

Deconstructing Digital Social Envy and Reconstructing Junior High School Students' Moral Autonomy through Value Clarification Technique

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Abstrak

Era digital telah melahirkan fenomena iri sosial digital, yang berakar pada media sosial dan secara struktural memengaruhi perkembangan moral remaja. Studi ini bertujuan untuk meneliti secara mendalam hubungan antara iri sosial digital dan erosi otonomi moral, sekaligus merumuskan model rekonstruksi pedagogis berdasarkan Teknik Klarifikasi Nilai (VCT) dalam pendidikan Studi Sosial. Studi ini menggunakan metode tinjauan pustaka konseptual dengan mengeksplorasi sumber literatur akademik primer dan sekunder, termasuk buku teks teoretis, artikel jurnal nasional dan internasional yang terpercaya, serta laporan dari institusi yang kredibel. Analisis data dilakukan melalui pembacaan mendalam dan sintesis konseptual tematik. Temuan studi ini menghasilkan tiga proposisi konseptual utama: (1) iri sosial digital adalah konstruksi yang berbeda dari iri hati konvensional, dengan empat karakteristik unik yang belum banyak dibahas dalam literatur pendidikan di Indonesia; (2) iri sosial digital beroperasi melalui mekanisme "heteronomisasi nilai" yang secara paradoks membalikkan lintasan perkembangan moral Piaget dari otonomi kembali ke heteronomi; dan (3) VCT adalah metode pedagogis adaptif karena beroperasi pada tingkat penyaringan nilai, yang sesuai dengan akar masalah iri sosial digital. Artikel ini merumuskan Model Rekonstruksi Otonomi Moral (MROM-VCT) berbasis VCT empat tahap yang dapat diintegrasikan ke dalam pendidikan Studi Sosial serta layanan bimbingan dan konseling di tingkat sekolah menengah pertama.

Kata kunci: Iri Sosial Digital, Otonomi Moral, Teknik Klarifikasi Nilai, Siswa SMP, Pendidikan Nilai

Abstract

The digital era has given rise to the phenomenon of digital social envy, which is rooted in social media and structurally influences adolescents' moral development. This study aims to examine in depth the relationship between digital social envy and the erosion of moral autonomy, while also formulating a pedagogical reconstruction model based on the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) in Social Studies education. This study employs a conceptual literature review method by exploring primary and secondary academic literature sources, including theoretical textbooks, reputable national and international journal articles, and reports from credible institutions. Data analysis was conducted through close reading and thematic conceptual synthesis. The findings of this study yield three main conceptual propositions: (1) digital social envy is a construct distinct from conventional envy, with four unique characteristics that have not been widely addressed in the educational literature in Indonesia; (2) digital social envy operates through a mechanism of "value heteronomization" that paradoxically reverses Piaget's moral development trajectory from autonomy back to heteronomy; and (3) VCT is an adaptive pedagogical method because it operates at the level of value filtering, which corresponds to the root of the digital social envy problem. This article formulates a four-stage VCT-based Moral Autonomy Reconstruction Model (MROM-VCT) that can be integrated into Social Studies education and guidance and counseling services at the junior high school level.

Keywords: Digital Social Envy, Moral Autonomy, Value Clarification Technique, Junior High School Students, Values Education

Introduction

The development of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the ways in which adolescents interact, communicate, and construct their identities. Tasya et al. (2024) emphasize that social media has become a primary space for social interaction and the search for self-identity, in line with a global report indicating that more than 90% of adolescents access digital platforms every day. This phenomenon is further reinforced by a report by Felda Nayla Seftiandri (2025), which confirms that Generation Z constitutes the largest group of internet users in Indonesia, accounting for 34.40%, a trend that is also consistent with the analysis by (Regita, 2024), which reveals high levels of cyber exposure among students. This high level of digital engagement ultimately places junior high school students at risk of various negative effects, one of which is the phenomenon of digital social envy, or social envy.

Digital social envy is a modern form of social envy that arises from self-comparison activities conducted online through social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. Appel et al. (2016), in *Current Opinion in Psychology*, revealed that passive social media use has been shown to trigger detrimental social comparisons and feelings

of envy, which ultimately have a significant association with depressive symptoms among users. This situation is further exacerbated by data from an APJII survey showing that, on average, Indonesians spend 1–2 hours using social media each day. According to the survey results, approximately 34.17% of respondents fall within this time range, with 32.98% and 37.55% of female respondents reporting more frequent use of TikTok (Surharno, 2025). This makes *digital social envy* a threat that gradually erodes the psychological and moral well-being of adolescents at the junior high school level.

