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## Exploring the Impact of Attachment to School Counselors on Moral Emotion Development in Slow Learners: A Case Study in Central Java Inclusive Schools

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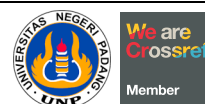
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# Exploring the Impact of Attachment to School Counselors on Moral Emotion Development in Slow Learners: A Case Study in Central Java Inclusive Schools

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**Abstract:** Emotion becomes an integral part that derives children's moral behavior. Moral emotion controls moral transgression by making children aware of the consequences of their actions. However, not all children can control their emotions, e.g., slow learners. The slow learners in this study are students in inclusive schools in Central Java. Their status as inclusive students resulted in feelings of alienation, even bullying. One factor affecting moral emotions is children's attachment to attachment figures, including school counselors. This study aims to determine the attachment pattern between slow learners and school counselors in developing moral emotions. This research used a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data was collected by interviews, direct observations, focused group discussions (FGD), and documentation. The results showed that the level of slow learners' attachment security was affected by school counselors' affection, responsiveness, sensitivity, and availability, both physically and emotionally. Higher security slow learners demonstrated higher trust and disclosure, and are emotionally attached to school counselors compared to those with lower security. On the other hand, attachment is associated with moral emotions of shame, guilt, and righteous anger but is not significantly associated with empathy. The findings are expected to increase awareness of school counselors in showing support and affection toward slow learners in inclusive schools, especially while providing services to fulfill guidance and counseling functions of understanding, development, and prevention.

**Key Words:** Moral emotion; Slow learner; School counselor; Inclusive school; Central Java

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## INTRODUCTION

Emotions are the earliest factors that lead to moral behavior in children's moral development (Otrebski & Czus-Sudoł, 2022). For example, children will naturally feel happy to be praised by their parents for their good behaviors, but upset to be scolded for their bad behaviors. These experiences taught them which behaviors could lead to positive or negative emotions (Otrebski & Czus-Sudoł, 2022). Then, as adolescents, they start to implement moral standards created by society (Andharini & Kustanti, 2020). The existence of moral standards, which are then mediated by moral emotions, forms moral decisions and behaviors (Tangney et al., 2007).

Haidt (2003) demonstrated that moral emotions could be negative emotions that emerge with below-the-standard behaviors, i.e., shame, guilt, and embarrassment, or a positive emotion, such as moral pride. Those emotions are part of self-conscious emotions, in which individuals do self-reflection and self-evaluation accordingly. For example, when individuals make mistakes or break the rules, moral

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emotions that may arise are shame, guilt, or embarrassment, but while they do the right things, the moral emotion that may arise is moral pride. Other categories of moral emotions are empathy, sympathy, altruism, forgiveness (Martins et al., 2021), righteous anger, contempt, disgust, elevation, and gratitude (Tangney et al., 2007). They are part of how individuals respond to others' conditions or behaviors.

Due to the importance of moral emotions, the teacher needs to pay more attention to the development of moral emotions in students, especially students with special needs in the early adolescent period in inclusive schools. It has been regulated in Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 70 of 2009 that every region is required to appoint at least one elementary school and higher school in each sub-district to conduct inclusive education. It aims to give children with special needs access to non-discriminative educational facilities, giving them the same opportunities to learn in an educational environment as regular children (Gusti, 2021; Permendiknas, 2009).

However, children with special needs in inclusive schools face several issues due to their status as a 'minority' in numbers and their limitations compared to students in general. Some to be mentioned are the feelings of alienation and bullying. On the other hand, the teachers also face problems in giving them more attention due to the high number of students they have in a class. Their special needs, followed by the unsupportive school environment, influence how they perceive themselves, moral values, and—most importantly—moral emotions. One of the inclusive students that need to be given more attention is slow learners.

Among other special needs students in the list of inclusive schools in Indonesia, data showed that children with learning difficulties, including slow learners, were the highest number with a percentage of 33,80 percent (Dapodik, 2021). Slow learners are categorized as students who experience delays in teaching and learning processes (Suryana, 2018), with IQ scores of 70-79 and 80-89 (Cooter & Cooter, 2004; Tran et al., 2020). They are students with special needs but do not qualify to join special schools (Korikana, 2020; Tran et al., 2020). Thus, instead of categorizing them as students with special needs, Korikana (2020) described them as students who need special instructions due to their cognitive limitations, especially in the understanding of symbolic, abstract, and conceptual subjects (Chauhan, 2011; Permatasari et al., 2018). On the other hand, they are also characterized to have limitations on language, auditory perceptual, visual motor, and social-emotional aspects that support adaptive behavior (Korikana, 2020; Nurshobah, 2021).

Slow learners' limitation on social-emotional abilities can be shown by their tendency to be drawn away from social activities (anti-social), moody, and have under-expectation of social emotions (Nurshobah, 2021). On the one hand, some slow learners demonstrated sensitive and unstable emotions. However, on the other hand, some demonstrated no interest in making friends and were never even involved in any trouble. Therefore, it is vital to explore the development of moral emotions of slow learners in inclusive schools because they have limitations in these factors that are basically the main factors of someone's moral emotions.

