

IMPLEMENTATION OF CYBER COUNSELING TO IMPROVE THE ACCESSIBILITY OF COUNSELING SERVICES

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Abstract. In today's digital age, the need for easily accessible counseling services is increasingly urgent, especially among individuals with geographic or mobility limitations. This research aims to explore the implementation of cyber counseling as a solution to improve the accessibility of counseling services. This research identifies the challenges faced in implementing cyber counseling, including data privacy and security issues, as well as the need for training for counselors to use technology effectively. The method used was a literature review, by analyzing various academic sources, relevant articles and reports regarding cyber counseling and its impact on the accessibility of mental health services. The main source of research data is scientific articles on the database on google scholar. with a publication range of 1988 to 2024. The keywords used in the journal search were "cyber counseling services", "global cyber counseling era", and "cyber counseling in schools". Data analysis is carried out qualitatively consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The results of the analysis show that cyber counseling has great potential to improve the accessibility of counseling services, but there needs to be more attention to the technical and ethical aspects of its implementation

Keywords: Cyber Counseling, Accessibility, Guidance and Counseling

Abstrak. Di era digital saat ini, kebutuhan akan layanan konseling yang mudah diakses semakin mendesak, terutama di antara individu yang mengalami keterbatasan geografis atau mobilitas. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi implementasi konseling cyber sebagai solusi untuk meningkatkan aksesibilitas layanan konseling. Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi tantangan yang dihadapi dalam mengimplementasikan konseling cyber, termasuk masalah privasi dan keamanan data, serta kebutuhan untuk pelatihan bagi konselor untuk menggunakan teknologi secara efektif. Metode yang digunakan adalah studi literatur, dengan menganalisis berbagai sumber akademik, artikel dan laporan yang relevan mengenai konseling dunia maya dan dampaknya pada aksesibilitas layanan kesehatan mental. Sumber utama data penelitian yaitu artikel ilmiah pada basis data di google scholar. dengan rentang publikasi tahun 1988 sampai dengan tahun 2024. Kata kunci yang digunakan dalam pencarian jurnal adalah "cyber counseling services", "global cyber counseling era", dan "cyber counseling in schools". Analisis data dilakukan secara kualitatif yang terdiri dari reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa konseling dunia maya memiliki potensi besar untuk meningkatkan aksesibilitas layanan konseling, tetapi perlu ada lebih banyak perhatian terhadap aspek teknis dan etika dalam implementasinya

Kata Kunci: *Cyber Counseling*, Aksesibilitas, Bimbingan dan Konseling

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INTRODUCTION

In the last few decades, the development of information and communication technology has changed various aspects of life, including in the field of guidance and counseling. Cyber counseling, or online counseling, emerged as an innovation that offers a solution to increase the accessibility of counseling services. This concept allows individuals to get psychological help without having to meet face-to-face with a counselor, thus providing convenience for those who have limited time, distance, or even shyness to physically attend counseling sessions (Wibowo, 2016). The current social and economic conditions of society show that many individuals experience psychological stress due to work demands, complex social lives, and other personal problems. According to Haryati (2020), the need for counseling services is increasing along with the complexity of the problems faced by society. In this context, cyber counseling offers a more flexible and accessible alternative for individuals who need psychological support.

This phenomenon is reinforced by data showing that internet usage among adolescents and young adults is increasing. A survey showed that 93% of adolescents use the internet, with 38% spending between one and five hours online each week (Nakhma'ussolikah, 2017). As such, cyber counseling platforms can be utilized as a means to reach individuals who may not have access to traditional counseling services. While cyber counseling offers many advantages, such as convenience and flexibility in scheduling counseling sessions, there are challenges that need to be addressed. One of the main challenges is the issue of client privacy and data security. Counselors must ensure that clients' personal information is well protected during the online counseling process (Hughes, 2000). In addition, the lack of understanding of technology among some counselors may hinder the effectiveness of this service (Jerizal & Hanung, 2017). While cyber counseling has great potential to increase the accessibility of counseling services, there are some challenges that need to be considered. One of them is the social stigma still attached to individuals seeking psychological help. Many people feel embarrassed or afraid of being perceived as weak if they acknowledge the need for counseling (Daryanto, 2004). This may reduce individuals' participation in cyber counseling programs.

In addition, the existence of various online platforms also creates its own challenges. Not all platforms offer the same quality of service; therefore, it is important for users to choose a trusted and secure platform (Elleven & Allen, 2004). Counselors also need to be trained to use technology effectively in order to provide the best service to their clients. Cyber counseling has the potential to bridge the gap in access to counseling services. By utilizing communication technologies such as video call, chat, and email, counselors can reach clients from various

backgrounds without geographical restrictions (Surya, 1988). This is especially important for individuals living in remote areas or for those with limited mobility. Furthermore, cyber counseling can also help reduce transportation costs and the time required to attend face-to-face sessions. With this online service option, individuals can more easily get psychological support anytime and anywhere (Kirana, 2019). Therefore, further development of cyber counseling becomes highly relevant in the context of improving people's mental health.

