

Online Media Usage in Guidance and Counseling Services during Covid-19 Pandemic

(Penggunaan Media Online dalam Layanan Bimbingan dan Konseling pada Masa Pandemi Covid 19)

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Abstract: The Covid-19 pandemic has brought restraints into people's activities. Consequently, during the pandemic, the school guidance and counseling services should be conducted online. Therefore, this study seeks to identify the types of online media frequently used by school counselors in classical guidance and individual or group counseling, as well as the rationale. This descriptive quantitative study involved 106 school counselors and used an Online Media Usage questionnaire to obtain the data. The results suggest that Google Form and Google Classroom have become the most used applications in classical guidance, while WhatsApp is the most popular application for individual or group counseling. These applications are selected due to the limited internet access, students' technological literacy, students' financial state, and privacy assurance, primarily for the counseling process. Therefore, the school counselors mainly provide asynchronous rather than synchronous services during the Covid-19 pandemic. Besides, these results can be the foundation for online guidance and counseling services development.

Keywords: online media; guidance and counseling services; online guidance and counseling

Abstrak: Pandemi Covid-19 memaksa kita untuk menyesuaikan diri agar tetap dapat beraktivitas walau dalam keterbatasan. Dalam Bimbingan dan Konseling, layanan yang diberikan oleh konselor sekolah saat ini harus dilakukan secara daring karena alasan kesehatan. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui macam media online yang sering digunakan oleh konselor sekolah untuk pelayanan bimbingan klasikal dan konseling individual atau kelompok serta kondisi-kondisi yang melandasi pemilihannya. Penelitian kuantitatif deskriptif dengan desain survei ini melibatkan 106 konselor sekolah sebagai responden. Pengumpulan data menggunakan angket survei Penggunaan Media Online. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa aplikasi *Google Classroom* dan *Google Form* sering digunakan sebagai media untuk bimbingan klasikal, dan aplikasi WhatsApp untuk konseling individual/kelompok. Sementara kondisi-kondisi yang melandasi pemilihan media online adalah keterbatasan jaringan internet, kemampuan pemanfaatan teknologi informasi peserta didik, kemampuan finansial peserta didik, dan terjaminnya kerahasiaan khususnya untuk konseling. Dari hasil studi ini, dapat diketahui bahwa pada masa pandemi Covid 19 ini pelayanan konselor sekolah cenderung lebih banyak *asynchronous* daripada *synchronous*. Hasil penelitian ini dapat menjadi dasar penelitian pengembangan pelayanan Bimbingan dan Konseling berbasis daring.

Kata kunci: media online; pelayanan bimbingan dan konseling; bimbingan dan konseling online

INTRODUCTION

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, countries have implemented several new protocols, such as work from home, study from home, social distancing, and physical distancing (Boshra et al., 2020; Chu et al., 2020; Koh, Naing, & Wong, 2020; Liebreuz, Bhugra, Buadze, & Schleifer, 2020; Qureshi, Suri, Chu, Suri, & Suri, 2021; Sammer, Sher, Huisman, & Seghers, 2020; Savić, 2020). Similarly, in Indonesia, all learning activities are carried out from home since the government enforced the work from home (WFH) and Stayed at Home (SAH) regulation. Consequently, teachers have to teach from home, while the students also learn from home, using online media and schedules arranged by the schools. Thus, the guidance and counseling services are also carried out online.

The online guidance and counseling services practice requires the school counselors to be creative, innovative, and productive (Perdana & Shofaria, 2020; Petrus & Sudibyo, 2017). These attributes aid students to evade boredom caused by the learning pattern transition and facilitate the counselor to select the proper services (Nugroho, 2020). Therefore, during the pandemic, guidance and counseling service should be carried out intensively (Karaman, Eşici, Tomar, & Aliyev, 2021; Meleo-Erwin, Kollia, Fera, Jahren, & Basch, 2021).

