

The Role of Digital Platforms in Da'wah and Counseling: Between Opportunities and Challenges

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Article History: **Recived:** 2025, 08, 30; **Revised:** 2025, 09, 30; **Accepted:** 2025, 10, 20.

Abstract: In general, counseling and guidance play an important role in helping clients achieve positive behavioral changes. To ensure the effectiveness of counseling and guidance programs, a systematic evaluation of their implementation is required, including supervision, assessment, and monitoring of outcomes. However, in practice, many counseling and guidance programs still lack adequate evaluation mechanisms and do not fully adhere to proper standards. The purpose of this study is to describe how counseling and guidance program evaluations are implemented, while also providing recommendations, analysis, and factors to consider when deciding whether to continue or terminate a program. The term “program evaluation” has been widely used in the field of education in this context, highlighting the importance of improving the quality of counseling implementation. The findings further emphasize that evaluations should involve feedback from those being assessed as well as relevant stakeholders. Moreover, evaluation in counseling and guidance programs includes both process evaluation and outcome evaluation.

Keywords: Digital Da'wah, Effectiveness of Digital Da'wah, Challenges of Digital Da'wah

INTRODUCTION

The main duties of a counselor in a guidance and counseling program are outlined in the Decree of the Minister of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (KEPMENPAN-RB) No. 84/1993, which includes five key responsibilities: (1) designing and developing guidance and counseling programs, (2) implementing these programs, (3) conducting supervision, (4) evaluating the results of implementation, and (5) monitoring the progress of students under their supervision. As a system, guidance and counseling services encompass three essential aspects: planning, implementation, and evaluation. These components are closely interconnected, where the quality of outcomes is largely determined by careful planning and optimal implementation. Both aspects become more evident when the evaluation process is carried out effectively. Therefore, the evaluation of the implementation of counseling service programs must be carefully and systematically prepared.

The rapid growth of the internet in Indonesia has brought significant changes in communication patterns and social interactions. In 2024, the number of internet users reached 278.6 million, making digital technology an integral part of daily life. This transformation has not only affected business and economic sectors but has also expanded into social, religious, and mental health services. The phenomenon of digital da'wah and digital-based counseling has emerged in

line with advancements in multi-platform communication technologies that provide diverse information, allowing religious messages and counseling services to spread more quickly and reach a wider audience. Da'wah, which functions as a medium for spreading religious teachings, and counseling, which serves as a form of mental health service, have now transformed into digital formats to broaden their reach and enhance their effectiveness. This shift introduces new perspectives, facilitates accessibility, and opens up opportunities to engage audiences that were previously difficult to reach through traditional methods.

Since guidance and counseling services are process-oriented, their effectiveness must be evaluated. Essentially, the purpose of evaluation is to provide feedback or assessment based on specific criteria. Evaluation is conducted to review and improve both guidance programs and educational programs in general. Through evaluation, it can be determined whether the designed guidance and counseling programs truly have an impact or produce meaningful outcomes for students. Furthermore, the effectiveness and efficiency of the programs are important considerations in the evaluation process.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, aiming to provide an in-depth overview of the evaluation of digital da'wah and counseling programs, along with their effectiveness, challenges, and development opportunities. This method was chosen due to the study's focus on conceptual understanding and literature analysis, which seeks to generate comprehensive insights into the implementation and evaluation of digital services in the fields of da'wah and counseling.

DISCUSSION

Evaluation of Digital Da'wah and Counseling Understanding Evaluation in Digital Da'wah and Counseling

1. Definition of Evaluation as a Systematic Process for Assessing Program Effectiveness

Gibson and Mitchell emphasize that the core of guidance and counseling services lies in the counseling program itself. Meanwhile, Ronlund and Linn explain that evaluation is a systematic process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting information to determine the extent to which learning objectives have been achieved. In other words, evaluation is conducted to assess the level of success learners attain in meeting established goals, as well as to measure the effectiveness of specific programs or activities.

According to Cronbach and Stufflebeam, program evaluation aims to provide information that serves as a basis for decision-making. This means that assessment focuses on the condition of a program by referring to applicable standards and evaluation criteria within the framework of a comprehensive guidance and counseling (BK) program.

