

Experiences of Online Group-Counseling Based-Video Conference on High School Students in Indonesia

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Abstract. Counseling methods with integrated information and communication technology in schools are interesting to discuss. Recently the conditions of the COVID-19 Pandemic have made all educational activities in schools online, and in Indonesia. We predict the use of information and communication technology in high school students to be easier to implement. Because they are more familiar with information and communication technology than students at the primary school level. This qualitative study aims to describe the experiences of students in secondary schools receiving online counseling. The semi-structured interviewed involved eight students, both chat messages and video call session by WhatsApp application. Participant of study are students has experience attending online group counseling via video conferencing. Data on the benefits of online group counseling, experiences in cyberspace, and barriers were analyzed thematically. The findings in this study explain that online group counseling has provided a solution, and some students feel it is precious to help. Their insight and self-help increase on the issues discussed. It was so convenient for them that some students expressed relationship school counselor with students-client. Network problems and smartphone overheating are obstacles. The implications of the results of this study as a reference for improving the implementation of online counseling.

Keywords: School Counselor, Virtual Counseling, Group, High School Students, Indonesia

Abstrak. Metode konseling dengan teknologi informasi dan komunikasi yang terintegrasi di sekolah menarik untuk dibahas. Belakangan ini kondisi Pandemi COVID-19 membuat semua kegiatan pendidikan di sekolah menjadi online, dan di Indonesia. Kami perkirakan penggunaan teknologi informasi dan komunikasi pada siswa SMA akan lebih mudah diimplementasikan. Karena mereka lebih mengenal teknologi informasi dan komunikasi dibandingkan siswa di tingkat sekolah dasar. Penelitian kualitatif ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan pengalaman siswa sekolah menengah yang menerima konseling online. Wawancara semi terstruktur melibatkan delapan mahasiswa, baik melalui pesan chat maupun sesi video call melalui aplikasi WhatsApp. Partisipan penelitian adalah mahasiswa yang telah berpengalaman mengikuti konseling kelompok online melalui video conference. Data manfaat konseling kelompok online, pengalaman di dunia maya, dan hambatan dianalisis secara tematis. Temuan dalam penelitian ini menjelaskan bahwa konseling kelompok online telah memberikan solusi, dan beberapa siswa merasa sangat berharga untuk membantu. Wawasan dan self-help mereka meningkat pada isu-isu yang dibahas. Sangat nyaman bagi mereka bahwa beberapa siswa mengungkapkan hubungan konselor sekolah dengan siswa-klien. Masalah jaringan dan smartphone overheat menjadi

kendala. Implikasi dari hasil penelitian ini sebagai acuan untuk perbaikan pelaksanaan konseling online.

Kata Kunci: Konselor Sekolah, Virtual Konseling, Kelompok, Siswa Sekolah Menengah, Indonesia

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Introduction

Development of the internet is increasingly fast to submit information and facilitate communication, has an impact on online counseling that increasingly popular (Hooley et al., 2016; Suranata et al., 2020; Trepal et al., 2007; Wang et al., 2020; Young, 2005; Zamani et al., 2010) especially among adolescents. As the highest internet user, online counseling services are in demand by adolescents because effective of cost, and accessibility (Wong et al., 2018). Adolescents are heavy users of newer electronic communication such as instant messaging, e-mail, and text messaging, as well as communication-oriented Internet sites such as blogs, social networks, and sites for sharing photos and videos (Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008; Valkenburg & Peter, 2011), may be part of the reason that online counseling is accessibility. Of course, it is contributing positively to the lack of adolescents seeking professional help face-to-face due to several obstacles (Mallen et al., 2005; Navarro et al., 2020; Tirel et al., 2020).

Online counseling is defined as professional counseling services by counselors to the client through digital technology (Gonca Zeren et al., 2019; Lazuras & Dokou, 2016; Pordelan & Hosseinian, 2020; Trepal et al., 2007). Various forms of online counseling namely based on e-mail (Salleh et al., 2015; Sekerler & Sekerler, 2008), chat (Barak & Dolev-Cohen, 2006; Kraus et al., 2010), based on telephone (Centore & Milacci, 2008; Harris et al., 2012), based on video conferences (J. E. Chang et al., 2016) and base on website (Zeng et al., 2010). There is no gender difference for adolescents who want online counseling services (Glasheen et al., 2016; Mishna et al., 2013).