Following the Regulation of the Minister of National Education Number 70 of 2009, many provinces issued policies to regulate the implementation of inclusive schools in their respective regions. In Semarang City, Central Java, the government appointed formal and non-formal education units to provide inclusive education, at least one in each sub-district. Schools can conduct inclusive education when chosen and recommended by the government through its psychological test institution, Rumah Duta Revolusi Mental (RDRM) Semarang City. Among 45 middle schools in Semarang City, only 16 were chosen to accept inclusive students. The school that has the most inclusive students in Semarang City is SMP Negeri 13 Semarang. It has 13 inclusive students, of whom 9 were categorized as slow learners.

One of the factors that can affect the development of children's moral emotions is the attachment they build with attachment figures, including school counselors. John Bowlby's (1958) attachment theory explains that children will form emotional relationships with people they consider important and whom they use as a place of shelter and to feel safe (Alexander et al., 2018; Verschueren & Koomen, 2012a). Children who develop secure attachment will have better adaptability, social skills, and self and emotional regulation than those who develop insecure (Ainsworth et al., 2015; Duschinsky & Solomon, 2017). Several studies found that secure attachment can build an internal working model that can influence children's perception of themselves and how they should respond to other people's needs and behavior (Bowlby, 1958; Govrin, 2014; Martins et al., 2021). Thus, it is ideal for school counselors to

build intimate relationships that can create secure attachments with children, especially slow learners, that, in the end, will influence the counseling's success (Sugitri & Marjo, 2022).

Armsden & Greenberg (1987), referring to Bowlby's attachment theory regarding feelings towards attachment figures, denoted three dimensions of attachment, i.e., degree of mutual trust, quality of communication, and extent of anger and alienation. Trust and quality of communication have positive values that will encourage secure attachment. Meanwhile, the extent of alienation tends to show negative values that do not support secure attachment. These attachment dimensions could be fundamental values for school counselors to provide services to slow learners, whether in basic, responsive, individual planning, or system support services. School counselors could build exemplary communication and show availability, sensitivity, and responsibility to meet learners' needs (Verschueren & Koomen, 2012b). For example, in SMP Negeri 13 Semarang, school counselors show concern and build communication with slow learners through classical, group, or individual counseling. The support they provide affects slow learners' social-emotional ability development—as one aspect of moral emotions. Slow learners who showed sensitivity in the first year of school had become more stable. They can also build interpersonal relations with friends, even if limited to only one or two friends.

Many studies have examined the relationship between attachment and the development of moral emotions. However, exploration of this relationship in qualitative research is still limited. In terms of methodology, several studies were conducted using literature and quantitative approaches with research in Anglo-Saxon countries and America (Martins et al., 2021; Muris et al., 2014; Oward, 2020). The study was also on parents' attachment to children in general. In fact, attachment relationships are not only related to parents but also to friends, partners, and—in the school context—teachers (Feniger-Schaal & Joels, 2018). In addition, other studies examined the quality of attachment between children with special needs and teachers, such as those with special needs in general (Mazidah, 2021) and mental retardation (Feniger-Schaal & Joels, 2018; Vanwalleghem et al., 2021). However, they used quantitative approaches in special schools and out-of-school contexts. Meanwhile, this research took place in inclusive schools, which puts the subjects in different social conditions.

From the literature review above, this research has novelty in methodological approach with different research subjects and backgrounds. The study of attachment patterns between slow learner students and school counselors in inclusive schools will strengthen the provision of guidance and counseling services in facilitating the optimal development of students. For this reason, this research was explicitly oriented to finding: How are slow learner students' moral emotions at SMP Negeri 13 Semarang? Why do they develop an attachment to school counselors? How does their attachment to school counselors affect the development of moral emotions? Then, finally, what are the implications of these findings for guidance and counseling at inclusive schools?.

## METHOD

This research used a qualitative case study method to build an in-depth understanding of the particular context of a case (Miles et al., 2014; Tomaszewski et al., 2020). This research focuses on how the limitations of slow learner students influence the attachment pattern toward school counselors and the development of their moral emotions. The researcher then examines how the formed attachment patterns are associated with the moral emotions of slow learners.

### Participants

Data sources in qualitative research are selected purposively and are snowball sampling, where research subjects are chosen because they can specifically provide an understanding of the problems and phenomena in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this research, data resources are divided into primary and secondary data. Here are the details: Primary sources in this research are interviews, focus group discussions (FGD), and direct observation of the primary research subjects, i.e., slow learner students and school counselors in SMP Negeri 13 Semarang. This school has 13 inclusive students, of whom 9 were categorized as slow learners. However, the researchers took 3 students and 3 of their in-charged school counselors as research subjects. School counselors in SMP Negeri 13 Semarang will

oversee the same students from grades 7 to 9. Thus, the chosen subjects were slow learners in grades 8 and 9, considering they had interacted for at least a full year with their in-charge school counselors. There are 5 school counselors in the school, and 3 were responsible for slow learners in grades 8 and 9. Thus, the researchers chose one slow learner from each school counselor.

