

Counseling Communication Model of Religious Instructors in Preventing Online Gambling Behavior Among Teenagers

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Abstract

Advancements in information technology have brought benefits to society but have also given rise to various social issues, including the spread of online gambling among young people. This situation can have psychological, academic, financial, social, moral, and religious consequences. This study aims to examine the counseling communication model employed by religious counselors to prevent online gambling among adolescents in Medan Timur District. The study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. The primary informant was an Islamic religious counselor assigned to the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) of Medan Timur District. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. Data credibility was strengthened through triangulation of data collection techniques. The findings indicate that counseling communication emphasizes rapport building, problem understanding, guidance and development, assistance and follow-up, and behavioral change, which are synthesized in the 5P Counseling Communication Model. The process uses persuasive, dialogic, empathetic, and participatory communication, while religious values are integrated into guidance. The findings also indicate that family and community support is perceived by the informant as important for sustaining prevention efforts. The study contributes a context-specific model of Islamic counseling communication for preventing online gambling among adolescents, while recognizing that further research with multiple informants is needed to examine the model more broadly.

Keywords: Counseling Communication, Religious Counselor, Online Gambling, Adolescents, Prevention.

A. Introduction

The development of information technology has provided various conveniences, but it has also contributed to the emergence of forms of social deviance, one of which is online gambling. The ease of access through digital devices makes adolescents a

particularly vulnerable group due to their high level of internet use and their still-developing capacity for self-control.¹

Online gambling has become a serious social problem because it can cause economic, psychological, social, moral, and spiritual harm. Adolescents who become involved in online gambling are at risk of developing addiction, losing self-control, experiencing a decline in academic achievement, and encountering difficulties in their social relationships.²

Data from the Indonesian Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Center (*Pusat Pelaporan dan Analisis Transaksi Keuangan/PPATK*) indicate that the number of online gambling participants in Indonesia has reached approximately four million people, including around 440,000 children and adolescents aged 10–20 years and approximately 80,000 children under the age of 10. This condition demonstrates the need for preventive efforts involving the government, families, educational institutions, communities, and religious leaders.

The government has undertaken various measures, including blocking gambling websites and providing public education. However, these efforts have not been entirely effective. Online gambling behavior is also influenced by psychological conditions, social environments, and weak self-control; therefore, a more comprehensive and sustainable approach is required.³

Counseling communication is one approach that can help individuals recognize their problems, identify solutions, and direct behavioral change toward more positive outcomes. From the perspective of Islamic guidance and counseling, counseling communication also plays a role in strengthening faith, moral character, and religious values as the foundation for behavioral change.⁴

¹ Corey, C., *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy* (Canada: Cengage Learning, 2022).

² Nasution, S. W., dan S. Nasution, "Persuasive Communication of Religious Counselors in Reducing Online Gambling Addiction," *Jurnal Penelitian dan Pengembangan Sains dan Humaniora* 8, no. 2 (2024): 306–313, <https://doi.org/10.23887/jppsh.v8i2.83623>

³ Sahputra, D., "The Impact of Online Gambling on Adolescents: A Case Study in Tebing Tinggi," *Islamic Counseling: Jurnal Bimbingan dan Konseling Islam* 6, no. 2 (2022): 139–156, <https://doi.org/10.29240/jbk.v6i2.3866>

⁴ Bingham, A. J., "From Data Management to Actionable Findings: A Five-Phase Process of Qualitative Data Analysis," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 22 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069231183620>

Religious counselors have a strategic role as communicators, educators, and guides in assisting communities, particularly adolescents, in addressing social problems. Through dialogical, persuasive, empathetic, and participatory communication, religious counselors can foster openness and help adolescents overcome their involvement in online gambling.⁵

Medan Timur District is an area with broad internet access, making adolescents vulnerable to exposure to online gambling through social media, peer groups, and digital advertisements. Based on preliminary observations and information obtained from religious counselors at the Medan Timur District Office of Religious Affairs, preventing online gambling requires educational and preventive approaches implemented through continuous counseling communication.⁶

Previous studies have shown that online gambling can have psychological and social impacts on adolescents, while religious education and the role of religious counselors are important in preventing deviant behavior. However, studies examining how religious counselors organize counseling communication into a systematic preventive model for adolescents remain limited, particularly at the district level. Existing studies tend to emphasize the impact of online gambling, persuasive communication, family communication, or the role of religious leaders separately. This study therefore examines the counseling communication process used by religious counselors in Medan Timur District and synthesizes its recurring components into a contextual model.

Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing the counseling communication model employed by religious counselors to prevent online gambling behavior among adolescents in Medan Timur District. The analysis includes communication processes, counseling techniques and approaches, as well as the roles of families and communities in supporting prevention efforts.

The novelty of this study lies in the synthesis of five recurring components of counseling communication identified from the field data: Approach, Problem Understanding, Guidance and Development, Assistance and Follow-Up, and Behavioral

⁵ Amri, Y., dan R. Darmawan, "Online Gambling among Adolescents: A Family Communication Perspective in Kederasan Panjang Village, Batang Masumai District, Merangin Regency," *AN-NABA: Islamic Communication Journal* 4, no. 2 (2025): 1–33, <https://doi.org/10.51311/annaba.v4i1.1297>

⁶ Umilawati dan Jasman, "The Role of Religious Leaders in Addressing Gambling among Communities in Tanjung Pasir Village, Kuala Betara District, West Tanjung Jabung Regency," *At-Tadabbur: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan* 12, no. 2 (2022): 17–35.

Change. These components are integrated with interpersonal communication, religious values, and family and community support. The 5P model is presented as an empirical synthesis of the findings in this study rather than as a universal or experimentally validated model.

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design to obtain an in-depth understanding of the counseling communication model used by a religious counselor. The research was conducted at the Office of Religious Affairs (Kantor Urusan Agama/KUA) of Medan Timur District, which was purposively selected because of its religious outreach, guidance, and counseling activities for the community, particularly adolescents. The primary informant was Husni Tamrin Rambe, S.Ag., an Islamic religious counselor and Government Employee under a Government Employee with a Work Agreement (*Pegawai Pemerintah dengan Perjanjian Kerja/PPPK*) assigned to the KUA of Medan Timur District. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The interview explored the counselor's communication practices, counseling approaches, challenges, and collaboration with families and communities. Observations and documents were used to provide supporting information and to compare data obtained through different collection techniques. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Credibility was strengthened through triangulation of data collection techniques. Research ethics were maintained through informed consent, confidentiality, and the use of data solely for academic purposes. Because the study relied primarily on one informant, the findings are interpreted as a contextual description rather than a generalizable representation of all religious counselors.

The informant was selected using purposive sampling, with Husni Tamrin Rambe, S.Ag., an Islamic religious counselor and a Government Employee under a Government Employee with a Work Agreement (*Pegawai Pemerintah dengan Perjanjian Kerja/PPPK*) assigned to the KUA of Medan Timur District, serving as the primary informant. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation.⁷ Data trustworthiness was strengthened through triangulation, while the data were analyzed using the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and

⁷ Wibowo, *Behavior in Organizations* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2022)

Saldaña. Research ethics were maintained through informed consent, confidentiality, and the use of all data solely for academic purposes.⁸

B. Research Findings

Aspects Addressed by Religious Counselors

No.	Aspect	Content
1	Spiritual Aspect	Religious counselors provide an understanding of the prohibition of gambling in Islam, instill faith-based values, encourage adolescents to increase their religious practices, and encourage them to strengthen their relationship with Allah SWT as a spiritual foundation for avoiding online gambling.
2	Psychological (Emotional) Aspect	Religious counselors establish warm and supportive relationships, listen to adolescents' concerns, provide motivation, and assist adolescents in managing their emotions and impulses to engage in gambling.
3	Social Aspect	Religious counselors encourage adolescents to develop positive social relationships, improve their relationships with their families and communities, and avoid social environments that may encourage online gambling behavior.
4	Cognitive Aspect	Religious counselors provide knowledge about the definition, causes, and negative impacts of online gambling so that adolescents understand the risks and consequences associated with such behavior.
5	Behavioral Aspect	Religious counselors guide adolescents in changing gambling-related habits by encouraging them to engage in constructive activities, such as studying, performing religious practices, participating in social activities, and developing their personal potential.

