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Developing a Mental Health Counseling E-book to Improve Student Mental Health

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ABSTRACT: The mental health of university students is a crucial aspect that contributes to their academic success and psychological well-being. However, many students experience academic, social, and emotional pressures that may trigger mental health disorders such as stress, anxiety, and depression. Unfortunately, limited access to counseling services and the negative stigma surrounding mental health discourage many students from seeking help. Therefore, innovative solutions are needed to support student mental health in a more accessible and effective manner. This study aims to develop and evaluate the effectiveness of a mental health counseling e-book for university students. The research employs the ADDIE (Analysis, Development, Implementation, and development model, involving 417 students from the State Islamic University of North Sumatra. Data collection was conducted using a Likert-scale questionnaire to measure students' mental health before and after the e-book intervention. The findings indicate that the developed e-book meets the content and design feasibility standards, with percentages of 68.73% and 88.52%, respectively, and was deemed highly suitable by experts. The Wilcoxon statistical test revealed a significant improvement in students' mental health levels following the use of the e-book, with an Asymp. Sig value of 0.000 (p < 0.05). Thus, the e-book has proven to be an effective tool in helping students manage their mental health. This study recommends the utilization of e-books as a supplementary counseling medium in higher education institutions to enhance students' psychological well-being.

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INTRODUCTION

Optimal mental health encompasses a balance of emotions, thoughts, and behaviors that enable individuals to face life's challenges positively. Individuals with good mental health can manage stress, adapt to change, and maintain healthy social relationships (Lawrance et al., 2022). Optimal mental health allows individuals to think clearly, make wise decisions, and experience satisfaction and meaning in life (Lucas & Moore, 2020). Therefore, it is crucial to create an environment that supports mental health within families, schools, and communities to foster emotional and psychological well-being.

University students are individuals who excel not only in academics but also in maintaining balance in their social, emotional, and psychological lives. They must possess the skills to handle academic pressures without compromising their mental well-being. Students also need high self-awareness, the ability to recognize and manage emotions, and the capacity to seek support when facing problems (Burhaein, 2023). Good mental health enables students to develop into independent, resilient individuals who are prepared to face challenges in the professional world after graduation (Sulaiman, 2021).

Mental health is a crucial aspect of overall well-being. However, in many developing countries, mental health issues are not prioritized compared to infectious diseases (Aprianto & Rahman, 2021). In fact, mental health remains one of the most neglected areas of public health, with nearly 1 billion people living with mental disorders, 3 million people dying each year due to harmful alcohol consumption, and one person dying by suicide every 40 seconds (Ridlo, 2020).

Mental health regulations and policies in Indonesia continue to face significant gaps in service coverage and accessibility. Mental health reflects an individual's well-being and psychological stress and plays a vital role in life (Putri et al., 2022). Individuals with good mental health tend to be happier (Sarmini et al., 2023). WHO statistics indicate that 450 million people worldwide experience mental disorders, with the highest depression rate in India (4.5%) and the lowest in the Maldives (3.7%). In Indonesia, the prevalence of mental disorders reaches 3.7% (9,162,886 cases), highlighting the significance of this issue (Nabila et al., 2023). Limited access to mental health services and persistent societal stigma exacerbates the impact of these disorders. Suranata et al. (2021) state that good mental health is closely related to psychological well-being, while Karisma et al. (2023) suggest that individuals with poor mental health are more vulnerable to stress and anxiety.

University students worldwide, including those in the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Asia-Pacific region, face increasing mental health disorders, primarily due to the challenges of online learning. Studies indicate that online learning, social isolation, and pandemic-related uncertainties trigger anxiety, stress, and depression among students (Son et al., 2020). Research also highlights the severe impact of mental health disorders, including rising suicide rates. A study by Krisdianto & Mulyanti (2015) found suicide cases in universities linked to final thesis pressures. In the United States, one in ten students considers suicide each year due to stress (Hartley, 2011). Another study reports that 12-18% of students are diagnosed with psychiatric disorders (Mowbray et al., 2006).