**Table 1.** List of Research Subjects

Slow Learners	School Counselors	Grade
SL1_CL	Coun1_NR	9
SL2_AN	Coun2_AF	8
SL3_LV	Coun3_HN	8

The three slow learner students were selected based on research inclusion criteria, i.e., 1) students who already have assessment results from the RDRM and 2) did not have other disabling conditions. Secondary data sources in this study are homeroom teachers and peer students.

## Procedures

The researchers conducted one-on-one in-depth or unstructured interviews (Yin, 2017) with school counselors to slow learners to peer students while doing direct observations. The FGDs were used to interview and observe slow learners' interaction with peer students and peer slow learners. Furthermore, documentations, i.e., student data, assessment results from RDRM, report cards, and violation records were used to strengthen and add more evidences.

The aspects explored in the study include attachment dimensions consisting of feelings of mutual trust, quality of communication, and feelings of alienation (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). Meanwhile, the aspects of slow learners' moral emotions explored include their understanding of moral standards, moral emotions that arise when disobeying rules or doing good, and moral emotions that arise in response to other people's conditions or behavior (Haidt, 2003; Ramdhani, 2016).

## Data Analysis

The data in this research were analyzed using the qualitative analysis software Quirkos. The data analysis technique was thematic analysis, a method to identify, analyze, measure, describe, and report themes found in data collections (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This technique has six phase approaches, i.e., familiarizing with the data, creating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing potential themes, defining and naming themes, and creating research reports (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In the first phase, the researchers re-read the transcript data multiple times, listened repeatedly to the recordings, and then made notes. The data was then coded and grouped in themes through Quirkos systems. After that, the researchers reviewed the potential themes before they were defined in the final themes. The last phase was creating a research report showing data results and analysis.

## RESULTS

### Moral Emotion

The main characteristic of slow learner students at SMP Negeri 13 Semarang is to have below-average cognitive abilities (IQ<90) according to a psychological test by RDRM using the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC). This condition affects their learning performance in class regarding thinking, reasoning, and communication skills. Social-emotional abilities and emotional stability, which are volatile, also affect their adaptive behavior in the school environment, as well as moral emotions.

Regarding social-emotional abilities, slow learners in SMP Negeri 13 Semarang are shy, sensitive, moody, and tend to withdraw from the environment. This has an impact on their interactions with friends. Moreover, the cognitive limitations make it difficult for them to complete tasks individually and in groups. On the one hand, classmates complained that their performance could not keep up with other

friends in group assignments. Meanwhile, on the other hand, this condition makes slow learners feel inferior and isolated.

“It’s still the same (she has no friends) now in grade 8. Moreover, her classmates complain about her being like that (cannot cooperate in group assignment), so *yeah*, she felt that they are teasing her.” (Coun2\_AF interview)

The data collected indicated that slow learners showed moral emotions such as shame, pride, and guilt, which are categorized as self-conscious emotions. These emotions emerge as a result of self-reflection and self-evaluation that appear below the level of awareness, both implicitly and explicitly. Other moral emotions such as empathy, righteous anger, forgiveness, and ignorance emerge as a part of responding to others’ conditions.

### *Self-Conscious Emotions*

Even though having limitations in cognitive and social-emotional abilities, slow learners do not completely fail to show moral emotions, including self-reflection and self-evaluation. In this case, slow learners at SMP Negeri 13 Semarang showed a feeling of shame that is more directed into fear of embarrassing friends or people around them due to lack of abilities. In fact, they are aware of their limitations, impacting how they perceive themselves when working in groups.

For example, SL3\_LV student has enthusiasm and initiative when given specific orders. Once, she volunteered to join a calisthenics competition in a class meeting event. However, on the competition day, she had no courage to continue and was worried about embarrassing her classmates.

"I don't want to embarrass the class. How if later I suddenly do not remember, I forget the moves." (Coun3\_HN interview)

This was also shown by SL1\_CL, who was reluctant to ask the teacher questions even though she did not understand the lesson. Her difficulty following lessons made her feel that asking questions was embarrassing, especially in front of his friends. Another condition was shown by SL2\_AN, who felt embarrassed to interact with friends. He became a quiet, disclose, and anti-social student. Meanwhile, friends find it difficult to communicate with her.

“Hmm (she’s) quiet and having difficulties to communicate with others.” (BQ, SL2\_AN’s friend interview)

Meanwhile, the moral emotion of guilt arises when slow learners break the rules and are reprimanded by the teacher. However, in certain conditions, the difficulties they faced due to their limitations have trapped them in a distressed situation. Even though teachers and friends assist them in completing assignments, the moral behaviors that emerge are negative, such as cheating and truancy.

Slow learners basically understand that cheating and truancy are destructive behaviors. However, in certain situations, they do not hesitate to cheat and play truant, resulting in other negative behaviors such as lying or forcing friends to give answer copies. Moreover, some slow learners also have emotional control and stability that quickly change.

