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# New Media and Challenges of Islamic Counselors in Implementing Counseling in the New Normal Era

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#### **Abstract**

The New Normal era has created a new habit of doing various activities. Likewise with counseling activities which are usually carried out face-to-face and then change into the form of E-Counseling which conducts online counseling using the media as a means. This study aims to describe how the new media becomes an alternative in conducting counseling in the new normal era and how the challenges of Islamic counselors in conducting counseling in the New Normal Era. This research is a field research (Field Research) using a qualitative approach. The method used is descriptive analytical. Data collection used interviews with several alumni of Islamic Counseling Guidance who are currently practitioners in the E-Counseling Service Sahabat-ku. Interviews were also conducted with counselees who had conducted E-Counseling during the New Normal Era. Data analysis was carried out by means of reduction, presentation and conclusion. The results showed that the use of new media as a means of conducting counseling is an alternative that is quite beneficial for both counselors and counselees. Meanwhile, the challenges for Islamic counselors can be seen from two aspects. The first aspect of service is that Islamic counselors do not yet have full professional capacity and networks that are sometimes less stable. The second aspect of knowledge is that there is a need for improvement and training in the use of a more comprehensive technology to support E-Counseling services.

Keywords: New Media, Counselor's Challenge, Counseling, New Normal

## Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia is increasingly worrying with the increase in the number of people affected by up to 163 thousand people (*Jumlah Kasus Corona Idn - Penelusuran Google*, n.d.). Every day, the number of corona cases increases in Indonesia reaches almost 3 thousand people every day. Currently the corona virus in Indonesia has spread to at least 34 provinces and 485 districts / cities (*UPDATE Sebaran Virus Corona Indonesia Kamis* (27/8/2020), n.d.). This very alarming figure makes the government and all elements of society have to work together in order to decide the spread of this virus. As a result, all forms of activities are carried out in a limited manner and comply with health protocols. Among the preventive measures taken are maintaining distance and limiting physical interactions among humans as well as implementing new habit adaptations in every activity (New Normal) (Kementrian Kesehatan RI, 2020, p. 110).

The New Normal era or the adaptation of new habits is a change in humans currently experiencing. This adaptation is carried out as an effort to optimize various activities by changing behavior in life based on health protocols. The goal is to take steps to prevent the spread of the corona virus ("Kenormalan baru," 2020). Spokesperson for handling Covid-19 in Indonesia Achmad Yurianto said that the order, habits and behavior in the new normal era are more about how to cultivate a clean and healthy life and behavior (*Kementerian Kesehatan Republik Indonesia*, n.d.).

Changes in the New Normal Era do not only occur in changes in behavior, but also have an impact on changes in service methods such as counseling services. The most visible of these changes is a shift between the implementation of activities that are usually carried out face-to-face or offline and then most of them turn online (during). Likewise with Counseling services which should be done face-to-face then must be done online or known as E-Counseling. The implementation of online counseling is certainly inseparable from the use of new media as an effective counseling medium and allows for face-to-face and distance-free counseling.

New media is a digital-based communication technology that is computerized and connected to the internet network (Tosepu, 2018, p. 56). New

media has convergent characteristics and does not recognize space and time (Wahyuni, 2018, p. 1). New media can provide opportunities for anyone to be able to exchange information, discuss debates and everything else can be done separately but connected to each other (Liliweri, 2017, p. 285). The new media certainly demands that its implementers really know how to use it properly so that targets and goals can be achieved, including a counselor. Especially in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, the use of new media must really be done very effectively.

Research on counseling challenges has been discussed by several previous researchers, but still struggling with challenges in facing the industrial era 4.0, some of the results of these studies say that digital-based counseling services on every social media platform are very effective considering that they are currently used by millennials (Sarjun & Mawarni, 2019). Then the implementation of digital counseling is a challenge for counselors to continue to increase their capacity in providing services including increasing their knowledge of technology (Dianto & Putri, 2019). If we look in the context of Islamic counselors, further discussion is needed, because basically there are very striking differences between Islamic counselors and General Counselors both from the educational background and national associations. Therefore, this study aims to find out how the new media as an alternative for the implementation of counseling in the New Normal Era and how the challenges of Islamic counselors in conducting counseling in the New Normal Era

#### Method

This research is a field research (Field Research) using a qualitative approach. The method used is descriptive analytical. Data collection used interviews with nine alumni of Islamic Counseling Guidance who are currently practitioners in the E-Counseling Service My Friends and four counselees who have conducted E-Counseling during the New Normal Era. Data analysis was carried out by means of reduction, presentation and conclusion.

