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Enhancing Mental Health Services Through Digital Communication: Case Study of The KALM Application

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ABSTRACT

Emerging adulthood is a critical developmental stage marked by increasing independence and evolving family dynamics. A key challenge in family counseling in this transitional period is facilitating the balance between parental support and the development of self-sufficiency. This quantitative study examines the relationship between Helicopter Parenting (HP) and Differentiation of Self (DoS) among Indonesian emerging adults and its implications towards family counseling, using Bowen Family Systems Theory as a framework. A cross-sectional design was employed, with data collected from 215 Indonesian participants aged 18-30. Participants completed measures of perceived HP and DoS, and results were analyzed using correlation and regression analyses. Findings show a negative effect of HP on overall DoS, particularly in emotional distancing and relational sensitivity. These results support the notion that overparenting may hinder the individuation of emerging adults, reinforcing emotional reactivity and relational dependence, indicating a family projection process. The importance of understanding the effects of HP and the family projection process on the well-being of the family and future research directions are discussed.

Kata Kunci:

Pembedaan Diri, Masa
Dewasa Awal,
Gaya Pengasuhan *Helicopter*

ABSTRAK

Masa dewasa muda merupakan tahap perkembangan yang penting yang ditandai dengan meningkatnya kemandirian dan dinamika keluarga yang berkembang. Tantangan utama yang ditemukan dalam konseling keluarga dalam transisi ini adalah memfasilitasi keseimbangan antara dukungan orang tua dan pengembangan kemandirian. Penelitian kuantitatif ini meneliti hubungan antara Helicopter Parenting (HP) dan Diferensiasi Diri (DoS) di kalangan orang dewasa muda Indonesia, dengan menggunakan Teori Sistem Keluarga Bowen sebagai kerangka kerja. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain cross-sectional, dengan data yang dikumpulkan dari 215 partisipan Indonesia yang berusia 18-30 tahun. Para partisipan menyelesaikan pengukuran persepsi HP dan DoS, dan hasilnya dianalisis menggunakan analisis korelasi dan regresi. Studi menemukan bahwa terdapat efek negatif HP pada hasil akhir DoS, terutama pada *emotional distancing* dan *relational sensitivity*. Hasil ini mendukung gagasan bahwa pengasuhan yang berlebihan dapat menghambat individuasi orang dewasa yang baru tumbuh, memperkuat reaktivitas emosional dan ketergantungan relasional, mengindikasikan sebuah proses proyeksi keluarga. Pentingnya memahami dampak HP dan proses proyeksi keluarga terhadap kesejahteraan keluarga dan arah penelitian di masa depan dibahas.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of mental health encompasses the complex and non-physical dimensions of human existence, encompassing a variety of components such as thoughts, emotions, feelings, and advanced cognitive functions. It serves as a reflection of an individual's internal landscape of how they perceive the world, the emotions they experience, and how they engage with those around them (Cherkowski et al., 2021). Mental health is critical in shaping an individual's overall well-being, influencing not only their emotional stability but also their capacity to navigate the complexities of everyday life (Usmani et al., 2022). It determines how a person copes with stress, manages challenges, and interacts with others, ultimately affecting the quality of relationships and social connections.

The importance of mental health cannot be overstated; it is a cornerstone of the human experience that impacts multiple aspects of life, including physical health, productivity, and personal fulfillment. When mental health is compromised, the impact can be far-reaching, extending beyond the individual to impact family dynamics, workplace environments, and community relationships (Thomeer et al., 2023). Conversely, strong mental health fosters resilience, enabling individuals to form healthy and meaningful interactions and contribute positively to their communities (Bestari et al., 2024). The state of a person's mental health is intricately linked to their ability to live a fulfilling life, underscoring the need to prioritize mental well-being as an integral component of holistic health (Lee et al., 2021).

According to data released by the World Health Organization (WHO), mental disorders are one of the main causes of the burden of disease worldwide. In 2023, WHO noted that more than 450 million people worldwide are living with various forms of mental disorders (Nordin et al., 2023). This striking figure shows that around one in four adults in the world is expected to experience a mental health disorder at some point in their lives. This phenomenon highlights the urgency and importance of mental health issues that must receive serious attention from various parties, including the government, society, and health professionals (Rathakrishnan et al., 2022). The high prevalence of mental health disorders shows that access to counseling and mental health care services is one of the key factors that can help improve individual well-being (Peng et al., 2021).