"Then yes, if, for example, she can't do that (the assignment), she then asked for a copy. I was often asked for it. But if I don't give it, she would force me. But she did it via WhatsApp. She did not have the courage to do it directly." (L2, SL2\_AN’s friend interview)

On the other hand, the distress situation faced by slow learners was directed to a tendency to lie and be absent from school. This pattern can be seen in SL2\_AN, where she will be absent in mathematics and, more recently, in English. She said she had a family agenda or was sick as an excuse.

“It is just that he did not do mathematics like that in the past, many times. Then, every Friday, he never comes to school. That is just a math lesson. Then, it is like the teacher is angry with AN. Actually, not angry but reprimanded. “Why don’t you come to every lesson I take? “Why wasn’t the homework done?” (Coun2\_AF interview)

Interestingly, these three slow learners are more oval in showing their emotions through social media than in the real world. For example, SL2\_AN, who forces friends to give her a copy answer through WhatsApp (WA) chat, does not dare to ask directly, and SL1\_CL and SL3\_LV often express their emotions through WA status. At school, they are shy students who withdraw from social environments, but they do not hesitate to express their emotions on social media, even with harsh language.

“Um, WA status. I just don’t want to overthink about it. She was sarcastic like that, “Why is it like this?” (SL3\_LV’s friend, RE)

Their tendency to be more attached to social media than the real world also impacts the scope of friendships on virtual media. In a worse case, SL3\_LV, who already had an attraction to the opposite sex, had a romantic relationship with someone she met through social media. However, because she failed to understand the concept of good and evil, she was exploited and given content that led to pornography.

“He gave her (LS3\_LV) stickers of people doing husband-wife activities, you know. There are lots of them on her cellphone. Well, it turns out that the tissue or something in her brain broke. She became addicted to pornography. She wanted to do it for real. That is in cyberspace, right?” (Coun3\_HN interview)

Besides negative self-evaluation of shame and guilt, self-conscious emotion also motivates positive self-evaluation, which is moral pride. In this case, slow learners showed pride when doing good things and guilt when misbehaving. They showed joy when teachers praised them for putting effort into an assignment. On some occasions, they do feel happy to be able to help friends.

“My friend was sick, and I offer a help. I am happy if I could be helpful.” (SL3\_LV interview)

### *Other-Focused Moral Emotions*

The next feature of moral emotions shown by slow learners are the emotion that arises in response to other people's behavior or condition. They are empathy, forgiveness, anger, upset, and ignorance.

In the context of empathy, slow learners performed a low level of empathy due to their quiet, shyness, difficulty approaching, and anti-social characteristics. Even during observations, the researchers found gestures indicating that SL2\_AN had an unfavorable relationship with her friends. SL2\_AN was primarily silent during FGDs with her friends. Her friends also kept silent and stared at each other anytime she got to answer questions. As her school counselor, Coun2\_AF confirms this condition.

"Yes, she doesn't really show empathy for friends. AN also doesn't (show empathy) because she's quiet." (Coun1\_AF school counselor interview)

The low level of empathy was also shown by SL3\_LV. Like SL2\_AN, she is quiet and needs instructions to start something.

"Less empathy...Yes, maybe she is preoccupied with her own world. (She's) quite quiet." (Coun3\_HN interview)

However, that does not mean that all slow learners have a low level of empathy. Although they tend to be quiet, SL1\_CL showed empathetic behavior towards her friends.

"Like... what is that... like I saw her (a friend) sitting down, like pondering... She didn't have any snacks from the first break to the last. Then, I took a second break to buy her snacks. She seemed to refuse, but I forced her to take them." (SL1\_CL interview)

The different empathy levels are also related to their characteristics and relationships with classmates. SL2\_AN, who is more reserved and introverted, tends to find building relationships with friends around her more challenging. Even when asked to communicate, she stayed silent, did not answer, and even gave desynchronized answers. The researcher must repeat the question several times and change the diction with more concrete and general terms to make her understand.

In addition, another moral emotion that may arise is righteous anger, which is the feeling of anger that arises when someone sees violations committed by others (Tangney et al., 2007). However, the feelings of anger they showed addressed not only positive behavior but also negative. It is positive because slow learners can understand and address their emotions without causing negative behavior. They tend to ignore and forgive them. For example, when a friend took SL1\_CL's belongings, such as pens and sticky notes, she ignored them even though she was annoyed.

"Yeah, sometimes they gave them back. Sometimes they brought them home. But well, it's okay." (SL1\_CL interview)

"She was angry. She said, 'I do not like it, Ma'am. I dislike it if they kept doing it.' She said like that." (Coun1\_NR interview)

"I forgive them. I am fine if they want to become friend, but if they do that again... em, then how?" (SL3\_LV interview)

Even though they tend to be passive in showing their anger, slow learners are more courageous in expressing it through social media. For example, SL2\_AN, who forces friends to give copy answers via WhatsApp, will be silent when meeting face-to-face in class. Then SL1\_CL, although only silent when teased by friends, expressed her frustration by showing aggressive behavior on her social media. Once, she fought with her friends. Coun1\_NR, as her in-charge school counselor, found that she had many second social media accounts where she mostly said harsh words.