Many previous studies showed that online counseling is one form a counseling was as effective as conventional counseling or counseling by face-to-face (Chan, 2020; Mallen, 2011; Mishna et al., 2013; Salleh, 2011; Suranata et al., 2020). In Singapore, students who have experience in online counseling services stated that they have a solution to their problem (Kit et al., 2019). Then adolescents in the USA who have experience in online counseling stated that they get support, feel comfortable and, can connect with group members even though with anonymity (T. Chang et al., 2001). Studies on the use of online counseling in school settings in Indonesia have also shown good effectiveness, acceptability, and feasibility (Ardi et al., 2018; Ildil et al., 2020; Suranata & Ildil, 2020).

Involving groups in the online counseling process will provide opportunities for individuals to participate in communication such as sharing experiences, asking questions, or providing emotional support and self-help in dealing with the same problem (Coulson, 2005; Eysenbach et al., 2004). Group support is the potential to help provide positive results for adolescents (Ellis et al., 2009). Involving groups in online counseling, the role of the school counselor in leading the group is very important such as explaining the rules, norms in the group and welcoming group members with humor impression (White, 2001). One form of online counseling involving groups namely group-counseling synchronous with video conferences program (Liu et al., 2008; Vogel et al., 2014). The program of video conferences sends and receives dynamic images (moving) between computers on the internet. Besides a high-speed internet connection, accessories are needed such as a microphone, webcam (computer), and video conference applications (Kraus et al., 2010).

The counseling model through video conferences is a feasible and effective way to be applied to clients (Greene, 2010). This model does not have a significant difference with face-to-face (Cook & Doyle, 2004; Germain et al., 2009). This model is also able to provide comfort for groups (King et al., 2009; Kraus et al., 2010), with mutual support and guidance (Marziali, 2013). Several studies showed that treatment through video conferences is effective in reducing chronic tic disorders in children (Himle et al., 2012), reducing

obsessive-compulsive symptoms (Vogel et al., 2014), reducing symptoms of anxiety (Novella et al., 2020), depression, stress (Stubbings et al., 2013), and reduce panic disorders (Bouchard et al., 2004). The implementation of online group-counseling through video conferences is important to consider specific technical, ethical, and clinical conditions (Haberstroh, 2018; Haberstroh et al., 2008). The results of the study indicate that the implementation of online counseling is more directed at information gathering and exploration of objectives, so that action planning is minimal and even non-existent (Chardon et al., 2011). Besides, the challenges of using the video conference model in online group-counseling involve potential technological difficulties, inconvenience with technology, relationship development, and ethical problems (Zamani, 2009).

This study will examine the opinion of students who have participated in online group-counseling through video conferences. Specifically, the purpose of this study was to identify the benefits of online group-counseling for students-client, identify the creation of relationships between student client-counselors, and identify various obstacles of student-client. Counseling online with a group has received a positive response from students-clients for its benefits (T. Chang et al., 2001; Khasanshina et al., 2008; Kit et al., 2019). The findings in this study will make a positive contribution to school counselors in Indonesia related to the preparation of online group-counseling to ensure the effectiveness of the services provided to students. Besides, school counselors' insights will increase regarding online group-counseling to increase their professional competence. This study also can be used as a consideration in the implementation of training for school counselors in Indonesia. The information presented in this study will add to a lot of literature on group-based online counseling through video conference in ASEAN and Indonesia

Method

This study is qualitative research using a phenomenological approach and prepared based on the SRQR guidelines (BC et al., 2014). Students in Vocational High School Prshanti Nilayam Bali-Indonesia is target of population who has experience group counseling online via videoconferencing with school counselor. Because school counselor only with eight students-clients giving online group-counseling services through video conference until this study was conducted, all of students-clients were used for the study. The researcher doing semi-structured interview via WhatsApp with eight students-client. WhatsApp was chosen to collect the data because this application is more familiar and easier to use among students compared to other application platforms. In addition, the features of application provided are sharing messages, photos, videos, documents and video calls.

