying to cool the atmosphere". This statement shows that patience is always tried with the best. Patient behaviour doesn't come automatically but through a process of learning and practice.

The third indigenous counsellor character is diligent and industrious, as reflected in the Sinom song *"Kepati amarsudi, Sudane hawa lan nepsu, Pinepsu tapa brata,"* which means that indigenous counsellors must be diligent in reducing lust through asceticism. This illustrates the importance of perseverance in resisting temptation and working with high dedication. A diligent indigenous counsellor always strives to provide the best service for their counsellors, without giving in to difficulties (Beech, 2021). In another part of Sinom, it states: *"Tis tising tyas marsudi,"* which means that the heart is determined to always strive diligently. This diligence ensures that counsellors not only carry out their duties with responsibility, but also continually strive to improve themselves and support their clients with sincerity. Perseverance is key to maintaining the consistent and effective quality of services provided by indigenous counsellors (Davey et al., 2023).

The fourth indigenous counselor character is compassion and love, which is reflected in the Sinom song in the 9th stanza: *"Amamangun karyenak tyasing sesama,"* meaning building a loving character towards others. This expression confirms that an indigenous counsellor must have a sincere attitude of compassion and love towards the counselee. Compassion is an important foundation in the counselling process, where the counsellor not only sees the counselee as an individual who needs help, but also as a fellow human being who deserves empathy and care. By adopting this disposition, the counselor will be more sensitive to the client's needs and able to create an atmosphere that supports the healing process and self-development. Genuine compassion strengthens the counsellor-counsellor relationship, making counselling more meaningful and effective (Baharun & Arifin, 2023; Steindl et al., 2023).

The fifth indigenous counselor character is to have self-awareness, as expressed in the Sinom song *"Samangsane pasamuan, mamangun marta martani,"* which means cultivating an attitude of self-knowledge in every association. Self-awareness in this context refers to the counsellor's ability to understand themselves, including both their



strengths and weaknesses, as well as the impact of their attitudes and actions on themselves. A self-aware indigenous counsellor is always reflective, keeping their attitudes and behaviours in line with moral and spiritual values. They are always careful in their words and actions, and are able to control their own desires for the welfare of the counsellor. With strong self-awareness, indigenous counsellors are able to empathise and provide more authentic and thoughtful guidance, while maintaining a harmonious and understanding counselling relationship (Hall, 2021).

The sixth indigenous counselor character is knowledgeable and conscientious, as reflected in the tembang Gambuh: "*Sucine tanpa banyu, Mung nyunyuda mring hardaning kalbu*," which means "purifying without water, restraining the passions in the heart." This expression teaches that counsellors must manage their behaviour with care and precision. Extensive knowledge serves as the foundation for providing appropriate guidance, while a careful and vigilant attitude prevents the counsellor from making mistakes in acting or giving advice. By mastering knowledge and being thorough, counsellors can provide more quality and meaningful counselling services.

The seventh indigenous counsellor character is surrendering to God and being sincere, as described in the Sinom song: "*Yeku aran wong barek berag agama*," which means someone who truly lives religion. This attitude teaches that a counsellor must have peace of mind in facing all challenges and trials by surrendering fully to God's will. In the song Pocung, there is the phrase "*Lila lamun kelangan nora gegatun, Trima yen ketaman*," which means sincere when lost without regret, patient when hurt by others, and surrender to God. Indigenous counsellors who are passionate and resilient can accept all situations, both personal trials and those encountered during the counselling process, without being shaken by negative emotions. This attitude fosters an inner calm that affects the way the counsellor helps the counselee. With a sincere heart and genuine service, counsellors can carry out their duties wisely, offer advice without burden, and create a counselling environment full of peace and empathy.

The eighth indigenous counsellor character is to remember the afterlife, as reflected in the Sinom song: "*saking duk maksi taruna, sadhela wus anglakoni, aberag marang agama, maguro angering kaji, sawadine tyas mami, banget wedine ing mbesuk, pranata angkor jaman*," which means that from a young age, one has learnt about religion, studied for knowledge, and eventually developed a fear of the afterlife. This character emphasizes the importance of cultivating a profound spiritual awareness, particularly in acknowledging that life in this world is fleeting and that everyone will be held accountable for their actions in the afterlife. An indigenous counsellor who remembers the afterlife will always maintain integrity, act with high morals, and carry out his/her duties with full responsibility. This attitude ensures that the counsellor doesn't only focus on worldly solutions in helping the counselee, but also directs them towards a more spiritually meaningful life. With the afterlife in mind, counsellors will be more thoughtful in giving advice and direction, always considering the eternal values of goodness, and help counsellors not only overcome problems in the world but also prepare themselves for a better life in the future.