"She explained that, 'I didn't do that, Ma'am.' That's it. But if I check her comments on social media on her messenger, those are her words that are not good. She talked back to her friends too. I asked, 'How come your words are like this?' 'I'm annoyed, Ma'am. He keeps saying it even though I didn't do it.' That's it." (Coun1\_NR interview)

Of the three research subjects, only SL3\_LV dares to show aggressive behavior to her friends when angry.

"When her friends touched her stuff (in grade 7), she got angry. Then, none of her friends want to get close to her because she talks dirty... Em, rude. Like cursing in Javanese. '*Asu ya kowe!*'" (Coun3\_HN interview)

### Pattern of slow learner-school counselor attachment

Attachment is closely related to how children perceive their relationship with their attachment figure. Thus, in this study, the attachment between slow learners and school counselors cannot be separated from how school counselors treat them, which they then perceive. All three slow learners showed different attachment characteristics, depending on the treatment given by their in-charge school counselor.



**Table 2.** Attachment Patterns Between Slow Learners and School Counselors

Attachment Factors	Subject	School counselor's treatment	Slow learner's perception
Degree of mutual trust	SL1	Inconsistency of affection	Ambivalence/ Ambiguity
	SL2	Absence of affection	No trust
	SL3	Showing affection and support	Trust
Quality of communication	SL1	Unavailability when needed	Hesitance
	SL2	Problem-based counseling services only	Conceal
	SL3	Proactive & Responsive	Disclose
<i>Extent of anger and alienation</i>	SL1	<i>Insensitivity</i>	<i>Avoid intimacy</i>
	SL2	<i>Neglecting SL's needs</i>	<i>Detachment</i>
	SL3	<i>Sensitivity</i>	<i>Emotionally attached</i>

*Degree of mutual trust.* This dimension is related to slow learners' level of trust that the school counselor understands and respects their needs and desires. The school counselor's concerns by asking about their conditions and difficulties provide a sense of trust in their relationship with school counselors.

"The thing that I like from Mrs. HN is that she can be trusted. Like she is not going to reveal the secret to anyone else." (SL3\_LV interview)

Coun3\_HN showed her affection by constantly asking about SL3\_LV's condition or difficulties in learning. Besides providing classical and individual services, Coun3\_HN communicates more often with SL3\_LV when she is with friends so that she does not feel 'inclusive' or given excessive attention compared to other friends.

"Meanwhile, I often ask, "Are you okay or not?" That's it. "I am fine, Ma'am." She's glad to be given attention like that. So when I'm in the class, when I'm teaching or when I pass by and meet her, I say, "Hello LV, you good today?" "Yes, I am." That's it." (Coun3\_HN interview)

Coun3\_HN also understands the needs and conditions of SL3\_LV. Cognitive limitations that hinder slow learners' understanding of learning and bullying issues lead to many obstacles, such as withdrawal from the environment, low self-esteem, and feelings of alienation. Facing this, Coun3\_HN provides teachers and other students with an understanding of the unique conditions faced by slow learners. He also shows support for slow learners when they need more confidence.

"Yes, because when we were in grade 7, we were still at the beginning of learning, right? We just found out that inclusive children are like that. I asked the teacher for help, "Please accompany her. Assist her." Then I asked her, "How was the English class yesterday? There is work to do, right?" There is. "Has it been done yet? Are there any difficulties?" (Coun3\_HN interview)

"Well, then one day LV did not come in, I went to class. I told all his friends. Because at first they did not know." (Coun3\_HN interview)

"Yesterday, she volunteered to take part in a gymnastics competition. "Ma'am, I usually forget the moves. Then how, ma'am?" She realized. "It's okay, Girl. The important thing is that you want to. Just be confident. It is fine to forget the moves." (Coun3\_HN interview)

In contrast to Coun3\_HN, Coun1\_NR showed inconsistent affection to SL1\_CL. On the one hand, Coun1\_NR knows SL1\_CL is very dependent on her mother, so she positions herself as a mother figure when communicating. However, this attention is shown during counseling sessions when slow learners face problems. Besides that, Coun1\_NR, who also serves as the homeroom teacher, showed a firm attitude towards all students without distinction, including SL1\_CL. She never asked about the

conditions or needs of slow learners who face the same issues: classroom learning obstacles and bullying.

"I'm worried, if I treat her inclusively, she will be offended. And then there might be social jealousy from his friends... So, when there is a problem like that, it's just as necessary. That's why when you asked me if I asked anything about her academics, I have not, hehe. I know I should have done that, too. Hehehe." (BK1\_NR interview)

"When being counseled, she was like... scared, then she was like... how come I'm confused. Doing this (showing hand gestures). She did not want to talk like this (hand gesture). Her expression was like that, shaking like that." (BK1\_NR interview)

This gives rise to ambivalent or ambiguous feelings in SL1\_CL. On the one hand, she wanted to talk about the conditions she experienced, such as when she experienced bullying. However, on the other hand, she thought that Coun1\_NR was a figure she was afraid of.