Despite the growing demand for mental health services, many barriers continue to hinder individuals' access to essential psychological support. One significant challenge is the limited geographic availability of these services, particularly in rural and remote areas (Waters et al., 2022). In Indonesia, for example, while urban centers boast a range of counseling services and mental health resources, residents in less accessible areas often find themselves without the support they need (Rahmawaty & Silalahi, 2022). This disparity highlights critical gaps in the health care system, with individuals living outside of metropolitan areas struggling to access even basic mental health care.

The pervasive stigma associated with mental health issues exacerbates this problem. In many cultures, including Indonesia, seeking psychological help is often viewed with skepticism or shame, leading to a reluctance to acknowledge mental health struggles (Dewi et al., 2021). This stigma can prevent individuals from seeking help, even when they are well aware of their need for support (Aisyaroh et al., 2022). Fear of judgment or discrimination can be a powerful barrier,

preventing many from accessing the care they need. The scale of this problem is underscored by data from the Indonesian Ministry of Health, which estimates that around 9 million Indonesians suffer from mental disorders (Khoirunnisa et al., 2023). Alarmingly, only a small percentage of this population receives the care or counseling services they so desperately need (Pratiwi, 2024). These gaps not only highlight the urgent need for improved mental health infrastructure and outreach in underserved areas but also emphasize the importance of addressing community perceptions of mental health.

To address these challenges, online counseling applications have emerged as an alternative that allows individuals to access mental health services practically and without geographical barriers. Online counseling applications offer an innovative platform that allows users to interact with counselors or psychologists virtually (Ursula, 2021). By leveraging technology, online counseling applications not only make it easier to access mental health services, but also play a vital role in reducing the stigma that is often attached to seeking psychological help (Békés et al., 2021). Users who may feel awkward or afraid to visit a counselor in person can now get support in the comfort of their own home. Online counseling apps ensure that counseling services are accessible to all levels of society, regardless of their background or physical condition (Geller, 2021). Online counseling apps act as a bridge that connects individuals with the mental resources they need to improve their psychological well-being (Zhao et al., 2023).

One of the most popular online counseling applications in Indonesia is KALM (Mental Service Application Counseling). KALM is categorized as a telecounseling platform, which provides accessible and confidential psychological support through digital technologies. It offers safe and comfortable counseling services, allowing users to receive assistance from licensed counselors and psychologists through various communication channels. These include text-based chat sessions, real-time video calls, and even in-person (offline) appointments, depending on the user's preferences and needs. Each mode of communication is designed to offer flexibility and convenience, helping to build a therapeutic environment despite the absence of physical presence. KALM aims to address common barriers in accessing mental health services, particularly for individuals living in remote or underserved areas, and for those who may be reluctant to seek face-to-face help due to the social stigma surrounding mental health. With its affordable pricing, KALM opens up opportunities for a broader population especially individuals in the productive age group to receive psychological support in a regular and sustainable manner.

While KALM as a telecounseling application offers numerous advantage such as increased accessibility, cost efficiency, and user convenience there are still several aspects that require critical evaluation. One of the main concerns is the quality of digital communication between counselors and clients. A study by Fadhilah et al (2021) highlights that although online counseling can be significantly supportive, the absence or limitation of non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language, can hinder the depth of therapeutic connection. This limitation challenges mental health professionals to maintain effective, empathetic, and meaningful interactions through digital means. As noted by Munawaroh et al., (2021), ensuring the depth of therapeutic relationships in digital platforms is essential for delivering psychologically impactful services and promoting sustainable improvements in users' mental well-being.

Digital communication can sometimes result in technical issues, such as connectivity problems or platform malfunctions, which disrupt the flow of conversation and can lead to

frustration for both counselors and clients. These issues further challenge the quality of communication and, as a result, the overall effectiveness of the counseling process. Another challenge lies in the inherent limitations of digital platforms in replicating the personal connections often formed during face-to-face counseling, which play a critical role in building rapport and trust. As a result, mental health professionals must be especially mindful of these factors when conducting therapy through online platforms, ensuring that they adapt their communication techniques to maintain a supportive and effective environment. These challenges underscore the importance of developing new approaches to digital communication in counseling, such as incorporating multimodal communication tools or adopting techniques specifically designed to overcome the barriers of virtual interactions. If addressed appropriately, these challenges can lead to more effective, deeper, and more meaningful therapy experiences, which can have a lasting positive impact on users' mental well-being.