In general, program evaluation is the process of gathering information, analyzing it, and assessing the plan, objectives, effectiveness, benefits, and alignment of the program with predetermined criteria. In the school context, the evaluation of guidance and counseling programs serves to determine the extent to which these services have been implemented in accordance with their intended goals.

Several experts have also offered their perspectives on evaluation, including:

- a. Lessinger states that evaluation is the process of assessing by comparing the expected objectives with the actual results achieved.

- b. Wiyong views evaluation as an effort to obtain useful information to support decision-making.
- c. Gibson and Mitchell emphasize that evaluation is the process of aligning data from the beginning to the end of program implementation as a basis for assessing goal attainment.
- d. Stufflebeam describes evaluation as an effort to provide relevant data and information for decision-making.

Overall, evaluation can be understood as a comprehensive and continuous process of data collection aimed at assessing the effectiveness of actions, the direction of development, and the outcomes achieved by students during the implementation of a program.

2. Purpose of Evaluation: Enhancing the Quality, Effectiveness, and Impact of Services

In general, the evaluation of the implementation of guidance and counseling programs aims to:

- a. Identify the development of both the guidance and counseling program and the participants who have received the services.
- b. Assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the strategies used in implementing the guidance and counseling program over a specific period.

Operationally, the evaluation of guidance and counseling program implementation has the following objectives:

- a. Conduct periodic reviews of the results of guidance and counseling program implementation.
- b. Assess the level of efficiency and effectiveness of the guidance and counseling services.
- c. Identify the types of services that have been carried out, those that have not yet been implemented, and those that need improvement and further development.
- d. Measure the extent to which guidance and counseling programs contribute to achieving general educational objectives as well as more specific instructional objectives (general instructional objectives (TIU) and specific instructional objectives (TIK).

Indicators of Success in Digital Da'wah

In today's rapidly evolving digital era, the methods and scope of Islamic da'wah have undergone major transformations. Da'wah is no longer limited to face-to-face gatherings in mosques or religious study circles but has expanded to various digital platforms such as social media, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. However, the success of digital da'wah cannot be measured solely by numerical data; it must also be assessed through the quality of interaction and the real impact on changes in the audience's behavior and understanding.

1. Quantitative Indicators: Views, Likes, Shares, Comments, Followers/Subscribers

Quantitative indicators in digital da'wah refer to numerical and statistical measures that reflect the level of reach and audience engagement with the delivered content. Examples include the number of video views, likes, shares, comments, and the count of followers or subscribers across various social media platforms. Such data are essential for determining how far da'wah messages have spread and how engaged the audience is. However, quantitative measurement focuses primarily on numerical reach and does not necessarily capture the quality or actual impact of da'wah on the audience's attitudes and understanding at a deeper level.

2. Qualitative Indicators: Changes in Perception, Religious Understanding, Audience Engagement in Discussions or Real Actions

On the other hand, qualitative indicators emphasize the meaningful and profound impact experienced by the audience. These indicators focus on changes in understanding and religious perception after receiving digital da'wah. Examples

include increased religious knowledge, the development of positive attitudes toward Islamic teachings, and active participation in discussions or real-life actions inspired by da'wah messages. This qualitative approach is crucial to assess the extent to which da'wah can foster positive behavioral and attitudinal change, something that cannot be adequately represented by statistical data alone.

Indicators of Success in Digital Counseling

Digital counseling is an innovative form of counseling service that utilizes online technology to reach clients. Its level of success can be assessed through several key indicators, namely:

1. Client Functionality After the Counseling Service.

The success of digital counseling can be evaluated by observing the client's ability to apply the insights or solutions gained during the sessions to their daily life after the counseling process concludes. If there are positive changes in the client's way of thinking, attitudes, and behaviors—resulting in a healthier and more productive lifestyle—the service can be considered successful. This indicates that digital counseling is not merely a medium of communication but also produces tangible impacts on the client's growth and well-being.

2. Client Satisfaction with the Digital Counseling Process

Client satisfaction is one of the primary indicators reflecting the quality of the digital counseling experience.

Factors such as the ease of accessing the service, smooth communication, the preservation of safety and privacy, and the counselor's responsiveness and appropriateness in addressing client needs significantly influence satisfaction levels. Clients who feel satisfied tend to be more open, cooperative, and motivated to continue the counseling process consistently.

