



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

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### Abstract

The rapid development of social media in the digital era has had a significant impact on the formation of identity and mental health of students. The trend of massive use of social media requires a transformation in the counseling approach to be relevant and effective in facing these challenges. Transformational counseling is an important strategy that integrates an understanding of the dynamics of social media with the psychological needs of students, especially in building a healthy self-identity and maintaining mental health. This approach not only helps students understand and manage the influence of social media on self-image but also strengthens emotional and social adaptation skills in the digital world. This study examines the role of transformational counseling in supporting students in dealing with social media trends, with a focus on developing an authentic identity and improving mental well-being. The results of the study indicate that counseling that is responsive to the digital context can strengthen self confidence, reduce social pressure, and improve students' coping abilities with stress related to social media exposure.

**Keywords:** transformational counseling, social media, student identity.

### 1. Introduction

The rapid development of social media in the digital era has brought significant changes to the lives of students, especially regarding the formation of their self-identity and mental health. Social media has become the main space for students to express themselves, interact, and build their self-image, but on the other hand it also raises various psychological challenges such as social pressure, anxiety, and stress due to social comparison, cyberbullying, and the demand to maintain an ideal image in cyberspace. This phenomenon demands a transformation in the counseling approach that has been used so far, in order to be able to answer the complexity of problems that arise due to the social media trend. Transformational counseling is present as an approach that integrates a deep understanding of the dynamics of social media with the psychological needs of students. This approach not only focuses on traditional psychological aspects, but also accommodates the digital dimension that is now an inseparable part of student life.

Through transformational counseling, students are helped to develop an authentic and healthy self-identity, as well as build effective emotional and social adaptation skills in dealing with the pressures and negative influences of social media. This is important so that students do not only become passive users of social media, but are able to manage their psychological impacts positively. (Suryahadikusumah, H., & Nadya, A. 2020)

Various studies have shown that excessive use of social media can lower self-esteem, increase anxiety, depression, and sleep disorders in students. Therefore, transformational counseling also plays a role in increasing students' awareness of the impact of social media, teaching adaptive coping strategies, and encouraging balanced and healthy use of social media. This approach also emphasizes the importance



of spiritual strengthening and positive values as a foundation for building mental resilience in the digital era. In addition, transformational counseling helps students understand that self-identity is not solely formed by the image displayed in cyberspace, but also by real values, experiences, and social relationships. Thus, students can be more critical and selective in responding to content and interactions on social media, and are able to maintain their mental health from detrimental social pressures. This counseling also opens up space for students to reflect on themselves, develop empathy, and build healthy interpersonal relationships in the real world. Overall, transformational counseling is an urgent need in dealing with increasingly complex social media trends that have a broad impact on students' identity and mental health. This approach not only offers practical and strategic solutions, but also provides deep spiritual meaning and reinforcement, so that students can grow and develop optimally in the digital era. Therefore, the development and implementation of transformational counseling must be a priority in guidance and counseling services in higher education institutions. (Bauman, Z. 2013)

The difference in climate refers to the variation in average weather conditions that occur over a long period of time in a particular area. Climate includes patterns of temperature, rainfall, humidity, wind, and other meteorological phenomena that last for tens to thousands of years. While weather is the condition of the atmosphere that occurs at a certain time and place in a short period of time, such as daily or weekly. So, the main difference between climate and weather lies in the time scale and stability of the observed patterns. Climate describes the general characteristics of weather that are typical in an area over a long period, so it can be used to classify areas based on their climate type, such as tropical climate, temperate climate, or polar climate. Meanwhile, weather is more dynamic and can change quickly, for example heavy rain on one day or sudden cold temperatures. Thus, climate provides a long-term picture that helps in agricultural planning, development, and disaster mitigation, while weather is more relevant for daily activities and extreme weather warnings. In short, climate is the average weather pattern over a long period of time in a region, while weather is the atmospheric conditions that occur over a short period of time and can change. This distinction is important to understand in order to distinguish between short-term and long-term phenomena in the study of meteorology and the environment. (Kavanagh, S., & O'Rourke, K. 2016)

