

COUNSELING TRANSFORMATION TO FACE SOSIAL MEDIA TRENDS ON STUDENT IDENTITY AND MENTAL HEALTH IN DIGITAL ERA

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Abstract

Counseling transformation becomes very important in facing social media trends that have a major impact on the formation of identity and mental health of students in the digital era. Social media is not only a platform for social interaction, but also a space where students build and maintain their digital identities, which are often a combination of authentic and idealized self-images. The process of forming this digital identity takes place through the phases of exploration, niche discovery, audience targeting, to the integration of complex and dynamic digital identities. However, continuous exposure to social media also causes psychological pressure, such as anxiety, stress, and feelings of inadequacy due to social comparison and the need to maintain a positive image in cyberspace. Transformational counseling is present as an approach that integrates a deep understanding of the dynamics of social media with the psychological needs of students, helping them develop a healthy and authentic self-identity and build effective emotional adaptation skills. This approach also emphasizes the importance of self-reflection, digital reputation management, and strengthening positive values so that students are able to face psychological challenges in the digital era more resiliently. Recent studies have shown that counseling that is responsive to the digital context can improve students' mental well-being by reducing social pressure and increasing self-confidence and coping skills. Therefore, the transformation of counseling services that adopt digital technology and value-based approaches is very necessary to support the development of students' identity and mental health holistically in the era of social media.

Keywords: transformational counseling, digital identity, social media

1. Introduction

Digital identity is a digital representation of an entity or individual that includes various personal information, transaction history, and online footprints that provide a complete picture of a person or organization in the digital world. In the era of rapidly developing information technology, digital identity has become an important element that revolutionizes the way we interact, work, and live our daily lives. This development marks a paradigm shift from physical identity associated with documents such as identity cards or passports, to identities that are stored and managed digitally. Digital identity plays a central role in various aspects of modern life, from online financial transactions, digital health services, to education and e-commerce. With the increasing integration of technologies such as artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things (IoT), digital identity is the key to accessing various digital services that facilitate human activities and increase efficiency. However, this convenience also brings serious challenges related to data security and privacy. Cases of data breaches and misuse of digital identity are issues that must be watched out for, so strict security measures and adequate digital literacy are needed for the public to be able to manage their digital identities responsibly. (Cameron, K. 2005)

In addition, digital identity also reflects the complexity of identity in a network society, where territorial boundaries are increasingly fluid and identity is not only individual but also relational and collective. This adds a new dimension to the understanding of identity in the digital era, which is not only limited to biological or socio-demographic characteristics, but also to the dynamic process of identity

formation and maintenance in a digital context. Thus, digital identity is not only a technological necessity, but also a social phenomenon that requires holistic attention, including strengthening security, increasing digital literacy, and collaboration between the public and private sectors to create a safe, efficient, and sustainable digital ecosystem. The future of digital identity technology will greatly determine how we manage interactions and transactions in everyday life in an increasingly digitally connected world. (Clarke, R. 2008)

The rapid development of information and communication technology in the digital era has brought significant changes in various aspects of life, including in the field of guidance and counseling. The digital revolution demands a transformation of counseling services to be more adaptive, inclusive, and effective in responding to the challenges of an increasingly complex era. The use of digital media such as websites, instant messaging applications, video conferencing, and social media opens up new opportunities for counselors to provide virtual services that are more flexible and can be accessed without geographical or time limitations. This transformation not only changes the methods and media of services, but also demands an increase in counselors' digital skills and a deep understanding of the ethics and security of client data in the context of online counseling. Counselors must be able to build effective professional relationships through digital media while maintaining the confidentiality and integrity of the counseling process. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of technology in counseling practice, so that online services have become the main alternative that allows for the continuity of services even though face-to-face interactions are limited. (Chadwick, D. 2017)

