

**How to Cite:**

Bangkara, B. M. A. S. A., Maruf, I. C. ., Latif, A., Hashibah, H., & Ikhsan, I. (2022). Improving the quality of counseling services for students based on digital applications in line with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 6(S9), 2100–2114. <https://doi.org/10.53730/ijhs.v6nS9.12875>

# Improving the quality of counseling services for students based on digital applications in line with the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum

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**Abstract**--This study discusses the issue of improving the quality of counseling services for students by relying on digital applications following the direction of implementing the independent curriculum and considering the efficiency and innovation of services, especially when a pandemic hits Indonesian schools. The applications were used, including WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and several other applications used for consulting services to make breakthroughs that have been consulting regularly. This research finding is helpful for the smooth implementation of similar studies in the future. In addition, this study was done in a qualitative design and under a phenomenological approach.

**Keywords**---Improving, Counseling, digital application, implementation, Merdeka curriculum.

## Introduction

Counseling is the most common way of giving help through guiding meetings by a specialist, called an instructor, to a person encountering an issue, called the counselee, which prompts the issue to settle. Counseling and advising play a fundamental part in carrying out the Merdeka Educational plan. Guidance and counseling services (GC) are required in every education unit (Dharmayana & Herawati, 2021). This follows Permendikbud Number 111 of 2014, which explains that Guidance and Counseling is a systematic, objective, a logical, sustainable, and programmed effort carried out by counselors or teachers assigned to serve Guidance and Counseling. Its task is to facilitate the development of students in achieving independence in their lives, especially guidance related to student education (Sun & Yuen, 2012). If it is associated with the application of the Independent Curriculum, the role of guidance and counseling services in the Independent Curriculum is as a coordinator in realizing the psychological well-being of students and facilitating the development of students to be able to actualize their potential in achieving optimal development. In addition, Guidance and Counseling are also part of planning the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (Bintani, 2020).

Academic units have their uniqueness that can affect conditions in schools. Education units can carry out the role of Guidance and Counseling in the Independent Curriculum according to their respective conditions, needs, and abilities. Guidance and counseling services can be done by utilizing existing facilities and infrastructure. Subject teachers and teaching staff can collaborate in carrying out the role of Guidance and Counseling in realizing students' psychological well-being. In applying the Independent Curriculum, the role of guidance and counseling services to facilitate students' potential is expected not only to be carried out by BK teachers but also by subject teachers/educators. So, what Guidance and Counseling services can be provided in implementing the Independent Curriculum? (Martunis et al., 2017).

Guidance and Counseling Services in each school are provided for religious purposes. There are solutions to students' problems. Some examples of Guidance and Counseling in the field of personal services that can be done are providing services to students who have problems that need to be dealt with firmly (Fitri & Marjohan, 2017). Educators actively listen and respond appropriately when students are consulted inside and outside the classroom. Educators can also invite students to discuss and help understand their potential by finding their strengths and weaknesses and providing support to students to develop their potential to achieve success—guidance and Counseling in academic question services (Sitanggang, 2021).

To find out the potential of each student in teaching and learning activities, subject teachers and BK teachers can conduct an assessment. Subject teachers can conduct cognitive assessments before starting lessons and use the results to create different learning strategies according to learning readiness and student profiles. As for BK teachers/counselors, the results of non-cognitive assessments can be used to develop Guidance and Counseling programs so that they can

provide guidance and counseling services according to the characteristics of students (Setianingsih, 2016).

Guidance and Counseling in education and social services were also essential. Guidance and Counseling in the social service field are carried out to help students understand their environment. They can carry out positive and skilled social interactions to create a harmonious relationship between students and their environment. To achieve this, educators can introduce a variety of socio-cultural backgrounds as well as applicable values and norms (Setiyawati et al., 2015). Students' understanding of equality can also be fostered by providing equal opportunities for every student. If there is a conflict between students, the teacher must be able to be a wise mediator. A sense of responsibility and spirit can also be instilled through social activities in the school environment (Sukatin et al., 2022).

