



Virtual Counseling to Help College Students Reduce Stress During Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstrak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui pengaruh konseling virtual dalam membantu mahasiswa mengurangi stres selama pandemi COVID-19. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kuantitatif dengan metode statistik deskriptif. Subjek penelitian adalah mahasiswa yang melakukan konseling virtual. Data diperoleh melalui kuesioner pelaksanaan konseling virtual dan instrumen Perceived Stress Scale (PSS 10). Analisis data menggunakan uji koefisien regresi sederhana (Uji-t). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa ada pengaruh konseling virtual dalam membantu mahasiswa mengurangi stres selama pandemi COVID-19. Respon mahasiswa terhadap konseling virtual menunjukkan hasil bahwa 70% sangat puas, 30% cukup puas dan 0% tidak puas. Pengaruh konseling virtual dalam mengurangi tingkat stres yang dialami mahasiswa selama pandemi COVID-19, dapat dilihat dari nilai $p < 0,000$ dengan persentase sebesar 62,7%. Penggunaan konseling virtual dapat dikatakan efektif dalam meminimalisir stres selama pandemi COVID-19.

Katakunci: Konseling Virtual, Stres, Pandemi COVID-19

Abstract. This research aims to determine the effect of virtual counseling in helping college students reduce stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. This research is a quantitative study using descriptive statistical methods. The research subjects were students who did virtual counseling. The data were obtained through a virtual counseling implementation questionnaire and the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS 10) instrument. Data analysis used simple regression coefficient test (t-test). The results showed that there was an effect of virtual counseling in helping students reduce stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, the college student response to virtual counseling showed that 70% were very satisfied, 30% were quite satisfied and 0% were not satisfied. The effect of virtual counseling in reducing the level of stress experienced by students during the COVID-19 pandemic can be seen from the p value of 0.000 with a percentage of 62.7%. The use of virtual counseling can be said to be effective in minimizing stress during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Virtual Counseling, Stress, COVID-19 Pandemic



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Introduction

The spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 or COVID-19 in Indonesia until June the graph continues to increase. The news portal Tirto.id noted that on June 23, 2020, the total number of positive cases of Corona in Indonesia reached 47,896 people and is expected to continue to increase every day (tirto.id, 2020). Various appeals to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are more stringent, starting from studying from

home, working from home, worshipping at home, wearing masks when leaving the house in good health or sick, washing hands and keeping a distance. The policies and recommendations made by the government have had a considerable impact on the social life of the people in Indonesia (Aufar & Raharjo, 2020).

During a pandemic like this, apart from the COVID-19 virus, information about COVID-19 has the potential to create feelings of anxiety that can cause stress because it is uncomfortable with the various information. The recommendation to study from home during the COVID-19 pandemic can be a cause for stressors. There are around 65 universities in Indonesia that organize learning from home to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (CNN Indonesia, 2020). Learning from home that can be done during the COVID-19 pandemic is online learning. According to Moore, Dickson-Deane, & Galyen (2011) online learning is learning that uses the internet network with accessibility, connectivity, flexibility, and the ability to bring up various types of learning interactions. According to Nurmala, Wibowo, & Rachmayani (2020), the feelings of stress faced by students when facing online learning can be seen from the responses of students who complain of discomfort, difficult signals, limited quotas and difficult networks in the area where they live.

The results of research by experts and directors of the Center for Applied Learning Intelligence, Seattle University John J, Medina on stress conditions and cognitive performance found that humans under stress conditions significantly affect the decline in cognitive test results, even up to 50% (Ambarwati, et al, 2019). On the other hand, excessive worry and fear will begin to create, until psychosomatics happens so quickly. If these stressful conditions are not handled immediately, it will result in lowering the body's immunity that is vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus. According to Amalia, Irwan & Hiola (2020), stress is the main factor in reducing immunity, someone who has a low immune system is easily infected with the COVID-19 virus.

According to Potter & Perry (in Vania, Supriatna, & Fatimah, 2019) explains that stress is one of the reactions or psychological responses of humans when faced with things that are felt to have exceeded the limit or are considered difficult to deal with. Normal stress is experienced by every individual and becomes an integral part of life. Stress can make someone who experiences it think and try hard in solving a problem or challenge in his life as a form of adaptation response to survive. According to Salam, et al (2015), stress is a condition that interferes with individuals both mentally and physically, resulting from individual interactions with the environment and is considered a threat to individual well-being.