Note: The five aspects in this table were synthesized from recurring themes in the interview and supporting field data; they are not presented as a pre-existing validated measurement scale.

Implementation of Counseling Communication to Prevent Online Gambling among Adolescents

Based on the interviews conducted, the informant explained that counseling and guidance for adolescents regarding the risks of online gambling begin with an initial relational approach. Counselors, parents, and community members attempt to establish

⁸ Suparno dan Susilo, *Communication Theory for Research* (Yogyakarta: Suluh Media, 2022).

positive relationships so that adolescents feel safe and do not feel judged. According to the informant, adolescents who have already become involved in online gambling should not be immediately reprimanded or abruptly prohibited from engaging in the behavior. Instead, they should be invited to engage in constructive discussions about their lives, education, aspirations, and future. Through this approach, adolescents can become aware that they have opportunities to become better individuals and contribute positively to their families and communities.⁹

Once a positive relationship has been established, adolescents are provided with an understanding of the dangers and negative consequences of online gambling. The informant explained that online gambling can cause financial losses, reduce motivation to study, disrupt family relationships, and jeopardize adolescents' futures. In addition, religious counselors provide an understanding from a religious perspective that gambling is prohibited and generally brings greater harm than benefit. Through guidance that is provided gradually, attentively, and in language that is easy to understand, adolescents are expected to recognize the dangers of online gambling and develop a willingness to avoid it.

Based on the interviews, the informant stated that the most common form of communication used to provide guidance to adolescents is direct, face-to-face interaction. Before providing advice, counselors first attempt to understand the context and problems experienced by each adolescent. The informant explained that every adolescent has different motivations for engaging in particular behaviors; therefore, the approach employed must be adapted to their individual circumstances. Through direct communication, counselors can listen to adolescents' experiences, understand the challenges they face, and establish closer relationships based on trust.

The informant further explained that communication can be conducted individually or in groups; however, individual communication is more frequently preferred because it is considered more efficient. Through face-to-face interaction, adolescents have greater freedom to express their feelings and problems. In the guidance and counseling process, counselors use simple, comprehensible, and non-judgmental language. In addition to providing advice and encouragement, counselors also encourage adolescents to participate in discussions aimed at identifying solutions to their problems.

⁹ Religious Counselor, interview with the researcher, April 2, 2026.

Through this approach, adolescents become more receptive to guidance and better able to understand the messages conveyed by the counselors.

Based on the interview findings, the informant explained that counseling is conducted through both group and individual approaches. However, group counseling is more frequently used as an initial step in the counseling process. According to the informant, group counseling is more effective because adolescents can discuss issues with their peers in a more relaxed and open atmosphere. Furthermore, adolescents today tend to be more sensitive and may feel uncomfortable or judged when they receive individual guidance directly. Through group counseling, adolescents become more confident in expressing their opinions, sharing their experiences, and receiving guidance from religious counselors.¹⁰

Based on the interview findings, the informant explained that establishing rapport with adolescents during counseling requires the creation of a comfortable, open, and caring relationship. Before providing advice, counselors first attempt to understand the adolescents' characteristics, circumstances, and problems. According to the informant, adolescents who are already involved in online gambling often find it difficult to accept direct advice. Therefore, counselors prioritize listening to their stories, concerns, and experiences so that adolescents feel respected and not judged. Through this approach, adolescents become more comfortable expressing themselves and developing constructive communication with religious counselors.