The first communication is to communicate about the purpose and intention of the interview, then ask the willingness of respondents to be interviewed. All of the students-client stated that they were willing to be interviewed so that there was no reduction in the number of respondents. Personal data of respondents such as age, gender, grade of class and pseudonym include in interview guideline. The demographics data of respondents in this study in table 1 as the following:

Table 1. Demographic of Respondents

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Grade of Class
Dika	16	Male	11
Dewi	16	Female	10
Gung Bayu	17	Male	11
Tika	18	Female	12
Dian	17	Female	12
Mitha	17	Female	11
Gungbin	15	Female	10
Endra	18	Male	12

The open-ended question is given in the process of interview via WhatsApp messages and videocall at lasts 15 until 25 minutes to get in-depth information about their new experiences and the perceived impact. Not all participants were successfully interviewed via video call because obstacle of the network by participants. Total 5 respondent success were interview via video call and the others via instant messages. The questions asked by the researcher include:

“Do you get benefits after participating in online group-counseling?”

“Can you tell me, what kind of benefits you get?”

“How do client-counselors relationship during the online group-counseling process?”

“Do you have obstacles during online group-counseling process?”

“Can you tell me, what kind of obstacles you are having?”

With regard to validity, two experts in counseling ascertained the content and face validity of the interview guide and trustworthiness the result of data (Amos et al., 2020). The responds of participant in the form of instant messages and notes from video call recording are archived and doing thematic analysis using QDA Miner 5.0 version. Thematic analysis was adopted because it is a commonly used analytical method to identify themes or patterns in the data (Ng, 2019). In coding process, code come from sentence as interview responses by participant. Code assigned to each sentence help interpret meaning (Azizan et al., 2022).Contains how data is collected, data sources and ways of data analysis

Results and Discussion

Results

The experience of the students-client following online group counseling through video conference as data to identify the benefits of online group-counseling for students-client, identify student-counselor relationships, and identify various obstacles of student-client as follow:

Benefit of Online Counseling

Benefit of online counseling will provide an overview what is respondents get after participating in online group counseling services via videoconferencing. The result finding that All of respondent giving a positive response such us:

One of the respondents said that she has solution about her problems as follows:

“Sure, I get a solution to my problem, after I am participating in these activities” (Mitha via video call)

Other respondents said that they were happy sharing experiences, can meet and can helping friend to solve her problems.

“Yes, I am happy to participate in these activities because I can share my experiences with friends who have the same problem with me” (Dian via videocall)

“Yes, I can meet friend and sharing my experiences about problem” (Dika via instant messegess)

Some of respondents said that they have new knowledge about problems and solution. One of statement respond as follow:

“I have more knowledge about my problems” (Gungbin via videocall)

All of respond from respondents who have experiences in online group counseling via videoconference were positive impact on personal students-client. So that, the findings in this study can contribute to online counseling services especially group counseling as alternative when face to face model cannot be done.

Experience in Videoconference

The theme is overview experience of respondents participated in online group counseling via videoconference related to the relationship that occurs between school counselor and students-client. The findings in this study reveal the feelings experienced by the students-client such as non-verbal school counselor response and the counseling situation.

Some of respondent said that they are given a chance, acceptance from school counselor and interactive during counseling process. Some of statement as follow:

“School counselor give me a turn to comment. I am happy because I got noticed, not just listening” (Dika via videocall)

“I'm glad school counselor gave me the opportunity. The application was also easy to follow” (Mitha via videocall)

Obstacles to Online Counseling

Generally, there are two obstacles who experiences by respondents in group online counseling via videoconferencing such us smartphone overheat and network issue. Some of statement as respond in interview us follow:

Some of respondent said that her/his smartphone overheat as follow:

“My smartphone overheats if the activity a long time” (Dewi via videocall).

Others respondent said that network issue as follow:

“At the time I was listening carefully, suddenly my video display got stuck, so I was left behind” (Gung Bayu via instant massages)

All of respond from respondent doing data tabulation as a part of thematic analysis. Table 2 show that key finding from narrative data to easier doing generalize.

