

Readiness of Guidance and Counseling Teachers at Junior High School Level in Implementing Cyber Counseling Services

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Abstract

The development of the internet is growing rapidly. Cyber counseling services by utilizing the internet are expected to support services in the field of mental health. Cyber counseling has many benefits, including optimizing guidance and counseling services, for clients can increase accessibility, clients feel free from anxiety or stigma and allow anonymity. The research objective is to identify the readiness of Guidance and Counseling teachers/school counselors to provide cyber counseling services. Using a quantitative research approach through a cross-sectional survey design, with technological competence instruments for counselors developed by the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), involving guidance and counseling teachers/counselors in metropolitan areas in Indonesia. The results show that guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors are generally ready to carry out cyber counseling services, but several aspects need to be improved to support the readiness of cyber counseling services.

Keywords: counseling, cyber counseling, internet, competency.

1. Introduction

The development of informatics technology encourages changes in all spheres of life. Almost all educational institutions have used information technology for the social interaction of educators and students (Mishna et al., 2015). The Corona Virus (SARS-CoV-2) pandemic has accelerated the transition to the use of information technology in educational institutions (Ali, 2020; Dhawan, 2020). Furthermore, the social restriction policy implemented by the government encourages the implementation of online learning, including cyber counseling services.

Cyber counseling services are something new in Indonesia. The term cyber counseling services (E-Counseling) began to appear since 2009, which describes all guidance and counseling services with the help of technology (Ifdil & Ardi, 2013). Cyber counseling is defined as a non-face-to-face therapeutic activity by applying software technology as a medium for counselor therapeutic interaction with clients (Lan, 2016; Mishna et al., 2013). Furthermore, the technological media used are telephone media, asynchronous email, synchronous chat, and video conferencing.

The total population of Indonesia is more than 260 million people (Thamrin et al., 2021). The development of the internet is growing rapidly and continues to grow. Based on the results of a survey by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJI), there are 171.1 million internet users in Indonesia (APJI, 2020). There are 93 counselors practicing online in the United States who claim that their cyber counseling services are effective (Finn & Barak, 2010). However, the results of a study of 20 counselors in Malaysia stated that they were comfortable doing face-to-face counseling (Zamani et al., 2010). Furthermore, how is the readiness of cyber counseling services for guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors in Indonesia? Cyber counseling services give many benefits to be obtained, it is necessary to have good readiness for implementing cyber counseling services in Indonesia.

The results of previous research have described the benefits of cyber counseling. An important benefit of cyber counseling services is increased accessibility of clients with disabilities such as individuals from rural areas, individuals with physical disabilities, or individuals with limited time to travel to the counselor's office (Mishna et al., 2013). Furthermore, several other cyber counseling services are facilitating clients who experience anxiety or stigma (Richards & Viganó, 2013), clients who feel comfortable using technology as a shield (Hrynyschyn & Dockweiler, 2021) and clients who wish to disclose problems using anonymity (Alleman, 2002).

Cyber counseling can be said to be a solution to various problems that arise from the implementation of face-to-face counseling. Rida states that cyber counseling can be a solution due to the lack of face-to-face service time at schools (Gading, 2020). Cyber counseling services make it easier for guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors to help clients develop themselves through counseling sessions without disturbing study hours at school (Kackar & Joshi, 2005). Further development of cyber counseling services is important, considering the benefits that can be obtained from these services.

The benefits of cyber counseling services have helped intervene clients who want to commit suicide, besides that they also facilitate family and marriage therapy for reflection, and narrative intervention (Haberstroh et al., 2008). Based on several studies, cyber counseling is more beneficial for clients with male gender than women (Wright, 2002; Zainudin & Yusof, 2018). Men feel comfortable when doing cyber counseling, because there is prejudice and social stigma that seeking help will affect their self-esteem. Various benefits can be obtained from implementing cyber counseling services, but how the competence, skills and readiness of school counselors to carry out cyber counseling has not received much attention.

Previous research has provided recommendations for further research, including identifying the readiness of school counselors to carry out cyber counseling services (Situmorang, 2020); next, identify the condition of the development of cyber counseling services in Indonesia to date (Ifdil & Ardi, 2013); finally identifying support from institutions for the implementation of cyber counseling services (Dami & Waluwandja, 2019). Furthermore, the purpose of this research is based on the recommendations of previous research, namely, identifying the readiness of cyber counseling services in the Jakarta-Bogor-Depok-Tangerang-Bekasi Region, Indonesia.