In Indonesia, a study at Ahmad Dahlan University examined depression levels among final-year students, revealing that mild depressive symptoms were the most prevalent (29.58%), while severe depression had a prevalence of 5.63% (Khufa & Murinto, 2024). These findings indicate that while most students experience mild depressive symptoms, there is a group that requires special attention in managing severe depression. This data provides valuable insights into the mental health conditions of final-year students who frequently face academic pressure and future career preparations.

Mental health disorders among university students have become an increasingly concerning phenomenon. Data show that one in three students experiences issues such as anxiety, depression, or stress, often triggered by academic pressures, new social environments, and growing life responsibilities (Fauziah, 2014). The effects of these disorders are not only emotional but also impact academic performance, as students struggle with concentration, declining motivation, and difficulties completing assignments on time (Djoar & Anggarani, 2024). Despite the high prevalence of these disorders, many students hesitate to seek help due to a lack of awareness, fear of stigma, and limited access to mental health services. Surveys indicate that 60% of students experiencing mental health issues do not receive professional support (Oetomo & Alfian, 2024). This phenomenon is particularly pronounced among first-year students, as the transition from high school to university increases the risk of mental health disorders.

The advancement of technology, including mental health applications and e-books, has emerged as an alternative solution (Atsani &

Anjari, 2023). These technologies enable students to access information and assistance more easily, helping them manage stress and mental disorders while guiding them toward face-to-face counseling services.

E-books are digital versions of books accessible through electronic devices such as computers, tablets, or smartphones. Typically, available in formats like PDF, ePub, or Mobi, e-books offer greater flexibility than printed books, allowing readers to access content anytime and anywhere without carrying physical copies. In the context of mental health, e-books can serve as effective tools for providing information, guidance, and support to students. This phenomenon underscores the importance of raising awareness of mental health among students and developing more accessible resources to help them navigate these challenges.

In the mental health context, e-books can be effective tools for delivering information, guidance, and support to students. The development of mental health-based e-books follows the ADDIE model, which has proven effective in digital learning product development across various contexts. This model comprises the stages of Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation, enabling the systematic creation of content tailored to users' needs. The use of e-books in education and counseling is expected to help students become more aware of the importance of mental health and gain easier access to resources that support their psychological well-being.

METHOD

This study employs the ADDIE development model, which consists of five stages: Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation. The primary objective of this research is to develop a mental health counseling e-book that assists students in overcoming mental health disorders. The study involves 417 students from the State Islamic University of North Sumatra, representing various departments, including Islamic Guidance and Counseling (BPI), Islamic Educational Counseling (BKPI), and Islamic Religious Education (PAI).

Data collection was conducted through a Likert-scale questionnaire distributed online via Google Forms. The e-book content was developed based on a needs analysis of students, covering mental health indicators such as biological, psychological, social, economic, and religious aspects. After implementation, the e-book was assessed for its impact on students'

mental health through content and visual feasibility tests evaluated by experts and stakeholders.

Evaluation was carried out using data analysis with SPSS software to measure the differences before and after the use of the e-book. SPSS was chosen due to its efficiency and speed in processing and analyzing the data collected in this study.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This research resulted in a mental health counseling e-book designed to help students enhance their psychological well-being. The development process utilized the ADDIE model (Analyze, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation), focusing on relevant content structuring and engaging visual design.

Experts evaluated the feasibility of the e-book in terms of both content and presentation. According to the evaluation results, the e-book content was deemed feasible with a score of 68.73%, while the visual aspect received a highly feasible rating of 88.52%. This finding aligns with Magdalena et al. (2024), who emphasize that instructional material design should support user engagement and learning effectiveness. The Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (W) test also demonstrated a significant alignment among experts, with Kendall's values of 0.032 for content and 0.028 for presentation, confirming the e-book's appropriateness for student use.