In online guidance and counseling services, the communication can be carried out asynchronously or synchronously. The asynchronous communication provides a delay between the contacts, while the synchronous communication occurs at the same time (Barak, Klein, & Proudfoot, 2009; Dowling & Rickwood, 2013). Situmorang (2020) mentions a proper counseling service for the pandemic situation, which is usually referred to by a number of terms, such as online counseling or therapy, Internet counseling or therapy, cybertherapy, e-therapy (e-counseling), computer-mediated therapy, and web-based intervention (Dowling & Rickwood, 2013; Li, Lau, Jaladin, & Abdullah, 2013). Asynchronous online therapy has been frequently implemented (Chester & Glass, 2006), along with synchronous online counseling carried out through chat and video conference (Bambling, King, Reid, & Wegner, 2008). In Indonesia, online counseling has been massively discussed (Ifdil & Ardi, 2013; Kirana, 2019; Prabawa, Ramli, & Fauzan, 2018; Prasetya, 2017) and many research on this topic has been reported (Bangun & Saragih, 2015; Mansyur, Badrujaman, Imawati, & Fadhillah, 2020; Prabawa et al., 2018; Prahesti & Wiyono, 2017; Setyawan, 2019; Sukoco KW, 2019; Sutijono & Farid, 2018).

However, implementation of online counseling still carries several complexities since its differences with offline counseling that demands particular competence. Substantially, school counselors use applications, such as WhatsApp, Zoom, Webex, Google Meet, Hangout, Telegram, and Instagram as the media for the counseling process (Musdalifah, 2020; Sholihah & Handayani, 2020; Supriyanto et al., 2020). In addition to the counseling services, school counselors also conduct classical guidance. The data obtained through the initial interview reveal that the classical guidance is carried out through WhatsApp Group (WAG). The classical guidance serves as an information delivery facility, with a number of materials in PowerPoint presentations, Scribe videos, and other videos, sent through WhatsApp Group. Besides, the school counselors also frequently adopt Google Classroom and Zoom, along with Google Form, to respond to reflective questions. The tendency to conduct online asynchronous classical guidance signifies the one-way communication among school counselors and students.

The complexity of online counseling and the less practical classical guidance have indicated that online media usage in guidance and counseling services should be investigated intensively. Thus, this study aims to illustrate the implementation of online guidance and counseling services during the Covid-19 pandemic, along with the constraints experienced by the school counselors. Specifically, this study aims to identify: (1) the online media frequently used by the school counselors for the classical guidance; (2) online media used in individual and group counseling; and (3) the rationales behind those online media selections.

METHOD

This descriptive quantitative study used the survey method. The data were analyzed by estimating the frequencies and percentages, which were then visualized in the pie and bar charts. This study involved 288 Department of Guidance and Counseling, Universitas Sanata Darma graduates who worked as school counselors in junior, senior, and vocational schools. The participants were from different areas of

Indonesia, namely North Sumatera, Lampung, Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi, Java (West, Central, and East), Kalimantan (West and East), Bali, Sumba, Sulawesi, and Papua. This study adopted a simple random technique, with 50% samples in each area, since it had time limitations and considered similar opportunities from every region of the participants. Thus, the total participants were 114 people (50%). However, only 106 (around 37%) of participants had been obtained in 2 months through the Online Media Usage Questionnaire, distributed through Google Form.

The survey method facilitated this study to attain more significant information from the respondents. Meanwhile, the adopted questionnaire consisted of 20 items (close-ended questions) for the try-out phase and 22 items (close-ended questions) for the research stage. The components covered in the questionnaire were: (1) identity, (2) technological and informatics competence, (3) online media selection reasoning, (4) the online media usage frequency for the classical guidance, (5) the frequency of online media used in the individual and group counseling, and (7) self-made and self-developed media for the guidance and counseling services. The questionnaire was validated by experts on online guidance and counseling media content. The content validity test was carried out to identify the conformity between the item formulation and the questionnaire's components (outline). Simultaneously, the questionnaire items' readability was completed by 26 school counselors.

The validity test results on the conformity between the questionnaire's outline and research purposes were explained narratively. The experts' suggestions in the form of qualitative data were not quantified, as presented in Table 1. Meanwhile, the results of the questionnaire's readability test from 26 counselors were in the form of recommendations. The readability test covers the delivery in the Google Form, conformity between the answer with the reality, clarity of item formulation, and the answer. The detailed results of the readability test are presented in Table 2.

