

Dynamics of Interpersonal Relationships in Virtual Guidance and Counseling for BK Students: Challenges, Opportunities, and Intervention Strategies

Nurasyah¹, Rini Fadhillah Putri², Enny Fitriani^{3*}

^{1,2} Muslim Nusantara Al Washliyah University, Medan, Indonesia

³ Indah College of Health Sciences, Medan, Indonesia

Email: nurasyah@umnaw.ac.id¹, rinifadhillah@umnaw.ac.id², ennyfitriani146@gmail.com³

*) Corresponding Author: ennyfitriani146@gmail.com

Article history: received December 09, 2024; revised January 05, 2025; accepted January 15, 2025

This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License



Abstract. The counseling process has been significantly changed by advances in information and communication technology. The digital era has paved the way for virtual counseling services, which allow wider, more flexible, and anonymous access for those who need it, especially students. One of the important services provided to students to support their emotional, social, and academic growth is counseling. Counseling in higher education is increasingly being done virtually due to the rapid development of information technology. The purpose of this study is to investigate the dynamics of interpersonal relationships in virtual counseling, find problems, and find opportunities and intervention strategies that may be used in this situation. It is important to understand these challenges and create useful solutions for them. Some of the main problems that are often faced include difficulties in building strong emotional relationships, limitations in non-verbal interactions, and technical problems that can interfere with communication. The research method is a qualitative descriptive method by taking data from several libraries that are used as consideration. After reviewing the literature from various related research sources, this article concludes that although virtual counseling services present some technical problems and limitations in non-verbal interactions, they also offer greater opportunities. Appropriate intervention strategies include technology skills training, use of safe platforms, and approaches that rely more on effective communication skills.

Keywords: *Dynamics, Counseling Guidance, Technological Development, Virtual, Intervention*

1. INTRODUCTION

In higher education, guidance and counseling (CDC) provides social, academic, and psychological support to students. Many educational institutions have started using digital platforms to provide various services, such as guidance and counseling, as the COVID-19 pandemic has caused major changes in the way of living and learning. (Attika & Sukardi, 2021) Virtual counseling practices provide new opportunities for students to obtain these services without sacrificing location and time. Despite its many potentials, virtual counseling also presents many problems, especially related to the dynamics of interpersonal relationships between counselors and clients. Building a strong emotional connection, limitations in non-verbal interactions, and technical issues that can interfere with communication are some of the main problems that are often faced. (Tjahyanti, 2021) Therefore, it is important to understand these difficulties and create effective solutions to overcome them. The purpose of this article is to study the dynamics of interpersonal relationships that occur in virtual counseling. It also explores the difficulties, opportunities, and methods that can be used to improve the quality of counseling for college students. (Novita et al., 2018).

A. Virtual Counseling Guidance

Virtual counseling is a type of counseling provided through technology such as video phone applications, chat, or email, which allows clients and counselors to interact with each other without a face-to-face meeting.(Jannah & Marjo, 2022)Because it allows clients who are in remote locations or have limited time, this type of counseling is becoming increasingly popular. Virtual counseling has the advantage of flexibility and privacy, as students can access services anytime and anywhere,(Pratama & Nur, 2023). However, the biggest problem is non-verbal interactions, such as body language and facial expressions, which can affect the quality of interpersonal relationships during the counseling process.(Salsabila et al., 2022)

B. Dynamics of Interpersonal Relationships in Counseling Guidance

Counseling relies on interpersonal relationships. Success in helping clients overcome their psychological or emotional problems depends on the quality of the therapeutic relationship, which is based on empathy, sincerity, and nonjudgmental acceptance, according to Rogers (1961). Creating a strong emotional bond despite physical limitations is a major challenge in the virtual context.(. et al., 2018). The use of digital platforms in counseling guidance can reduce emotional involvement because observation of body expressions and facial expressions is limited.(Nurasyah et al., 2022). However, active listening skills and verbal communication can serve as excellent substitutes for enhancing interpersonal relationships in virtual counseling.(. et al., 2018)

C. Challenges in Virtual Counseling Guidance

1. Limitations of Non-Verbal Interaction

The loss of non-verbal communication elements is a major problem in virtual counseling. During face-to-face meetings, counselors can study clients' facial expressions, body language, and tone of voice to gain further insight into the issues or feelings they are experiencing. Because of these limitations, it can be difficult for counselors to detect more subtle emotional signals.(Jannah & Marjo, 2022).

2. Technology Issues

Often, conducting virtual counseling becomes difficult due to technical issues such as unstable internet connection, sound interference, or problems using the digital platform.(FTH et al., 2022). This can lead to difficult communication and a poor counseling experience for students.