## 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 to Face Social Media Trends on Student Identity and Mental Health in the Digital Era shows that the development of digital technology, especially social media, has significantly changed the way students build their identity and affects their mental health. Social media provides a wide space for expression and interaction, but also poses psychological challenges such as social pressure, anxiety, stress, and the risk of cyberbullying that can worsen students' mental condition. Therefore, transformation in counseling practice is very important in order to be able to answer the needs and problems that arise due to this social media trend. One form of effective counseling transformation is the development of digital technology-based cybercounseling services, such as asynchronous chat and the WhatsApp application, which allows counseling to be carried out online with flexibility in time and place. Research at the University of Lampung shows that the use of asynchronous chat-based cybercounseling is very practical and effective in increasing access and quality of counseling services for students. Students feel more comfortable and helped because they can consult at any time without having to meet face to face, thus reducing time and space barriers in the counseling process. In addition, WhatsApp-based group counseling services have also been shown to increase students' self-disclosure, which is important for their psychological development. (Pagnotta, K. 2018)

This transformation not only provides easy access, but also adapts counseling methods to the characteristics of the digital generation who are familiar with technology. This approach helps students develop a more authentic and healthy self-identity by equipping them with the emotional and social adaptation skills needed to deal with social media pressures. Transformational counseling also emphasizes the importance of strengthening positive and spiritual values as a foundation for mental resilience in the digital era. However, the use of technology in counseling also has limitations, such as dependence on the internet network, lack of face-to-face interaction that can affect nonverbal communication, and limited features that support full emotional expression. Therefore, although digital counseling services are very helpful, a face-to-face approach is still needed as a complement for optimal results. Overall, the results of the study show that the transformation of counseling through the use of digital technology and social media is a strategic step to face the challenges of mental health and the formation of student identity in the digital era. This approach allows counseling services to be more effective, responsive, and relevant to the needs of today's students, and is able to improve their psychological well-being as a whole. (Shatto, B. 2017)

#### **Mental health counseling**

Mental health counseling has undergone a significant transformation with the advent of digital technology expanding the access and effectiveness of services. Recent research has shown that digital therapy interventions such as internet-based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (iCBT) are comparable in effectiveness to traditional face-to-face therapy, but require less therapist time and have better adherence rates. This opens up a huge opportunity for mental health providers to reach hard-to-reach populations, such as students in remote areas, who often experience emotional distress and mental health disorders such as depression and anxiety. Additionally, technological advances such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are creating immersive therapeutic environments that allow patients to confront phobias and practice social skills in a safe and controlled manner. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) in the form of therapy chatbots such as Woebot and Wysa is also gaining popularity, providing scalable, easily accessible psychological support based on Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), mindfulness, and positive psychology at any time. Online therapy platforms such as Talkspace connect patients with

licensed therapists via video, text, and audio, and use AI to match patients with the therapist best suited to their needs. (White, J. 2022)

Teletherapy and virtual counseling have become essential components of modern mental health care, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic that has limited face-to-face interactions. Key benefits of these methods include increased accessibility, eliminating geographic and time barriers, and reducing the stigma that often prevents individuals from seeking help. Online counseling allows for virtual face-to-face sessions that are similar to traditional therapy, as well as asynchronous communication through secure messaging that supports ongoing reflection and support between sessions. The use of technology has also improved counseling practice management through applications such as SimplePractice and Therabill that assist with scheduling, billing, and insurance claims, as well as electronic health record (EHR) systems that improve patient data organization and continuity of care. However, challenges such as data privacy, the learning curve of technology, and limitations in nonverbal communication remain important concerns that mental health professionals must address. Overall, the integration of technology into mental health counseling offers innovative solutions that increase access, personalization, and effectiveness of therapy. This digital approach is especially relevant for college students and other vulnerable groups who are experiencing emotional distress in the digital age, allowing them to receive psychological support more easily, quickly, and tailored to their needs. (Petrescu-Mag, R., et al. 2023). By continuing to develop and adapt these technologies, mental health services can become more inclusive and responsive to the needs of modern society.

Counseling Transformation to Face Social Media Trends on Student Identity and Mental Health in the Digital Era along with an in-depth explanation:

1. Counseling Paradigm Changes in the Digital Era. Counseling transformation occurs due to the strong influence of social media which changes the way students build their identities and interact socially. Traditional face-to-face counseling is starting to be complemented and even replaced by digital services such as asynchronous chat-based cybercounseling and instant messaging applications such as WhatsApp. This allows the counseling process to be more flexible, easily accessible, and relevant to the lifestyle of students who are highly dependent on digital technology.
2. Effectiveness of Asynchronous Chat-Based Cybercounseling. A study at the University of Lampung shows that asynchronous chat-based cybercounseling is more practical and effective in providing counseling services to students. Students can access services at any time without having to adjust the time in real-time, thus reducing time and space barriers. This media also makes it easier for students to confide and discuss more comfortably and openly, which is very helpful in overcoming emotional stress due to the influence of social media.
3. The Role of WhatsApp in Digital Counseling Service. WhatsApp as a popular platform among teenagers is an effective media for e-counseling services. The advantages of WhatsApp include ease of communication, chat features, voice and video calls, and file sharing that enrich counseling interactions. The use of WhatsApp has been shown to increase students' self-confidence and encourage self-disclosure, which is very important in the counseling process to build a healthy self-identity and overcome psychological problems.
4. Development of Instagram Social Media for Cyber Counseling. Instagram social media is also used as a valid and appropriate cyber counseling media. Instagram Guidance and