The impact of social envy in the digital world on junior high school students is not limited to psychological aspects but also extends to more fundamental aspects of moral development. Excessive exposure to social media, cyberbullying, and social comparison have been shown to cause high levels of anxiety, which ultimately obscure adolescents' ability to distinguish between ethical and unethical behavior in public settings (Sabila et al., 2023). This situation significantly threatens the moral autonomy of junior high school students, which refers to an individual's ability to think and act based on personally held ethical values rather than merely following temporary and external digital social pressures (Denissa et al., 2022)

Conceptually, moral autonomy is a key concept in the theories of moral development proposed by Piaget, (2013) and Kohlberg (1976), which emphasize that individuals who have reached the stage of moral autonomy are capable of thinking and acting in accordance with principles of justice derived from self-awareness. Erikson (1968) also states that a major challenge in adolescent development is the formation of an integrated and cohesive self-identity as the foundation for healthy social life. However, when digital social envy influences this process, adolescents are more likely to adopt external values focused on popularity and visual appearance rather than values that are more meaningful and morally authentic.

This crisis of moral autonomy places Social Studies (IPS) in a strategic position to respond. In essence, Social Studies is the result of the selection of the social sciences and humanities disciplines, scientifically and psychologically organized for educational purposes, with the ultimate goal of developing citizens who are not only knowledgeable about society but also possess responsible attitudes and values in social life (Sapriya, 2009). Thus, the shift in values triggered by digital social envy is not merely an individual psychological issue among students but also a pedagogical challenge that falls directly within the scope

and objectives of Social Studies education at the junior high school level.

This challenge has become increasingly urgent given that Social Studies education in Indonesia is considered slow to adapt to the digital realities of the 21st century Widodo et al. (2020). To date, digital literacy content in the Social Studies curriculum has largely focused on technical and cognitive aspects, such as the ability to search for and filter information, while the affective and moral dimensions of students' digital experiences, including the phenomenon of social envy rooted in self-comparison on social media, have received limited explicit attention in Social Studies education discourse. This gap provides the fundamental rationale for this article to position Social Studies not merely as a context for implementation but as the primary curricular space in which the reconstruction of junior high school students' moral autonomy in response to *digital social envy* should take place.

In this context, the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) introduces a structured and reflective teaching method. Wibowo et al. (2022) noted that the VCT teaching model has been shown to be successful in increasing students' awareness of moral values through an active clarification process in secondary schools. (Siswinarti, 2019) in *Buletin Ilmiah*

Pendidikan, also revealed that the implementation of VCT had a positive impact on students' social attitudes in Social Studies. In addition, Wibowo et al., (2022), in *Jurnal Basicedu*, showed that a VCT-focused learning method could significantly improve students' understanding of social values at the junior high school level. These findings are further supported by empirical evidence from international research; in an experimental study of adolescents, (Lee et al., 2024) found that a value clarification program significantly improved ethical reasoning skills while strengthening participants' identity stability, with the effects persisting for up to five months after the intervention. These findings provide cross-contextual support that VCT is not only theoretically relevant but has also been empirically proven effective in reshaping the foundations of adolescents' values and identities, two aspects that are particularly vulnerable to erosion by digital social envy.

Although research on VCT and student ethics has developed significantly, studies that specifically link digital social envy to the moral autonomy of junior high school students and position VCT as a strategy for its reconstruction remain very scarce in the educational literature in Indonesia. Most existing studies only address the implementation of VCT in the

context of values education in general or traditional Social Studies learning, as described by Wibowo et al. (2022), without examining in depth the dimensions of the moral crisis arising from the pressures of social envy in the digital world. This research gap provides the primary basis for this conceptual article.

Considering the aforementioned background, this article aims to: (1) deconstruct the phenomenon of digital social envy and analyze its impact on the moral autonomy of junior high school students; and (2) reconstruct a model for strengthening moral autonomy based on the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) as a contextual pedagogical response to the challenges of the digital era. Practically, this article is expected to benefit: (a) guidance and counseling teachers and Social Studies teachers in designing value-based interventions that are relevant to students' digital realities; (b) school principals and education policymakers in considering the integration of value clarification approaches into the curriculum; and (c) future researchers who wish to develop empirical research on digital social envy and adolescent moral autonomy in Indonesia.