3. Privacy and Security Limitations

The security and privacy of client data in virtual counseling sessions is very important. Using an unsafe platform can risk exposing clients' personal data. Therefore, it is important for teachers and institutions to choose secure technology and teach students how to protect their personal data.

D. Opportunities in Virtual Counseling Guidance

1. Wider Accessibility

The main benefit of virtual counseling is that it is more accessible. Students from different locations and demographics can easily access the service without having to be physically present on campus. This can lead to more students using counseling services.(Kurniawan & Aiman, 2020).

2. Time Flexibility

Virtual counseling provides greater flexibility, allowing it to accommodate students' busy schedules. By allowing both counselors and clients to choose a time that works for them, the counseling process can be more efficient and tailored to the student's needs.

3. Using Technology to Increase Engagement

The use of chat to share materials or interactive activities that strengthen the therapeutic relationship are some of the tools that digital platforms can offer to increase engagement and effectiveness of counseling ((Pardamean et al., 2023)). In addition, technology allows counselors to track their clients' progress in a more organized and systematic manner.

E. Intervention Strategies to Improve Interpersonal Relationships in Virtual Counseling Guidance

1. Technology Training for Counselors

Counselors should be trained on the proper use of virtual counseling platforms to address technical issues.(Dan et al., 2021). This training may include software usage, managing technical issues, and strategies to ensure counseling sessions run smoothly despite technology issues.

2. Strengthening Verbal Communication Skills

Counselors must learn better verbal communication skills, such as active listening, giving empathetic feedback, and asking open-ended questions to encourage deeper conversations in a virtual environment.(Kurniawan & Aiman, 2020)

3. Building Digital Trust and Security

From the beginning, it is important to build trust with students through open discussions about the procedures and goals of virtual counseling. Additionally, creating a secure and privacy-compliant platform will help students feel safe.(Dan et al., 2021).

4. Utilizing Digital Features to Increase Engagement

Using features like text messaging, reminders, and digital resources can help students be more engaged during counseling. Students can feel more connected to their counselors and get support more easily with these features.(Bastomi, 2019).

II. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach to provide an in-depth description of the dynamics of interpersonal relationships that occur in virtual counseling guidance.(Iii, 2018). This study concentrates on the experiences and thoughts of counselors and students involved in virtual counseling guidance.

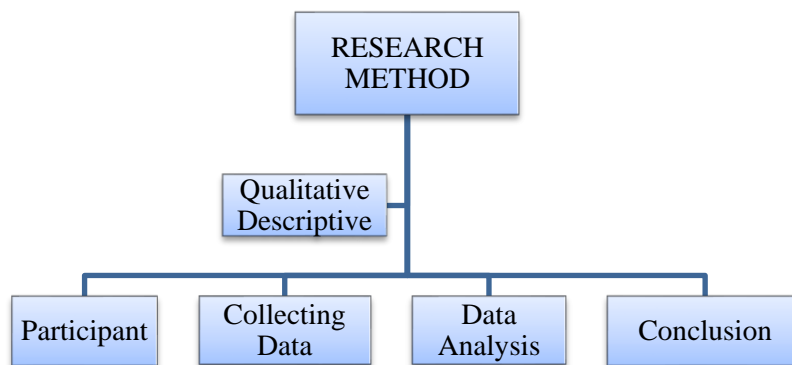


Figure 1 Research Method Chart

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Challenges in the Dynamics of Interpersonal Relationships in Virtual Counseling Guidance

One of the main problems in virtual counseling is the limited non-verbal communication, which includes facial expressions, body language, and voice intonation. Although this technology can convey verbal information well, many emotional aspects are lost or distorted in virtual interactions. This can prevent counselors from understanding students' feelings and providing appropriate responses.

In addition, technical glitches are also a big problem. Choppy sound, poor video quality, or poor internet connections can disrupt communication and reduce the quality of interactions. Building emotional closeness is an additional challenge. Technology cannot replace in-person presence in counseling, which can reduce students' confidence and comfort in speaking openly.

2. Opportunities in Virtual Counseling Guidance

Virtual counseling opens up a variety of opportunities, but there are challenges. One of the biggest opportunities is the ability to customize how you use the service. Students can attend counseling sessions from anywhere, at any time, without the constraints of distance or time. This allows counseling services to be available to more students, even those who live in remote areas or have busy schedules.

Additionally, virtual platforms can offer multiple ways to communicate, such as chat or email, allowing students to speak in writing before engaging in a virtual face-to-face meeting. This may be

a more comfortable way for students who may feel awkward speaking in person. Additionally, it can give students time to explain their concerns in more detail.