The informant also explained that, in order to establish rapport with adolescents, religious counselors need to understand their needs, aspirations, and vulnerabilities so that the messages conveyed can be more readily accepted. In addition, parents play a highly important role because they have a close emotional relationship with their children. Through attention, effective communication, and continuous support, adolescents will feel more valued, cared for, and supported. The presence of closeness and mutual trust can make counseling concerning the dangers of online gambling more meaningful and encourage adolescents to refrain from such behavior.

Nevertheless, individual counseling continues to be provided when adolescents face more profound or sensitive problems. Through individual counseling sessions, counselors can explore the adolescents' circumstances in greater depth and provide appropriate

¹⁰ Religious Counselor, interview with the researcher, May 4, 2026

solutions to the issues they face. Thus, both approaches continue to be implemented, although group counseling is prioritized because it is considered more effective in creating a sense of comfort and openness among adolescents during the initial stage of the counseling process.¹¹

Challenges in Counseling Communication to Prevent Online Gambling among Adolescents

Based on the interviews, the informant stated that the information and messages commonly presented in efforts to prevent online gambling tend to emphasize the risks and negative consequences associated with online gambling. Adolescents are informed that online gambling can result in financial losses, reduce motivation to study, disrupt family relationships, and potentially lead to addiction. Furthermore, religious counselors emphasize that gambling habits can jeopardize adolescents' futures by encouraging them to pursue instant financial gains without legitimate effort.¹²

The informant also added that the counseling materials address the spiritual dimension. Adolescents are informed that gambling is prohibited because it causes greater harm than benefit. In addition, counselors motivate adolescents to spend their leisure time engaging in constructive activities, such as studying, performing religious practices, and developing their personal potential. By providing an understanding of the negative consequences of online gambling and the importance of maintaining oneself in accordance with religious teachings, adolescents are expected to recognize the dangers of online gambling and choose to avoid such behavior.

During the interview, the informant explained that one of the challenges frequently encountered when counseling adolescents about online gambling is the difficulty of identifying the underlying factors that lead them to engage in online gambling activities. The informant stated that each adolescent has a different background and motivation, such as peer influence, curiosity, gaming habits, or inadequate parental supervision. If counselors do not yet understand the underlying causes, the guidance process becomes more complex because the solutions provided may not correspond to the adolescents' actual circumstances.¹³

¹¹ Religious Counselor, interview with the researcher, June 30, 2026.

¹² Religious Counselor, interview with the researcher, April 2, 2026

¹³ Religious Counselor, interview with the researcher, May 4, 2026.

The informant further revealed that another challenge is the diversity of adolescents' personalities and interests. Adolescents are generally more interested in activities they enjoy than in listening to advice or participating in guidance activities. Therefore, counselors cannot impose their preferences or expectations on adolescents but must adapt their communication strategies to their circumstances and interests. According to the informant, if the approach employed is inappropriate, adolescents tend to have difficulty accepting the guidance provided. Consequently, counselors need to establish effective communication, understand adolescents' needs, and convey messages in an engaging manner so that guidance concerning the dangers of online gambling can be accepted and generate positive effects.¹⁴

Roles of Parents and the Community and Perceived Outcomes of Counseling Communication

Based on the interviews, the informant revealed that not all adolescents readily accept the advice provided to them. The informant explained that this is because adolescents differ in terms of personality, patterns of thinking, and levels of maturity. Some adolescents are willing to listen and accept guidance positively, whereas others may be less receptive or have difficulty accepting advice, particularly when they feel pressured or judged. Therefore, religious counselors need to understand the circumstances and personality of each adolescent before providing guidance so that the messages conveyed can be received more effectively.¹⁵

The informant stated that young people often understand concrete examples more readily than verbal advice alone. Therefore, it is important for parents, religious counselors, and community figures to provide positive examples in their everyday lives. Furthermore, the social environment strongly influences adolescents' attitudes toward receiving advice. If an adolescent is not receptive to direct instructions, an alternative approach can be implemented through family members, peers, or supportive communities. According to the informant, support from a positive environment can help adolescents become more open to advice and better understand the importance of avoiding negative behaviors such as online gambling.