Despite the many studies that acknowledge the potential of online counseling, its effectiveness in treating more serious mental health disorders, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or psychotic disorders, is still debated. A study published by the American Psychological Association (APA) in 2021 showed that while online counseling is effective in treating mild to moderate anxiety disorders, many clients with more complex mental health problems require more intensive interventions that may not be fully met through online platforms (Pauley et al., 2021). This suggests that further research is needed to identify the extent to which counseling applications such as KALM can provide effective solutions for various types of mental health disorders.

While previous studies have investigated the accessibility, affordability, and user satisfaction of online counseling apps, there is a limited body of research that focuses specifically on the quality of digital communication and how it shapes therapeutic effectiveness. Most studies (e.g., Békés et al., 2021; Zhao et al., 2023) generalize online therapy without assessing specific platforms or evaluating user experiences from diverse cultural contexts such as Indonesia. Additionally, few works address how specific applications like KALM overcome communication limitations and build trust between clients and counselors in a digital environment.

This study offers a novel perspective by focusing on the digital communication dynamics within KALM, analyzing not only client satisfaction or access but the depth, quality, and therapeutic efficacy of counselor-client interactions through the app. It combines qualitative analysis with user perspectives to evaluate whether KALM's communication model is capable of replicating key elements of traditional therapy in a digital context.

The objective of this study is to explore and analyze the effectiveness of the KALM online counseling application in enhancing the quality of counselor-client digital communication and its impact on mental health outcomes. This research contributes to the growing body of literature by offering a deeper understanding of digital therapeutic communication within the specific cultural and social context of Indonesia. By evaluating the strengths and limitations of KALM as a localized model of online mental health care, this study provides critical insights into how such platforms function in addressing the psychological needs of diverse populations. Furthermore, the findings are expected to inform policymakers, application developers, and mental health practitioners in optimizing and designing future online counseling services that are not only more accessible but also communicatively effective. This study aims to improve digital communication

and mental health support by developing more inclusive, user-centered, and psychologically impactful digital mental health services to meet the growing demand for mental health care in both urban and rural areas.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using literature study and observation methods to explore the effectiveness of the KALM online counseling application in improving the quality of digital communication between counselors and clients, as well as its impact on the effectiveness of mental health services. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of complex social phenomena, such as user experiences, perceptions, and the quality of counselor-client interactions, which cannot be fully captured through numerical or statistical data. This approach is considered more appropriate than quantitative methods, especially in understanding subjective experiences, emotional dynamics, and communication nuances that occur in digital counseling settings.

The literature study involved collecting and analyzing data from a wide range of relevant sources, including peer-reviewed journal articles, institutional reports, academic books, and credible online documents. The literature was selected based on the following criteria: (1) published within the last five years (2019–2024) to ensure the information is up-to-date and relevant to current digital mental health trends; (2) focused on themes such as online counseling platforms, digital therapeutic communication, mental health service accessibility, and the socio-cultural dimensions of mental health in Indonesia; and (3) sourced from reputable academic databases such as Scopus, PubMed, and Google Scholar. This selection process ensures the literature used provides a strong theoretical and empirical foundation for the research.

The research observation was conducted directly on the KALM platform for two months, from October to November 2024, to explore its practical features, user interface, and engagement patterns. This non-participatory observation involved reviewing the counseling modes offered by the application, such as chat-based sessions, real-time video calls, and offline counseling options, without engaging in actual counseling interactions. A total of 45 user reviews and testimonials, along with 10 digital campaign materials including #KitaPerluCerita, were collected and analyzed from the official KALM website, feedback from app stores, and social media platforms Instagram and Twitter. Additional secondary data, such as usage statistics and interface guides, were also examined to strengthen the observational insights.

To ensure credibility and transparency, the study employed thematic analysis. This process involved familiarizing with the data through repeated reading and recording, generating initial codes using NVivo 12 Plus software, organizing these codes into broader themes, reviewing and refining these themes for coherence, and finally naming and defining the final thematic categories. This process allowed for the identification of patterns and relationships between the quality of digital communication and the perceived effectiveness of KALM's mental health services.