Research Method

This article applies a conceptual literature review method based on the methodological framework of Torraco

(2005). This method was selected because the primary focus of the article is to develop theory and formulate conceptual arguments concerning the relationship between digital social envy and the erosion of moral autonomy among junior high school students, while also formulating a pedagogical reconstruction model based on the Value Clarification Technique (VCT). Data were collected through a documentary study of primary and secondary literature sources. The literature search was conducted systematically using academic databases, such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and reputable journal publisher repositories/Scopus, using the following specific keywords: social envy, digital envy, moral autonomy, Piaget moral development, Kohlberg, Value Clarification Technique, and value education in social studies. The literature inclusion criteria comprised: (1) original works or primary theories developed by the

originators of the concepts (foundational texts); (2) indexed empirical and conceptual research journal articles published between 2013 and 2025; and (3) official reports from credible institutions relevant to trends in internet and social media use among adolescents in Indonesia. The conceptual synthesis was conducted through close reading, thematic categorization, and the integration of arguments to construct a new and comprehensive theoretical framework.

Primary Sources

The primary sources in this article are the original works of the originators of the theories that serve as the main conceptual foundation of the discussion. These primary sources were used to formulate theoretical arguments directly from the original ideas, thereby avoiding interpretive distortion. The primary sources used are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1 List of Primary Sources

No.	Author	Title of Work	Year	Publisher/Journal	Relevance
1	Piaget, J	The Moral Judgment of the Child	1965	Free Press	Theory of moral autonomy and children's moral development
2	Helmut Schoeck	Envy: A Theory of Social Behaviour	1969	Harcourt, Brace & World	Concept of <i>envy</i> not merely as a personal psychological emotion, but as a fundamental drive that shapes social behavior and power structures
3	Kohlberg, L.	The Philosophy of Moral Development	1981	Harper & Row	Stages of conventional–postconventional moral development
4	Raths et al.	Values and	1966	Charles E. Merrill	Theoretical foundations

		Teaching: Working with Values in the Classroom	and procedures of VCT		
5	Sidney B. Simon	Values Clarification: A Handbook of Practical Strategies	1972	Hart Publishing	Practical VCT strategies in the classroom
6	Festinger. L	A Theory of Social Comparison Processes	1954	Human Relations	Social comparison theory as the root of social envy

Secondary Sources

Secondary sources include journal articles, reports, and research findings that discuss, interpret, and apply theories from primary sources in more contemporary and specific contexts. They serve to strengthen the arguments, provide recent empirical evidence, and contextualize the discussion within the educational and socio-digital realities of Indonesia and the global context.

Analytical Techniques

The data analysis technique in this study adopts Torraco's (2005) framework of conceptual analysis and synthesis, combined with the stages of qualitative analysis proposed by Huberman (2014). The analysis process was carried out through two main phases:

1. **Deconstruction and Data Reduction Phase (Close Reading & Conceptual Mapping):** The authors conducted a close reading of all selected literature materials to identify, extract, and categorize key concepts, theoretical

arguments, and empirical findings relevant to digital social envy and moral autonomy.

2. **Conceptual Synthesis and Reconstruction Phase (Conceptual Synthesis):** The authors integrated and interconnected fundamental ideas from various theoretical perspectives, namely developmental psychology of morality and Social Studies values education, into a coherent theoretical line of argument (Torraco, 2005). This synthesis proceeded from a deconstructive analysis of the impact of digital social envy on the moral depersonalization of junior high school students toward the formulation of a pedagogical reconstruction framework based on the Value Clarification Technique (VCT).

Through these analytical stages, the study does not merely summarize the existing literature but also produces conceptual novelty in the form of an

adaptive learning model for values education in the digital era (Torraco, 2005).