Guidance and Counseling in educational career services are also essential. Career service is one of the guidance and Counseling services students provide at school. Services are carried out to help identify students' interests and talents with non-cognitive assessments as preparation for career planning (Hidayati, 2015). Although these services are primarily provided to high school/level students, junior high school educators can also help students plan their careers early on. At the initial level of junior high school, the Guidance and Counseling teacher conducts a non-cognitive assessment in the form of a child's intelligence potential test. Furthermore, in class VIII, the counseling teacher can explore students' interests by asking about the profession they are interested in and why. In the final stage, grade IX and teachers' counselors can guide students in designing careers by determining secondary school choices (Atmaja, 2014).

Assist a specialist meeting with students facing a problem to survive and provide answers to the problems that the counselee is looking for (Bustan et al., 2020). Existence can take advantage of various possibilities and positions so that guidance seekers can understand themselves to achieve an ideal change, be free, and have the choice to design a superior future to achieve a prosperous student life (Snow et al., 2018). In addition, Directing is also carried out face to face in a closed room. However, it can be well resolved through significant distance design with the help of data innovation or so-called e-directing, which briefly can be interpreted as compiling directions and guidelines online or electronic services (Singh et al., 2020).

Every student faces many problems. However, these students rarely consult with counseling teachers about personal, family, economic, and career problems and are confused about choosing a university. Because many students feel embarrassed to enter the counseling room because usually, students who enter the counseling room are primarily students who have problems or do not obey school rules, the problem (problems continuing to study) follows the skills or talents, interests, and achievements they have (Currie, 2010). In implementing this Guidance and Counseling, many ways can be used. Like the forecasting method in this application, it is hoped that it can help students decide when choosing a university. With this android-based e-counseling, it is hoped that it will make it easier for students who feel embarrassed to enter the guidance and

counseling room and who want to ask questions or consult about which university to continue their studies at; students can express their problems through this application. This application provides a chat feature for consuls and is equipped with tips and tricks for choosing a campus based on the university and its significance (Toquero, 2020).

The application's meaning, as per the Huge Indonesian Word reference, is "The application uses a framework plan to handle information using certain programming dialect principles or settings" (Budianto et al., 2019). Such as the application of a set of records (structure, class, report) which means doing specific exercises that are interrelated, such as financial applications and fixed income sources applications. Based on the above understanding, it tends to make sense that Counseling is a program or program used to complete a particular job or task separately. E-Directing The term e-advising comes from English, especially e-guiding, which temporarily can be interpreted as the most common way of compiling coaching electronically (Cipolletta & Mocellin, 2018).

In addition to e-directing, some people mention cybercounseling, virtual advising, and web guides. Advising helps communities on an ongoing basis to adapt as best they can to their current circumstances, which will bring about change in themselves—directing and guiding administration to beat separate students in providing data to students so that they have data that matches the reasons or evidence of a recognizable problem, both data about themselves and data about their current state. The data obtained by separate students becomes a guide in pursuing the right choice to analyze the limitations of students and how to beat them. Haberstro et al. (2014) define e-guiding as correspondence between clients and instructors using PC video and real-time voice to build partnerships between clients and advocates. From some of the definitions above, it tends to make sense that e-guiding is a movement to help or provide arrangements by an advocate for problems seen by clients using data innovations such as PCs and the web (Duffey et al., 2016).

Directions and guidance from some of the definitions above tend to be considered that e-advising is an action to help or provide guidance on clients' problems using data innovations such as PCs and the web. Referrals are assistance given to people to choose, plan and expect a position and progress in the position that has been chosen. Directing is a movement in which all realities are gathered, and all student meetings are centered around a particular issue for the individual concerned to discuss. They provide individual and direct assistance to deal with these issues. Advisors do not handle client problems (Haberstroh & Moyer, 2012). Advice should be focused on dynamically improving the person to deal with the problem on his own without assistance. From each of the sentiments above, it can be well planned that Guidance and Guidance is a program of assistance realized through counseling interviews by an expert to people facing a problem, which intends to survive and provide answers to the problems encountered. Clients can take advantage of various possibilities and existing offices so that people or groups can understand themselves to achieve an ideal and free turn of events (Glasheen et al., 2016).