"Like... like what... for example, a glass, she told us to put it back. Once Mrs. NR was the homeroom teacher, there was a friend of mine who did not attend class. She did not care... She had already chatted, asking for permission, but she had just read it. Didn't reply. She should reply so they will know." (SL1\_CL interview)

Meanwhile, in the case of Coun2\_AF, the slow learner, who was anti-social, quiet, and shy, never caused any problems at all. She only often skips mathematics and English, which he considers difficult, on the grounds of illness. So, in this case, Coun2\_AF did not pay special attention to slow learners. However, with this lack of attention, SL2\_AN admitted that he never had and did not believe in telling the school counselor about her problems.

"Avoid (if there is a problem). Afraid of being scolded." (SL2\_AN interview)

*Quality of communication.* This factor is related to slow learners' perception of the extent of involvement quality and the verbal communication with school counselors, followed by how responsive they are to their emotional condition. Communication opportunities between school counselors and slow learners are limited to providing classical and individual services tailored to student needs assessment. However, in reality, individual and group services are only provided when individuals have problems due to limited time and human resources. In some conditions, the school counselor also becomes a homeroom teacher for slow learners, making interaction and communication more intense.

The quality of communication cannot be separated from slow learners' characteristics, which tend to be quiet, shy, and withdrawn from the environment. For this reason, school counselor must consider counseling approaches that adjust their character. For example, Coun1\_NR applied the pattern used by SL1\_CL's parents to communicate with her because SL1\_CL still depends on her mother.

"Yes, to say the least, you have to be very close. Because I remember when her mother said to this child, if I don't ask her to eat, then she won't. So, I remembered it so that when I talk to CL, I do it in that way." (Coun1\_NR interview)

Coun1\_NR, who is currently SL1\_CL's homeroom teacher, often takes advantage of the midday prayer break to communicate with her. However, SL1\_CL admitted that she did not tell the school counselor everything. In some conditions, Coun1\_NR is not very responsive and is unavailable when CL needs, such as when SL1\_CL wants to talk about bullying cases or when SL1\_CL faces learning obstacles in class.

"There's something that wasn't (told). Personal problems... Yes, because I did not want to." (SL1\_CL interview)

"But if asking, "Do you have any problems in class?" I've never done that. Even though it actually needs to be given attention and given counseling, hehe." (Coun1\_NR interview)

On the other hand, Coun2\_AF admitted to taking a more problem-focused approach. So that when students face no specific problems, they do not take a particular approach.

"... here (in SMP 13) the counseling is more emphasis on children with problems, not inclusion." (Coun2\_AF interview)

However, SL2\_AN is a quiet, shy, and anti-social student who never caused problems. So, communication is only limited to classical services in class. This made SL2\_AN never say anything to Coun2\_AF.

"(I am) afraid of being scolded. Just keep it for myself (if there is a problem)." (SL2\_AN)

In contrast to the two school counselors above, Coun3\_HN tends to be more proactive in asking about slow learners' conditions. Even when SL3\_LV is not involved in troubles, Coun3\_HN is more responsive and provides emotional support. She tends to take a 'casual' approach compared to an individual approach that requires one-on-one meetings. Coun3\_HN will ask SL3\_LV's condition and take a discreet approach to build communication and SL3\_LV's trust.

"For SL3\_LV, I just chatted casually. For example, when doing community work, I called her, "Come and sit here with Mrs. HN." Then to his friends, "You sit over there." I chatted with her slowly... I approached her when the condition was not too crowded. I didn't call her alone." (HN school counselor interview)

This approach makes SL3\_LV disclose to Coun3\_HN, and communication can run well. In addition, another factor that led to this communication was the length of time Coun3\_HN became in-charged school counselor to SL3\_LV, which is from grade 7 to grade 8. Moreover, Coun3\_HN also became SL3\_LV's homeroom teacher when she was in grade 7. This opportunity became a privilege for Coun3\_HN to approach SL3\_LV because he can fully overcome SL3\_LV problems.

In contrast to Coun2\_AF and Coun1\_NR, even though they are in charge of SL2\_AN and SL1\_CL from grade 7, the limited time in providing counseling services reduces the momentum to establish communication. They also do not have the opportunity to handle cases directly because they need to work together with the homeroom teacher.

*Extent of anger and alienation.* This factor refers to how adolescents experience feelings of isolation, anger, and experiences of detachment from their attachment figures (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Guarnieri et al., 2010; Purnama & Wahyuni, 2017). As with the attachment factors above, the feelings of alienation and closeness also vary depending on how the school counselors treat slow learners. For example, the ambivalence of the relationship that SL1\_CL builds with the school counselor makes her avoid further intimacy. The school counselor, who was not sensitive to her emotional condition, made her want to avoid interaction.