¹⁴ Religious Counselor, interview with the researcher, June 30, 2026.

¹⁵ Religious Counselor, interview with the researcher, April 2, 2026.

The interview findings indicate that the community has a significant influence on efforts to prevent online gambling among adolescents. The informant stated that adolescents tend to imitate the habits and behaviors prevalent in their surroundings. When they are situated in a positive environment, they are more motivated to engage in constructive activities and avoid harmful behaviors. Conversely, when their social interactions are characterized by negative habits, including online gambling, they become more vulnerable to becoming involved in such activities. Therefore, the social environment constitutes a key element that can significantly influence the behavior of young people.

However, the informant emphasized that the influence of the environment can be reduced when adolescents possess a strong religious foundation and solid moral values from an early age. Parents have a responsibility to provide religious education, habituate religious practices, and instill positive values in their children. With this foundation, adolescents can develop strong principles and become less susceptible to negative influences in their surroundings. Even when living within a diverse community, adolescents who receive proper education and guidance are better able to exercise self-control and avoid harmful behaviors, including online gambling.

Based on the interviews, support from parents and the community plays an important role in the counseling process aimed at helping adolescents avoid online gambling. Parents play a key role by providing attention, maintaining effective communication, exercising supervision, and offering consistent support, thereby helping adolescents feel cared for and become more receptive to guidance. In addition, the community contributes by creating a positive environment, providing good role models, and encouraging young people to participate in constructive activities. Support from the family and surrounding environment makes adolescents more receptive to advice and more motivated to avoid negative behaviors such as online gambling.¹⁶

To address challenges in the counseling process, counselors must first understand the underlying reasons for adolescents' involvement in online gambling, given that each adolescent has a different background and set of circumstances. Counselors must also establish effective communication, use easily understandable language, and adopt a friendly and non-judgmental approach so that adolescents feel comfortable sharing their

¹⁶ Religious Counselor, interview with the researcher, May 4, 2026.

experiences. In addition, collaboration among counselors, parents, families, and the community needs to be strengthened so that adolescents receive continuous support. Through appropriate approaches and support from various stakeholders, obstacles in the guidance process can be overcome, thereby making efforts to prevent online gambling among adolescents more effective.

Based on the interviews, the social environment, peer influence, strong curiosity, established gaming habits, and limited family supervision are among the main factors influencing adolescents' continued involvement in online gambling. Adolescents often imitate behaviors prevalent in their surroundings. When they are situated in an environment where negative behaviors, including online gambling, are normalized, they are more likely to be influenced and become involved. In addition, the desire to obtain quick financial gains is another factor that makes it difficult for adolescents to break away from gambling habits.

The role of parents and the community is highly significant in guiding adolescents. Parents can contribute by providing supervision and attention, maintaining effective communication, and instilling religious and moral values from an early age. Meanwhile, the roles of the community, religious leaders, and other surrounding social influences are important in providing positive examples and creating a supportive environment for adolescents. With support from their families and surrounding communities, adolescents are more likely to feel cared for, become more receptive to advice, and be motivated to avoid negative behaviors such as online gambling.

Based on the interview and supporting observations, counseling communication can be understood as a continuous process rather than a single advice-giving activity. The process begins with rapport, continues with understanding the adolescent's circumstances, provides guidance and development, involves follow-up and support from the surrounding environment, and aims at constructive behavioral change. Because the study did not use a pre-test/post-test design or an independent behavioral measure, the findings do not establish causal effectiveness. Instead, the observed changes should be understood as indications reported in the field and perceived by the informant.

The 5P Counseling Communication Model

The five components are sequential but flexible: Approach → Problem Understanding → Guidance and Development → Assistance and Follow-Up → Behavioral Change.