Table 1. The Results of Content Validity Test

No	Aspect	Assessment Results
1	Suitability between the outline and purpose	The conformity between the outline and purposes have been excellent
2	Identity	1. The economical status option (high, middle, and low) is less operational. It should target the more detailed information, such as the monthly family income, or provide more apparent options with clear definitions of the high, middle, and low economy. 2. One of the options on the individual counseling services said that it could be scheduled. It might trap people to believe that individual counseling could be scheduled, while it could not.
3	Technology and Informatics competencies	The provided items could not reveal the teachers' technology and informatics competencies. It only identified their relevant efforts to improve their competencies, such as by attending training. The instruments initially aimed to see the school counselors' competencies that had been implemented.
4	The online media selection rationale	The items had not identified teachers' reasoning in choosing particular online media. They only reveal the information on the presence of schools' guidance and counseling websites.
5	Frequency of online media usage in classical guidance service	1. The items did not correspond with the item purpose to reveal the frequency of online media usage. The provided items only reveal the information on the frequently used guidance and counseling website menus. 2. Inconsistencies on the concept of Internet, website, application, and media had been observed.
6	Frequency of online media usage in individual and group counseling services	1. A discrepancy between the item formulation and the item purpose was found. The item aimed to identify the frequency of online media usage, while it revealed information on the reason for online media selection. 2. There was an error or typo. The word frequently was written as always.
7	Experts assisted online guidance and counseling media development.	The items were great
8	Self-made guidance and counseling media.	The technology and informatics concepts were overlapped.

Table 2. Results of Questionnaire Readability Test

No	Aspect	Suggestions and Comments	Number of Respondents
1	The answer formulation and distractors	The provided item formulations and distractors could be read and comprehended easily.	14
2	The technique of answer display	It would be better if the participants were allowed to give the open-ended answer by the 'other' option.	3
3	The technique of answer display	One of the required questions provides no correct answer, while the participants were obligated to fill it, in order to submit their responses. The connected question should be separated.	2
4	Online media application	Other than Google Meet and Zoom, some schools used Moodle, Google Classroom, Edmodo, and Instagram.	4
5	The answer example	The answer alternatives for some items are confusing, so the answer examples should be provided.	1
6	Counselors' behavior and response	There should be items on school counselors' behavior and response to online learning.	1
7	Specific answer	The answer should be explicitly made, primarily for the definition of video call and voice notes. The online media that provide video call features are WhatsApp, Google Meet, Zoom, and Microsoft team, while the one with voice note feature is WhatsApp.	1

RESULTS

The 106 participants involved in this study consist of 68.9% female and 31.1% male. The detailed information about the participants is presented in Table 3. Interestingly, most of the participants in this study are female school counselors with bachelor's degrees in guidance and counseling programs working in city private schools. Besides, the certified and uncertified teachers, the status of permanent and non-permanent teachers in the education institutions, and the level of junior and senior high school students were spread equally.

Table 3. Description of the Participants

No	Criteria	Description
1	Teaching certificate	52.8% of participants have had a teaching certificate, while 47.2% do not have it.
2	Employment status	41.5%, 30.2%, and 18.9% of the participants are permanent teachers in the education institution, non-permanent institutional teachers, and civil servants, respectively. Meanwhile, the remaining participants are auxiliary, honorary, province-contract, and non-permanent state school teachers.
3	Educational level	95.3 % of the participants have the guidance and counseling bachelor's degree.
4	The level of schools they work for	45.3%, 49.1%, and 5.6% of the participants work in junior, senior, and vocational high schools, respectively.
5	The level of schools they work for	67.9%, 24.5%, and 7.5% of their schools are private, state, and private national schools, respectively.
6	Location of the schools	64.2%, 18.9%, and 17% of the schools are located in the city, districts, and regency, respectively.
7	The economic status of the students	41.5%, 30.2%, and 25.5% of their students have middle to high, middle, and middle to low economic status. Meanwhile, the remaining of their students have high and low financial status.

Online Media Frequently Used in Classical Guidance Services

Commonly, schools provide scheduled classical guidance services every week (72%). Most of the school counselors use Google Form (69%), video maker (60%), and non-narrated powerpoint (57%) to create the materials for their group guidance services, as illustrated in Figure 1. In addition, 50% of the schools' counselors put Google Classroom as their most frequently used online media. The frequency of Google classroom usage is higher than Zoom and Video Conference, as presented in Figure 2. Zoom and Video Conference enables the counselor to hold a synchronous meeting, while they can have an asynchronous discussion using Google Classroom, audio slide PowerPoint, Google Form, and WhatsApp Speech Rapid.

Online Media Frequently Used in the Individual and Group Counseling Services

Essentially, there are three types of online or cyber counseling, namely textual, audio, and audiovisual. The most recurrent online media used for online counseling is WhatsApp chat (90%), followed by Live Instagram, while the voice note has almost never been used, as presented in Figure 3. It signifies that online textual counseling is the most used counseling type.

The Reasoning for the Online Media Selection in the Classical or Group Counseling

The students' Internet accessibility (77%) becomes the primary consideration for the online media selection, followed by students' technological competencies (68%) and their financial capability (67%), as presented in Figure 4. Therefore, the considerations of online media selection mostly lie in students' situations.