Improving the quality of counseling services in schools, exceptionally high school students, must continue to be pursued following the demands and mandates of the constitution described in the Merdeka Learning curriculum, which involves the application of digital technology. However, because the Merdeka learning curriculum has only been implemented in 2022, to strengthen the response to the importance of involving technology applications in improving the quality of educational consulting services, a series of facts and fires from various sources are the results of studies that have been published are very relevant to be voiced. So it is based on an urgency that every project to improve the quality of education services, including the quality of counseling to students by involving digital applications, needs to be reviewed and discussed from various perspectives and views of experts, especially in the context of applications in schools or countries that have been successful and have shown accurate results.

## **Method**

In the following, we describe the steps and stages of implementing a literature review study to improve application-based counseling services for students following the implementation of the Merdeka curriculum, which was recently implemented (Amatea & Clark, 2005). Data searches will be conducted online on technology applications widely used in counseling guidance services at the school level to discuss this issue. We prioritize the publications released between 2010 and 2022 from various publications such as books and scientific journals. Our data review involves coding data for data interpretation, high evaluation, and concluding, so we get findings from the highest study answers (Anderson et al., 2014).

This study is designed in qualitative descriptive where we discuss it to understand how consulting services use digital applications to improve service quality as expected by the independent curriculum. The electronic search uses keywords such as counseling service, digital location, implementation, an independent curriculum we embed in the Google Scholar application, and other events. After successfully reviewing the data, we designed it in a collective where this study also depends on secondary data from published scientific literature (Mytton et al., 2014).

These are the steps and stages of implementing a qualitative study to improve the quality of counseling services for secondary schools based on digital applications, which are part of the implementation of the independent curriculum in Indonesia. The presentation starts with identifying data retrieval problems, data analysis, and final reporting by adhering to the validity and reliability of the findings of this study.

## **Discussion**

### **Reasons for the need for a counseling application**

Schools need professional guidance and counseling teachers to understand the learning barriers they face. In addition, the existence of Counseling can provide a bright spot for students to develop their potential (Shaffer et al., 2010). The

results showed that online Counseling is very effective because it helps reduce anxiety and worries. All clients feel better cognitively, behaviorally, and emotionally even though they do not do face-to-face Counseling. The stages of online Counseling are not much different from the stages of the counseling process, which consist of five stages, namely the stage of delivery, assessment, interpretation, coaching and assessment, and continuous. However, in practice, it is a "flexible continuum" that is interconnected, continues according to stages, and is more open (Yurayat & Seechaliao, 2021). Cybercounseling services utilize various online media such as social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and email.

Meanwhile, the application programs for chatting to support these cybercounseling activities are skype, messenger. However, many schools still do not realize the importance of using applications that support counseling activities. Then, here are several reasons for the need for counseling applications in every school which we summarize from the various views and experiences of experts both at home and abroad:

### **Collecting student social behavior data**

Every student who comes to Guidance Counseling has different problems. The actions taken as feedback are also not the same (Young & Kaffenberger, 2011). Therefore, counseling teachers must collect and classify social behavior data appropriately. Later, data collection on student relationships and social behavior will be obtained, whether it is the relationship between individuals, the structure, or the direction of their social relations. It makes it easier to create a counseling guidance program. To support better counseling activities, it is not enough to have teaching staff. Professional counseling teachers always have a passion and a structured counseling plan. The design of the counseling program will be more accessible with the application of web-based counseling guidance. This application will help counselors conduct a school counseling program at the beginning of the new school year (Cook et al., 2017). Thus, supporting extension activities are not only learning tools, books, and counseling teacher modules.