Feedback from follow-up may lead the counselor to return to problem understanding and adjust guidance according to the adolescent's circumstances.

Counseling Communication Model	Description
<i>Approach (Building Rapport and Trust)</i>	The informant explained that religious counselors do not immediately provide advice to adolescents involved in online gambling. Instead, counselors first establish close communication through conversations about adolescents' daily lives, education, families, and aspirations. According to the informant, this approach aims to make adolescents feel comfortable, respected, and not judged, thereby encouraging them to open up to the counselor. At this stage, communication focuses primarily on establishing a relationship based on mutual trust rather than immediately delivering counseling materials.
<i>Problem Understanding (Identifying the causes of adolescents' involvement in online gambling through two-way communication and active listening)</i>	Once a positive relationship has been established, counselors begin to explore the reasons underlying adolescents' involvement in online gambling. The informant explained that the causes vary among adolescents, ranging from peer influence and curiosity to gaming habits and inadequate parental attention. Therefore, counselors prioritize listening to adolescents' stories rather than immediately providing solutions. The informant emphasized that understanding the root causes is an important step in determining an appropriate form of guidance according to each adolescent's circumstances.
<i>Guidance and Development (Group counseling, individual counseling, education on the impacts of online gambling, motivation, and reinforcement of religious values)</i>	The informant explained that guidance is provided through face-to-face communication, both in the form of group counseling and individual counseling. Group counseling is more frequently used as an initial stage because it allows adolescents to feel more comfortable discussing issues with their peers. Individual counseling, meanwhile, is provided when an adolescent has more complex or in-depth problems. During the guidance process, counselors provide information about the negative impacts of online gambling on adolescents' financial circumstances, education, family relationships, and future prospects. Counselors also reinforce religious values as a foundation for adolescents to abandon gambling behavior. All materials are delivered using simple and easily understandable language so that

Counseling Communication Model	Description
	adolescents can more readily comprehend and accept the messages conveyed.
Assistance and Follow-Up (Involving parents, families, religious leaders, and the community in supporting adolescents' behavioral change)	Based on the interview findings, counselors do not terminate communication once the counseling process has been completed. Instead, they continue coordinating with parents, family members, religious leaders, and the community to ensure that adolescents receive ongoing support. The informant explained that parental attention, effective family communication, and a positive community environment greatly assist adolescents in maintaining behavioral changes after participating in counseling. Thus, ongoing assistance and follow-up constitute an important component of the counseling communication model identified in this study.
Behavioral Change (<i>Adolescents become more open, receptive to advice, disengage from online gambling, and become active in educational, religious, and social activities</i>)	The informant explained that the success of counseling communication can be observed through changes in adolescents' attitudes and behaviors following the guidance process. These changes are reflected in increased openness in communication, greater willingness to accept advice, reduced involvement in online gambling, and increased participation in educational, religious, and social activities within the community. According to the informant, these changes do not occur instantaneously but result from a gradual and continuous communication process.

Based on the thematic synthesis of the field findings, this study identifies the 5P Counseling Communication Model as a contextual model of communication used by the religious counselor to prevent online gambling among adolescents. The model was derived by grouping recurring practices found in the data into five connected components: (1) Approach, which emphasizes building rapport and trust; (2) Problem Understanding, which identifies the circumstances and factors underlying adolescents' involvement in online gambling; (3) Guidance and Development, which provides education, counseling, motivation, and constructive activities; (4) Assistance and Follow-Up, which involves continuing communication and support from families and the community; and (5) Behavioral Change, which refers to indications of greater openness, receptiveness to

guidance, and movement toward constructive activities. The five components form a process in which the initial relationship supports problem exploration, problem exploration guides intervention, intervention is reinforced through follow-up, and sustained support is expected to contribute to constructive behavioral change. The model is an empirical synthesis from this case and should be tested with broader participants in future research.