The e-book was also rated highly in terms of usability by lecturers and university counselors, receiving an approval rate of 81.7%. Further statistical tests indicated a significant difference in assessments between lecturers and counselors (Kendall's value of 0.072), reflecting variations in the e-book's application. The e-book is not only user-friendly for students but also provides flexible access, allowing them to learn anytime and anywhere.

The effectiveness of the e-book was demonstrated by a reduction in mental health disorders among 417 students, with 26.6% showing a significant decrease and 51.1% classified within the moderate category. This effectiveness also includes an improvement in student resilience, enabling them to adapt to stress and challenges. The mental health counseling e-book has been proven to be valid, practical, and effective in assisting students in overcoming mental health issues. Its accessibility and easy-to-understand

content make it a valuable tool for lecturers and counselors in promoting students' psychological well-being.

The ability to adapt to stress and difficulties, known as resilience, can be enhanced through structured interventions, including counseling and education (Mashudi, 2016). A valid, practical, and effective mental health counseling e-book can serve as an intervention tool supporting students in addressing mental health issues, improving adaptability, and strengthening resilience. Its accessibility and comprehensibility make the e-book relevant in enhancing psychological well-being within higher education settings.

A study conducted on 417 students at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra from the BPI (Islamic Guidance and Counseling), BKPI (Islamic Educational Counseling), and PAI (Islamic Religious Education) departments revealed significant findings.

Interval Skor	f	%	Category
≥141	25	6,0	Very High (VH)
114 140	168	40,3	High (H)
87 113	153	36,7	Moderate (M)
60 86	71	17,0	Low (L)
≤ 59	0	0,0	Very Low (VL)
Sum	417	100	High (H)

Table 1. Rekapitulasi Kesehatan Mental Mahasiswa Secara Umum

In research on university students' mental health, it was found that the majority of respondents experienced mental disorders at a fairly serious level. A total of 17.0% of students, or 71 individuals, fell into the low category. However, this number increased significantly in the moderate category, with 36.7% or 153 students. Surprisingly, 40.3% or 168 individuals were recorded in the high category, while 6.0% of students were classified in the very high category.

From the questionnaire results, biological indicators showed that 10 students (2.40%) were in the very low category, 97 students (23.26%) in the low category, 131 students (31.41%) in the moderate category, 140 students (33.57%) in the high category, and 39 students (9.35%) in the very high category. In conclusion, mental health disorders among students are generally at a high level, necessitating reduction efforts to prevent an increase to the very high category through the use of the Mental Health e-book.

Regarding social indicators, mental health disorders in the very high category were experienced by 25 students (6.00%) and in the high category by 161 students (38.61%). This highlights the need for further exploration of social aspects within the e-book.

Table 2. Results of Kendall's Coefficient of Concordance (W) Test on Content Feasibility Assessment by Experts

N	Kendall's Wa	Chi-Square	Asymp. Sig	Df
10	0,346	6,914	0,032	2

The chi-square value of 6.914 with an Asymp. Sig of 0.032 indicates that there was no significant difference in the assessments of the three experts regarding the mental health counseling e-book design. The three experts provided consistent evaluations, meaning the e-book design was considered aligned and met the established standards. Thus, the experts agreed that the e-book design is suitable for implementation as it fulfills feasibility criteria in terms of appearance, structure, and functionality.

After conducting the effectiveness test of the mental health counseling e-book, students were given a mental health instrument (posttest). The analysis focused on the distribution of data before and after (pretest and post-test) the provision of the mental health e-book to 417 students at the State Islamic University of North Sumatra.

Table 3. Distribution Results of the Mental Health Instrument Before and After the E-book Intervention

Calagory	Interval –	Pre-T	Pre-Test		Posttest	
Category	intervai	f	%	f	%	
Very High (VH)	≥141	12	2,9	0	0,0	
High (H)	114 140	181	43,4	111	26,6	
Moderate (M)	87 113	153	36,7	213	51,1	
Low (L)	60 86	71	17,0	93	22,3	
Very Low (VL)	≤ 59	0	0,0	0	0,0	
Sum		417	100	417	100	

The improvement in students' mental health after using the e-book is evident. Before the e-book intervention, 43.4% of students were in the high category (181 individuals), and 2.9% (12 individuals) were in the very high category. After using the e-book, mental health disorders in the very high category dropped to 0%, and the high category decreased to 26.6% (111 individuals). These data prove that the e-book is effective in reducing students' mental health disorders.