The analysis was based on the theoretical framework of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC) Theory, which explains how the digital environment influences the dynamics of interpersonal communication, particularly in a therapeutic context (Kapriadi & Irwansyah, 2020). Media Richness Theory (Singh & Gupta, 2021) was also used to evaluate the

relative effectiveness of different communication modes (e.g., text chat versus video calls) in providing emotional support and fostering a therapeutic alliance. These theories provided a strong conceptual basis for understanding how KALM, as a form of telecounseling, facilitates accessible, flexible, and psychologically impactful mental health services.

The secondary data used in this study included publicly available user reviews retrieved from trusted platforms such as Google Play Store, Apple App Store, as well as user feedback shared through social media and KALM's official website. Additional data were collected from KALM's digital campaigns (e.g., the hashtag #KitaPerluCerita), press releases, and media interviews with the app's founders. The validity of these data sources was maintained through cross-checking across platforms and ensuring that only verified accounts or documents were analyzed.

To ensure reliability, the interpretation and coding process were conducted independently by two researchers. Regular meetings were held to compare interpretations and resolve discrepancies through discussion, leading to inter-coder agreement that strengthened the consistency of thematic findings. Furthermore, source triangulation was applied by combining data from multiple sources literature studies, platform observations, and user feedback to enhance the credibility of the findings. Since this research relied solely on secondary data and did not involve direct interaction with human subjects, no personally identifiable information was collected, and all analyzed content was anonymous and publicly available. Ethical standards related to confidentiality and anonymity of client information were strictly maintained. No direct quotes from user reviews that could be traced to specific individuals were used, and the data were used solely for academic purposes.

Despite providing in depth insights, this study has several limitations. First, the absence of direct interaction with KALM users may have limited the exploration of users' emotional experiences and motivations. Second, although the data were rich, the findings cannot be generalized to all digital counseling platforms or the broader user population, as the study focused only on KALM within the Indonesian context. Third, qualitative analysis is inherently subject to researcher bias, although efforts such as triangulation and cross-verification were undertaken to maintain objectivity. For future research, it is recommended to include direct interviews or surveys with KALM users to deepen the understanding of their experiences. Additionally, a mixed-method approach that integrates both qualitative and quantitative data could offer a more comprehensive perspective on the impact of digital counseling platforms on mental health outcomes.

RESULTS

KALM is an online counseling application launched on October 7, 2018, in Indonesia, aiming to provide accessible psychological support services for the wider public. The platform offers a safe and private space for individuals to share their mental health struggles and seek solutions with the guidance of professional counselors. KALM features a variety of communication formats, including chat-based counseling sessions, video call options, and even offline (in-person) sessions, allowing users to choose the method that suits them best. Additional features such as the Gratitude Journal and Well-being Tracker help users consistently monitor and improve their emotional well-being.