Discussion

Based on the findings, counseling begins with an approach that prioritizes the establishment of positive relationships before advice is given. The religious counselor seeks to create a comfortable environment in which adolescents do not feel accused or judged. This finding is consistent with the counseling principle that a trusting relationship can facilitate openness and participation. In the context of this study, rapport is not merely an interpersonal technique; it functions as the first component of the 5P model because it creates the conditions needed for subsequent problem exploration and guidance.

The findings indicate that the counseling process does not merely emphasize prohibiting gambling but also discusses adolescents' future, education, responsibilities, and life aspirations. This orientation shifts communication from simple prohibition toward reflective guidance. The counselor encourages adolescents to consider the longer-term consequences of gambling and to identify constructive alternatives. Within the 5P model, this finding strengthens the relationship between Problem Understanding and Guidance and Development: guidance is delivered after the counselor has attempted to understand the adolescent's circumstances.

Direct interaction is the most frequently described method in the field data. Face-to-face communication gives the counselor an opportunity to listen to adolescents' experiences, explore contextual factors, and observe their responses during interaction. The value of direct communication in this case lies in its dialogical character: adolescents are not treated only as recipients of information but are invited to discuss their circumstances. This supports the Approach and Problem Understanding components of the 5P model.

In its implementation, counselors prioritize the use of simple and accessible language so that the messages conveyed can be properly understood by adolescents. The use of overly formal or judgmental language may instead generate resistance among

adolescents. Therefore, counselors more frequently employ dialogue and discussion-based approaches, allowing adolescents to feel that their opinions are valued. Effective communication in counseling is characterized by openness, empathy, and the counselor's ability to understand the client's situation, enabling the messages conveyed to be received effectively.¹⁷

The field data indicate that group counseling is often used at the initial stage, while individual counseling is retained for more sensitive or complex problems. Rather than treating one approach as universally superior, the findings suggest a complementary function. Group interaction can provide a less threatening space for sharing, whereas individual counseling allows deeper exploration of personal circumstances. The choice of approach therefore needs to be responsive to the adolescent's needs and the stage of the counseling process.

Individual counseling remains important when adolescents face more serious or sensitive problems. Through individual sessions, counselors can explore issues in greater depth and provide guidance suited to specific circumstances. The finding supports the flexible implementation of the Guidance and Development component of the 5P model. However, because this study did not compare outcomes between group and individual counseling, the relative effectiveness of the two approaches cannot be established from the present data.

Overall, the research findings demonstrate that establishing rapport with adolescents is one of the key components contributing to the success of the counseling process. This relationship is developed through a friendly attitude, genuine concern, and willingness to listen to adolescents' concerns. Counselors do not function merely as providers of advice but also serve as trusted discussion partners. When adolescents feel respected and accepted, they become more open and more receptive to the guidance provided. A strong counseling relationship constitutes a fundamental basis for behavioral change because clients tend to be more receptive to assistance from individuals whom they trust.¹⁸

¹⁷ Huang dan Nemoto, "Communication Tools in Management Accounting: Adapting Jakobson's Communication Model," *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* 12, no. 2 (2022): 50–62.

¹⁸ Rohman, "Strengthening Tolerance in Pluralistic Societies through the Competence of Religious Counselors in Serving Religious Communities," *Jurnal Bimas Islam* 15, no. 1 (2022): 65–102.

The counseling materials primarily focus on the harmful consequences of online gambling, including financial loss, disruption of study motivation, family problems, and risks to adolescents' future. The findings also show that the counselor addresses the desire for quick financial gain and encourages constructive alternatives. These materials connect cognitive understanding with behavioral guidance. Claims concerning mental-health or dependency outcomes should nevertheless be interpreted cautiously because those outcomes were not independently measured in this study.

Religious values constitute an important dimension of the counseling communication described by the informant. Adolescents are reminded that gambling is prohibited in Islamic teachings and are encouraged to strengthen religious practices and constructive activities. In the context of the study, religious values function as a moral and motivational resource within the Guidance and Development component rather than as a substitute for psychological or social counseling. This integration is one of the contextual characteristics of the model developed in the study.