The Deliberation of Online Media Selection for Individual or Group Counselling

Similar to the media selection for classical guidance, the consideration of online media selection in individual or group counseling also mostly relies on students' situations. 74% of participants consider their students' internet accessibility, 73% consider confidentiality assurance, while 63% and 64% consider the students' financial and technological ability, as presented in Figure 5.

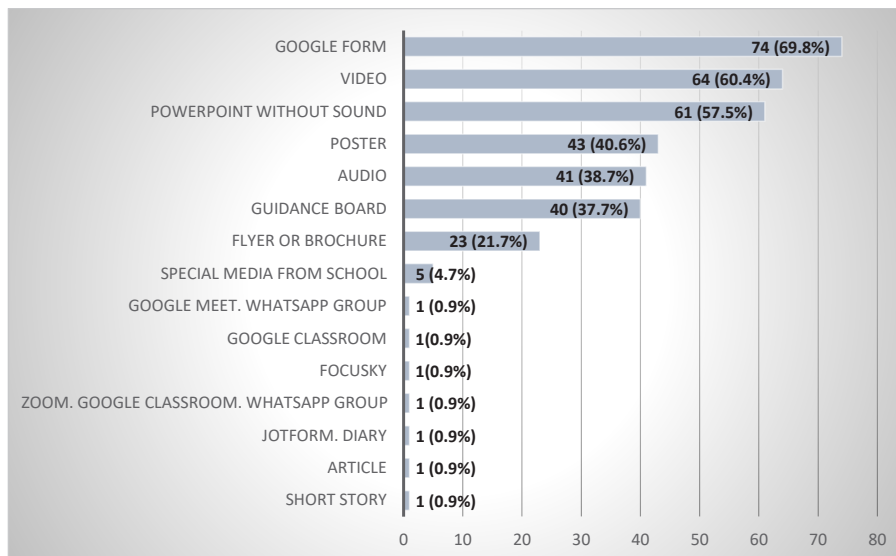


Figure 1. Media Used in the Formulation of Guidance and Counseling Materials

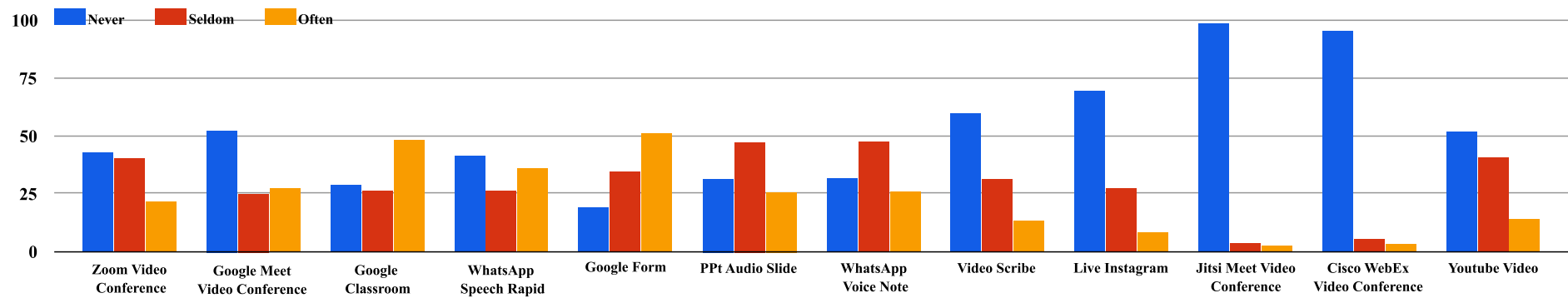


Figure 2. The Frequency of Online Application and Media Usage

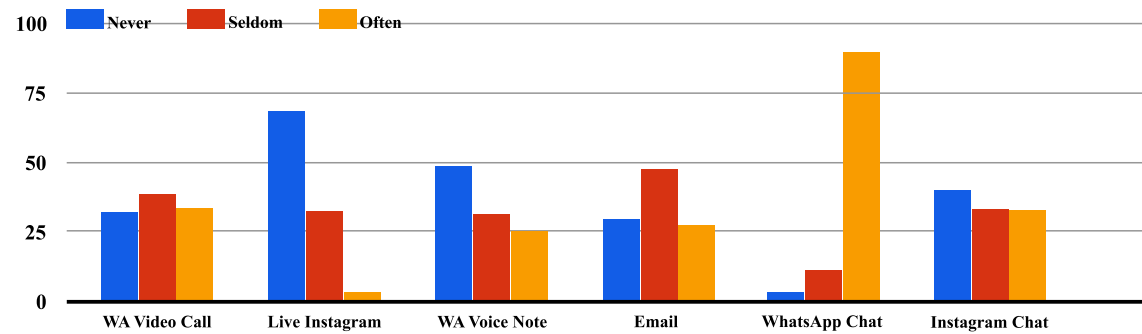


Figure 3. The Frequency of Online Application Usage in Counseling Process

