



## Trends and Developments of Cyber Counseling Among Teens

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### ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:* Cyber Counseling, Teenagers, Digital Counseling

*Received :* 20, April

*Revised :* 23, May

*Accepted:* 26, June

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### ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of a systematic review of the trends and developments in cyber counseling among adolescents. This study was motivated by the increasing need for technology-based counseling services, especially in the digital era and post-COVID-19 pandemic. This study used the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach with PRISMA guidance. Data were obtained through literature searches from four databases (Google Scholar, DOAJ, Garuda, and ResearchGate), resulting in 137 initial articles which were then systematically selected into 25 selected articles. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify trends, counseling approaches, platforms used, and implementation challenges. The results of the study indicate that cyber counseling is a strategic approach in addressing adolescent psychosocial issues such as anxiety, digital addiction, and limited access to conventional services. The findings also emphasize the importance of technology training for counselors and the development of platforms that are safe, inclusive, and responsive to adolescent needs.

## INTRODUCTION

Cyber counseling is a form of counseling service that utilizes digital technology to provide psychological assistance to individuals or groups. This service is growing rapidly in response to the need for flexible counseling, not limited by space and time, and in accordance with the characteristics of the digital generation, especially teenagers. Teenagers are a very active group in using social media and communication technology, which makes them more comfortable expressing their feelings through online media compared to face-to-face interactions.

The development of digital technology has also changed the form and source of adolescent psychosocial problems. In addition to challenges from the real environment, adolescents today also face issues such as online bullying (*cyberbullying*), online game addiction, social media pressure, and digital identity crisis. On the other hand, conventional counseling services still face various obstacles, such as limited access in remote areas, stigma against mental health, and the lack of counselors.

Cyber counseling offers a potential solution to address these challenges. Various innovations have been made, such as the use of instant messaging applications (WhatsApp, Telegram), social media (Instagram, Facebook), to special platforms such as Android-based applications for counseling services. However, studies that systematically map the trends, effectiveness, and challenges of cyber counseling services among adolescents, especially in Indonesia, are still very limited. This is the main *research gap* in this study.

Therefore, this study aims to conduct a systematic literature review of scientific articles that discuss the implementation, effectiveness, media used, and challenges in implementing cyber counseling for adolescents. This study uses the *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) approach with PRISMA guidance, so that the results can provide a comprehensive understanding of the direction of development of this service. The findings of this study are expected to provide scientific contributions in the development of a digital counseling service model that is more responsive, inclusive, and in accordance with the psychosocial needs of adolescents in the digital era. In addition, the results of this study can be a reference for policy makers, education practitioners, and counselors in designing sustainable technology-based interventions.

## METHOD

This study uses the *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) approach with reference to the PRISMA ( *Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses* ) guidelines. This method was chosen to obtain a comprehensive and objective understanding of the trends, approaches, and challenges of implementing cyber counseling for adolescents in Indonesia.

This type of research is a systematic literature review ( *Systematic Review* ), which is qualitative descriptive. The aim is to summarize and synthesize the results of previous studies thematically. Secondary data were collected from four scientific databases, namely Google Scholar, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Garuda (Garba Rujukan Digital Kemenristek/BRIN), and ResearchGate

The article search was conducted using a combination of keywords: “cyber counseling”, “adolescents”, “digital counseling”, “online counseling services”, and “digital mental health”. The search was limited to articles published between 2015 and 2024. The selection procedure followed the four stages of PRISMA, namely:

**Table 1. PRISMA Stages**

Stages	Information
Identification	Found 137 matching articles based on search keywords.
Filtering	Elimination was carried out on duplicate, non-empirical (such as opinion/editorial) and irrelevant articles based on the title and abstract, leaving 64 articles.
Eligibility	A full reading was conducted of the remaining articles to ensure appropriateness of content, focus on adolescents, and use of digital media in counseling.
Inclusion	A total of 25 articles met all criteria and were included in the final review.

Articles included in the analysis must meet the following requirements:

1. The main focus is on adolescents as subjects of counseling.
2. Using digital media as a counseling platform
3. Contains empirical data (quantitative, qualitative, experiments, case studies, etc.)
4. Published in Indonesian or English
5. Fully accessible (full-text)

The selected articles were analyzed thematically using a narrative synthesis approach. The researchers grouped the findings based on:

1. Type of digital platform used
2. Counseling approaches (CBT, REBT, Islamic, etc.)
3. Intervention goals (anxiety, addiction, bullying, etc.)
4. Impact and challenges of implementation