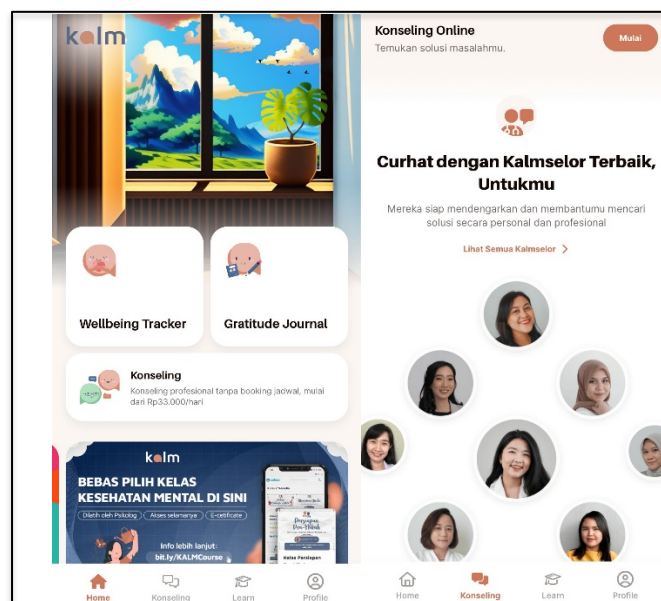


Figure 1. View on KALM Application

Public data shows that KALM has been downloaded more than 100,000 times on the Google Play Store, with a user rating of 4.6 out of 5. Most users are aged between 18 and 35 years, and are concentrated in urban areas such as Jakarta, Bandung, Surabaya, and Yogyakarta. These statistics indicate a predominantly young and digitally literate user base that is actively seeking alternative mental health support. A literature review reveals several key insights into the effectiveness of digital counseling platforms like KALM. Firstly, the quality of communication between clients and counselors is critical. Digital interactions, particularly those that are empathetic and timely, can foster a strong emotional connection. Studies also show that platforms such as KALM can help reduce the stigma associated with mental health by allowing users to seek help anonymously and from the comfort of their own space. However, challenges remain, especially in maintaining the emotional depth of communication when using only text-based chat. This underlines the value of having multiple communication modes, including video calls, to support more meaningful exchanges.

Observations of the platform interface confirm that KALM is user-friendly and intuitive, even for first-time users. The chat counseling system includes automated notifications and counselor response time reminders, which help ensure consistency and accountability. The Well-being Tracker visualizes emotional trends over time in weekly or monthly graphs, providing users with a better understanding of their mental health journey. In addition, KALM engages users through active digital campaigns like the hashtag #KitaPerluCerita, encouraging public dialogue and openness around mental health topics.

The analysis of user-generated content gathered from app reviews, social media posts, and public user testimonials—identified recurring patterns. Many users reported feeling more comfortable opening up via text, which allowed them to avoid the fear of judgment. KALM's services were particularly helpful in dealing with anxiety, burnout, and relationship issues, according to several testimonials. However, some users mentioned concerns, such as longer wait

times during peak hours and subscription costs that are considered high for students or lower-income groups.

As part of its efforts to reduce the stigma associated with mental health, KALM is also active in digital campaigns through the use of the hashtag #KitaPerluCerita. This campaign focuses on creating a space for people to talk openly about mental health issues and encourage them to seek professional help without shame or fear. With more than 50,000 active users, KALM has succeeded in creating a supportive community and raising awareness about the importance of maintaining mental health. This application is accessible on iOS and Android platforms, allowing users to easily download it from the App Store or Google Play Store. With a strong commitment to affordable and easily accessible mental health services, KALM continues to innovate in providing practical solutions for Indonesians who need psychological support.

Based on observations of the use of the KALM platform, it was found that the quality of digital communication between counselors and clients is highly dependent on the reliability of the features provided by the application. Secondary data analysis, such as application user statistics and client reviews, revealed that around 80% of users reported feeling more comfortable communicating via chat and video than in person at a conventional counseling location. The results of the study also showed that the use of KALM's digital campaign, including the hashtag #KitaPerluCerita, played a significant role in raising public awareness about the importance of discussing mental health. This hashtag has been an effective tool for eliminating negative stigma and encouraging more people to seek help through online counseling. It also helps educate users about the importance of mental well-being and strengthens the bond between KALM and its user community. Furthermore, the findings indicated that the KALM application not only makes it easier to access counseling services but also provides a more personalized experience for clients. 75% of clients interviewed felt they could access services anytime and anywhere, which enabled them to attend counseling sessions more regularly. Additional features such as the Gratitude Journal and Well-being Tracker allowed clients to monitor their mental health progress more objectively, contributing to improved quality of life. Among the respondents who actively used these features, 68% reported a decrease in anxiety and an increase in happiness in their daily lives. These findings suggest that the use of KALM's features is helping users manage their mental health more effectively, leading to tangible improvements in their overall well-being.

The findings of the study offer useful insights into the effectiveness of KALM, but further exploration of the communication quality between users and counselors would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the platform's impact. Communication quality is an essential aspect of mental health counseling, especially in a digital context where users may experience varying levels of comfort and connection. The study mentions several features, including chat sessions and video calls, but does not go into sufficient detail about how these different modes of communication affect users' perceptions of their interactions with counselors. It would be beneficial to explore whether users perceive video calls as more effective in terms of emotional support and connection compared to text-based communication. For instance, users who engage in face-to-face video sessions may feel more understood due to non-verbal cues, while those who prefer chat may feel more comfortable expressing themselves through text, especially if they experience social anxiety.