## Theoritical review

#### New Media

New media is a medium that is identified with the internet. Historically it can also be said that this new media emerged since the advent of the internet era. New media is also referred to as a computerized digital communication that is connected to the internet network (Tosepu, 2018, p. 54-55). New media capabilities that are supported by digital devices can provide access to anyone, anywhere and anytime. With the use of new media, each individual can also communicate actively, interactively and creatively in providing feedback between each other. Then with new media it can also form a new community through the content of new media (Liliweri, 2017, p. 284). Dennis Mcquail said that new media is characterized by the presence of interconnectivity, which is having a relationship between devices, can be accessed by anyone, provides opportunities for users to interact or is interactivity and has various uses depending on who uses it (Tosepu, 2018, p. 55).

John Vivian said that the existence of new media can go beyond the patterns of message dissemination carried out using traditional media such as blurring geographical boundaries, interaction capacity and can be done in real time (Nasrullah, 2016, pp. 13-14). On another occasion, Croteau and Hoynes detailed some of the benefits provided by new media, namely First, new media can change the meaning of geographical distance, distance does not become an obstacle for each individual to interact even with the sophistication offered now users can not only hear voices but also can see other individuals live with audio and video calls. The two new media allow for a massive increase in the volume of information, with the spread of several information media platforms to spread information more widely at the speed of internet access even for information only takes a few seconds to spread. The three communication and interactive speeds provided by new media make pauses or time saver, for example, before there was new media to send messages, we had to use postal or mail services while new media offered faster internet access. Individuals can also carry out interactive interactions at once without overlapping and can connect several people at once or interconnect (Liliweri, 2017, p. 284).

Judging from the characteristics and offers given by new media, new media is a very effective alternative to be used by individuals with various needs. McQuail as quoted by Novi Kurnia classifies new media into four groups, namely *First*, interpersonal communication media such as telephones, cellphones, e-mail. *Both* media play interactive like online games. *The three* media search for information such as google, online media that provide a lot of information based on search engines. *The four* media are collective participation, such as the use of new media to share, argue, exchange information, share experiences and others (Kurmia, 2005, p. 292–293). The complexity that is offered by new media is merely to facilitate individuals in accessing many things that are beneficial to themselves.

# E-Counseling Service

Basically, the implementation of Electronic Counseling (E-Counseling) uses the basic principles of counseling in general. Counseling by definition is a professional assistance provided by the counselor to the counselee individually or in groups based on theories so that the counselee can overcome weaknesses and obstacles in carrying out his development tasks optimally, independently and can live happily both independently, in a community, nation and state (Hartono, dkk, 2015, p. 30).

The definition of E-Counseling can be described in two basic forms of words, namely Electoric which has the origin of Electronica which is a branch of physics that studies the emission, behavior and impact of electrons and the tools that use them. While the meaning of Electronic itself is a thing or thing that uses tools that are formed or work on the basis of electronics (*Arti Kata Elektronik - Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) Online*, n.d.). So simply E-Counseling can be defined as a process of implementing counseling using electronic devices. Electronics as a system has a series of tools and procedures that serve to prepare, collect, process, analyze, store, display, announce, transmit and disseminate information (Maskun, 2014, p. 116). Not only here, the definition of E-Counseling is also inseparable from the use of internet access that is connected to the work system of electronic devices so that some of them often define E-Counseling directly as Online Counseling (Siradjuddin, 2017; Sudirman, 2020).

After we come to a clear definition of the purpose of Electronic Counseling, then we can define E-Counseling services as online counseling. This Vol. 11, No. 2, 2020

argument is based on the need for electronic devices for the internet network or called Online in order to access and perform services. Online in Indonesian is integrated into "Dalam Jaringan" (Daring), namely electronic devices connected to the internet network (Padanan Istilah Online Dan Offline? | Badan Pengembangan Dan Pembinaan Bahasa, Kementerian Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan, n.d.). So we can only say that E-Counseling is an online counseling because it is tied to an electronic device that must be connected to the network. The definition of online counseling is a virtual guidance and counseling strategy or takes place through the help of an internet connection. Online counseling is also often referred to as Cybercounseling (Rahmat, 2018, pp. 83-84; Siradjuddin, 2017, p. 50; Siradjuddin & Do Abdullah, 2019, p. 61; Sudirman, 2020, p. 88). So from the description above it can be concluded that what is meant by E-Counseling is a service providing assistance provided by an expert who is called a counselor to someone who is in need or is called a counselee by using an electronic device connected to the internet network with the aim that the counselee can overcome problems and be able to be independent and live happily.

Counseling services can be carried out with any internet-based media that allows the counselor to connect with the counselee interactively and can provide feedback between people. The media that can be used as a medium for counseling are communication and interaction-based media such as social media facebook, whatsaap, line, telegram, and the like. Other forms of online counseling can also be done in the form of a vent application, website, E-Mail, video conferencing, youtube and other innovative media (Rahmat, 2018, p. 84). With the use of internet-based media, any user will easily access counseling services anywhere and anytime. This is because the E-Counseling service is more flexible, effective, confidential, comfortable and affordable (Rahmat, 2018, p. 85).