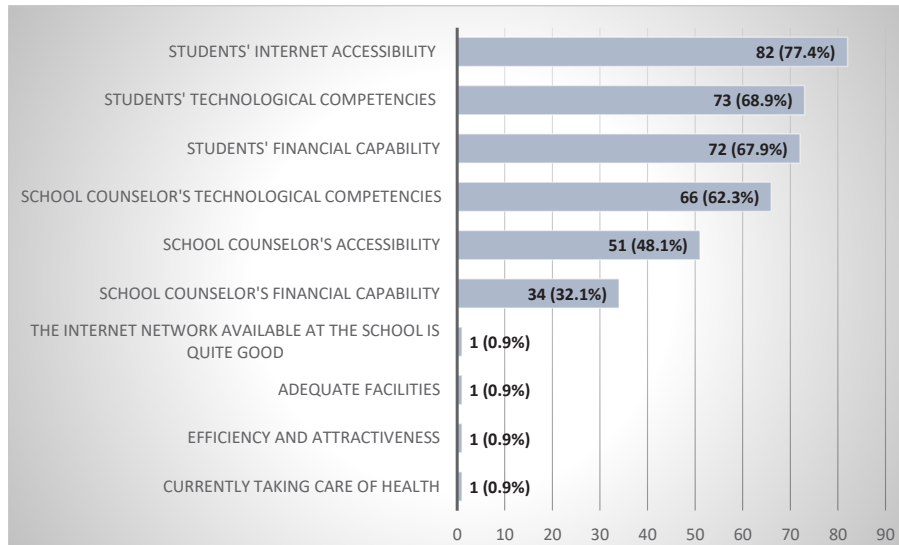


Figure 4. Consideration of Online Media Selection in the Classical or Group Counseling

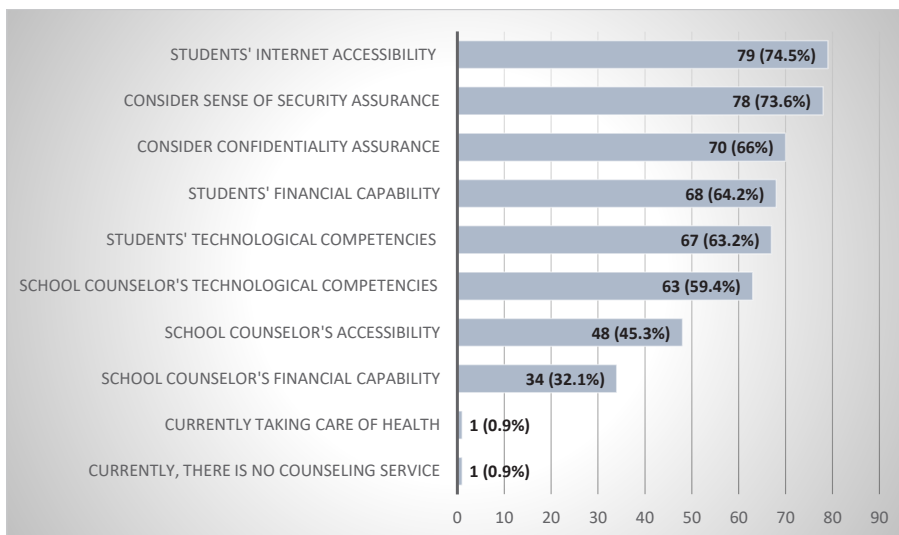


Figure 5. Deliberation of Online Media Selection for Individual and Group Counseling

DISCUSSION

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic, guidance and counseling services are carried out online, so Internet accessibility and stability become essential. Consequently, asynchronous counseling held through Google Classroom becomes a relatively reasonable choice for school counselors. Furthermore, Google Classroom provides uncomplicated access for the teachers and students to hold the learning process at any time and place, with the Internet connection (Nurhayati, Az-Zahra, & Herlambang, 2019; Putri & Dewi, 2019; Widyantara, 2020).