The use of technology also allows the development of more innovative and personal counseling methods, such as asynchronous chat-based cyber counseling and group counseling services via the WhatsApp platform, which have been shown to increase self-disclosure and psychological well-being of clients, especially students. Social media such as Instagram has even been utilized as a valid and effective cyber counseling medium to reach students with an approach that is in accordance with the characteristics of the digital generation. However, the transformation of digital-based counseling services faces a number of challenges, including limitations in nonverbal interaction, issues of privacy and data security, and the need for intensive training for counselors to be able to master technology and integrate professional ethics into digital practice. Therefore, the development of superior and adaptive human resources for counselors to technology is the key to the success of this transformation. Overall, the transformation of guidance and counseling in the digital era is a strategic step that not only increases the accessibility and efficiency of services, but also enriches the counseling experience with a more innovative and responsive approach to the needs of today's clients. The integration of technology in counseling must be balanced with the strengthening of professional competence and ethics so that services remain of high quality and have a positive impact on the development of individuals and society at large. (Preukschat, A., & Reed, D. 2019)

2. Methods

The method in this article uses library research, which is a method of collecting data by understanding and studying theories from various literatures related to the research. There are four stages of library research in research, namely preparing the necessary equipment, preparing a working bibliography, organizing time and reading or recording research materials. The data collection uses a method of finding sources and constructing from various sources, for example books, journals and research that has been done. Library materials obtained from various references are analyzed critically

and must be in- depth in order to support their propositions and ideas. The data analysis technique in this work uses the content analysis method, which can be used to draw correct conclusions and can be reviewed. In the analysis, selection, comparison, combination and sorting are carried out in such a way that the relevant ones are found. Inter-library checks and consideration of supervisor comments are carried out to maintain consistency in the evaluation, prevention, and elimination of incorrect information, namely human misunderstandings that can be caused by a lack of bibliographic author factors. (Mei Tang. 2019)

3. Results and Discussion

Counseling transformation in the face of social media trends is crucial to support students' identity and mental health in today's digital era. Social media has become an inseparable part of the lives of adolescents and college students, which has a significant impact on their psychological well-being. Various studies have shown that excessive use of social media and unhealthy interaction patterns on digital platforms can increase the risk of depression, anxiety, and other mental disorders among students. For example, a study from UT Southwestern Medical Center revealed that excessive emotional attachment to social media is correlated with increased severity of symptoms of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts among adolescents undergoing mental health treatment. In addition, national data from the United States shows an increasing trend of anxiety and depression among adolescents associated with intensive social media use, thus raising an urgent need for more structured and responsive mental health interventions. In this context, counseling must transform from a traditional approach to a more adaptive approach to the digital dynamics that affect students' identities. Social media often triggers unhealthy social comparisons, where students feel inadequate or inadequate when comparing themselves to the ideal image presented by peers online. This phenomenon can cause severe psychological distress, such as imposter syndrome and low self-esteem. Counselors need to develop strategies that help students understand and manage the psychological impacts of exposure to social media content, including mindfulness techniques, screen time management, and strengthening authentic self- identity outside of the virtual world. (World Economic Forum. 2021)

In addition, counseling transformation must also include digital literacy education that instills critical awareness of social media use. Students need to be equipped with the ability to recognize content that has the potential to harm mental health, such as fake news, online bullying, or pressure to maintain a certain image. A holistic counseling approach must also involve strengthening offline social relationships and developing healthy social skills, to balance digital interactions that are sometimes superficial and competitive. The role of counselors is also increasingly important in helping students build a positive and professional personal brand on social media without sacrificing their mental health. This is especially relevant considering the demands of the era that require individuals to actively network and build a good digital reputation as part of career development and self-identity. Effective counseling must be able to provide practical guidance in maintaining a balance between digital existence and psychological well-being. Overall, counseling transformation to deal with social media trends must be proactive, responsive, and evidence-based, given the complexity of social media's influence on students' identity and mental health. This approach not only helps address issues that have already arisen, but also plays a role in prevention by equipping students with the skills to adapt and be resilient in an ever-changing digital world. Collaboration between schools, families, and mental health professionals is key to the successful implementation of counseling that is able to answer the challenges of the digital era while utilizing the positive opportunities of social media for the development of students' identities and mental

well-being. The difference between digital counseling and traditional counseling lies mainly in the way services are delivered and the interaction between counselors and clients. Traditional counseling is conducted face-to-face with direct interaction in a physical space, allowing for rich verbal and nonverbal communication such as facial expressions, body language, and voice intonation. This provides emotional depth and warmth in the counseling process that is difficult to fully replicate in digital counseling. In contrast, digital counseling or cyber counseling uses online media such as video calls, chat, email, or special applications to communicate, so that clients and counselors do not need to meet physically and can interact from distant locations. This approach offers flexibility in time and place, allowing clients to access

services anytime and anywhere without having to be present in person.