One primary challenge is the difficulty of identifying the circumstances and motivations underlying adolescents' involvement in online gambling. The informant described peer influence, curiosity, gaming habits, and limited parental supervision as possible factors. This finding indicates that prevention requires assessment of individual and environmental circumstances before communication strategies are selected. It directly supports the Problem Understanding component of the 5P model.

In addition, differences in adolescents' interests and personalities constitute another significant challenge. Not all adolescents readily accept the advice provided to them. Some are more interested in activities they enjoy than in participating in guidance programs. Therefore, counselors need to adapt their communication methods to adolescents' circumstances so that the messages conveyed do not cause boredom or resistance. Creative approaches that are relevant to contemporary developments represent one strategy that can be employed to attract adolescents' attention and encourage their engagement.

Social factors within peer relationships were also identified as a significant finding in this study. The social environment has a substantial influence on adolescent behavior, particularly because adolescents at this developmental stage tend to interact extensively with their peers. When the social environment supports positive change, adolescents are

more likely to develop constructive habits. Conversely, when they are surrounded by negative behaviors, including online gambling, the likelihood of their involvement increases. Therefore, social conditions constitute an important element that must be considered in efforts to prevent online gambling.

The roles of parents and the community are described in the field data as supporting elements in the counseling process. Parents can provide supervision, attention, communication, and religious and moral education, while the community can help create a supportive environment and positive examples. Because parents and community members were not the primary interview participants, these findings should be understood as information reported by the counselor rather than as independently verified accounts from those stakeholders. Their role is nevertheless important for the Assistance and Follow-Up component of the proposed model.

Overall, the findings indicate that the counseling process was perceived by the informant to contribute to adolescents' recognition of the risks of online gambling and to movement toward more constructive activities. Reported indications included greater openness to communication, greater receptiveness to guidance, reduced involvement in gambling, and participation in studying, religious practices, and social activities. These findings suggest potential benefits of continuous counseling and environmental support, but they should not be interpreted as evidence of causal effectiveness because the study did not include a comparative design, longitudinal measurement, or independent assessment of adolescent behavioral change. The principal contribution of the study is therefore the contextual 5P model synthesized from the field data.

Study Limitation

This study has several limitations. First, the primary empirical account came from one religious counselor, so the findings represent a specific institutional and contextual experience. Second, the study did not independently measure changes in adolescents' gambling behavior. Third, the roles of parents and the community were primarily reported through the counselor's account. Future research should involve multiple counselors, adolescents, parents, and community stakeholders and should examine the 5P model through broader qualitative or mixed-method designs.

C. Penutup

Based on the findings of this study, counseling communication implemented by the religious counselor at the KUA of Medan Timur plays an important preventive role by combining

rapport building, problem understanding, guidance and development, assistance and follow-up, and behavioral change. These components were synthesized into the 5P Counseling Communication Model. The model shows that prevention is not limited to delivering information about the prohibition and risks of online gambling but involves a continuing communication process that considers adolescents' circumstances and encourages constructive alternatives.

The findings also indicate that family and community support are important contextual resources for sustaining prevention efforts. Parents can provide supervision, attention, communication, and religious education, while the community can provide positive examples and a supportive environment. However, the study does not establish causal effectiveness; the reported behavioral changes are field indications based primarily on the informant's account. The model should therefore be understood as a contextual empirical synthesis that requires further examination with broader participants and stronger outcome measures.

Therefore, the KUA of Medan Timur is encouraged to strengthen religious outreach and counseling programs for young people by integrating the five components of the 5P model and by involving educational institutions, village governments, religious leaders, community leaders, and parents. Parents are encouraged to provide attention, supervision, and open communication concerning adolescents' internet and social-media use, while the community can contribute by creating an environment that supports positive adolescent development. Future researchers are encouraged to test and refine the 5P model by involving multiple informants and settings, incorporating adolescents' perspectives, and using longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to examine behavioral outcomes.

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