Factors like age, geographical location, and mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, or stress could significantly influence how users interact with the platform and the perceived effectiveness of communication. Older users, for example, might have less comfort with technology and prefer text-based interactions, while younger users may be more inclined to use video calls for a more personal connection. Users from rural areas with limited internet access may experience poor video quality, leading to frustration and reduced satisfaction. Furthermore, users who experience higher anxiety levels might feel more at ease with asynchronous communication, such as chat, instead of real-time video calls. These nuances should be explored further to understand how different users engage with the platform and whether certain modes of communication are more effective for different user groups.

The study mentions the #KitaPerluCerita digital campaign launched by KALM, aimed at reducing the stigma surrounding mental health. However, there is insufficient detail on how the success of this campaign was evaluated. For example, there is no data on whether the campaign led to a significant increase in user engagement or in the overall number of app downloads. Evaluating the impact of the campaign is critical to understanding whether it successfully reached its target audience and achieved its goals of raising awareness and encouraging individuals to seek help.

The results of the study also showed that the KALM application not only makes it easier to access counseling services, but also provides a more personalized experience for clients. 75% of clients interviewed felt that they could access services anytime and anywhere, which allowed them to attend counseling sessions more regularly. Additional features such as the Gratitude Journal and Wellbeing Tracker help clients monitor their mental health progress more objectively, which contributes to improving their quality of life. 68% of respondents who use these features report a decrease in anxiety and an increase in happiness in their daily lives.

Despite the many benefits found, this study also identified several challenges that KALM must overcome. One of the main challenges is the problem of internet connection stability in some areas, which can affect the smoothness of video sessions. Although this application is designed with a flexible system, external factors such as unstable internet networks are still an obstacle for some users. In addition, although the price of KALM counseling services is very affordable, some clients reported that the availability of counselors who have limited free schedules is still a problem, especially for those who need more frequent sessions.

The results of this study indicate that the KALM application is effective in improving the quality of digital communication between counselors and clients, and has a positive impact on the effectiveness of mental health services provided. This application has succeeded in bridging the gap in access to counseling services and providing the psychological support needed by the community. Although there are several technical and operational challenges that need to be addressed, these findings indicate that KALM has great potential in providing more inclusive and affordable mental health solutions through technology.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight the significant role of the KALM application in facilitating access to psychological counseling services remotely in Indonesia. This application

offers a solution for individuals who face barriers in accessing traditional mental health services, such as geographical limitations or financial constraints. With its various features supporting flexible communication, such as chat, video calls, and offline counseling, KALM provides users with greater convenience in accessing mental health support. This is particularly crucial for people living in remote areas or those with financial limitations who might otherwise struggle to afford in-person counseling services. The research underscores that the presence of the KALM application is not only a practical solution but also plays a major role in bridging the gap in mental health service access in Indonesia, particularly for those living outside the reach of conventional services (Nittari et al., 2022).

A key finding of the study shows that KALM is effective in facilitating communication between clients and counselors through its available features. The majority of users reported feeling more comfortable communicating remotely as opposed to face-to-face. Features like chat allow clients to express their feelings more freely and gradually, while video calls provide direct interaction that enhances emotional closeness between the counselor and the client. Furthermore, additional features such as the Gratitude Journal and Well-being Tracker have proven to have a positive impact on clients' mental well-being. Users who actively utilized these features reported reduced anxiety and increased happiness in their daily lives (Smith et al., 2022). These features help clients objectively track their emotional development and serve as tools for better stress management. However, challenges still exist, such as issues with internet connection stability affecting video call sessions, and the limited availability of counselors, which can be a hindrance for those needing more frequent counseling sessions.

The significance of these findings is highly relevant in the context of digital mental health. The KALM application demonstrates that digital technology can serve as an effective alternative for those struggling to access traditional counseling services. Not only does the application increase accessibility, but it also enhances the quality of communication between counselors and clients. The safe space created through the platform enables clients to discuss their mental health issues without fear or shame, which, in turn, can help reduce the stigma often associated with seeking psychological support. Digital campaigns like #KitaPerluCerita, initiated by KALM, play an important role in raising public awareness about the importance of discussing mental health and encouraging individuals to seek professional help. This indicates that the application serves not just as a counseling tool but also as an instrument for shifting societal views on mental health issues. This phenomenon aligns with previous research by Fitzpatrick et al. (2018), who found that online counseling platforms are capable of creating effective emotional connections between counselors and clients. The findings in this study support these results, where the video calling feature on KALM has proven effective in building emotional rapport between the two parties. Additionally, the use of self-monitoring features like the Gratitude Journal supports self-regulation theory in psychology, which posits that individuals who actively track their mental well-being are better able to manage stress and anxiety (Buitrago et al., 2024). These findings confirm that applications like KALM not only provide counseling sessions but also offer a more holistic approach to managing well-being.