"It's like... I want to tell (Coun1\_NR), but sometimes I ponder like should I do that? Because if I tell the teacher and my friend finds out, I'm afraid I'll get scolded." (SL1\_CL interview)

Meanwhile, at SL2\_AN, limited communication made him feel disconnected from the school counselor. She admitted that he only ever talked about the bullying problem. From the data collected, SL2\_AN's other biggest obstacle is that her cognitive limitations make her have low self-esteem to the point of being inferior and often skipping classes in certain subjects. In this case, SL2\_AN needs attention from close figures at school. Coun2\_AF knows that SL2\_AN is a child who needs attention, but because SL2\_AN is not a problem-making student, she does not mind this.

"SL2\_AN from grade 7 is quiet, but sometimes there are cases where she tries to get the attention of his homeroom teacher. So, she often spams chats with her homeroom teacher. When the message had been replied to, she repeated the question again. Judging from the language of the chat, in my opinion, it is indeed she was trying to get attention. Because when she got a reply, she felt cared." (Coun2\_AF) "It's like... I want to tell (Coun1\_NR), but sometimes I ponder like should I do that? Because if I tell the teacher and my friend finds out, I'm afraid I'll get scolded." (SL1\_CL interview)

In other cases, SL3\_LV is emotionally close to Coun3\_HN. She admitted that Coun3\_HN was her favorite teacher and always beamed when she talked about her. This, of course, cannot be separated from the treatment of Coun3\_HN, who shows sensitivity, is emotionally present, and shows attention and support to her.

"She is cool...caring...can provide solutions. He was the homeroom teacher in 7th grade... Mrs. HN first asked for this card, what is it, a form... from the education office, like that. Well, that's what I was given there, ma'am, to a special room like that. It was like repetition, ma'am...Then I was helped by Mrs. HN. Then... yes other things like that, ma'am." (SL3\_LV interview) "It's like... I want to tell (Coun1\_NR), but sometimes I ponder like should I do that? Because if I tell the teacher and my friend finds out, I'm afraid I'll get scolded." (SL1\_CL interview)

It is known that slow learners have different levels of attachment and security. SL1\_CL and SL2\_AN, for example, show behavior that leads to a lower security level than SL3\_LV, who has higher security with her school counselor. The treatment and presence of school counselors as attachment figures are the main factors determining this level of attachment, considering the condition of slow learners with limitations.

## DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to explore the attachment pattern between slow-learner students and school counselors in the development of slow learners' moral emotions in inclusive schools, using a case study in Central Java. The findings indicated that slow learners showed different levels of security toward their in-charge school counselors. SL1\_CL and SL2\_AN, for example, showed behaviors that serve a lower level of security compared to SL3\_LV, who has a higher level of security. It is affected by how school counselors treat and show affection, warmth (Guarnieri et al., 2010), sensitivity, responsiveness, and emotional and physical availability on their needs and conditions. The factors that could build slow learners' attachment to school counselors are the degree of mutual trust, quality of communication, and extent of anger and alienation (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Guarnieri et al., 2010; Purnama & Wahyuni, 2017). On the other hand, the limitation in cognitive and social-emotional skills also affected their understanding of good and evil and, finally, their moral emotions.

This finding contrasts with the study conducted by Oward (2020) that demonstrated attachment and moral emotion to not moderated by the figure of attachment and have no significant association in at-risk children. This study found that the physical and emotional responsiveness and availability of school counselors can lead to children's trust and disclosure in communicating. With the complexity of issues faced by slow learners as 'minorities' in inclusive schools, trust and disclosure are essential in reducing the level of shame and alienation in slow learners.

In the moral emotion of shame, the subjects showed feelings of worthlessness and inferiority because they did not perform well in class and were worried that they could embarrass others due to their limitations. This feeling encourages defensive and avoidant behavior (Muris et al., 2014), where they become very closed and withdraw from the environment. However, SL3\_LV, with higher attachment security, was ultimately able to build friendships, which, although not extensive, improved her social abilities. Her aggressiveness in grade 7 also decreased, in contrast to SL2\_AN who increasingly withdraws from the environment with anti-social behavior and truancy. Children with a secure attachment are indicated to have the courage to explore the environment because of the figure they use as a safe haven (Ainsworth et al., 2015; Duschinsky & Solomon, 2017; Hardiyanti, 2017).

Besides shame, another moral emotion shown by slow learners that represents a negative evaluation is guilt, a feeling of regret and remorse for breaking the rules or doing something negative that they hope to behave differently. Guilt could be an adaptive function as it is a ruminative behavior after transgression (Muris et al., 2014). However, even though slow learners showed a feeling of guilt after breaking the rules, they tend to behave negatively in a distress condition, such as cursing friends on social media, forcing them to give answers for assignments, saying rude words, and skipping a considerably difficult subject. In his study, Tangney (2007) explained that a high level of guilt is

maladaptive, especially when it is followed by shame. This is a form of self-defense for slow learners in dealing with their distress situation at school.