For a more complete look at the part contained in the Wedhatama fibre, an overview of the ideal character of indigenous counsellors can be seen in the following table:



Table 1.
Attributes of Indigenous Counsellors Based on Serat Wdhatama

No.	Character	Comment	Code
1.	Humble and not arrogant	An indigenous counsellor should be humble and not arrogant. This attitude is important to build a good relationship with the counsellor and create an empathetic and respectful counselling environment.	PA19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 34, 35, 36, SI 145, 146
2.	Patience	Patience is key in the counselling process. Indigenous counsellors must be patient in listening to the counsellor's problems, providing guidance, and waiting for positive changes that may take time.	PA 31, 32, PU15, 54, GA 60, 71, 132
3.	Diligent and Diligent	Indigenous counsellors must be diligent and industrious in carrying out their duties. Diligence and hard work will ensure that they always provide the best service to the counsellor.	PA72, 73, SI 05, 06, 07, 23, PU48,49,50.
4.	Affection and having love	Having compassion and love for others is an important attribute for counsellors. This attitude helps create a deep and meaningful relationship with the counsellor, which in turn accelerates the process of recovery and development.	SI 9, 10, 11, 20, 21, 22, 25
5.	Have self-awareness	Self-awareness helps counsellors to understand their own strengths and weaknesses, as well as how these affect the relationship with the counselee. Self-awareness also helps in the process of reflection and self-development.	PA 92, SI 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
6.	Knowledgeable and thorough	Extensive knowledge and a conscientious attitude are essential in the counselling profession. Counsellors must continue to learn and improve their knowledge in order to provide appropriate and relevant solutions.	SI 47, 48, 49, 58. 143, 144, GA59
7.	Surrender to God and be sincere	Indigenous counsellors are expected to have an attitude of surrender to God and be sincere in carrying out their duties. This	SI 147, PU 53, 57, 58, 59, 60, GA 06, 127, 128, 133



No.	Character	Comment	Code
		attitude will help them stay calm and focused in providing guidance, and accept any results with a spacious heart.	
8.	Remembering the Hereafter	Awareness of life after death helps counsellors to stay on the right track and not be swayed by worldly temptations. This attitude fosters high integrity and morality in the counsellor.	S1 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, GA 87, 88, 89, 90, 91

Thus, this research successfully identified the ideal characteristics of indigenous counsellors based on the teachings of Serat Wedhatama. These characters are expected to increase the effectiveness of guidance and counselling services in Indonesia, with an approach that is more in line with the local cultural context. This research aims to identify and analyse the ideal character of indigenous counsellors in Indonesia based on the moral and spiritual teachings contained in Serat Wedhatama. Using the Gadamerian hermeneutic approach, this research successfully explores the deep meanings of the Serat Wedhatama text and contextualizes them within a modern framework of guidance and counseling. The indigenous counsellor characters found in this study provide important implications for the practice of guidance and counselling in Indonesia. Humbleness, patience, diligence, compassion, self-awareness, conscientiousness, resignation, and remembrance of the hereafter are attributes that aren't only relevant in the local cultural context but can also be a strong moral foundation in building more effective and meaningful counselling relationships. These characters, drawn from traditional Javanese teachings, guide for counsellors to integrate local spiritual and cultural values into their counselling approach.

This indigenous approach emphasises that counselling isn't just a technical psychological interaction, but also involves moral, spiritual, and cultural dimensions (Adhiputra, 2013). Therefore, this finding is particularly important in developing counselling models that are suitable for the Indonesian context, especially among communities with a strong connection to traditional values and religion. Through Gadamerian hermeneutic analysis, this study explores the profound meaning of the Serat Wedhatama text in relation to the ideal character of an indigenous counselor. Gadamer argues that understanding is the result of a dialogue between the interpreter and the text (Constantin & Sitorus, 2024). In this context, the understanding of the character of an indigenous counsellor doesn't only result from a literal interpretation of the text, but also from a dialogue between the traditional values contained in Serat Wedhatama and the needs of modern counselling practice in Indonesia.

This Gadamerian interpretation process enables the researcher not only to understand the Serat Wedhatama text within its historical context but also to apply these meanings in a contemporary context. Thus, characters such as humility, patience, and compassion can be seen as reflections of modern counselling principles that emphasise empathy, patience, and a deep connection between counsellor and counsellor. In data analysis, this study used Miles and Huberman's approach to conduct data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The data reduction process involved filtering



relevant information from the Serat Wedhatama text, which was then mapped onto the attributes of indigenous counsellors. Table 1, generated from this research, provides a clear and systematic overview of the counsellor attributes based on specific quotations from Serat Wedhatama.

The next step in the analysis was the presentation of data, which was done through a table of indigenous counsellor attributes. This table enabled the researcher to identify and categorize important characters that align with the moral and spiritual teachings in Serat Wedhatama. Through the inference step, the research was able to formulate the ideal character of an indigenous counselor relevant to counseling practice in Indonesia. This research also makes significant contributions to the state of the art in the field of guidance and counseling in Indonesia, particularly in the development of indigenous counseling models based on cultural and spiritual values. Currently, most counselling approaches are still dominated by the Western paradigm, which often overlooks the cultural context and spiritual values of Indonesian society (Wibowo, 2018). By identifying the character of indigenous counsellors based on Serat Wedhatama, this research offers an alternative that is more contextual and relevant to Indonesian society.