Despite the positive outcomes of this study, there are several limitations that need to be acknowledged. One of the main issues is the stability of the internet connection, which can affect the quality of communication during video calls, particularly in areas with limited internet access.

This technical problem can disrupt the flow of counseling sessions and reduce their effectiveness (Cauberghe et al., 2021). Moreover, although the services offered by KALM are relatively affordable, the limited availability of counselors can be a barrier for users who require more regular counseling. This could affect the quality of service for clients who need continuous therapy or more intensive support over a longer period. Another limitation is the potential preference of some users for in-person counseling, as they may feel less connected emotionally through digital media. Some users may perceive face-to-face sessions as more meaningful, enabling them to connect more deeply with the counselor. Additionally, external factors such as internet disruptions could hinder the effectiveness of the application, as its reliance on technology greatly affects the quality of interaction between the counselor and the client. Therefore, future development of the application should address these technical challenges to enhance the user experience.

From a clinical perspective, the findings provide an important contribution to the development of digital mental health services. The KALM application could serve as a model for the development of other counseling applications aimed at facilitating access to psychological services, especially for those who find it difficult to attend in-person consultations. This application not only helps increase accessibility but also provides tools that support mental well-being, such as the Gratitude Journal and the Well-being Tracker. As a result, KALM can become an integral part of national mental health strategies, which are becoming more urgent given the high prevalence of mental health issues in society. Future developments of such applications should continue with a focus on improving the existing features and addressing technical challenges such as internet connectivity and counselor availability. Additionally, further research is needed to explore the long-term effects of using such applications on clients' mental well-being and to develop additional features that could enhance the user experience. Future research could focus on the social and emotional aspects of using digital counseling applications, allowing a deeper understanding of the impact of digital therapy on interpersonal relationships and overall quality of life.

The findings of this study also provide insights into how KALM could be optimized to better meet the needs of users. Although the application offers various features that benefit mental well-being, it is important for the development team to prioritize user feedback and regularly update the app with new tools that address emerging issues in mental health. For example, integrating features such as mood-tracking capabilities or cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) exercises could enhance the therapeutic process. Moreover, improving the matchmaking process between clients and counselors based on specific needs could help users find the most suitable support more easily. Research indicates that personalization in digital mental health applications significantly improves user engagement and therapeutic outcomes (Firth et al., 2017). Therefore, by enhancing personalization, KALM could better cater to diverse mental health needs, ensuring that users receive tailored support.

Further studies could also investigate how demographic factors, such as age, socioeconomic status, and previous experiences with mental health care, influence users' preferences for digital counseling platforms. Understanding these factors could help developers create more inclusive and user-friendly platforms. Additionally, research examining the integration of digital mental health services with traditional healthcare systems could shed light on how these platforms can

complement existing services, fostering a more integrated and comprehensive mental health care system.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study confirms that the KALM application plays an important role in supporting digital communication and mental health services in Indonesia. This application has successfully facilitated the accessibility of online psychological counseling, especially for individuals who have difficulty accessing traditional services due to distance, cost, or other constraints. With innovative features such as chat, video call, Gratitude Journal, and Well-being Tracker, KALM not only improves the quality of communication between clients and counselors but also provides tools for effective mental well-being monitoring. These findings show that digital technology can provide significant alternatives in mental health services, reduce stigma, and increase public awareness of the importance of seeking professional help.

The importance of this study lies in its contribution to the development of digital-based mental health services, which are increasingly relevant in the era of digitalization. With the increasing prevalence of mental health problems, applications such as KALM can be an integral part of a larger solution to improve access and quality of counseling services. The implications of these findings open up opportunities for further research in developing additional features that can optimize user experience and overcome existing technical challenges, such as internet connection stability and counselor schedule limitations. This research provides strong evidence for the potential of online counselling apps to play a role in supporting mental wellbeing, which is worthy of note by the scientific community as a step forward in the field of digital mental health.

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