In this digital era, the implementation of cyber counseling is a strategic step to increase the accessibility of counseling services. Although there are challenges in its implementation, the potential benefits of this service are enormous. Therefore, further research on the effectiveness of cyber counseling as well as the development of best practice guidelines are needed to ensure that this service can have a positive impact on individuals who need psychological help. This research aims to explore the implementation of cyber counseling as a solution to increase the accessibility of counseling services. In the current digital era, the need for easily accessible counseling services is increasingly urgent, especially among individuals who experience geographic or mobility limitations.

METHOD

This research applies the literature review method or literature study. This technique is applied to reveal various theories relevant to the topic under study as reference material in the discussion of research results. The literature review process was carried out by collecting books and journals from various sources, both national and international, obtained through the Google Scholar database. The data collected in this study are journal articles taken from the Google Scholar database, with a publication range between 1988 and 2024. The keywords used in the search for journal articles included “cyber counseling services,” “global cyber counseling era,” and “cyber counseling in schools.

This method is often known as a naturalistic research method because it is conducted based on existing reality without intervention, and can also be referred to as an ethnographic method (Sugiyono, 2013). This research uses reliable sources, such as scientific journals, research results, and information from the internet. Various sources were used in this study, which provided detailed data. In addition, books related to cyber counseling are also a supporting source. The data collection method was carried out by literature review, and data analysis using data reduction techniques, data presentation, and data verification. (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 1992)

RESULTS

In the ever-evolving digital era, information and communication technology has brought significant changes to various aspects of life, including in the field of guidance and counseling. Cyber counseling, or online counseling, has emerged as an innovative solution to increase the accessibility of counseling services for individuals in need of psychological support. By utilizing digital platforms, cyber counseling allows clients to connect with counselors without geographical and temporal limitations, thus providing convenience for those who may not be able to access traditional counseling services. Mental health issues are increasingly becoming a concern in modern society. According to Haryati (2020), many individuals experience psychological stress due to the increasingly complex demands of life. In this context, the need for easily accessible counseling services becomes very important. Cyber counseling offers a flexible and convenient alternative for individuals who may be reluctant to attend face-to-face counseling sessions for various reasons, such as time constraints or social anxiety (Ifdil & Ardi, 2013). One of the main advantages of cyber counseling is its ability to reach individuals in remote or hard-to-reach areas. Many areas in Indonesia still lack access to mental health services, so cyber counseling can be a solution to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to get help (Budiman, 2019). By using digital technology, students and adults can access guidance and counseling services without having to physically come to the counseling room, which is often an obstacle for them (Kirana, 2019). Cyber counseling has several advantages compared to traditional counseling methods. First, flexibility of time is an important aspect. Clients can choose the time that suits them best without being tied to the counselor's working hours (Amani, 2018). This is very beneficial for students or workers who have busy schedules. Second, the anonymity offered by cyber counseling can increase clients' comfort in sharing personal problems. Many individuals find it easier to express their feelings and thoughts in a digital environment compared to face-to-face interactions (Elleven & Allen, 2004). This is especially true for those who feel anxious or embarrassed to talk about their problems in person. Third, cyber counseling allows for wider outreach. Counselors can reach clients from various backgrounds and locations without physical limitations (Centore & Milacci, 2008). Thus, this service can help address the gap in access to mental health services.

Although cyber counseling offers many benefits, there are also a number of challenges that need to be considered. One of the main challenges is the issue of client data privacy and security. In the digital world, the protection of personal information is very important. Counselors must ensure that client data is well protected during the online counseling process (Hughes, 2000). In addition, the lack of understanding of technology among some counselors

can hinder the effectiveness of this service (Jerizal & Hanung, 2017). Another challenge is the social stigma that still attaches to individuals who seek psychological help. Many people feel embarrassed or afraid of being considered weak if they admit the need for counseling (Daryanto, 2004). This can reduce individual participation in cyber counseling programs.

Cyber counseling has great potential to expand the accessibility of counseling services. By utilizing communication technologies such as video calls and chat, counselors can reach clients from various backgrounds without geographical limitations (Surya, 1988). This is especially important for individuals living in remote areas or those with limited mobility. Furthermore, cyber counseling can also help reduce transportation costs and the time required to attend face-to-face sessions. With this online service option, individuals can more easily get psychological support anytime and anywhere (Kirana, 2019). Therefore, further development of cyber counseling becomes very relevant in the context of improving community mental health.

One of the main goals of implementing cyber counseling is to increase the accessibility of counseling services. In many areas, especially those located in remote areas, access to counseling services is very limited. Many people who need these services cannot find them because of the long distance or the absence of service providers near them. With cyber counseling, geographical barriers can be overcome, allowing individuals from various locations to get the help they need in addition cyber counseling.

