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Youth Empowerment Program Based on Digital Leaflet to Improve Help-Seeking Behavior Related to Mental Health Issues Among Students



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Abstract

Mental health problems among adolescents have become a growing global concern. This study aims to examine the effectiveness of a youth empowerment program using digital leaflets to improve help-seeking behavior related to mental health issues among students. Technological advancements and the widespread use of digital media among adolescents provide new opportunities to address these issues. Digital media can effectively reach adolescents and other target groups within their communities. This study focused on the 'One Group Pretest-Post Test Design' framework which employs a quantitative technique and uses a quasi-experimental design. This framework was able to determine whether or not there was any impact from the intervention. Using a pretest-posttest design with 312 students, statistical analysis showed a significant increase in help-seeking behavior after the digital leaflet intervention. The resulting significance level (p-value) was 0.000, which is significantly lower than the 0.05 significance level (α). This indicates that the difference in mean scores between the pretest and posttest did not occur by chance but is a real effect of the empowerment program. These findings suggest that digital media can be an effective tool for mental health education among adolescents.

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INTRODUCTION

Problems with the mental health of youth have become an increasing international concern. Worldwide, 1 in 7 adolescents, aged 10–19 years, live with a mental health disorder, although most cases are undiagnosed and untreated ([Man et al., 2022](#)). The prevalence of mental and emotional disorders in Indonesia has increased in recent years. According to the Indonesian Ministry of Health, the prevalence of schizophrenia reached 1.356% in 2023, higher than the global average of 0.650% Indonesia Ministry of Health, and mental disorders at 0.3–0.44 against Indonesia Ministry of Health (16) 9.8% ([Yosep et al., 2023](#)). Adolescents, as a susceptible group, are confronted with particular problems; such as excessive study pressure, cyberbullying on the internet, and the accelerated pace of social change, which can result in mental health problems ([Bansal et al., 2023](#)).

One of the key barriers to addressing this problem is the underutilization of support by adolescents ([Ngo et al., 2021](#)). Many adolescents are less likely to ask for help from professionals or to disclose their problems to others because of stigma ([Park et al., 2020](#)), poor mental health literacy and insufficient confidence in existing services ([Huang et al., 2023](#)). studies have shown that many youngsters prefer to cope with their problems alone, or find information from unaccredited sources ([Gohal et al., 2023](#)), such as the internet and social media, exacerbating their condition ([Suraseth & Koraneekij, 2024](#)).

Technological progression and digital media saturation in the lives of adolescents provide avenues for addressing these issues anew. Reaching adolescents (and other target groups) in their communities via digital media (eg, digital leaflets) is a timely and efficacious method. Compared to regular print media, digital leaflets are able to achieve wide and interactive dissemination across different digital communities (e.g., WhatsApp, Instagram, and school e-learning platforms), and are therefore ideal instruments for mental health education and promotion ([Cassidy et al., 2017](#)). By providing attractive, user-friendly content, the digital leaflets could enhance mental health literacy and reduce stigma ([Mulloy et al., 2010](#)) and, in this manner, promote young people's motivation to ask for help ([M et al., 2024](#)).

Due to the urgency of the issue, this research was conducted on "Development and Implementation of Digital Leaflet Based Youth

Empowerment Program for Improved Youth Help-Seeking Behavior for Mental Health Problems in students of MAN 2 Kota Kediri. A consideration was first evidence from surveys indicating that most students at the school tend to keep their issues to themselves, and limited presence of mental health curricula ([Park et al., 2020](#)). It is expected that mental health literacy will increase, and stigma barriers will be lowered, while classroom and help-seeking behaviors are enhanced, through this program ([Fossum et al., 2023](#)). This research will evaluate the degree to which the program is effective, as well as its universal application, as an intervention program in education ([Yosep et al., 2023](#)).