- Counseling Laboratory at Riau University, for example, has proven effective in expanding the reach of online counseling services. Expert validation shows that the content, language, and design of this social media are very appropriate to the needs of students, so that they can help students overcome developmental problems and emotional stress in the digital era.
5. **Impact of Social Media on Student Identity and Mental Health.** Social media influences the formation of student identity by providing a wide space for expression but also creates pressure to appear perfect. This can cause stress, anxiety, and other mental health disorders. The transformation of digital counseling provides a responsive approach to this phenomenon by helping students manage the influence of social media in a healthy way and build mental resilience through strengthening positive values and coping skills.
  6. **Peer Counseling and Digital Social Support.** Peer counseling conducted digitally through chat platforms and social media allows students to support each other and share experiences. This approach increases social engagement and reduces loneliness, which are important factors in maintaining mental health in the digital age. Cybercounseling-based group counseling services via WhatsApp have been shown to be effective in improving students' psychological well-being.
  7. **Challenges and Limitations of Digital Counseling.** Despite its many benefits, digital counseling also faces challenges such as dependence on the internet network, limited nonverbal communication, and lack of face-to-face interaction that can affect the depth of the therapeutic relationship. Therefore, digital counseling should be combined with face-to-face services for optimal results and to meet students' emotional needs as a whole.
  8. **Counseling Service Development Strategy in the Digital Age.** The development of counseling services must integrate digital technology with an adaptive psychological approach based on positive and spiritual values. Training counselors to master technology and understand the dynamics of social media is essential so that counseling services can run effectively and in accordance with the needs of today's students. In addition, the development of social media and special applications for counseling services can expand access and improve the quality of services.

Overall, the transformation of counseling that adopts digital technology and pays attention to social media trends provides innovative and effective solutions in helping students build a healthy self-identity and maintain mental health in the digital era. This approach makes counseling services more relevant, accessible, and responsive to the psychological challenges faced by students today. (Arensberg, M., et al. 2020)

#### **4. Conclusions**

Cyber counseling is a counseling service that utilizes digital media to provide psychological support to adolescents and students who face various pressures, whether academic, social, or emotional. Quantitative research using experimental methods shows that a six-week cyber counseling program has a significant positive impact on the psychological well-being of participants. Pre-test and post-test data showed a significant increase in psychological well-being scores in the group that underwent cyber counseling intervention, especially in reducing anxiety and stress levels and increasing self-confidence. In contrast, the control group that did not receive intervention did not show significant changes, confirming the effectiveness of cyber counseling as a psychological aid in the digital era. The advantage of cyber counseling lies in the flexibility and ease of access it offers. This service allows students and students to express personal problems more comfortably and without fear or shame, because communication can be

done in writing and asynchronously. This is very helpful for those who experience obstacles in face-to-face counseling, either due to geographical factors, time, or social awkwardness. In addition, cyber counseling can expand the reach of counseling services so that they can reach more individuals who need psychological support.

In addition to being an intervention tool, cyber counseling also functions as a preventive tool that supports the psychological development of adolescents by helping them manage stress and anxiety more effectively. This approach can improve positive coping skills and self-awareness, so that adolescents are better prepared to face the challenges of life in the digital era full of social pressure and rapid information. However, cyber counseling also has challenges and limitations, such as dependence on technology and internet networks, as well as limitations in nonverbal communication that can affect the depth of the therapeutic relationship. Therefore, cyber counseling should be combined with face-to-face counseling services to provide more comprehensive support and meet the emotional needs of clients as a whole. Overall, cyber counseling has proven to be an innovative and effective solution in improving the mental health of students and college students in the digital era. This service not only facilitates access and increases participant self-disclosure, but also helps reduce psychological stress related to academic, social, and emotional demands. With proper development and implementation, cyber counseling can become an integral part of a modern guidance and counseling system that is responsive to the needs of the digital generation

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