The indigenous counsellor character in Serat Wedhatama has fundamental differences with the ideal concept of counsellors in the Western tradition. In the Western approach, counsellors tend to be oriented towards individual abilities, with a strong emphasis on the skills, knowledge, and competencies possessed by the counsellor (Sue & Torino, 2005). This approach often neglects the concept of a relationship with God or the element of spirituality in the counselling process. This excessive focus on personal abilities can lead to arrogance and haughtiness, as if success in resolving the counsellor's problems is solely due to the counsellor's own expertise. As a result, there is a tendency to underestimate the role of greater forces, such as God or spiritual factors, in the problem-solving process.

In the view of Serat Wedhatama, such a view is considered to lack an understanding of the essence of man and life. Individuals who feel that they are able to solve problems independently, without recognising God's involvement, are seen as someone who doesn't understand "true sense". True rasa in the Javanese tradition refers to a deep understanding of the unity between humans, nature, and God. Awareness of this true sense makes one realise that all the abilities and successes they have are actually gifts from God. Therefore, indigenous counselors aren't only expected to possess technical skills, but also a profound spiritual understanding (Baskin, 2022). Counsellors who follow the teachings of Wedhatama should be able to harmonise their personal abilities with the recognition of God's role in every aspect of life. Counselling isn't only seen as an interaction between individuals, but also as a process that involves a higher spiritual power (Cervantes & Parham, 2005). Thus, an indigenous counsellor not only assists counsellors in finding solutions to their problems, but also helps them to realise their connectedness with God, who is considered the source of all wisdom and abilities. This approach is expected to create a more profound, humble, and meaningful relationship in the counselling process.

Another indigenous character of counselling that distinguishes it from the concept of counselling in the Western tradition is the importance of "remembering the end of days." In the Western tradition, which is heavily influenced by materialistic philosophy, the general view is that there is no life after death (Harris, 2001). When the physical human body dies, it is considered that life has come to an end. The result of this view is a tendency not to see moral or spiritual responsibility in everyday life, including in the



counselling profession. In the context of counselling, this may result in a less responsible attitude, where counsellors may be more likely to disregard professional ethics.

This non-belief in the last day also risks leading to unethical behaviour, such as inappropriate relationships between counsellors and clients, e.g., infidelity. From a materialistic perspective, there are no spiritual consequences of such actions after life ends, so counselors may not feel bound by deeper ethical norms. In contrast, indigenous counselors who remember the end of days will have a deep understanding that all actions in this world have repercussions that extend beyond earthly life (Hasan, 2024). With the awareness that humans will be held accountable for their actions in the afterlife, indigenous counselors will make a greater effort to avoid reprehensible behavior (Mujahid & Yusuf, 2024). Indigenous counsellors understand that moral responsibility doesn't only apply in this world, but also before God on the last day. This awareness helps maintain integrity and professionalism in carrying out their duties as counsellors.

Furthermore, the findings support the development of counsellor training programmes that are more oriented towards local cultural values, so that counsellors not only possess technical skills but also have a deep understanding of moral and spiritual values that play a crucial role in the counselling process. In addition, this research presents opportunities to further develop indigenous counselling approaches that can be applied in various regions of Indonesia, taking into account the richness of local cultures and traditions.

This research makes important contributions both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research enriches the literature on guidance and counselling by presenting an indigenous perspective based on the moral and spiritual teachings of Serat Wedhatama. It also confirms the importance of the hermeneutic approach in interpreting traditional texts, which can provide guidance in modern counseling practices. Practically, the characters identified in this study can serve as a guide for counselors in carrying out their roles in society. By combining traditional values with modern principles of guidance and counselling, this study helps build a more holistic model of counsellors, paying attention not only to the psychological but also the moral and spiritual aspects of their interactions with clients.

CONCLUSION

The ideal character of an Indonesian traditional counselor is based on moral and spiritual teachings in Serat Wedhatama, such as humility, patience, perseverance, compassion, self-awareness, knowledge, caution, surrender to God, and always remembering the afterlife. This ideal counsellor character is a crucial foundation in building an effective and meaningful counselling relationship within the local cultural context. This finding makes an important contribution to the development of counselling practice in Indonesia, particularly in enriching counselling theory with a more contextual and relevant local perspective. The ideal counsellor character serves as a source of inspiration for forming professional ethics and a more holistic, spiritual therapeutic relationship, and is grounded in local wisdom. However, this study has several limitations in the researcher's interpretation of the Serat Wedhatama text, as it is based solely on literary texts and does not involve direct views from counsellors, clients, or traditional leaders, which could have enriched and tested the validity of the interpretation. Then, the implementation of counselling that integrates Serat Wedhatama values needs to follow modern psychological approaches, taking into account the multicultural backgrounds of



counsellors and clients, as well as the acceptance of secular cultures in various environments. This approach can be applied in social, cultural, and institutional contexts.

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