According to the level, stress is classified into low, middle, and high stress. (1) Low stress is a level of stress that often occurs in everyday life. This condition can help the individual to be more alert and prevent how things are going to happen. This stress does not cover the physiological aspects of a person. Behavioral responses from low stress are found to be overworked, easily tired and unable to relax. Low stress will not cause disease unless it is faced continuously. (2) The level of stress is middle, the individual focuses more on important things at this time and puts others aside so that it narrows the field of perception. The physiological response of middle stress levels is characterized by disturbances in the stomach and intestines such as ulcers, irregular bowel movements, muscle tension, disturbed sleep patterns and menstrual cycle and pattern disturbances begin to occur. In behavioral responses, the body often feels like it will fall and feels like passing out, loses responsiveness to situations, inability to carry out daily routine activities, and decreased concentration and memory power. (3) The level of stress is high, the individual's perception area is greatly reduced and tends to focus on other things. All behaviors are aimed at reducing stress. The level of high stress also affects the physiological aspects obtained, such as severe digestive system disorders, heart palpitations getting louder, shortness of breath and the whole body feels shaking. In the psychological response, physical fatigue feels deeper, feelings of fear, anxiety are increasing, easily confused and panicked (Puspitaningsih, 2015).

Syamsu (2004) explains that someone who experiences stress can be seen from the symptoms, as follows: 1) Physical symptoms, including: dizziness, stomach pain, hypertension, heart pain or heart beating fast, insomnia, easily tired, cold sweats, lack of appetite, and always urinating; 2) Psychological symptoms, including: restless or anxious, unable to concentrate on studying, being apathetic, pessimistic, often daydreaming, and often angry, or being aggressive; 3) Cognitive symptoms, including: forgetfulness, negative thinking, loss of self-confidence, loss of hope, often feeling bored and bored; 4) Behavioral symptoms, including: withdrawing from the social environment, grumbling, delaying completing assignments, having difficulty self-discipline, lying and skipping school.

COVID-19 pandemic provides social changes as well as psychological pressure that causes stress. Many factors cause stress during the COVID-19 pandemic, namely the uncertainty of when the COVID-19 pandemic will end, feelings of anxiety and fear of whether to contract the virus or not, feelings of anxiety and also worrying about families, such as parents who are more vulnerable or maybe their families. others have a history of illness so there is fear. In addition, every day seeing and reading a lot of news about COVID-19, over time the information received can cause reactions in the form of fear and anxiety (Sarah, 2020). According to Farmawati, et al (2020) that stress such as anxiety and fear can cause

the body's immune system to become weak, making it vulnerable to COVID-19. So that the stress experienced does not lead to depression, it is necessary to immediately overcome it by seeking help from experts such as online counseling or virtual counseling.

Virtual counseling is one way that can be accessed when you need psychological services during the COVID-19 pandemic, where during the COVID-19 pandemic, people are asked to stay at home and activities are carried out online. Virtual counseling is a counseling process that is carried out with network tools as a liaison between the counselor and the counselee or client without having to face to face directly. Virtual counseling can help individuals who experience stress and cannot control it during the COVID-19 pandemic. Haberstroh (in Wibowo, 2016) explains that virtual/online/cyber counseling is a client and counselor communicating by using streaming video and audio by utilizing information technology, computers and the internet. Amani (2007) that virtual counseling is counseling via the internet which generally refers to professions related to mental health services through internet communication technology.

There are two forms of virtual counseling, namely synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous is a counseling process at the same time or real time, counselors can interact online with clients directly via telephone, video calls, and others. Meanwhile, asynchronous is a counseling process involving the interaction of counselor and client at different times such as counseling by chat, email, social media and others. According to Koutsonika (in Ifdil & Ardi, 2013), media that can be used for virtual counseling are websites/websites, telephone/mobile phones, email, instant message chat and social media, video conferencing. In this study, using synchronous and asynchronous virtual counseling forms to help overcome problems faced by individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Virtual counseling process has two stages, namely the preparation stage and the counseling stage (Wibowo, 2016). The preparation stage is the initial stage in the virtual counseling process, which focuses more on the technical use of hardware (hardware) and software (software) in the implementation of virtual counseling. The counseling stage is the stage where the process of providing assistance by the counselor to the client begins. The counseling stage includes introduction, assessment, interpretation, coaching and assessment/ending counseling. Based on the description above, the purpose of this study is to determine the effect of virtual counseling in helping students reduce stress during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Method

The research approach used is quantitative research with descriptive statistical methods, by analyzing the results of data collection through virtual counseling questionnaires and Perceived Stress Scale (PSS 10) instruments given to students regarding the implementation of virtual counseling conducted by Psychology Lecturers and Counseling Guidance Lecturers at IAIN Pekalongan. The research subjects were students who took part in virtual counseling as many as 20 students for 1 month (20 April – 20 May 2020).