Table 4. Wilcoxon Non-Parametric Test Results Before and After the Mental Health Counseling E-book Intervention

		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Post-test	Negative ranks	160a	162,05	25928,50
Pre-test	Positive ranks	108^{b}	93,68	10117,50
	Ties	149^{c}		
	Total	417		

Following the e-book intervention, there was a decrease in students' mental health disorders, as indicated by a negative rank value of 160a. On the other hand, the positive rank value of 108b signifies an improvement for some students. Meanwhile, the ties value of 149c suggests that some students had the same results between the pre-test and post-test.

Additionally, the positive rank value of 108b indicates that some students experienced improvement, possibly due to increased motivation to understand and apply the e-book material more deeply. This is supported by Pustikayasa et al (2023), who stated that the use of e-books not only provides ease of access but also motivates users to be more actively involved in the learning process, particularly in the context of mental health.

The ties value of 149c, which indicates no change for some students, suggests that e-book-based interventions may require adaptation or additional guidance for certain individuals. This implies that using technology as an intervention medium should be complemented with other services, such as consultation sessions, to optimize outcomes for all users.

These findings confirm that while e-books are effective for most students, it is crucial to consider individual factors in technology-based approaches to mental health.

Table 5. Mental Health Significance Test Test Statisticsa

(2 tailed)

	Post-test pre-test
Z	6.280b
Asymp. Sig.	,000

Since the Asymp. Sig value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, this indicates a significant change in students' mental health levels before and after reading the mental health counseling e-book.

The utilization of the mental health counseling e-book in this study demonstrates its effectiveness as an innovative solution in supporting

students' mental well-being. The research findings prove that the e-book not only provides easy access to relevant information and guidance but also helps students independently manage mental health disorders. This technology allows students to access materials anytime, anywhere, making it a practical choice in the digital era.

Support for the use of e-books is further reinforced by various literature (Safitri et al., 2024). Technology such as e-books offers high flexibility, allowing users to access information without spatial and temporal constraints. This is particularly relevant for students who often face time limitations in seeking direct mental health services. Furthermore, Amrina and Rahmi (2024) explained that e-books can enhance user engagement through interactive content while providing a sense of comfort for readers to learn and seek solutions independently.

The observed reduction in mental health disorders among students after using this e-book confirms that digital media can be an effective intervention tool. Beyond its flexibility, e-books also offer a personalized and adaptive experience, enabling students to understand and manage their conditions without external pressure (Afriyani et al., 2024). Thus, this e-book can become an integral part of a multifaceted approach to mental health services, supporting students' coping skills development while raising their awareness of the importance of mental health.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that the mental health counseling e-book for students is feasible and can be used as a supporting medium for mental health. This product is accepted as a tool that not only provides information but also motivates students to learn independently and seek counselor assistance if they experience mental health problems.

Stakeholders, including parents and counselors, can also utilize this e-book. Parents may use it as a guide to understand student mental health issues and offer better emotional support. Meanwhile, counselors can integrate the e-book into counseling sessions as a reference or discussion material. Additionally, this e-book can be employed in workshops or training sessions to raise mental health awareness on campus.

Although this product is deemed viable, further research is necessary to evaluate its effectiveness at other educational levels, such as secondary schools or vocational education. Developing interactive features such as videos, quizzes, or simulations may also enhance user engagement. Moreover, future research could investigate the long-term impact of the e-book on students' mindsets, habits, and stress levels. With further development, this e-book is expected to contribute more significantly as an innovative medium in supporting student mental health.

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