3. Communication Quality and Continuity of the Counselor-Client Relationship

The success of digital counseling is highly influenced by the quality of communication between the counselor and the client. A relationship built on trust, openness, and effective interaction fosters a strong professional bond, allowing the counseling process to run smoothly. The continuity of this relationship is essential for maintaining service consistency, providing ongoing support, and facilitating the monitoring of the client's progress.

Challenges in Evaluating Digital Counseling Services

Guidance and counseling services have undergone a dramatic transformation in today's digital era, becoming more accessible through reliable online platforms. Although technology offers vast potential, evaluating these digital services presents numerous difficulties. To ensure quality, effectiveness, and sustainability, efficient evaluation procedures are essential. In reality, various ethical, social, and technical obstacles hinder comprehensive and accurate assessments. Therefore, one of the most crucial initial steps toward improving digital counseling and guidance services sustainably is to understand the main challenges in evaluating such services.

1. Digital Literacy Gap Between Counselors and Clients

The ability of clients and counselors to use digital technology varies, creating what is known as the "digital literacy gap." Many clients and counselors still lack experience in digital counseling programs, leading to suboptimal service delivery. This gap complicates both the implementation and evaluation of digital services. Digital literacy training and the integration of face-to-face and virtual counseling models are potential solutions to ensure equitable and effective access for all users.

2. Limited Technological Infrastructure and Internet Access

One of the greatest barriers to digital guidance and counseling services is the lack of stable internet connections and adequate

technological infrastructure. Many regions, especially remote areas, suffer from unreliable internet access and limited availability of suitable technology. This issue disrupts counseling sessions and data collection processes, making it difficult to conduct digital assessments efficiently. Consequently, counseling services cannot function effectively or evenly across all regions.

3. **Data Security and User Privacy** In digital counseling services, user privacy and data security are of utmost importance. Counselors must employ encryption technologies and strict security measures to protect clients' personal information, including session recordings and counseling notes. These precautions aim to prevent data breaches that could harm clients and undermine trust in the therapeutic process. Counselors must also adhere to ethical guidelines regarding confidentiality and clearly communicate privacy assurances to clients at every stage of the counseling process.
4. **Difficulty in Building Empathy and Reading Nonverbal Communication** Counselors conducting digital sessions often face challenges in interpreting nonverbal cues—such as body language and facial expressions—that usually convey clients' emotions. As a result, developing empathy and emotional connection becomes more difficult compared to in-person counseling. To ensure clients feel heard and understood, counselors must optimize verbal communication and continuously adjust their methods to foster empathy in virtual settings.
5. **Lack of Support and Understanding from the Surrounding Environment** The effectiveness of digital counseling services depends heavily on the support of the community, schools, and families. However, limited awareness of the benefits of digital counseling often leads to low levels of support and engagement. This lack of understanding ultimately hampers both the effectiveness and evaluation of digital counseling services.

CONCLUSION

The rapid advancement of digital technology and the internet has significantly transformed patterns of communication and social interaction, including in the fields of da'wah and counseling. This transformation enables da'wah and counseling services to be delivered digitally, reaching a wider audience and providing greater accessibility. However, the effectiveness of such programs must be continuously and systematically evaluated to ensure that service quality is maintained and that the programs generate positive impacts.

The evaluation of digital da'wah and counseling programs is a systematic process aimed at assessing their effectiveness, efficiency, and overall impact. Evaluation involves collecting quantitative data, such as the number of views and audience interactions, as well as qualitative data, including changes in attitudes, understanding, and audience engagement. The success of digital counseling can be seen through positive client changes, satisfaction during the counseling process, and the quality of communication between counselor and client. Nevertheless, various challenges persist in digital services, such as digital literacy gaps, technological and infrastructural limitations, data security concerns, difficulties in establishing empathic communication, and a lack of environmental or community support. These challenges must be addressed to ensure that programs remain sustainable and effective.

Through thorough and continuous evaluation, digital da'wah and counseling programs can be further developed to maximize their benefits and reach. The optimal use of digital technology presents great opportunities to enhance the quality of religious and mental health services within society. Therefore, integrated planning, implementation, and evaluation—supported by all

stakeholders—are essential to overcome these challenges and ensure the success of digital da'wah and counseling initiatives.

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