### **Provide suitable facilities for counseling teachers**

Schools that provide counseling applications mean that they fully support extension activities. Few students are helped in expressing their feelings and concerns, both related to school and home (Azwar et al., 2021). Counselors can also better guide students who face doubts about their potential. Therefore, schools should not hesitate to support extension activities fully. Guidance and Counseling are needed by students as a form of assistance so that the next generation of this nation can solve the problems they face. Especially the things that students experience at school in order to be able to follow the lessons well (Jueajinda et al., 2021).

### **WhatsApp Application is expected during the pandemic**

Guidance and Counseling are carried out through various services in a student mentoring process. In the global era, it cannot only be done face-to-face (Yunianto

& Astuti, 2022). However, students can use information technology media and continue to provide Guidance and Counseling in more engaging, interactive, unlimited places, especially when mentoring has to be done online due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The coronavirus that has hit the hemisphere impacts almost all human life, including working from home, studying from home, maintaining health protocols, wearing masks, washing hands with soap, and maintaining distance. Teaching and learning activities/guidance, either individually, classically, or in groups, are usually carried out face-to-face (Pérez-Jorge et al., 2020).

However, according to government recommendations during the pandemic, it must be done online. Guidance services, incredibly individual Counseling so that they can be carried out smoothly during the pandemic, as an effort to find alternatives to facilitate the implementation of individual counseling services during the pandemic can interact with students, counseling teachers/counselors work around this by forming counseling groups with the WhatsApp application in their respective classes that become the capacity/responsibility of the class, so that individual counseling services in particular, and other services can still be carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic, students must continue to study at home so that it does not become an obstacle even though it is done online. Counseling teachers/school counselors must be willing to prepare their time to provide services without remembering the elements of self-interest (Wargadinata et al., 2019).

With the WhatsApp application, counseling teachers can make direct contact with students, perform individual counseling services, provide insight, share, vent, and alternative problem-solving solutions, where the final decision remains with the students. According to La Hanisi et al. (2018), WhatsApp is an application to send messages to each other instantly and allows us to exchange photos, pictures, videos, and voice messages; and can be used to discuss, exchange information, and share information. Implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic, it is an application for exchanging messages without SMS fees, can chat/sharing for individual counseling online to alleviate student problems that are personal and valuable as a medium to communicate and socialize without having to meet direct physical contact at the same time (Taipale & Farinosi, 2018).

If the WhatsApp application is used correctly, it can improve the implementation of Individual Counseling services during the Covid-19 pandemic, following the goals that have been set and as a communication medium that is not limited by space and time as has been implemented. By counseling teachers/school counselors in many places. When counseling, teachers can be a fun place to complain, serve wholeheartedly, master science correctly, master advanced technology, accept students' attendance without conditions, have empathy, are good at processing feelings towards their students, and are supported by appropriate media such as application applications. WhatsApp, counseling services can achieve the expected goals, according to the motto of Counseling caring for students, adhering to a code of ethics must be obeyed by a counseling teacher/school counselor while still paying attention to the principles in the implementation of Counseling, especially the principles of confidentiality, Volunteering, Openness. Also, make an agreement on a time for Counseling that

must be mutually agreed upon between the counselor and the counselee/student (Walnycky et al., 2013).

With the application of WhatsApp application during the pandemic in the implementation of individual counseling services, it can help students determine the solution/action to be taken so that they can make decisions in solving the problems they face, achieving the developmental task of the individual concerned. To develop their potential optimally, even though the Covid-19 pandemic is still hitting, Counseling can still be done (Mash et al., 2020).

### **Research Evidence**

Next is scientific evidence to help answer the question of this study, which is expected to answer questions from the various findings of the examinations we have conducted in electronic data retrieval. This is related to the writing that was deliberately made for the subject of this review, "Improving the Quality of Counseling Services for Students Based on Digital Applications in Line with the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum." The first proof of Suryahadikusumah et al. (2020, August) recognizes that school counseling has tremendous opportunities for improvement. However, they require interest to persevere. Computerization proficiency is a crucial skill to make students ready to upgrade. This study plans to describe the profile of computerized education related to counseling student development programs with the help of innovative technology.