Results and Discussion

A. Deconstruction of Digital Social Envy

1. The Concept of *Social Envy* from a Social Psychology Perspective

Envy is one of the most fundamental social emotions in human life. Helmut Schoeck (1969), in his seminal work entitled *Envy: A Theory of Social Behaviour*, defines envy as a sense of dissatisfaction and discomfort that arises when an individual observes the superiority, success, or possessions of another person that they desire. Schoeck emphasizes that envy is a major driving force in human social interaction throughout the history of civilization and describes it as “a drive which lies at the core of man's life as a social being” (1969: 1). In the context of education and adolescent development, *envy* is not merely an ordinary negative emotion but also a psychological force that can significantly alter an individual's moral judgment,

Parrott and Smith (1993), in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, clearly distinguish between two types of envy, namely benign envy (positive envy) and malicious envy (negative envy). Benign envy motivates individuals to improve themselves, whereas malicious envy motivates a desire to harm

or demean the person who is envied. Parrott and Smith found that envy is characterized by feelings of insecurity, longing for what others possess, concealed resentment, and dissatisfaction with the feeling of envy itself (1993: 906). In the digital context, malicious envy is considerably intensified because social media platforms algorithmically amplify content depicting success, beauty, and wealth, thereby creating standards of comparison that are nearly impossible for adolescents in general to attain.

The theoretical foundation of the phenomenon of digital social envy stems from Festinger's (1954) Social Comparison Theory. Festinger states that individuals naturally have a drive to evaluate their own opinions and abilities through comparison with others. When such comparisons involve upward comparison, that is, comparing oneself with individuals perceived as superior, they tend to evoke negative feelings such as dissatisfaction, low self-esteem, and envy. Structurally, social media reinforces the mechanism of upward comparison because users selectively choose to display only the best aspects of their lives, thereby creating the illusion that other people's lives are always happier and more successful.

2. Social Media as a Space for the Reproduction of Social Envy among

Adolescents

Krasnova (2013), in an international conference on *Wirtschaftsinformatik*, conducted an empirical study of 584 Facebook users and found that passive following behavior, namely merely observing content without actively engaging, can exacerbate feelings of social envy and ultimately reduce users' life satisfaction. The findings indicate that simply scrolling through content and viewing other people's seemingly better lives is sufficient to trigger social envy without users being consciously aware of it.

Appel et al. (2016), in *Current Opinion in Psychology*, reinforced the findings of Krasnova et al. by demonstrating that passive social media use can lead to detrimental social comparisons and is significantly associated with depressive symptoms and lower self-esteem. More concerning, Appel et al. found that many users are unaware that the negative emotions they experience after using social media are actually caused by an automatic and unconscious process of social comparison (2016: 44). This phenomenon is highly relevant to the behavior of junior high school students who spend hours accessing social media content every day.

Data from the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers

(APJII), as presented by Kristianti (2024), indicate that Generation Z, the majority of whom are currently junior high school students, constitutes the largest group of internet users in Indonesia, accounting for 34.40%. This reality places junior high school students among those most exposed to the effects of digital social envy, given that they are active social media users who have not yet developed sufficient emotional and moral maturity to critically evaluate the content they access.

3. Characteristics of Digital Social Envy among Junior High School Students

Junior high school students aged 12 to 15 are undergoing a developmental stage that Erik H. Erikson (1968) describes as the Identity vs. Role Confusion phase, during which they seek to discover and develop their identities. At this stage, acceptance from peers (peer group) becomes a highly significant psychological need. Erikson emphasizes that failure to develop a coherent identity during this phase results in role confusion and an identity crisis that may have long-term consequences (1968: 128). In this context, social media functions as a primary platform through which junior high school students seek recognition, validation, and confirmation of their identities.

Under these conditions, digital social envy can flourish among junior high

school students. Its main characteristics include: first, envy of the physical appearance and lifestyles displayed by peers on social media platforms; second, dissatisfaction with one's academic achievements and popularity in comparison with others; third, feelings of being left behind (fear of missing out) in relation to the social experiences of others; and fourth, the desire to manage one's self-image on social media in order to gain external recognition. These four characteristics are not merely psychological issues but also have a direct impact on the moral development of junior high school students.

4. Impact of Digital Social Envy on Adolescent Moral Development

Digital social envy affects the moral development of junior high school students through two main mechanisms. The first is value distortion: when students are continuously exposed to content that celebrates fame, wealth, and physical appearance as measures of success, they are encouraged to adopt these superficial values as their primary standards. Gradually, deeper values such as honesty, integrity, and empathy are displaced by extrinsic values derived from online popularity, which are illusory and temporary.