The flexibility and accessibility of Google Classroom have increased the efficiency of the distanced learning (Wijaya, 2016). Additionally, Google classrooms also simplify the materials delivery, students' work submission, the scoring process, teacher-students communication, time management, and mobile application access (Bakhtiar, Wulandari, & Marlina, 2019). Thus, Google Classroom carries excellent features for classical guidance. Recently, Google Classroom also can serve as the information carrier (Pustika, Astuti, & Suratman, 2019). However, other than those superior qualities, Google Classroom also possesses a number of weaknesses. First, the interaction dynamics between the school counselors and students in this media tend to only focus on materials delivery. Besides, it has minimum features that may bring confusion for its users.

In addition to Google Classroom, Google Forms has facilitated the online guidance process since it offers a number of beneficial facilities (Aji, Nurpitasari, Hanum, Akbar, & Putra, 2020). In detail, Google Form can be used to: (1) disseminate questionnaires to the students, (2) filing of the assessment results since the responses are automatically stored in Google Drive, and (3) spend the time efficiently (Batubara, 2016; Mulatsih, 2020).

Meanwhile, the minimum internet access accessibility and financial capability may also bring obstacles in the online counseling services. Online counseling can be complicated (Ifdil & Ardi, 2013; Kirana, 2019; Prasetya, 2017). In this study, online counseling is mainly carried out synchronously through chat and textually. The synchronous mode is selected due to the students' Internet accessibility and stability, financial state, and technological competencies. Besides, a proper internet connection is highly required in online counseling. Even online counseling through video calls can be felt like face-to-face counseling with a speedy Internet connection (Pasmawati, 2016).

This study identifies that the students mostly have sufficient financial ability to attend online learning. Consequently, the chatting method might have been selected due to students' frequent smartphone access rather than laptops. In contrast, a study carried out by Fauzi, Heiriyah, & Matarif (2020) show that the online guidance and counseling services was obstructed by the students' inability to purchase smartphone and Internet quota, as well as slow phone response. It indicates the diverse situation in the online guidance services. From the perspective of the school counselors, synchronous counseling is selected due to their skills and views on their students' situations.

Petrus & Sudiby (2017) state that people have the tendency to efficiently communicate their idea and feel when they are unobserved and give no verbal sign during the counseling process. Linear to this idea, counseling online is popular for the people who are afraid to attend or being cautious in face-to-face counseling (Barnett, 2005; Lange, Van De Ven, & Schrieken, 2003). Besides, the geographical (Sussman, 2004) and physical limitation sometimes also become the reason why people choose online counseling (Maples & Han, 2008).

In Malaysia, online counseling has grown rapidly and gains positive responses from counselors. However, most of the counselors still prefer face-to-face counseling (Zamani, Nasir, & Yusooif, 2010). A survey involving 409 Malaysian college students reveals that 35% of the respondents prefer online counseling and do not wish to participate in face-to-face counseling. It indicates that most of the students like online counseling better than face-to-face counseling (Wong, Bonn, Tam, & Wong, 2018).

The WhatsApp application is adopted in online counseling due to its simplicity and students' dominating Internet connection issues. People have been highly familiarized with the WhatsApp application. Besides, this application also offers personal and group chat features that enable individual and group counseling implementation. A study also suggests that the WhatsApp application is selected in the counseling process due to its simplicity and flexibility (Puspita, Elita, & Sinthia, 2020; Sukoco KW, 2019). Also, this application can be improved easily (Budianto, Hidayah, & Aziz, 2019). Other than WhatsApp, email and video calls have been observed to be used in the cyber counseling process. However, the internet connection issue has forced school counselors to avoid the use of video calls. Besides, the massive adoption of WhatsApp for the cyber counseling process in Indonesia suggests that synchronous communication through chat has been popular in this country. Also, another study shows that individual counseling through chatting is more effective than counseling through video (Barak, Hen, Boniel-Nissim, & Shapira, 2008; Dowling & Rickwood, 2013).

CONCLUSION

The school counselors have massively used Google Classroom in the classical or group guidance due to its accessibility and excellent features. Meanwhile, Google Form is observed to be frequently used to gather and analyze the students' data. For individual or group counseling, WhatsApp becomes the most popular application since it requires no strong Internet connection and is accessible. The results of this study can be used as the fundamental to improve school counselors' technological literacy and competencies required in online synchronous and asynchronous guidance and counseling services. Their technological competencies can be enhanced through intensive training.

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