The data collection tool or the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS 10) instrument was developed by Cohen (1994). Researchers use Google Form media in collecting data from samples. The sampling technique used is convenience sampling. The adapted instrument was used in the study which was then distributed to students who took virtual counseling to get a response.

The data analysis technique used is descriptive statistical analysis method. The descriptive method is analyzing the data results by using categorization to determine the stress level of students who take virtual counseling. The statistical analysis method is a simple regression coefficient test (t-test) with the aim of knowing whether the independent variable (X) namely virtual counseling has a significant effect on the variable (Y) namely stress. Next is the coefficient of determination test (R²). This test was conducted to find out how big the percentage of the influence of virtual counseling in helping students reduce stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data analysis was carried out in this study using SPSS version 20 software for Windows.

Results and Discussions

The results of this study found a description of the stress level of IAIN Pekalongan students who took virtual counseling, student responses to virtual counseling conducted by Psychology Lecturers and Counseling Guidance Lecturers, and the effect of virtual counseling in helping students reduce stress during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Category of College Student Stress

College student stress levels were measured using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) which was developed by Cohen (1994). The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) is a 10-item self-report questionnaire that measures a person's evaluation of a stressful situation in the last month of their life. The PSS is the only empirically defined general stress rating index. For each question, you must choose from the following

alternatives: 0 = never, 1 = almost never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = quite often, 4 = very often (Bhat, et al., 2011).

Bhat, et al. (2011) wrote that the PSS score was determined by the following method: First, by reversing the scores for questions 4, 5, 7, and 8. In these 4 questions, the score can change from: 0 = 4, 1 = 3, 2 = 2, 3 = 1, 4 = 0. Then, scores are added for each item to get the total score. The total score is represented as a stress score. Individual scores on PSS can range from 0 to 40, which are grouped into 3 groups, namely: (a) Low stress: scores ranging from 0 – 13; (b) Middle stress: scores ranging from 14 – 26; (c) High perceived stress: scores ranging from 27 - 40.

The value of the Cronbach Alpha coefficient on the original PSS scale is 0.80 (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983 in Hary, 2017). Hary (2017) translated the PSS into Indonesian and tested the validity and reliability of 80 people and produced a Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.81. Based on the instrument that has been distributed to 20 college students before and after the implementation of virtual counseling, it aims to find out the stress level of students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The recapitulation of the Perceived Stress Scale scores of each student prior to the implementation of virtual counseling is obtained in the following table 1.

Table 1. Recapitulation of Perceived Stress Scale Values Before Virtual Counseling

Subject	Score	Stress Category	Subject	Score	Stress Category
1	15	Middle	11	9	Low
2	13	Low	12	17	Middle
3	12	Low	13	15	Middle
4	14	Middle	14	18	Middle
5	23	Middle	15	14	Middle
6	27	High	16	20	Middle
7	12	Low	17	22	Middle
8	8	Low	18	18	Middle
9	10	Low	19	11	Low
10	14	Middle	20	16	Middle

Source: Perceived Stress Scale Scores Result, 2020

Furthermore, the researcher categorizes the level of students' self-concept using level categorization (Bhat, et al, 2011). On the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10), the classification of subjects is divided into three standard categories, namely, low, medium, and high. Then the categorization obtained on the PPS-10 scale is as follows:

Table 2. Overview of Student Stress Before Virtual Counseling

Score	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	High	1	5%
2	Middle	12	60%
3	Low	7	35%
Total		20	100%

Source: Measurement Results, 2020

Based on these calculations, the results show that the stress of students who will take virtual counseling from 20 people is in the low category as many as 7 people (35%), the medium category is 12 people (60%), and in the high category as many as 1 person (5 %). The empirical mean is obtained from the results of calculations using descriptive statistical SPSS with a value of 15.4 which, when put into the theoretical mean, is in the medium category, which is in the range of 14-26. From this description, it can be concluded that the stress experienced by students is in the moderate category, namely 60%.

College Student Response to Virtual Counseling

The questionnaire on virtual counseling was compiled based on the virtual counseling process according to Wibowo (2016), namely, the use of hardware (hardware) and software (software), introduction, assessment, interpretation, coaching and assessment/ending counseling. This virtual counseling questionnaire consists of favorable and unfavorable statements consisting of 25 statement items and has previously been tested for validity and reliability.

Statements on the scale consist of two kinds, namely statements that support the attitude object (favorable) and statements that do not support (unfavorable). Statements on the scale have four alternative answers, namely: Strongly Agree (SS), Agree (S), Disagree (TS), and Strongly Disagree (STS).