However, digital counseling also has different challenges compared to traditional counseling. The limitations of nonverbal interaction are one of the main obstacles because facial expressions and body language are difficult to capture optimally through digital media, so counselors must rely on verbal cues and emoticons to understand the client's emotional condition. In addition, aspects of data confidentiality and security are serious concerns because the counseling process takes place in cyberspace which is vulnerable to threats such as hacking and tapping. This requires the implementation of strict security protocols and the use of trusted platforms to protect client privacy. On the other hand, digital counseling provides benefits for clients who feel awkward or embarrassed to speak directly, as well as for those who live in remote areas or have limited mobility that makes it difficult to access face-to-face services. In terms of effectiveness, both forms of counseling have their own advantages. Traditional counseling allows for the formation of a stronger and more personal relationship between counselor and client, which can be very important in dealing with complex psychological problems. Meanwhile, digital counseling offers ease of access and convenience that can increase the reach of psychological services to a wider population, including those who were previously unreachable. The digital approach also allows clients to have more time to respond and express feelings in detail, as communication is often text-based, allowing space for reflection before responding.

Overall, the difference between digital and traditional counseling is not only about the medium of communication, but also involves aspects of interpersonal relationships, security, and accessibility. Digital counseling is an innovation that is relevant to technological developments and the needs of modern society, especially in the era of society 5.0 which demands fast, flexible, and easily accessible services. However, traditional counseling still plays an important role in providing in-depth and personal services. Therefore, the integration of these two approaches, as in blended counseling, can be an optimal solution to meet the needs of diverse clients while maintaining the quality and effectiveness of counseling services. (Reed, D., & Preukschat, A. 2020).

Digital Identity

Digital identity has become a very important and inseparable aspect of everyday human life in this modern era. With the advancement of information and communication technology, almost all activities that used to be done conventionally are now transformed into the digital realm. This makes digital identity the main foundation that allows someone to interact, transact, and access various services online. Digital identity is not just data or information stored in a system, but also a representation of who someone is in cyberspace that influences various aspects of social, economic, and cultural life. One of the biggest influences of digital identity is the ease and speed in carrying out various administrative

processes and transactions. For example, in digital banking services, digital identity allows someone to open an account, make a transfer, or access a loan without having to come directly to a branch office. This of course saves a lot of time and energy, and expands access to financial services for people living in remote areas. In addition, digital identity also facilitates the verification process in health, education, and government services, where personal data and user history can be accessed quickly and accurately by the authorities. Thus, digital identity increases the efficiency and effectiveness of public and private services which have a positive impact on people's quality of life. (O'Neill, M. 2019)

In addition to practical aspects, digital identity also has a major influence in the social and cultural realms. Social media, as one of the main platforms in the digital world, allows individuals to build and express their identity virtually. Through profiles, posts, and interactions with other users, a person can create the desired self-image and build a wide social network. However, this also brings its own challenges, such as social pressure to maintain a certain image, the risk of spreading false information, and the potential for cyberbullying that can have a negative impact on mental health. A well-managed digital identity can be a powerful tool for strengthening social relationships and building community, but if misused, it can lead to conflict and distrust. In terms of security and privacy, the existence of a digital identity requires special attention. Personal data stored digitally is very vulnerable to threats such as data theft, identity misuse, and cyber attacks. Therefore, protection of digital identity is very crucial to maintain user trust and ensure that personal data is not misused. The development of security technologies such as encryption, multifactor authentication, and blockchain are important solutions in maintaining the integrity and confidentiality of digital identity. In addition, digital literacy for the community must also be improved so that each individual is able to understand the risks and how to manage their digital identity wisely.

