

THE INFLUENCE ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ON MENTAL HEALTH IN THE DIGITAL ERA AND VIRTUAL COUNSELING SERVICES

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Abstract

Mental health has become a major concern in today's technological developments. With the emergence of the digital era, significant changes have occurred in mental health services. One of the most prominent evolutions is the emergence of virtual counseling services. This research is a literature review study related to the topic of providing mental health services remotely. Sources of information come from articles in scientific journals from the last 20 (twenty) years which are searched via the Google scholar, Google and Pubmed search engines. The number obtained was 13 articles, consisting of 10 international articles and 3 articles written by Indonesian authors. With the existence of cyber counseling or what is familiarly known as virtual counseling, it is a very effective alternative, apart from saving time and costs, cyber counseling can also be easily accessed without limited space. Furthermore, the level of client satisfaction in conducting online counseling is higher than face-to-face counseling. So we need a platform for counselors to be able to innovate with technological updates, one of which is cybercounseling (online counseling) services

Keywords: Influence of AI, Mental Health, Online Counseling

1. Introduction

In the era of globalization and with technological developments that continue to follow the current developments, all aspects of life are also changing towards a more instantaneous direction with the use of digital media. It was in this reform era that various aspects began to develop following competition from other developed countries. One of the many aspects that are involved in the development of the times is information and communication technology.

One of the reasons this happens is to make it easier for people from various circles to get all information quickly and instantly. According to (Fathoni, 2024), information technology has currently reached a very rapid level. There is almost no aspect of life that has not been touched by technological developments. With the rapid development of technology, it is almost impossible for us to avoid it, because it has more or less influenced us in living our daily lives.

Mental health is a major concern in today's technological developments. In this context, counseling services emerge as an important element that certainly cannot be ignored in providing support to individuals experiencing mental health challenges. With the advent of the digital era, significant changes have occurred in mental health services. One of the most prominent evolutions is the emergence of virtual counseling services. Dependence on technology and cyberspace is currently increasing, including dependence on AI. This can be seen from the amount of time people spend using digital devices, such as smartphones, laptops and tablets. Dependence on this technology can have an impact on mental health, such as anxiety, restlessness, and sleep disorders.

According to Park, Lee, and Kim (2014), dependence on the internet and technology can cause behavioral disorders, such as obsession with the internet, anxiety when not using digital devices, and loss of control over technology use. Their study showed that the more a person uses technology, the more likely they are to experience mental health problems. However, not all

reliance on technology has a negative impact. The application of AI technology in the field of health and counseling has provided great benefits for human mental health.

AI can help diagnose mental health disorders more quickly and accurately, as well as assist patients in the therapy process with chatbots or online counseling applications. Chatbots equipped with AI technology can help patients with symptoms of depression and anxiety. This chatbot can evaluate the patient's condition and provide advice according to individual needs. Apart from that, the counselee application online has also grown rapidly, and can help patients who find it difficult to access mental health services in person. The digital era, with its constant technological innovation, has penetrated every aspect of our lives, including the way we experience and understand mental health. Traditional mental health services are often hampered by geographic limitations, accessibility, and social stigma. Virtual counseling services exist as a solution to overcome these obstacles and provide broader and easier to access assistance.

The main advantage of virtual counseling services is greater accessibility. Individuals are no longer tied to a specific physical location to obtain counseling assistance. By using a virtual platform, a person can access counseling services from the comfort of their home or anywhere with an internet connection. This provides tremendous flexibility, addresses geographic issues and makes counseling assistance more accessible to individuals who live in remote areas or have limited mobility.

The legal basis for the influence of AI on mental health in the digital era and virtual counseling services can be seen from several aspects. First, Law Number 23 of 1992 concerning Health contains provisions regarding the protection of mental health and the development of mental health services. Second, Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 27 of 2016 concerning Health Service Standards contains provisions regarding digital mental health services. Third, Regulation of the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia Number 12 of 2018 concerning the Use of Information and Communication Technology in Health Services contains provisions regarding the use of information and communication technology in health services, including virtual mental health services.

As a policy recommendation, the government and related institutions must be actively involved in developing regulations that support and protect virtual counseling services. This regulation must cover aspects of data privacy, service quality standards and consumer protection. Apart from that, the public also needs to be actively involved to increase their understanding of the benefits and risks associated with virtual counseling.

The importance of virtual counseling services is also reflected in their increasing popularity. Society is increasingly opening up to the idea of receiving mental support through virtual platforms. These circumstances create a more open and supportive environment for individuals who may otherwise feel reluctant to seek help directly. With virtual counseling options, the stigma associated with visiting a counselor's office can be reduced, creating a more inclusive environment for everyone.