However, the findings showed that attachment conditions did not have much association with the moral emotion of empathy. Slow learners in this study are quiet, closed, anti-social, and absorbed in their own world. This also influences their level of consideration for the environment and their friends. Even though SL1\_CL has a higher level of empathy than the others, the research results showed that their level of security with attachment figures does not play much of a role.

Lastly, the limitation of slow learners' cognitive and reasoning abilities does not influence them to perceive their relationships with school counselors. However, it does affect their understanding of more complex moral standards applied in society. Nevertheless, the level of attachment can ease school counselors' jobs to direct and guide them to behave better after transgression. SL3\_LV, who showed destructive behaviors in romantic relationships through social media, could be treated earlier because of the trust, disclosure, and closeness she built with the school counselor.

The issues faced by slow learners can be categorized into four areas of guidance and counseling services at school: personal, social, learning, and career. In personal aspects, slow learners are disclosed, emotionally unstable, quickly pressured, and have low self-esteem. In social aspects, they face issues such as bullying, being drawn away from the environment, and being unable to understand ethical interactions with the opposite gender. In learning aspects, they are left behind in class, unable to coordinate group assignments, absent from class, and cheating. Meanwhile, in the career aspect, their talents and interests are less explored. Therefore, counseling services that could be given to slow learners in inclusive schools are basic and responsive services to fulfill guidance and counseling functions of understanding, development, and prevention.

Basic services can be given in classical and group guidance to fulfill the understanding functions of guidance and counseling at school. It aims to give slow learners understanding and increase their self-confidence, manage emotions and stress, interpersonal ability to make friends, understand and overcome bullying, and explore their talents and interests. In school, counselors could provide classical guidance emphasizing anti-bullying and non-discriminative environment, and emotion and stress management. Meanwhile, in group guidance, school counselors could allow slow learners to express their opinions intensely and develop their ability to make friends, cooperate, discipline, tolerate, and be responsible (Silondae, 2013).

Furthermore, responsive services can be provided in individual counseling as a development and prevention function. This counseling should be given 'casually' as a part of caution to provide services for the inclusiveness of slow learners. It means that school counselors could build communication, trust, and closeness (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987; Guarnieri et al., 2010; Purnama & Wahyuni, 2017) with slow learners by asking about their conditions or challenges. Responsive services aim to make slow learners disclose and provide an understanding of ethical-based interactions with the opposite gender. In implementing this service, school counselors must show concern, sensitivity, responsiveness, and availability when slow learners are in need, both physically and emotionally, so that a secure attachment can be formed and slow learners can fulfill their developmental tasks.

Apart from the direct services above, school counselors are also responsible for providing indirect services (Hall, 2015) through collaboration with peer students, subject teachers, school staff, parents, and even other parties outside the schools (Hadi & Laras, 2021). For example, school counselors could provide understanding to regular students, subject teachers, and school staff about slow learners' condition and limitations to build a supportive environment. Parental involvement and coordination with other parties like RDRM and the government must also be maintained to provide longitudinal service in case slow learners show striking behavioral changes, as in the SL3\_LV case.

More importantly, school counselors need to develop their potential to meet the needs of slow learners. With the regulation for all schools to provide inclusive education, school counselors who are responsible for the student's development must continuously develop themselves by learning various counseling techniques for students with special needs, either independently or by following the training provided by institutions or the government.

## CONCLUSION

The characteristics of slow learners in SMP Negeri 13 Semarang are quiet, shy, withdrawn from the environment, anti-social, and moody. The limitations they have due to their lack of cognitive and social-emotional ability resulted in many issues, such as feelings of alienation, low self-esteem, and even bullying. These impact their adaptive behavior, requiring more approach and attention from an attachment figure such as school counselors. The analysis above found that the level of slow learners' attachment security was affected by school counselors' affection, responsiveness, sensitivity, and availability, both physically and emotionally. Higher security slow learners demonstrated higher trust and disclosure and are emotionally attached to school counselors compared to those with lower security. On the other hand, attachment is associated with moral emotions of shame, guilt, and righteous anger but is not significantly associated with empathy.

The findings could give more awareness to school counselors in showing support and affection toward slow learners. Furthermore, the finding could also give school counselors an overview of services tailored to slow learners' needs, not services focused on problematic students. Nonproblematic students do not mean they have no problems. With this, the purpose of government to provide non-discriminatory education could be fostered. This research has numerous limitations, mainly in categorizing the attachment style of slow learners and measuring the influence of attachment on moral emotions. Thus, further investigations in mixed methods are required to complement this study. Further, the researcher could measure and categorize the attachment style and its influence on moral emotions before exploring it deeper into a qualitative description. On the other hand, further research could expand the research in different settings or subjects. For example, the attachment between school counselors and students with other special needs, between students with special needs and peer students, as well as between parents and vulnerable children who live in prostitution environments or street children. In this way, the field of research becomes more varied and comprehensive.

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