Furthermore, digital identity also plays a role in encouraging social and economic inclusivity. With a verified digital identity, groups of people who previously had difficulty accessing formal services, such as people in remote areas or vulnerable groups, can now gain easier access to financial, education, and health services. This helps reduce social disparities and opens up wider opportunities for economic and social empowerment. Digital identity is also an important pillar in the ongoing digital transformation in various sectors, which will ultimately drive the growth of the digital economy and technological innovation. Overall, digital identity affects everyday life not only in terms of convenience and efficiency, but also in terms of social, cultural, security, and inclusivity. Digital identity opens up many new opportunities while presenting challenges that must be faced together by individuals, governments, and the private sector. Good and secure digital identity management will be key to building an inclusive, productive, and sustainable digital society in the future. Therefore, a deep understanding and awareness of the importance of digital identity must continue to be improved so that every individual can utilize it optimally in ever. (Chadwick, D. W., & Cram, W. A. 2018)

Digital identity has a profound impact on everyday life in many ways that are now inextricably linked to human activity in the online world. Digital identity is a unique representation of a person or entity in the digital realm consisting of biometric data, demographic data, and authentication credentials used to access online services and systems. Here are some of the main influences of digital identity in everyday life:

1. Simplifying and accelerating the administrative process. With digital identity, the data verification process becomes faster and more efficient. Users do not need to carry physical documents because the data is already stored digitally and can be easily accessed by related institutions, for

example in health, education, and financial services.

2. Facilitating safe and valid online transactions. Digital identity allows online transaction validation through biometrics or digital signatures, thereby reducing the risk of fraud and increasing the security of digital transactions.
3. Supporting social interaction and identity formation on social media. Digital identity also includes social media accounts that are the main platforms for individuals to express themselves, build social networks, and form a curated self- image. Social media influences self-perception and social interaction through features such as profiles, posts, and interactions with other users. However, it also brings challenges such as social pressure and the risk of cyberbullying.
4. Increasing the inclusiveness of financial and social services. Digital identity enables wider access to formal financial services and government programs, especially for those who previously had no access due to limitations of physical documents or geographic location.
5. Becoming an important foundation in digital transformation. The existence of a secure and trusted digital identity increases consumer trust in digital services, which has a positive impact on the development of the digital economy and digital transformation as a whole.

Overall, digital identity has become an integral part of everyday life, influencing the way we interact, transact, and build social relationships in an increasingly digitalized world. However, it is also important to pay attention to security and privacy aspects so that digital identity can be utilized optimally and safely. (Digital2045. 2024)

4. Conclusions

The digital era has brought about very significant changes in the field of guidance and counseling, especially in the way services are provided and accessed. Information technology is the main driver of this transformation by presenting online counseling methods that are more flexible, inclusive, and easily accessible without geographical or time limitations. The use of digital platforms such as video calls, chats, and mobile applications allows for more dynamic interactions between counselors and clients, increasing client involvement and comfort in the counseling process. In addition, technology also helps overcome the stigma that is often attached to seeking psychological help, so that counseling services become more open and widely accepted. However, this digital transformation also presents challenges, especially related to aspects of data security, privacy, and the quality of interactions that are sometimes less in-depth than face-to-face counseling. Therefore, counselors are required to master technological skills while paying attention to professional ethics in implementing digital-based counseling. Technical training and strengthening understanding of ethics are very important so that counseling services remain effective, safe, and reliable. The COVID-19 pandemic has also been a catalyst that has accelerated the adoption of technology in counseling practice, emphasizing the need for continuous innovation to adapt to the times.

Overall, guidance and counseling in the digital era is not just a trend, but an urgent need that must be responded to with adaptation and innovation. With the right approach, information technology can be utilized to expand the reach of services, increase efficiency, and support the development of students' identities and mental health more optimally. Collaboration between counselors, educational institutions, and other stakeholders is essential to create a professional, ethical, and sustainable digital counseling service ecosystem in the future.

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