Along with the benefits, virtual counseling services also face a number of challenge. First of all, data security is a major concern, considering that sensitive personal information is shared through the platform. Serious efforts are needed to secure technological infrastructure to protect user privacy and confidentiality. Apart from that, limitations in physical interaction are also a challenge. Some elements of non-verbal communication may be lost in the virtual counseling context, which may affect the depth of the counselor's understanding of the client's problems.

To increase the effectiveness of virtual counseling services, there needs to be continuous innovation. The development of an interactive platform that can provide a more in-depth and

visually rich counseling experience could be a solution. In addition, the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) technology in the virtual counseling process can help in providing additional advice or support based on in-depth data analysis of needs and conditions (Zati, 2018).

In efforts to improve virtual counseling services, it is important to engage mental health professionals, researchers, and other stakeholders. This collaboration can produce practical guidelines, ethical standards and clear regulations to guide the delivery of virtual counseling services. Proper training for virtual counselors is also key to ensuring that they have the skills and knowledge necessary to provide effective support.

In other research, this is a review of literature from various sources, via the search engines Google Scholar, Google, and Pubmed with the keywords telemental health, telepsychology, and telecounseling. The rapid development of information technology in this digital era is a promising opportunity. The results obtained, with optimal integration of mental health services and technology, can be an alternative solution in reaching a wider community and minimizing existing gaps. Use of two-way long-distance telecommunications media, utilizing telephone and video conferencing by paying attention to professional procedures and ethics. The implementation of telepsychology in Indonesia needs to consider several things, including professional service procedures and ethics; infrastructure availability; community readiness and culture; as well as the ability of psychologists as providers of this service.

Previous research conducted by (Hanna Yulia, 2023) explained the use of artificial intelligence in implementing cyber counseling for users of replica applications, then this was reinforced by research conducted by (Mambu et al, 2023) concerning the use of artificial intelligence (AI) technology in dealing with Challenges for Teaching Teachers in the digital era. Furthermore, research was conducted by (Ayuni et al, 2021) in which they discussed Cyber Counseling as a Counselor Innovation in Facing the Challenges of Disruption in the Era of Society 5.0 We will examine the use of AI for online counseling and its impact on an individual's mental health.

The research objective of the article title The Influence of AI on mental health in the digital era and virtual counseling services is to explore the impact and challenges of virtual counseling services on mental health, as well as present solutions and recommendations to increase their effectiveness in the increasingly developing digital era. Virtual counseling services are an important milestone in the evolution of mental health services in the digital era. While providing greater accessibility and reducing stigma, challenges such as data security and limited physical interaction need to be addressed with innovation and cross-sector collaboration.

2. Method

The type of research that the author carried out was library research because the data source used was entirely from the library. Data collection in this research used several scientific journal references, ebooks, and other online publications that discuss problems related to the opportunities and challenges of using AI technology in guidance and counseling to collect information and data for this research.

Some of these techniques are used as solutions to problems that require in-depth understanding. Apart from that, this research uses a descriptive research approach which aims to explain phenomena or events in the field. Meanwhile, the data analysis technique in this research uses analytical methods, journals and other documents that are accessed via the internet.

3. Results and Discussion

The development of one era towards the next certainly requires adjustments. Individuals basically cannot close themselves off from this, so individuals are forced to adapt and innovate. Individuals who fail to face the challenges of changing times will be left behind and may be replaced. This challenge does not only impact one profession, but all professions, including teacher guidance and counseling counselors. Counselors are entering an important role in this era in order to be able to face serious impacts on the scope of their profession.

Facing the era of society, we must also be prepared to meet the challenges that are present in it. The challenges of implementing cyber counseling are: First, mastery of information and communication technology so that it cannot be replaced by artificial counselors. The progress of an era is preceded by progress in certain fields and sectors with all their innovations, from various things we can clearly observe the phenomenon of changing eras, such as the existence of Artificial Intelligence/AI (artificial intelligence). Artificial intelligence/AI is a computer program that has an algorithm whose function is to study data and use it to carry out thought processes and act like humans (Supriyadi & Asih, 2020).

Before reviewing cyber counseling in more depth, it would be good to first know what the definition of counseling itself is. Counseling (counseling). In fact, it is one of the services in guidance, but this service is flexible and comprehensive so this service is very special. Counseling flexibility can be related to the problem served, the depth of disclosure or assistance, the approach used and the role of the counselor and counselee.

Cyber counseling can be interpreted as providing counseling in a virtual scope. Experts such as Gibson (2008) define cyber counseling as counseling that can be done without face to face, with the aim of counseling that can be done in a long distance format with the help of an internet connection and sophisticated technology. This can then be called e-counseling.