Table 2. Tabulation of Key Finding Data

Theme	Key Finding
The benefit of Online Counseling	1) Having solution
	2) Sharing experiences with friends
	3) Having new knowledge
	4) Meeting with friend
	5) Can help friend
Experience in videoconference	1) Given a chance
	2) Interactive
	3) Acceptance
Obstacles to Online Counseling	1) Smartphone overheats
	2) Unstable Internet

Discussion

The counseling profession that serves the development of students in schools must continue to be evaluated on the role and scope of its services, especially online group-counseling services via video conferences (Steele et al., 2020). The usefulness of services for students (counselees) is important as a measure of service success (Suranata & Ildil, 2020). The findings of this study reveal that online group-counseling have provided solutions to student's problem. These findings are also in line with research findings which state that counseling through video conference helps them to solve their problems (Amos et al., 2020). Some students also feel it is valuable to help friends with their problems. It is interesting again that this online group-counseling giving insight and increased their self-help.

Reflecting on the online group-counseling process through the client-counselor relationship becomes interesting to discuss. The distribution of code same with face to face in theme show that highest. This is explained that process of counseling by counselor can facilitate students-client. The opportunity for students to respond to each other also occurred, as stated by Dian. These findings are also in line with research findings which state that friendly interaction and much freedom through video conference programs (Amos et al., 2020). Besides, they are also quick to adjust to the video conference program being used, so that all students are happy despite there are obstacles. Based on data who explains that the distribution of code problem solution showed lowest, because the process of group counseling only discussed one problem who has been agreed by all of participant. Only participant who discussed his problem giving respond.

The use of technology in educational activities cannot be separated from its limitations (Alenezi, 2017; Pelgrum, 2001). Using technology in the counseling process is certainly familiar, especially in online counseling (Abney & Maddux, 2004; Lundberg, 2000; Sampson & Makela, 2014). Study in Hongkong by Chan (2020) show that integrated online and face to face counseling will be a best way to implemented counseling in the future. Both is complementary, when face to face counseling is limited in space and time, while online counseling is more flexible but prone to various disorders, including miscommunication.

There are various obstacles faced by students when carrying out group counseling through video conference, especially using smartphones. The features of the smartphone are almost the same as a computer, when it will be used to access video conference programs for a long time, it will overheat. Of course, it needs to be considered by the client as the user and the school counselor as the service provider to give attention to this limitation. Besides, the problem of internet connection is also an obstacle, but it does not stop the counseling process from continuing. This is line with the results of the study by Gökyer (2015) which recommends that schools need to prepare the necessary facilities and infrastructure to support the implementation of online education including counseling. Results are the main part of scientific articles, containing: final results without data analysis process, hypothesis testing results. Results can be presented with tables or graphs, to clarify the results verbally. Discussion is the most important part of the entire contents of scientific articles. The objectives of the discussion are: answering research problems, interpreting findings, integrating findings from research into existing sets of knowledge and composing new theories or modifying existing theories.

Conclusion

Counseling online with a group through video conference for high school students is felt to have benefits for them. Serving their development needs at school is a shared responsibility, especially school counselors. Accessibility and convenience are important to note in service. What they feel is important for us to know and analyze so that improvements can be made. Creating a good relationship between student client-counselors in cyberspace is a challenge for school counselors as facilitators. The skill of technology must be part of the competence of school counselors so that obstacles to using the program can be anticipated. It is following these findings that the student-client does not take long to adapt to the video conference program. This is a note for school counselors of students' abilities with technology. The internet network in Indonesia has not reached all areas. Therefore, the government needs to give attention to network problems to immediately improve network access.

Given the size of the sample, this study cannot be generalized to the population. The small group in this study may not reveal some sensitive findings in large group studies. Considering that this research was conducted online by contacting students- client via WhatsApp messages and video call, maybe this approach is limited so that their disclosure about online counseling is limited. Direct communication may be having more information to say by students than in online formats. Contains conclusions and suggestions. Conclusions include answers to research questions. Suggestions refer to the results of the study and take the form of practical actions, mention to whom and for what advice is intended. Written in essay form, not numerical form.

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