DISCUSSION

Cyber Counseling Concept

Cyber counseling is a counseling service that is carried out online by utilizing various technology platforms, such as instant messaging applications, video conferences, and email. This service allows counselors and clients to interact without time and place restrictions, thus increasing flexibility in the counseling process (Pasmawati, 2016). According to Sutijono (2018), cyber counseling is very effective for students who cannot meet counselors directly at school, so that they still get the emotional and psychological support they need. Cyber counseling is a form of psychological counseling service that is carried out through electronic media, such as video conferences, chat, or email. In online counseling, counselors and clients can interact in real-time or asynchronously, depending on their preferences and needs. The main advantage of cyber counseling is its high flexibility and accessibility. Clients can access counseling services from anywhere and at any time as long as they have a device connected to the internet.

Cyber counseling is a counseling service provided through internet-based communication technology. Forms of cyber counseling include counseling via email, chat, video call, or other applications that allow interaction between counselors and clients without having to meet face to face. One of the main benefits of cyber counseling is the ease of access provided to clients. Clients do not need to face physical or location limitations to get the counseling help they need. According to Barak, cyber counseling offers many advantages, such as convenience, confidentiality, and flexibility in scheduling counseling sessions. Clients can choose a time that suits their schedule, and they can also access services from the most comfortable place, such as home or work. In addition, this counseling service can also be accessed by individuals who have difficulty meeting a counselor in person, either due to physical reasons or time constraints (Barak, 2008),

In a study Rahmi (2024) the experimental group showed a significant decrease in academic anxiety compared to the control group. However, implementing this service directly requires time and effort. With cyber counseling, technique-based sessions such as Dance Therapy can be recorded or conducted synchronously, making the service more efficient and easy to implement widely.

Benefits of Cyber Counseling

- Better accessibility; cyber counseling provides easy access for individuals who may have difficulty visiting a counselor in person. This is especially important for those who live in remote areas or have physical limitations (Haryati, 2020). With this service, individuals can access help anytime and anywhere.
- Privacy and convenience; one of the main advantages of cyber counseling is increased privacy for clients. Many individuals feel more comfortable sharing their personal problems online than face-to-face (Riganti, 2020). In this context, the use of platforms such as Microsoft Teams or WhatsApp allows clients to feel safer and more open in sharing their problems.
- Time and cost efficiency; cyber counseling eliminates the need to travel to a counseling location, saving clients time and transportation costs (Petrus & Sudibyoy, 2017). This is especially relevant amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, where mobility is restricted.

Challenges in Implementing Cyber Counseling

Despite having many benefits, the implementation of cyber counseling also faces various challenges. One of the biggest challenges is the issue of data security and confidentiality.

Counseling is a service that relies heavily on trust between clients and counselors, and the confidentiality of information provided by clients must be strictly maintained. The use of digital technology poses the risk of data leakage and privacy violations, which can damage the relationship between counselors and clients and reduce the effectiveness of services (Rosenfield, 2020).

In addition, the limitations of non-verbal communication are also a challenge in cyber counseling. In face-to-face counseling, counselors can read clients' non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions and body language, which helps them make a better assessment of the client's condition. However, in counseling sessions via chat or video call, counselors may miss some important information that can enrich the counseling process. To overcome this, counselors must be more careful in reading clues from text messages or talking in more depth to ensure a better understanding of the client's situation (Rothbaum, 2021). Although cyber counseling offers many benefits, there are several challenges that need to be addressed to ensure its effectiveness:

- Technological limitations; not all individuals have access to adequate technological devices or a stable internet connection. Some students may not have the smartphones or computers needed to attend online counseling sessions (Syuhada et al., 2022). Therefore, it is important for educational institutions to provide supporting facilities such as device loans or internet quota provision.
- Counselor skills; the counselor's technical skills in using digital platforms are also an important factor in the success of cyber counseling. Counselors need to be trained to utilize information technology properly in order to provide effective services (McLeod, 2006).
- Data confidentiality; the issue of data confidentiality is a major concern in cyber counseling services. Counselors must ensure that clients' personal information is well protected from misuse (Sucardi, 2008). The use of a secure data management system is very important in this regard.

CONCLUSION

Cyber counseling offers great potential to increase the accessibility of counseling services and address various challenges in mental health. By addressing existing challenges and implementing appropriate strategies, cyber counseling can be one solution to address mental health problems in the community. The implementation of cyber counseling is an innovative step to increase the accessibility of counseling services in the digital era. Although facing some challenges, the benefits offered by this service are far greater. With the support of educational

institutions and the improvement of technical skills of counselors, cyber counseling can be an effective solution to meet the counseling needs of modern society. Cyber counseling is an innovative solution that can increase the accessibility of counseling services for individuals in need, especially in remote areas or for those who face stigma associated with mental health services. Although there are challenges related to privacy and non-verbal communication, opportunities for the development of cyber counseling, such as the use of artificial intelligence technology and collaboration with educational institutions, pave the way for the use of technology in counseling services that are more efficient and effective. With the right use of technology, cyber counseling can be a very useful tool to improve the mental well-being of the community in a more inclusive manner.

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