The second mechanism is the loss of moral autonomy: social envy encourages

students to make moral decisions based not on internal convictions but on pressure to meet social standards established by social media. This results in dishonest behavior intended to appear better on social media, wasteful attitudes that exceed one's financial means, and cyberbullying directed toward individuals perceived as sources of envy, reflecting a clear loss of moral autonomy resulting from digital social envy, as described by Parrott & Smith (1993)

Through the literature reviewed above, the authors found that digital social envy among junior high school students constitutes a construct distinct from conventional *envy* and has not yet been comprehensively addressed in the educational literature in Indonesia. This article proposes that digital social envy among junior high school adolescents has four characteristics that fundamentally distinguish it from *envy* in face-to-face interactions.

The first characteristic is its continuous and unrestricted nature, which makes digital social envy considerably more intense than conventional envy, which is limited to the context of direct encounters. The second characteristic is asymmetry in comparison, indicating that adolescents compare the reality of their own lives, which may be characterized by

shortcomings, with an idealized version of other people's lives that has been curated, making the comparison unequal from the outset. The third characteristic is the unlimited scale of comparison, which produces unrealistic and difficult-to-achieve standards. Fourth, the silent envy characteristic emphasized by Schoeck (1969) makes digital social envy difficult for teachers and parents to recognize, thereby making planned pedagogical intervention particularly important.

B. Moral Autonomy of Junior High School Students and the Challenges of the Digital Era

1. The Concept of Moral Autonomy: Piaget and Kohlberg

The concept of moral autonomy was first systematically formulated by Jean Piaget in his work entitled *The Moral Judgment of the Child*. Piaget distinguished two main phases in children's moral development: heteronomous morality and autonomous morality. In the stage of heteronomous morality, children view rules as absolute, unchangeable, and established by external authorities. Obedience is demonstrated not because of an understanding of values but because of fear of sanctions. Conversely, in the stage of autonomous morality, individuals begin to recognize that rules are social agreements that can be negotiated, and that moral

judgments should be based on intentions, context, and principles of justice that they personally uphold (Piaget, 2013)

Kohlberg (1976) further expanded Piaget's theory by describing six stages of moral development grouped into three levels: pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional. At the pre-conventional level (Stages 1–2), morality is influenced by external consequences in the form of punishment and rewards. At the conventional level (Stages 3–4), individuals begin to modify their behavior to conform to the expectations of their social groups and existing norms. At the post-conventional level (Stages 5–6), individuals are capable of thinking and acting based on universal ethical principles that they personally uphold, without being influenced by group pressure. According to Kohlberg (1976), this final level reflects moral autonomy in its most mature form.

2. The Moral Position of Junior High School Students from a Kohlbergian Perspective

Junior high school adolescents aged 12 to 15 generally fall within the conventional level, particularly Stage 3, which Kohlberg refers to as the "good boy/nice girl" orientation. At this stage, moral actions are strongly influenced by the desire to gain approval and acceptance from the immediate social environment,

particularly peers. Individuals at this stage often follow group norms in order to be regarded as good, liked, and accepted (Kohlberg, 1976). This moral characteristic makes junior high school students highly vulnerable to pressure to conform to social norms, including digital conformity driven by likes, follows, and comments on social media platforms.

This is the critical point of the problem: junior high school students, whose moral development is still highly dependent on external validation, are exposed to a digital environment that systematically exploits this need for validation through social comparison. When digital social envy exploits moral vulnerability at this conventional stage, the result is reinforcement of a form of morality that should have begun to be transcended at this age. Rather than moving toward moral independence, junior high school students are instead driven back toward patterns of thinking that depend on external judgment in the digital world.

3. Mechanisms through Which Digital Social Envy Erodes Moral Autonomy

There are three main mechanisms through which digital social envy erodes the moral autonomy of junior high school students. First, the value substitution mechanism: digital social envy shifts students' value references from internal

values, such as honesty, empathy, and integrity, to external values derived from digital popularity, such as the number of followers, physical appearance, and material possessions. This process gradually weakens the foundation of moral independence that should develop during this phase.