Suwidagdho et al. (2021) say that direction is the help given to people (understudies) so that with their capacity, they can ideally foster themselves by figuring out themselves, grasping the climate, and defeating hindrances to decide better plans. The same thing was likewise expressed by Ahmad Susanto (2018); direction is the method involved with giving help completed by a specialist to an individual or people, whether kids, teenagers or grown-ups; so that individuals who are directed can foster their own and free capacities by using individual qualities and existing offices and can be created given material standards (Setiawan, 2018). Meanwhile, Adhiputra (2015) considers that guidance is assistance or assistance given to individuals or groups of individuals in avoiding or overcoming the difficulties of life so that individuals can achieve prosperity in their lives. Many experts reveal that guidance is held to help each individual better identify various information about himself.

A review is used as a study strategy (Jalil, 2021). The focal point of this review is the tendency of school counseling to utilize technology related to mechanical skills training and programming tendencies. Exploration is led by 45 millennial school instructors, with an age range of 22-35 years and an essential tenure of 1 year, for example. The observation results are that the available examples are computerized students, and the better level of computerized proficiency for respondents is correspondence and cooperation. Some respondents are understanding makers. For example, school advocates rarely create content from various data on the web. In this case, it is not easy to have the option of making creative directions and advising the program, as almost every respondent



downloaded the program from the web. This is a significant test of the simplicity of today's innovation (Siradjuddin, 2017).

Next, Julius et al. (2020) straightforward entry to innovation instruments is a chance for school counseling to foster various fantasies of media direction administrations. However, if the advocate does not have advanced proficiency abilities, the assistance of media improvement can become immaterial, old, and deserted. This writing survey expects to show the significance of computerized education as a school guide skill and illustrates parts of computerized proficiency in media improvement. The review utilizes course books, research diaries, and local area administration reports to investigate the use of computerized proficiency in instructive practices. Given this review, school advocates are expected to have the option to process and assess advanced data/information and make computerized items that are more pertinent to students. Advanced proficiency capabilities comprise 1) supporting, 2) foundation information, 3) focal skills, and 4) mentalities and viewpoints. Deciding reasoning is the way to this skill, and school guides can become accustomed to conceptualizing and rehearsing (Zyromski & Mariani, 2016).

While Gading (2020) also said that the improvement of digital counseling as a guiding help model for secondary school understudies in the computerized Age. Rules for digital directing, as well as their agreeableness and adequacy. The review phases consist of 4 D precisely characterize, plan, create, and spread. The acknowledgment test included two specialists as commentators, while the adequacy test included 30 secondary school understudies as members. The viability of models and rules was estimated by members' reactions to the advantages of digital directing. Information was gathered utilizing polls and afterward investigated utilizing a t-test. Their study showed that the hypothetical digital directing model comprised crude info, instrumental info, ecological info, interaction, and advising objectives. The rules for digital advising were set out in the means of digital guiding, comprising beginning correspondence, assimilation, and end. The acknowledgment of the model and digital directing rules was extremely high, with a coefficient of 1.00 (Wilkerson et al., 2013).

Subsequently, digital directing should be successfully utilized as a model guiding administration for secondary school understudies in the computerized age. Direction and guiding administrations are components of training that expect to help accomplish the goals of instruction. Direction and advising can forestall understudies' experience issues and may try and reduce understudies of his concerns. One of the endeavors that should be finished to work on the viability of direction and advising administrations is the advancement of media direction and guidance. Media direction and advising can make various shades of direction and directing administrations with the goal that understudies' interests increment while heeding the direction and guiding administrations. Utilized media should be significant with the targets/ability of the direction and advising and pertinent with material direction and guiding administrations. Media in direction and advising administrations assumes a significant part in the execution of direction and advising with the goal that the understudy can more readily comprehend, comprehend, and assimilate the material direction and guiding administrations to the understudy (Young & Kaffenberger, 2011).