2. Method

Research Design

The current research employs a quantitative approach through a cross-sectional survey design. Researchers collaborated with a number of guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors in metropolitan areas in Indonesia, namely Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi (Jabodetabek). Guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors respond to the cyber counseling service readiness instrument which is distributed via the Google form link.

Participant

The study population was all guidance and counseling teachers or school counselors in the Jakarta-Bogor-Depok-Tangerang-Bekasi area, Indonesia. The sampling process is a cross-sectional survey design. Guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors voluntarily participated in the study are 217 guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors in the Jakarta-Bogor-Depok-Tangerang-Bekasi area, Indonesia. The demographic distribution of Guidance and Counseling Teachers/School counselors consists of 34 males and 183 females.

Instrument

This study uses technological competency instruments for counselors developed by the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) (Zarirah et al., 2014). The instrument has 12 items in the form of a Likert scale. Which consists of choices 1. If "very inappropriate", 2. If "inappropriate", 3. If "Appropriate", and 4. If "Very Appropriate". Based on the results of the validity test using the confirmatory factor analysis test, it showed very good results with scores ranging from 0.624 to 0.826. Reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha results in ($\alpha = 0.772$). Furthermore, it can be said that the instrument can be used in a very good category. Descriptive analysis using the techniques of frequencies and the analysis is assisted by using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 For Windows.

Procedure

The research instrument was designed using the Google Form and distributed to a number of Guidance and Counseling teachers/ school counselors. Approximately 217 Guidance and Counseling Teachers/ School counselors participated in the online survey. Respondent response data is collected in Google Sheets. After classification, the study applied descriptive analysis using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 For Windows to test the hypothesis.

3. Data Analysis

Data analysis used descriptive using IBM SPSS Statistics 26 For Windows to determine the profile of the readiness of guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors to conduct online counseling.

4. Result

The results obtained from the administration of technological competence instruments for counselors are as follows.

Table 1. Cyber Counseling Service Readiness Level

No Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Amount	217	217	217	217	217	217	217	217	217	217	217	217
Mean	3.10	3.02	2.71	2.80	3.42	3.28	2.67	3.24	2.67	2.68	3.31	3.12
Std. Deviation	0.697	0.720	0.724	0.730	0.754	0.680	0.799	0.782	0.713	0.712	0.716	0.712
Variance	0.486	0.518	0.524	0.533	0.569	0.462	0.638	0.611	0.508	0.507	0.512	0.508
Range	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Minimum	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4

The descriptive results in Table 1 show that each item has the same maximum and minimum value, namely 1 (very inappropriate) and a maximum value of 4 (very appropriate). That is, all items have the same choice by respondents with the difference (range) score of each item is 3. The average result of the total number of voters (N = 2017). It is known that No-5 (M= 3.42) is the highest average score. Furthermore, it can be understood that guidance and counselling teachers/school counsellors have a good level of readiness to carry out cyber counselling services by means of electronic mail (e-mail). But No-7 (M= 2.67) and No-9 (M= 2.67) are the lowest average score. Furthermore, it can be understood that guidance and counselling teachers/school counsellors are not yet ready to carry out cyber counselling services due to a lack of participation in activities in developing cyber-counselling media and a lack of legal and ethical understanding in the implementation of cyber-counselling. Moreover, to find out the choice by the respondent on each statement item, the results are presented in Table 2 that shows the scores are as follows:

Table 2. Cyber Counseling Service Readiness Level Profile

No Item	Frequency (%)											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Very inappropriate	4.1	3.7	5.1	4.6	4.1	3.2	7.8	5.1	6.5	5.1	3.7	4.6
Inappropriate	7.4	13.8	30.0	24.9	3.7	3.2	30.0	6.0	27.6	31.3	3.7	6.0
Appropriate	63.1	59.4	54.4	56.7	38.2	55.8	49.3	48.4	58.1	54.4	50.2	61.8
Very appropriate	25.3	23.0	10.6	13.8	53.9	37.8	12.9	40.6	7.8	9.2	42.4	27.6

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that overall guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors have good readiness to carry out cyber counseling services. Shown by more than 105 (48.4%) respondents stated

"appropriate". However, it is necessary to pay attention to items No. 3, 4, 7, 9 and 10 because more than 54 (24.9%) respondents gave the answer "Not Appropriate". The following will further describe the aspects that need to be improved to carry out cyber counseling services.