Second, the “reverse heteronomization” mechanism: when Piaget’s (1965) dialectic between heteronomous and autonomous morality is examined in relation to the realities of the digital world, a developmental anomaly emerges, referred to as “Reverse Heteronomy.” An analysis of adolescents’ digital behavior indicates that the primary challenge to moral autonomy is no longer tangible authority figures such as parents or teachers, but rather a form of “New Digital Heteronomy” triggered by invisible authorities: platform algorithms and online public opinion. Chronologically, junior high school students are in a phase of progression toward moral independence, yet psychologically and digitally, they experience ethical regression. They become trapped in blind conformity to pseudo-validation metrics, such as likes and follows, in order to avoid social exclusion in the digital world, causing their moral locus of control to become heteronomous again, that is, externally controlled.

Third, the cognitive-moral dissonance mechanism: students who experience digital social envy often recognize that the envy they feel is inconsistent with the values taught at school, but they lack adequate reflective abilities to reconcile this dissonance. Without proper guidance, this dissonance instead encourages maladaptive behaviors such as lying to appear better, mocking peers who are the source of envy, or avoiding real-world social interactions. This condition is consistent with the findings of Appel et al. (2016), which indicate an association between digital social envy, depressive symptoms, and reduced life satisfaction among adolescents.

C. Reconstructing Moral Autonomy through Value Clarification Technique (VCT)

1. Genealogy and Concept of *Value Clarification Technique*

The Value Clarification Technique (VCT) was developed based on the ideas of Louis E. Raths, a professor at New York University who was inspired by John Dewey's ideas regarding the importance of values in education. Together with Merrill Harmin and Sidney B. Simon, Raths published the foundational work on VCT, entitled *Values and Teaching: Working with Values in the Classroom*, in 1978. Raths, Harmin, and Simon argued that the

moral education approach widely applied at the time, namely the direct inculcation of values, was ineffective because it did not empower students to think, feel, and act based on values that they genuinely believed in. They emphasized that genuine values can only be formed through an active, reflective, and non-coercive clarification process.

Sidney B. Simon (1972) expanded the concept of VCT in his book *Values Clarification: A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students*. The book presents more than 79 practical strategies that teachers can apply in the classroom to help students clarify their values. In the context of this article, VCT is not merely an ordinary teaching technique but a pedagogical approach that fundamentally challenges all forms of externally imposed values, including value pressures arising from digital *social envy*.

2. Seven Criteria of the Valuing Process in VCT

The essence of VCT lies in the seven criteria of the valuing process formulated by Raths, Harmin, and Simon (1966). These seven criteria are divided into three main processes, namely choosing, prizing, and acting. In the choosing stage, there are three criteria: (1) choosing freely without coercion; (2) choosing from among various available alternatives; and (3)

choosing after carefully considering the consequences of each alternative. In the prizing phase, there are two criteria: (4) feeling proud of and cherishing the choice made; and (5) being willing to express and acknowledge that choice publicly. In the acting stage, the final two criteria are: (6) acting in accordance with the chosen value; and (7) acting consistently and repeatedly as a pattern of daily behavior (Raths et al., 1978)

Taken together, these seven criteria constitute what are known as true values, as opposed to merely value indicators, which are limited to attitudes or feelings that have not undergone deep reflection. For junior high school students experiencing digital social envy, these seven VCT criteria serve as a relevant practical guide: are the values they pursue on social media platforms choices they make freely and consciously, or are they merely reflections of pressure to conform to digital conformity?

3. VCT as a Strategy for Deconstructing Digital Social Envy

Febriany et al. (2021), in *Jurnal Basicedu*, revealed that the VCT learning model effectively encourages students to investigate and clarify their moral awareness through an active and reflective process. This finding is important because VCT operates precisely at the point where digital social envy causes the greatest

disruption, namely the process of value formation. By implementing VCT, students are not merely told that envy is wrong but are guided to independently discover why digital envy is inconsistent with the values they hold.

Indah Karunia (2023), in *Buletin Ilmiah Pendidikan*, found that the implementation of VCT had a significant positive impact on students' social attitudes in Social Studies learning. This finding is important because digital social envy is essentially a profound social-attitudinal problem, namely the inability to appreciate differences and acknowledge others' achievements without feelings of inferiority. Through a systematic process of value clarification, VCT supports students in developing healthier and more authentic social mindsets that do not depend on digital social comparison as a benchmark for self-evaluation.