The article selection process is visualized in a PRISMA Diagram, which depicts the selection flow from the initial 137 articles to the 25 articles that were analyzed in depth.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Of the 25 articles analyzed, it was found that WhatsApp was the most dominant platform used in *cyber counseling services* for adolescents. Other platforms that were also used included Facebook, Instagram, Line, special Android applications, and online platforms such as Riliv. The choice of WhatsApp was generally due to ease of access, familiarity with the user interface, and private instant communication features. This is in line with the findings of Fauzia et al. (2021) and Budianto et al. (2019) which showed that WhatsApp was

effective in counseling interventions due to the high level of comfort for clients. The most frequently encountered topics in adolescent cyber counseling include:

1. Social anxiety
2. Game addiction
3. Bullying
4. Academic difficulties
5. Interpersonal relationship problems

The majority of articles reported positive outcomes of cyber counseling interventions on increasing self-awareness, self-disclosure, empathy, and satisfaction with counseling services. This is in line with the findings of Alexander et al. (2022) who noted the effectiveness of this service in dealing with adolescent depression during the pandemic. In terms of approach, the three most frequently used counseling methods are:

1. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
2. Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT)
3. Islamic Counseling

The method is combined with communication media such as text messages, *voice notes*, *video calls*, and the use of application-based chatbots. For example, a study by Setiawan & Mugiarto (2021) proved that group-based REBT through online media is effective in increasing self-control in junior high/high school students. Interestingly, several studies have shown that group cyber counseling is also effective in creating a sense of togetherness and social support. This is very helpful for adolescents who feel psychologically isolated, especially during distance learning or pandemic isolation. However, this study also noted several major challenges, including:

1. Ethical issues and privacy of client data, as emphasized by Hasanah et al. (2024)
2. Digital literacy of counselors and clients is not evenly distributed
3. Technical limitations, such as an unstable internet connection
4. Lack of digital competency training for counselors

This challenge shows that technology is not the only factor that determines success, but also the readiness of human resources and supporting regulations. In terms of trends, it was found that the number of publications related to cyber counseling has increased significantly since 2020, which is directly related to the adaptation of online services during the COVID-19 pandemic. This finding shows that the momentum of digitalization of counseling needs to be maintained and further developed strategically.

Finally, the results of this synthesis strengthen the view that cyber counseling is not just an alternative, but has become an important part of the adolescent psychosocial service ecosystem. Therefore, the development of a special platform with psychological intervention features (such as self-assessment, progress reporting, and automatic reminders) is an urgent need in the future. As a basis for analysis, Table 2 below presents a summary of the 25 selected articles used in this study.

**Table 2. Summary of 25 Cyber Counseling Articles**

<b>No</b>	<b>Author (Year)</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Method/ Main Focus</b>	<b>Platform/ Media</b>	<b>Population/ Focus</b>
1	Alexander et al. (2022)	Cyber Counseling & Teen Depression During the Pandemic	Case study	Not mentioned	Teenagers during the pandemic
2	The Promised Neverland (2016)	Cyber Counseling via Facebook for Game Addiction	Quasi-Experiment	Facebook	Teenagers addicted to games
3	Sari (2019)	Cyber Counseling for HIV/AIDS Prevention	Quantitative	Not specific	Vocational High School Students
4	Prayoga & Suhartono (2025)	Effectiveness of Cyber Counseling and Psychological Well-being	Survey	General	Teenagers in the digital age
5	Zakiah et al. (2018)	Optimizing Cyber Counseling as Problem Solving	Qualitative	WhatsApp, IG, Line	Teenagers (TeSA129)
6	The Last Supper (2024)	Social Interaction in Islamic Cyber Counseling	Qualitative	Not mentioned	Zilennial Generation

7	The Last Supper (2021)	REBT and Cyber Counseling Group	Experiment	Cyber counseling group	Junior High School/Senior High School Students
8	Devi et al. (2022)	Cyber Counseling as a Pandemic Solution	Literature Review	General	General
9	Nugraha et al. (2021)	Android App for Anxiety Disorder	Informatics R&D	Android App	Teenagers with anxiety
10	The Last Supper (2021)	Cyber Counseling at Tourism Vocational School	Case study	Not mentioned	Vocational High School Students
11	Hasanah et al. (2024)	Online Counseling for Teenagers Victims of Bullying	Literature Review	Online Chat	Victim of bullying
12	Saphira (2023)	Riliv Application in Cyber Counseling	Descriptive Study	Riliv Application	General
13	Fauzia et al. (2021)	Cyber Counseling Guide via WhatsApp	R&D (Manual Development)	WhatsApp	High School Students
14	The Last Supper (2022)	Cyber Counseling As A Solution To The Pandemic	Literature Review	General	General
15	Fadhilah et al. (2021)	Cyber Counseling in Schools: Literature Review	SLR	Not mentioned	School