Determination of the score on the favorable statement of answer choices SS is worth 4, S is worth 3, TS is worth 2, and STS is worth 1. Meanwhile for the score on the unfavorable statement the answer choices are SS worth 1, S is worth 2, TS is worth 3, and STS is worth 4.

To find out the student's response to the implementation of virtual counseling, it can be seen from the results of the recapitulation of the answers to the questionnaire. The following is a recapitulation of the assessment of each respondent ia as table 3.

Table 3. Virtual Counseling Questionnaire Value Recapitulation

Subject	Score	Subject	Score	Subject	Score	Subject	Score
1	76	6	80	11	75	16	86
2	80	7	81	12	87	17	85
3	77	8	80	13	84	18	86
4	86	9	76	14	82	19	77
5	78	10	78	15	80	20	78

Source: Questionnaire Measurement Results, 2020

Furthermore, categorization is carried out using level categories (Azwar, 2008). In the virtual counseling questionnaire, the classification of subjects is divided into three standard categories, namely: low, medium, and high. So, the categorization obtained on the virtual counseling scale is as follows table 4.

Table 4. Virtual Counseling Questionnaire Classification

Score	Category	Frequency	Percentage
$X < 60$	Very Dissatisfied	0	0%
$60 \leq X < 84$	Quite Satisfied	14	70%
$84 \leq X$	Very Satisfied	6	30%
Jumlah		20	100%

Source: Questionnaire Measurement Results, 2020

Based on the table above, it is known that the responses of students who took part in virtual counseling activities carried out by Psychology Lecturers and Counseling Guidance Lecturers through the WhatsApp application and zoom meetings seen from the implementation through a virtual counseling approach, were in the quite satisfied category with the number of students as many as 14 college students and a percentage of 70. %, and in the category of very satisfied with virtual counseling activities as many as 6 college students with a percentage of 30% and in the very dissatisfied category 0 college students. From the explanation, it can be seen that the student response is quite satisfied with the virtual counseling conducted by the Psychology Lecturer and Counseling Guidance Lecturer with a percentage of 70%.

The Effect of Virtual Counseling in Helping College Students Reduce Stress During COVID-19 Pandemic

Figures and tables are the most effective way to present results. Captions should be able to stand alone, such that the figures and tables are understandable without the need to read the entire manuscript. Besides that, the data represented should be easy to interpret.

To find out the effect of virtual counseling in helping students reduce stress during the COVID-19 pandemic, a statistical analysis method was used, namely hypothesis testing. The hypothesis test in this study will be analyzed using the Simple Regression Coefficient Test (t test), and the coefficient of determination test.

First, a simple regression coefficient test (t test) is used to determine whether the independent variable (X) which in this study is virtual counseling has a significant effect on the variable (Y) or stress during COVID-19 pandemic. After that, it can be seen how much influence the independent variables have on the dependent variable as seen from the Standardized Coefficients Beta. Hypothesis:

1. Ho: There is no effect between virtual counseling with college student stress during COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Ha: There is an effect between virtual counseling with college student stress during COVID-19 pandemic.

The results of the t-test data using the SPSS version 20 software program for Windows can be seen in table 5.

Based on the results of the coefficient test analysis that P_v in the sig. shows a value of (0.000), meaning that $P_v (0.000) < (0.05)$, then H_a accepted and H_o is rejected, this means that the proposed hypothesis shows that there is a relationship between virtual counseling and student stress during COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 5. Simple Regression Coefficient Test

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	B	Sig	Criteria
Stress	Virtual Counseling	0.750	0.000	Pv < α = Ha accepted Pv ≥ α = Ho accepted

Source: Measurement Results, 2020

After it was known that there was a relationship between virtual counseling and student stress during the COVID-19 pandemic, it was then continued to test how big the effect was. The regression coefficient test was also carried out using the SPSS version 20 software program for Windows. This regression coefficient test is known from its magnitude. Based on the table above, it can be seen that the regression coefficient for virtual counseling is 0.750, meaning that with virtual counseling, student stress during the COVID-19 pandemic will be low or decrease by 0.750 units.

Second, the coefficient of determination is used to determine the magnitude of the influence between variable X and variable Y, or the magnitude of the influence of virtual counseling in reducing student stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. These results can be seen from the calculations in the Model Summary table, here are the results of the calculations using the SPSS version 20 software program for Windows:

Table 6. Coefficient of Determination Test Results

	R Square
Virtual Counseling	0.627

Source: Virtual Counseling Measurement Results, 2020

From table 6, it can be seen that the magnitude of the influence on the column R Square or $r^2 = 0.627$, or the coefficient of determination in this study when converted into a percentage is 62.7%. This shows that the percentage obtained from the influence of virtual counseling in reducing student stress during the COVID-19 pandemic is 62.7% or if it is rounded up to 63%, and the remaining $100\% - 63\% = 37\%$ is influenced by variables other than virtual counseling, other variables can be internal or external factors of the individual himself.