In practical terms, VCT deconstructs digital social envy through three main steps. First, VCT creates a space for critical awareness in which students are encouraged to honestly and openly recognize and analyze the feelings of envy they experience in digital contexts. Second, VCT encourages students to consider whether the values they pursue on social media, such as popularity, physical appearance, and a consumerist lifestyle, are

values they consciously choose or values imposed by digital culture. Third, VCT guides students to discover and internalize authentic and meaningful values, such as gratitude, integrity, and appreciation of their own uniqueness, as a foundation for strong moral autonomy.

4. VCT-Based Moral Autonomy Reconstruction Model

A review of the VCT literature reveals a research gap in which the application of Louis Rath's valuing strategy has generally remained focused on conventional moral issues at the macro level and has not yet addressed aspects of cyber pathology (Wibowo et al., 2022). Therefore, the reconstruction proposed in this article takes the form of an original conceptual contribution. The authors formulate the VCT-Based Moral Autonomy Reconstruction Model (MROM-VCT), which consists of four sequential and interrelated phases. This model is

constructed based on a synthesis of the seven valuing criteria proposed by Rath et al. (1966), Piaget's (1965) and Kohlberg's (1984) theories of moral development, and an understanding of the mechanisms of digital social envy described previously. MROM-VCT is designed to be implemented in Social Studies, Pancasila Education, and Guidance and Counseling services at the junior high school level. By breaking the process down into four tactical stages, Social Studies and Guidance and Counseling instruction no longer merely indoctrinates values from outside but instead facilitates students in shifting their locus of control back within themselves through concrete actions and consistent gratitude-based reflection.

The four phases and operational indicators of the model proposed in this study are presented in detail in Table 2 below.

Table 2 VCT-Based Moral Autonomy Reconstruction Model (MROM-VCT)

Phase	Phase Name	Main Activities	VCT Strategy	Moral Target
1	Awareness	Stimulus involving a <i>digital social envy</i> case (video/story); identification and labeling of emotions experienced when using social media	Value Voting, Storytelling	Students recognize the presence of digital envy within themselves and label it honestly
2	Value Reflection	Identification of values that have been held thus far: which are freely chosen and which are passively absorbed from social media algorithms	Value Continuum, Value Whips	Students are able to distinguish internal values (autonomous) from external values (heteronomous)

3	Clarification & Commitment	Statement of core values that are believed in; commitment to concrete actions aligned with those values	Dilemma Discussion, Public Affirmation	Students possess values that are freely and consciously chosen and are ready to express them openly
4	Internalization & Actualization	Putting values into practice through actual behavior: how to use social media, respond to content, and build authentic relationships	Reflective Journal, Role Play	Moral autonomy is formed: moral decisions arise from internal values rather than digital pressure

The first phase, Awareness, aims to develop students' critical awareness of the presence of digital social envy in their lives. The teacher presents relevant stimuli, such as videos, stories, or real-life cases, and encourages students to identify and label the emotions they experience when using social media. This phase is important because, as argued previously, digital social envy is characterized by its silent nature (silent envy), making awareness a prerequisite for effective intervention.

The second phase, Value Reflection, constitutes the core of the deconstruction of digital social envy. Through the value continuum and value whips strategies, students are guided to actively distinguish between values that they genuinely choose consciously (autonomous values) and values that they passively absorb from social media algorithms (heteronomous values). This is the point at which the mechanism of value heteronomization proposed in the article's second proposition

is directly deconstructed before the students.

The third phase, Clarification & Commitment, is the stage in which students articulate the core values they believe in and make concrete commitments. The dilemma discussion strategy is used to encourage more mature moral reasoning, while public affirmation encourages students to express their values openly, which constitutes one of the criteria for valid values according to Raths et al. (1966). At this stage, students begin to experience a shift from heteronomy toward moral autonomy.

The fourth phase, Internalization & Actualization, is the stage in which the values that have been clarified are translated into concrete and consistent actions. This includes how students use social media more reflectively, how they respond to content that triggers digital social envy, and how they build more authentic social relationships. This consistency of action corresponds to the seventh criterion of Raths et al. (1966), which distinguishes

genuinely internalized values from values that are merely held superficially.

5. Relevance of VCT in Social Studies and Guidance and Counseling at the Junior High School Level

The relevance of VCT in the context of Social Studies education at the junior high school level is particularly strong. Social Studies education essentially aims to develop knowledgeable citizens with social skills and strong character. In the junior high school Social Studies curriculum, contemporary social issues, including the impacts of social media and digital culture, are increasingly relevant topics for critical examination. VCT offers a pedagogical approach that not only addresses these issues cognitively but also encourages students to engage affectively and behaviorally in responding to them.