16	Maulidia & Widodo (2022)	Group Counseling via WA Video Call	Experiment	WhatsApp Video Call	Junior High School Students
17	The Last Supper (2016)	Development of Counseling Services in the Global Era	Conceptual Study	Not mentioned	General
18	Aisha (2020)	Cybercounseling During the Pandemic	Descriptive Study	Not mentioned	General
19	Sari & Herdi (2021)	Cyber Counseling: Pandemic Solution	Literature Review	Not mentioned	General
20	Budianto et al. (2019)	WhatsApp + Mobile Computing for Cyber Counseling	Informatics R&D	WhatsApp	Vocational High School Students
21	The Witch (2022)	Cyber Counseling As A Pandemic Service	Literature Review	General	General
22	The Last Supper (2020)	Guidance and Counseling in the Pandemic Era	Case study	Not mentioned	General
23	Pratama et al. (2023)	Cyber Counseling Based on Religious Values	Literature Review	Not mentioned	Teenager
24	Princess (2023)	Utilization of Cybercounseling in Schools	Literature Study	Not mentioned	School
25	Korohama &	The Influence of Cyber	Quantitative	Not mentioned	Junior High School Students

	Gibbons (2022)	Counseling on Self-Disclosure			
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The article selection process is visualized in Figure 1, which shows the systematic stages from initial identification to final selection of articles.

Diagram Alur PRISMA

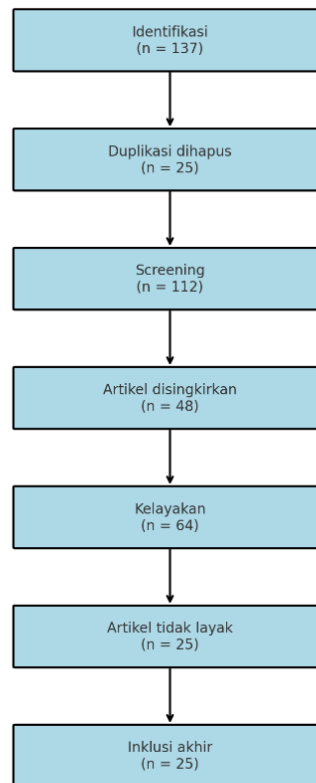


Figure 1. Flowchart of Article Selection Following PRISMA

Despite its many benefits, cyber counseling is not free from challenges. The main challenge lies in the ethical and professional aspects of counselors in handling personal data, conveying empathy through text media, and handling emergencies online. Specific ethical guidelines are needed for online counseling. In the Indonesian context, the issue of digital literacy from both counselors and clients is a significant inhibiting factor. Several articles indicate that counselors are not yet accustomed to using digital media in psychological services, so ongoing training and capacity building are needed.

The advantage of this approach is its high flexibility. Counselors and clients do not need to be in the same place, which is very beneficial for remote areas. This opens up opportunities for equal access to psychological services throughout Indonesia, including the 3T areas. In addition to the individual approach, digital-based group counseling services are also a promising solution. This model is able to create a supportive social climate, and reduce the

psychological burden of adolescents who feel isolated. In the long term, this service can also increase solidarity and empathy between adolescents.

This review also found that most cyber counseling research in Indonesia is still exploratory and descriptive. Experimental and longitudinal quantitative research is still very limited. In fact, this approach is needed to prove the effectiveness and long-term impact of the service. Regarding the media used, WhatsApp is the most dominant platform because of its inclusive and lightweight nature. However, in the future, it is necessary to develop a platform that is safer, more professional, and equipped with psychological intervention features, such as self-assessment, progress notes, or automatic monitoring.

The strategic steps suggested from these findings are to encourage the integration of cyber counseling services into the education and mental health systems of adolescents in schools and communities. Thus, the sustainability of services can be guaranteed and not only depend on individual initiatives. Finally, collaboration between academics, practitioners, policy makers, and technology developers needs to be strengthened. The goal is to create a sustainable, adaptive, and adolescent-friendly digital-based psychosocial service ecosystem.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this systematic review indicate that *cyber counseling* has become a strategic and adaptive approach in responding to the needs of adolescent psychosocial services in the digital era. This service is able to overcome barriers to geographic access, social stigma, and adapt to the communication style of the younger generation who are more comfortable using digital media. Platforms such as WhatsApp are the main choice because of their inclusivity, ease of use, and flexibility in building safe and private two-way communication. Psychological approaches such as CBT, REBT, and Islamic counseling have proven effective when combined with digital media. However, the effectiveness of cyber counseling also depends heavily on the readiness of counselors to master technology, as well as the existence of adequate ethical regulations to maintain the confidentiality and security of client data. This study emphasizes the need for integration of this service into the education and mental health system in schools and communities in a more structured and sustainable manner.

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