The discussion in this study based on the results of data analysis, it was known that there was an influence between virtual counseling in reducing stress faced by students during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the effect was very significant. The results showed a positive relationship between virtual counseling and stress during COVID-19 pandemic.

The results of the data analysis also prove that the hypothesis proposed by the researcher is accepted, namely that there is an effect of virtual counseling in reducing student anxiety during the COVID-19 pandemic. The effect of virtual counseling in reducing student stress during the COVID-19 pandemic has a significant value because it is due to the high relationship between the two variables, this is evidenced by a significant number of 0.000 which means that it is in the high category, virtual counseling is only one intervention to deal with stress during the COVID pandemic. -19. With virtual counseling activities carried out by Psychology Lecturers and Counseling Lecturers, it is hoped that stress during the COVID-19 pandemic can be reduced. Counseling has an important role in efforts to reduce and overcome stress during COVID-19 pandemic.

The roles of virtual counselor is as follows: First, to help individuals get to know themselves. Knowing your strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes can help map out where life will take you. By knowing yourself, it will be easier to determine what ways and strategies are right for reducing stress. Second, make individuals aware to care for themselves. After knowing oneself deeply, then the needs and obligations will also appear. Meeting your own needs is one way to manage stress. Caring for yourself can be started by trying a healthy lifestyle, socializing with friends and relatives, planning realistic activities and pursuing hobbies. Third, pay attention to balance. As humans are endowed with several aspects in themselves, these five aspects must be maintained and fulfilled in a balanced way. The five aspects of self-preservation include: Mental Emotional Aspects, Intellectual Aspects, Physical Aspects, Spiritual Aspects and Recreational Aspects. Fourth, instill a proactive attitude in preventing stress disorders by taking care of the five aspects above properly and regularly to become a resilient figure and have more ability and strength in dealing with stress.

The results of this study indicate that the effect of implementing virtual counseling is 62.7%. This proves that virtual counseling has a considerable influence in helping reduce student stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. These results are in line with the opinion of Finn & Barak (2010) who conducted a

study of 93 online counselors showing that overall online counselors are satisfied with their practice and they believe that the implementation is effective. Furthermore, according to Zamani, et al (2010) that in the future more and more people will continue to look to the internet as a resource to deal with their mental health problems.

Researchers also found several limitations that resulted in the implementation of virtual counseling being still not 100% maximal, including: 1) The stages in the implementation of virtual counseling are still conditional, so virtual counseling activities are not so formal, 2) Lack of monitoring from Psychology Lecturers and BK Lecturers as virtual counselors to the client after the problem is resolved, and 3) The availability of the network will determine the success or failure of the implementation of virtual counseling, so that virtual counseling is mostly done through chat messengers in solving problems and the lack of psychological contact between counselors and clients.

Virtual counseling not only provides services to consult on personal matters but also education and careers. Virtual counseling is an alternative as a counseling medium and an urgent need during the COVID-19 pandemic. So that the counselor's skills and skills are needed in using devices (computers, laptops, smartphones, and others) to solve client problems. In addition, adequate application to address confidentiality risks, develop clear policies regarding the rules of practice, focus on research efforts to determine the effectiveness of virtual counseling, and establish best practice standards regarding the provision of virtual counseling.

Conclusions and Suggest

Based on the results of the research conducted, it can be concluded that there is an effect of virtual counseling in helping students reduce stress during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is 62.7% with a *P* value of 0.000. In addition, the results showed that the stress conditions experienced by students before attending virtual counseling were 35% in the low category, 60% in the medium category and 5% in the high category. There are three main things that are stressful for students during the COVID-19 pandemic, namely the COVID-19 outbreak, the info demic regarding COVID-19 and academic problems during online lectures.

College students have different levels of stress due to internal and external factors such as the ability to solve problems and the emotional condition of each student. The results of the study stated that the responses of students who took part in virtual counseling activities carried out by Psychology Lecturers and Counseling Guidance Lecturers through the whatsapp application and zoom meeting were in the quite satisfied category with the number of students as many as 14 college students (70%), and in the very satisfied category with counseling activities. virtual as many as 6 college students (30%).

Based on the conclusions above, students are advised to always look for solutions that suit their abilities when experiencing stress. For further researchers, research can be done on solutions to overcome stress by coping with stress and spiritual images as well as technical preparation related to the implementation of virtual counseling in the future.

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