First, there are 65 (30%) guidance and counseling teachers/counselors who are not ready to use statistics/computer-based data processing. Second, there are 54 (24.9%) guidance and counseling teachers/counselors who are not ready to use applications for diagnostic tests and career decisions for students. Third, there are 65 (30%) Guidance and Counseling teachers/counselors who are not ready to participate in cyber counseling development activities. Fourth, there are 60 (27.6%) Guidance and Counseling/Counselor teachers who do not understand the legal and ethical aspects of cyber counseling. Finally, there are 68 (31.3%) guidance and counseling teachers/counselors who do not have an understanding of the disadvantages and advantages of cyber counseling services.

5. Discussion

Cyber counseling services as an alternative to non-face-to-face therapeutic services is using software technology assistance as a medium for counselor therapeutic interactions with clients. Cyber counseling services in Indonesia can be said to be something new, cyber counseling services were introduced around 2009 (Ifdil & Ardi, 2013). Based on the results of the analysis in this study, the research results are in accordance with the research hypothesis that, in general, guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors in the Jakarta-Bogor-Depok-Tangerang-Bekasi area have readiness to carry out cyber counseling services.

In Indonesia, cyber counseling services have experienced a lot of progress in their implementation. Along with the development of the digital era, counseling has transformed into a virtual-based psychological service but still achieves the principles and goals of the service. There have been many guidance and counseling teachers/counselors serving counseling to their students through virtual media both based on text and audio and visuals, this is because of the demands of their students. However, behind the implementation of virtual-based counseling services, there are consequences that must be considered, including the readiness of guidance and counseling teachers/counselors in providing cyber counseling services.

Guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors have basic computer skills. Computer skills and internet access are basic skills that must be possessed (Dami & Waluwandja, 2019; Haberstroh et al., 2008). Furthermore, guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors are ready to provide cyber counseling services. The online psychoeducation method is a method that has been proven to be effective for guidance services during the Covid-19 pandemic to increase the competence of parents and students (Rusli et al., 2020). Besides, guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors have shown readiness and competence in implementing cyber counseling services using a variety of methods.

Guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors are ready, but there are several aspects that need to be improved to support cyber counseling services.

The first aspect that has not been prepared is the ethical standards for implementing cyber counseling services for guidance and counseling teachers/counselors. The Indonesian Guidance and Counseling Association (ABKIN) as a professional organization has not set cyber counseling service standards (Haryati, 2020). The absence of an ethical and legal basis for cyber counseling services in Indonesia means that guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors are not fully prepared to carry out cyber counseling in schools. Ardi et al., (2017) provides advice for counselors who are in countries with professional organizations that have not yet established a cyber counseling code of ethics to follow the following minimal steps, firstly discussing with the client what can be done and what cannot be done, secondly explaining the benefits and worst possibilities that can occur during a counseling session, finally explain the process of storing client data and guaranteeing confidentiality. However, researchers suggest adopting a standard code of ethics for cyber counseling services such as those in the American Counseling Association (2014) and the American Association for Marriage and Family (2015).

Second aspect is self-development, the results of this study show that some Guidance and Counseling teachers/school counselors have not received training in cyber counseling services. The Center for Empowerment Development of Educators and Education Personnel (PPPPTK) for Physical Education and BK is in accordance

with the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 26 of 2020 concerning the Organization and Work Procedure of the Technical Implementation Unit of the Ministry of Education and Culture, namely increasing the competence of educators and education staff, especially BK teachers, as an institution. Officially, until now, there has not been an increase in cyber counseling competence for guidance and counseling teachers/counselors through systematic and strategic training. Several training models may be applicable to train guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors, for example Competency-Based Education (Brammer & Goodrich, 2021). Furthermore, it has not yet designed and developed models and guidelines for the implementation of relevant and accountable cyber counseling for use by guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors throughout Indonesia. The existence of models and guidelines with a background in theoretical and empirical studies is needed as a guide for the implementation of cyber counseling services in schools by guidance and counseling teachers/counselors.

Moreover, school institutions are expected to be able to provide support for guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors to develop themselves through sharing training especially, competence in data analysis/computer-based statistics, competency in diagnostic tests.

6. Conclusion

The survey reveals the readiness of guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors to carry out cyber counseling services. Overall guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors are ready to carry out cyber counseling in their work institutions. The findings of this study can be the basis for designing an effective and accountable cyber counseling model for use by guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors. Further studies are recommended to conduct a survey of the most appropriate cyber counseling model for use in all schools in Indonesia. Subsequent research to develop training models to increase the competence of school counselors is more needed.

The current study has limitations, namely, the survey was carried out using an online survey because conditions in the research area were experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic which had an impact on guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors with weak technological competences who could not be identified. Further research is recommended to conduct face-to-face surveys to identify the readiness of guidance and counseling teachers/school counselors to carry out cyber counseling services.

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