MROM-VCT has three comparative advantages over other moral education approaches in the context of the digital era. First, MROM-VCT is contextual. This model uses the digital realities experienced by students as a starting point rather than something to be avoided. This makes learning more relevant and meaningful for Generation Z students. Second, MROM-VCT is active and reflective rather than dogmatic. Students are not lectured about which values are right; instead, they are encouraged to discover and clarify their

own values, a process that is far more effective in developing lasting moral autonomy. Third, MROM-VCT can be integrated into existing curriculum structures, whether in Social Studies, Pancasila Education, or Guidance and Counseling, without requiring a significant increase in instructional hours.

The practical implications of MROM-VCT are as follows. For Social Studies teachers, this model can be integrated into discussions of topics such as socio-cultural change, the influence of technology, and social interaction by using cases of digital social envy as materials for contextual value discussions. For Guidance and Counseling counselors, the VCT strategy can serve as a framework for group counseling services specifically aimed at strengthening students' self-values and digital moral resilience at the junior high school level. For future researchers, the MROM-VCT conceptually formulated in this article provides opportunities for empirical testing through quasi-experimental studies or classroom action research (CAR) at the junior high school level.

Overall, this article has demonstrated that digital social envy is not merely an ordinary psychological phenomenon but a structured and systematic moral threat to the development

of moral autonomy among junior high school students. VCT, through the MROM-VCT formulated in this article, offers a pedagogical response that is not only theoretically relevant but also practically applicable within the context of Indonesian education. This constitutes the conceptual contribution that the authors hope will enrich the discourse on values education in the digital era.

Conclusion

Based on the conceptual-theoretical review conducted in this study, it can be concluded that the phenomenon of digital social envy among junior high school students has triggered a moral developmental anomaly identified as “Reverse Heteronomy.” This cyber pathology gives rise to “New Digital Heteronomy,” in which adolescents’ moral locus of control, which should progress toward independence (autonomy), instead undergoes ethical regression as it becomes highly dependent on pseudo-validation metrics on social media platforms and online public opinion.

Dialectically, the relationship between the deconstruction of digital social envy and the reconstruction of students’ moral autonomy lies in the process of dismantling pseudo-validation toward the formation of authentic values through the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) in Social

Studies education. VCT-based Social Studies education functions as a pedagogical instrument that moves students from passive comparison and digital conformity toward a critical reflective space. Through the three VCT domains—Choosing, Prizing, and Acting—students are guided to deconstruct external algorithmic dictates and independently reconstruct their capacity for moral judgment.

As an operationalization of this dialectical relationship, this study formulates the Four-Phase VCT-Based Moral Autonomy Reconstruction Model (MROM-VCT), which synergizes the stages of Awareness, Value Reflection, Clarification, and Internalization. This model operationally modifies Louis Rath’s seven criteria of the valuing process to address cognitive-moral dissonance among junior high school students, thereby successfully shifting their moral locus of control from social media dictates back to authentic internal principles.

The application of this VCT approach is highly relevant and strategic when integrated into Social Studies (IPS) education and Guidance and Counseling (BK) services at the junior high school level. This approach is capable of grounding the ideals of conventional moral education in the realities of contemporary cyber

challenges without being indoctrinative, while simultaneously equipping students with robust moral agency in the digital era.

Recommendations for Educators (Social Studies and Guidance and Counseling Teachers): It is recommended that educators begin integrating the “Four-Phase VCT-Based Model” into classroom instruction contextually by actively incorporating case studies of cyber pathology, such as comparisons of digital lifestyles, as materials for value clarification among students.

Recommendations For Schools: Schools are advised to facilitate synergistic collaboration between Social Studies teachers and Guidance and Counseling teachers in designing structured digital character-strengthening programs to safeguard students’ moral autonomy from the negative impacts of social media.

Recommendations For Future Researchers: Given that this study remains limited to the conceptual-theoretical level of analysis, future researchers are recommended to conduct empirical trials, such as classroom action research or quantitative experimental studies, to examine the operational effectiveness of this three-phase model across schools with different characteristics.

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