Supriyanto et al. (2020). Educator professional quality: Guiding administrations with innovation in Pandemic Coronavirus. The Coronavirus pandemic is influencing scholastic cycles all over the planet and the rise of issues in understudies. The school guides greatly assist issues and create understudy potential through directing administrations with computerized innovation media. This review centers around finding different advancements that were applied and utilized by school advocates during the time spent guiding administrations during the Coronavirus pandemic. The exploration technique utilized a contextual investigation strategy and a subjective graphic technique with thoroughly subject 20 educators professional training graduated class filled in as school guides in different islands in Indonesia.

The examination instrument is utilized an open survey with dispersion through google structure media and elucidating subjective information investigation. The consequences of the investigation discovered that nonconcurrent media and innovation-based coordinated media were the main options for internet advising administrations during the Coronavirus plague. Nonconcurrent media with WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, or virtual entertainment, as well as coordinated media with Zoom, Webex, Google Meeting, or Home base, can assist with tackling issues and foster understudy potential. Suggestions for school advocates to immediately adjust to the time of disturbance and innovation in directing administrations. The accompanying guidance for the public authority is the organization of educators and understudy government assistance (Williams, J. M., & Bryan, J. 2013).

The following view was from Goodrich et al. (2020), who carefully responsive school directing across the ASCA public model. Innovation assumes an undeniably significant part in the existence of understudies and other schooling partners. Proficient school instructors (PSCs), be that as it may, have simply probably started to incorporate computerized apparatuses into their expert work. Given the comprehensive data and contemplations set by innovation and its part in understudies' lives, crafted by the school advisor has become more mind-boggling. This paper contends for growing the utilization of intelligent advances explicitly inside the Conveyance Arrangement of the American School Advising Affiliation's Public Model. We analyze how advanced specialized instruments can improve and stretch out the capacity of PSCs to address the issues of understudies. Suggestions for school advising programs, PSCs, understudies, and teachers are considered (Torunoğlu & Gençtanırım, 2015).

This describes the results of a series of literature reviews from various publication sources published between 2010 and 2022. We complete the presentation of the study's results with a discussion in which we believe that the presentation of the results of this study will be valid and robust if it is backed up by scientific evidence in the form of publications from various sources, both books, and relevant academic papers. All of our presentations are designed in qualitative descriptive under a phenomenological approach, namely an effort to obtain data findings from several data that we believe are relevant to answer the problems we raise in the study of improving the quality of counseling services to secondary students in line with the direction of the Merdeka curriculum, which involves

digital technology which is an application that uses digital technology that is very innovative and transformation.

### **Conclusion**

Finally, we can summarize the essential materials that we have discussed in the results and discussion section to answer the problem of the study of improving counseling services for students based on digital applications following the direction and implementation of the independent curriculum in Indonesia. We have summarized some applications that try to help smooth school assignments, including counseling applications. There are several reasons why the technology-based application of students is efficient to use, among others, because of the application of technology to counselors. Able to collect student data as needed. Other people, for example, the counseling teacher, have facilities provided by the school.

During the pandemic, for example, after using the WhatsApp application, which is very emotional, it can be because it is impossible to carry out consultations effectively following government policies, causing schools to be successful and open up in the future. Several field study evidence prioritizes how important it is for schools to use digital applications to provide consulting services to UG students. We summarize this; several expert writers in the field understand that implementing digital applications for instruments to help smooth Counseling in schools is a proposal and innovation. Technology that must be applied according to the needs in this era is increasingly demanding to be all-round and automatic. So that is why various sources have described their fires where there are several applications such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, virtual entertainment, and zombie back Google meeting. So on, all of which have been used in several school instructions were to see the effectiveness of both used at home and abroad, so that we have summarized the happiness of this report, including the crucial explanations that we have found, we believe that this friend has weaknesses and suggestions for improvement of the study.

### **Acknowledgments**

We report that this study received support from the government for their assistance and training and the academic support community.

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