METHODS

This study focused on the 'One Group Pretest-Post Test Design' framework which employs a quantitative technique and uses a quasi-experimental design ([Ferreira et al., 2016](#)). This framework was able to determine whether or not there was any impact from the intervention. This design requires every respondent to be administered an initial test that is later followed by an intervention and is subsequently checked again to analyze and determine the amount of change that has occurred. The study population was all students at State Islamic Senior High School (MAN) 2 in Kediri City. The sample was drawn using purposive sampling. The number of respondents in this study was 312 students.

Digital Leaflet-Based Youth Empowerment Program become Independent Variable. This program consists of a series of educational materials on mental health, stigma, the importance of seeking help, and ways to get help, presented in digital leaflet format. Help-Seeking Behavior Related to Mental Health Issues become Dependent Variable ([Predescu & Calugar, 2024](#)). This variable was measured using a questionnaire developed based on relevant theory and literature, covering dimensions such as intention to seek help, knowledge of sources of help, and actual actions in seeking help ([Alturif & Alsand, 2024](#)).



The instrument used in this study was a structured questionnaire that measured help-seeking behavior related to mental health issues. The questionnaire consisted of several sections, including respondent demographic data and a series

of Likert-type statements to measure levels of help-seeking behavior. Prior to use, the questionnaire underwent validity and reliability testing.

Pre-test Phase: All 312 respondents completed a pre-test questionnaire to measure baseline levels of help-seeking behavior related to mental health issues. The questionnaire was completed online.

Intervention Phase: Respondents were given access to a digital leaflet containing educational materials for two weeks. Respondents could access the materials anytime and anywhere. During this period, researchers also facilitated Q&A sessions or limited discussions through the digital platform, as needed. **Posttest Stage:** After the intervention period was completed, respondents completed the same questionnaire again (posttest) to measure changes in help-seeking behavior after exposure to the digital leaflet material.

Inferential analysis used a paired sample t-test to compare the difference in mean scores of help-seeking behaviors before (pretest) and after (posttest) the intervention. The paired t-test was chosen because the data came from a single group of subjects measured twice (Thornberg et al., 2022). The t-test requirement, namely data normality, will be tested using the Shapiro-Wilk or Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

RESULTS

Table 1. Paired Samples Statistics

		Paired Samples Statistics			
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	HSB Pretest	37.7724	312	5.66561	.32075
	HSB Posttest	46.4551	312	3.92099	.22198

Based on the Paired Samples Statistics table, it can be seen that there is a difference in the average score between the measurements before (pretest) and after (posttest) the intervention. In the pretest, the average score for help-seeking behavior was 37.77 with a standard deviation of 5.67. After the intervention, namely in the posttest, the average score increased significantly to 46.4551 with a standard deviation of 3.92099. This increase in the

average score indicates a positive change in help-seeking behavior among respondents after they participated in the empowerment program. The decrease in the standard deviation in the posttest also indicates that the distribution of data has become more homogeneous or more clustered around the average value, indicating that the intervention has a more consistent effect on all respondents.

Table 2. Paired Samples Test

		Paired Samples Test					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Paired Differences			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	HSB Pretest – HSB Posttest	-8.682	2.60940	.14773	-8.97337	-8.39202	-58.775	311	.000

Based on the Paired Samples Test table, the paired t-test results indicate a highly significant difference between help-seeking behavior scores before and after the intervention. The mean difference (MED) was -8.68269. This negative value confirms a substantial increase in scores in the posttest compared to the pretest. The calculated t-value was -58.775 with 311 degrees of freedom (df).

The resulting significance level (p-value) was 0.000, which is significantly lower than the 0.05 significance level (α). This indicates that the difference in mean scores between the pretest and posttest did not occur by chance but is a real effect of the empowerment program. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H1) is accepted. The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference ranges from -8.97337 to -8.39202. Because this interval does not include zero, it further strengthens the conclusion that the intervention had a significant and positive effect.