3. Intervention Strategies to Improve Interpersonal Relationships

Several intervention approaches can be used to address issues and take advantage of opportunities in online counseling. First, counselors should improve their online communication skills, such as managing conversations, understanding emotional cues through voice or facial expressions, and paying attention to non-verbal elements that can still be identified, such as pauses or voice intonation.

In addition, the counseling experience can be enhanced with advanced technologies such as platforms that support more dynamic interactions, such as screen sharing or interactive video. In addition, counselors must maintain an emotional connection with students by providing additional attention, fostering trust, and creating an atmosphere of safe and open communication.

In addition, it is important to plan more organized counseling sessions, where students are given time to discuss their problems systematically. This can reduce tension in the interaction and clarify the purpose of counseling. A more directed and explorative conversational approach can also improve the quality of the relationship that has been formed.

IV. CONCLUSION

Virtual counseling offers many opportunities to increase access and flexibility of counseling services for students, but also presents significant challenges related to interpersonal dynamics. Among the barriers that need to be overcome are limitations in non-verbal communication, technical issues, and privacy concerns. The success of virtual counseling depends on good verbal communication skills, a secure platform, and training for counselors. Virtual counseling services can provide effective and meaningful support for students by using a more technology-based approach and strong interpersonal skills.

REFERENCES

- N., Fitriani, E., & Zulfikar, E. (2018). The Effect of Emotional Control in Improving Communication Ethics of Silinda Junior High School Students. *The International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention*. <https://doi.org/10.18535/ijsshi/v5i7.06>
- Attika, S., & Sukardi, T. (2021). APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGY MEDIA IN PROVIDING GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES DURING THE PANDEMIC. *Al-Taujih Journal: Islamic Guidance and Counseling Framework*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.15548/atj.v7i1.2669>
- Bastomi, H. (2019). Cyber Counseling: A Counseling Model in the Context of Online-Based Society. *EDUCATIONAL COUNSELING "Journal of Guidance and Counseling,"* 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.21043/konseling.v3i1.4993>
- Dan, B., Di, K., Dan, M., & Covid-, P. (2021). The Use of Digital Applications in Services. PGRI Adi Buana University Surabaya.
- FTH, DV, Juniorso, T., & Yustitia, V. (2022). DEVELOPMENT OF INTERACTIVE DIGITAL MODULES ON FLAT BUILDING SPACE MATERIALS FOR CLASS IV STUDENTS. *Elementary School: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Ke-SD-An*, 9(2). <https://doi.org/10.31316/esjurnal.v9i2.2968>
- Iii, BAB (2018). *Descriptive, Qualitative Methods*. Oxford Art Online.
- Jannah, R., & Marjo, HK (2022). *Counselor Professional Ethics in Virtual Counseling Guidance*

- Services. *Journal of Paedagogy*, 9(1). <https://doi.org/10.33394/jp.v9i1.4556>
- Kurniawan, NA, & Aiman, U. (2020). Problems of Using Interviews in Virtual Guidance and Counseling. *IIBKIN 2020 National Online Seminar "Use of Psychological Assessments and Tests in Guidance and Counseling in the Era of Adapting to New Habits,"* 19(5).
- Novita, A., Faried, I., & Atmodjo WP, D. (2018). Guidance and Counseling Information System Based on Knowledge Management. *Proceedings of the Teknoka National Seminar*, 3. <https://doi.org/10.22236/teknoka.v3i0.2833>
- Nurasyah, Fadhillah Putri, R., & Fitriani, E. (2022). STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING ABOUT CYBER COUNSELING BASED ON ZOOM MEET. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Invention*, 9(01). <https://doi.org/10.18535/ijsshi/v9i01.07>
- Pardamean, A., Nst, AS, Sari, RI, & Koto, TI (2023). Professional Ethics of Counselors in the Implementation of Guidance and Counseling Services in the Internet World. *As-Syar'i: Journal of Family Guidance & Counseling*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.47467/as.v6i1.5999>
- Pratama, S., & Nur, S. (2023). Cyber Counseling-Based Guidance and Counseling Service Strategy. *JBKPI: Journal of Islamic Education Guidance and Counseling*, 2(02). <https://doi.org/10.26618/jbkpi.v2i02.11462>
- Salsabila, I., Badrusalam, D., Basir, TA, & Yayan, Y. (2022). THE EFFECT OF COUNSELING GUIDANCE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' INTELLIGENCE, POTENTIAL AND PERSONALITY. *Indonesian Journal of Education: Theory, Research, and Innovation*, 2(2). <https://doi.org/10.59818/jpi.v2i2.230>
- Tjahyanti, NLPAS (2021). THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT IN GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING. *Daiwi Widya*, 7(5). <https://doi.org/10.37637/dw.v7i5.670>