The use of AI, like other mental health service facilities, certainly has advantages and disadvantages. SWOT is an analysis model that is widely used to evaluate organizational performance and has been proven effective. SWOT is an acronym for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. To study further regarding the use of AI in the counseling process, below is analysis and data from various sources. Strengths (Strengths) The use of AI makes the reach of clients wider, especially clients who have obstacles to meeting face to face. Thanks to the sophistication of AI technology, clients can enjoy counseling with a sense of comfort and security without face-to-face meetings.

Counseling can be carried out whenever the client needs it, the client does not need to spend time and energy traveling to the counseling location, so with this cyber counseling also saves the time of the client and counselor. Counseling services can be accessed whenever the client wants it, this opportunity can create a comfortable feeling that the counselor is always there, always present, eliminating the boundaries of separation and allowing clients to articulate their thoughts and feelings immediately to the counselor, without having to wait for the next counseling meeting (Ayuni et al., 2021).

The use of AI makes cyber counseling services classified as responsive services, meaning providing assistance to counselees who need immediate help so that obstacles to achieving their developmental tasks can be handled well. (Prasetyo, 2017)

Furthermore, artificial intelligence is one of the things that triggers various major changes in social life, until at the beginning of 2018 the issue arose that the teaching profession would be replaced by robots that implement Artificial Intelligence / AI (artificial intelligence) systems

which, when connected to the counselor profession, are Artificial counselors will be present, sparking lots of discussion from experts.

Technology provides many positive benefits for humans to make it easier for humans to fulfill their life needs. However, on the other hand, technological progress causes complex negative effects that exceed the benefits of technology itself, especially regarding human lifestyles in the socio-cultural dimension. In relation to this, the counselor's professional skills must also be adapted to various novelties in literature and media because the individuals they will treat will also enter the changing era. So we need a platform for counselors to be able to innovate with technological updates, one of which is cybercounseling (online counseling) services (Ayuni et al., 2021).

Another thing that triggers the shortcomings of cybercounseling is that counselors can see directly the conditions of the clients they face. Thus, it is possible that the analysis that will be given from the counselee's results will not be optimal enough compared to counseling carried out face to face. However, some of the shortcomings that exist in the online counseling process can be minimized as the counseling process progresses. This can be done because of course the pioneers of online counseling or cybercounseling are always making updates and making efforts to improve for the convenience and effectiveness of implementing online counseling. Thus, existing deficiencies can be minimized with developments in technological sophistication, as well as additional service staff.

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The disadvantage of online counseling activities that is often questioned is that counselors cannot directly monitor how clients express their problems. And the behavior and responsiveness of the counselee cannot be monitored closely by the counselor. These problems can motivate counselors to increase their imagination both in the form of making animations to provide variations to the counselee's process. So, this can provide a new atmosphere that the counselees may have never experienced before (Sari & Herdi, 2021).

Despite several shortcomings of the online counseling process, this does not become a barrier for counselees to ask for counseling from counselors. Because behind the shortcomings of cyber counseling there are also many advantages. So, the existing advantages and disadvantages can still be a consideration for those who want to do online counseling.

However, other research states that cyber counseling is considered a positive thing which of course really needs to be developed in this era of technological progress. As technology continues to develop, virtual counseling is not something that is difficult to implement. Especially during the increasingly widespread pandemic, of course mental health is no longer something that can be considered trivial. Because in reality, the shocks caused by the pandemic not only have an impact on a person's physical health, but also attack their mental health.

Furthermore, the level of client satisfaction in conducting online counseling is higher than face-to-face counseling. This should also be a reinforcement that cybercounseling is easy to

implement by considering the code of ethics generally used in the counseling process, explaining what methods will be used, informing the counselee that counseling data will be stored safely, verifying assistance, discussing alternative procedures, and explain possible technological failures (nor Zainudin & Yusof, 2018).

Just like the decline in the economic sector, of course it is also a burden on the mind which can reduce mental health. Therefore, counseling activities are also needed for every person to express the problems they are facing. With the existence of cyber counseling or what is familiarly known as virtual counseling, it is a very effective alternative, apart from saving time and costs, cyber counseling can also be easily accessed without limited space. As long as there is an internet network with a stable connection, this virtual counseling can still be carried out as it should.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the discussion, it can be concluded that cyber counseling is a counseling service that uses online media as an intermediary. Counseling can be carried out whenever the client needs it, the client does not need to spend time and energy traveling to the counseling location, so with this cyber counseling also saves the time of the client and counselor. Counseling services can be accessed whenever the client wants it, this opportunity can create a comfortable feeling that the counselor is always there, always present, eliminating the boundaries of separation and allowing clients to articulate their thoughts and feelings immediately to the counselor, without having to wait for the next counseling meeting.

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