DISCUSSION

The results of this community service are in line with several previous theories and studies that support the use of technology-based interventions for mental health promotion, especially among adolescents. Social Learning Theory Bandura states that individuals learn from their environment through observation and imitation (Lin et al., 2020), as well as through direct experience (Alturif & Alsand, 2024). The digital leaflet program used in this study served as an effective learning medium. Through the digital leaflet, students could obtain information, see examples of positive behaviors related to seeking help (Oliveira et al., 2024), and understand the consequences of those actions (Oliveira et al., 2024). The material presented visually and interactively can increase students' self-efficacy, which is their belief in their ability to successfully perform a behavior (Huang et al.,

2023). This increase in self-efficacy is a strong predictor of intention to seek help, as students feel more capable of overcoming potential obstacles (Sorrentino et al., 2023).

In the context of health communication, the use of digital media such as leaflets has the advantage of disseminating information widely and efficiently. This one-way communication model, while not directly interactive (Bansal et al., 2023), can provide crucial basic education about the importance of mental health and how to seek help. Digital leaflets eliminate geographical and time barriers, allowing students to access information anytime and anywhere (Li et al., 2022). This is particularly relevant for often stigmatized mental health issues, where students may feel more comfortable accessing information privately without the need for face-to-face interaction (Brighi et al., 2019).

Increased help-seeking behavior after an intervention can also be explained through behavior change models, such as the Transtheoretical Model (Winstone et al., 2024). This empowerment program can help students move from the pre-contemplation stage (unawareness of the problem) or contemplation stage (starting to think about the problem) to the preparation or action stage (having intention and taking concrete steps). The material in the digital leaflet provides knowledge, breaks down stigma, and provides the resources needed to motivate students to move toward healthier behavior changes (Garandeanu et al., 2022).

Overall, these findings strengthen the evidence that technology-based interventions, such as digital leaflets, are a promising strategy for addressing mental health issues among adolescents (Aldrup et al., 2022). Their effectiveness lies in their ability to convey important information concisely and easily accessible (Marraccini et al., 2022), and to encourage positive behavior change in accordance with the principles of learning and

communication theory (Alturif & Alsand, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Based on the entire series of activities and evaluation results, the Digital Leaflet-Based Youth Empowerment Program and evaluation results presented, the Digital Leaflet-Based Youth Empowerment Program to Improve Help-Seeking Behavior related to Mental Health Issues among Students at MAN 2 Kota Kediri was successfully implemented and achieved its stated objectives. Several conclusions and recommendations were obtained. This program has proven effective in increasing students' understanding of mental health and encouraging them to be more proactive in seeking help. Quantitative data shows a clear increase in students' knowledge, while qualitative data confirms a positive change in attitudes toward help-seeking. The use of digital leaflets as an educational medium has proven highly relevant and effective in reaching a youth audience. The engaging, concise, and easily shareable visual format successfully bridges the gap between conventional educational methods and students' digital preferences. This program not only provides information but also empowers students themselves as agents of change. By training them to create content, the program has instilled digital skills and awareness that will serve as capital for the program's future independent sustainability.

SUGGESTION

Recommendations for Schools (MAN 2 Kediri City) Sustainable Program Integration: Schools, especially Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers, are advised to integrate this program into the school's annual agenda. This can be done by forming a mental health team or club that regularly publishes digital leaflets with new themes. This will ensure the availability of relevant information for all students. Optimizing Communication Channels: Schools can optimize the use of official digital platforms (social media accounts, school websites) as the primary means of disseminating mental health information. With full support from the school, messages will be more easily accepted and have high credibility. Providing Professional Support: In addition to digital campaigns, schools are advised to consider collaborating with psychologists or professional institutions to provide regular online or in-person counseling sessions. This will complement the

educational program with structured professional services.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflicts of interest related to this research. The authors have no financial or personal relationships that could influence the results and interpretation of the findings reported in this article.

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