Dede Rahmat said there are three stages in carrying out E-Counseling services, namely the *first* stage of preparation, which is the stage where everything is prepared including the availability of media and technical use and implementation of counseling services. *Second* stage of the process. Basically, the process of implementing E-Counseling is the same as face to face counseling, it's just that the media used is different. *The third* is Post-Counseling, which is the stage where the counselee is able to solve the problem and if it must be continued, the counselor and counselee will re-agree on the counseling schedule or also include the referral process if it is needed during the counseling process (Rahmat, 292

2018, pp. 86–87). Furthermore, Deder Rahmat said that there are several forms of activities in conducting E-Counseling which include marketing counseling services such as marketing, advertising and other promotions. Then the delivery of the counseling service itself, the provision of self-help material and the supervision and research needed to evaluate counselors and counselors who receive services in order to improve counseling services for the future (Rahmat, 2018, pp. 87–88).

#### Discussion

New media as an alternative in conducting Counseling in the New Normal Era

The development of the new media has reached a very progressive period. There are many media as a form of new media that have been successfully created by mankind, on the basis of utilizing the internet network. Not only social media, but the use of media has now expanded to transportation, tourist destinations, marketing, learning and information media. Including in this case, new media has begun to be used as a medium for conducting counseling services.

The Covid-19 pandemic has become an epidemic that is so dangerous with a very concerning spread that requires a new normal in carrying out various activities. New Normal is carried out with the aim of keeping people productive in the midst of a life threatening pandemic. All forms of action taken by individuals, communities and institutions must be carried out in a new way of life that is different from before. As for the New Normal, what is meant is like frequently washing hands with soap, wearing masks, maintaining distance, having adequate rest, exercising diligently and eating nutritious food (Theresia Irawati, n.d.). When viewed from a social perspective, new normal underlies behaviors that are direct interactions between humans such as shaking hands, cipika-cipiki and doing activities such as gathering. Likewise in other matters, such as the new normal business, transferring all forms of transactions that are usually done manually to digital by utilizing technology (Perdana et al., 2020, p. 202).

The New Normal era has also replaced various activities that are usually carried out directly into digital-based activities. The use of new media is an alternative for adapting to new habits. Apart from the fact that new media allows access without having to meet face to face, new media also facilitates access and Vol. 11, No. 2, 2020

provides a wider reach, including in counseling services. Online-based counseling services or also known as E-Counseling have become a very effective medium when viewed from the danger of the Covid-19 pandemic which has plagued all parts of Indonesia. E-counseling can be done without any risk of exposure to the virus because it is done online, that is, without direct contact with the client.

From the results of interviews conducted with nine alumni counselors of Islamic Guidance and Counseling who are currently contributing to E-Counseling services, my friend said that the implementation of E-Counseling in the New Normal Era is a very effective step, because considering there are so many risks. when counseling services are conducted face-to-face.

"E-counseling is of course very helpful for those who want to consult without having to meet face to face" (Interview with Sela Pebrianti, 3 September 2020), "making it easier for counselors to carry out their obligations, especially in a pandemic season like this" (Interview with M. Wafiq Firdaus Izmi Azis, 3 September 2020), so that the use of existing technology can be used for things that are one of them is E-Counseling" (Interview with Musdalifah, 3 September 2020). "Whether there is a pandemic or not, the use of technology has been intensively carried out, but the tips are felt to be beneficial in the midst of a pandemic because there are restrictions on direct interaction" (Interview With Melsani, 3 September 2020). "The use of E-Counseling services also puts more pressure on security and stay safe for the new normal era" (Interview With Abi Apriyadi, 3 September 2020). "E-Counseling services are also a form of compliance with health protocols by utilizing technological sophistication and can carry out communication in the form of consultation and counseling anywhere and anytime (Interview With Nurhasiah, 3 september 2020).

Not only that, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, various problems have arisen that require counseling. Problems in the form of anxiety to stress are created by pandemic conditions where all forms of activities are restricted because they are very dangerous for health and survival (Saputra, 2020).

Karena di masa pandemi dan era new normal, tentu ramai masyarakat yang merasa ketakutan, khawatir dan berakibat terganggunya kondisi fisik maupun psikis. Sehingga konseling sangat dibutuhkan untuk membantu mengatasi permasalahan tersebut. Namun, masyarakat masih harus mengikuti protokoler kesehatan. Salah satunya mengurangi interaksi secara langsung (Interview With Nona Nurfadhila, 3 September 2020).

"Because during the pandemic and the new normal era, of course many people feel afraid, worried and result in disruption of their physical and psychological conditions. So that counseling is needed to help overcome these problems. However, people still have to follow health protocols. One of them is reducing direct interaction."

The provision of counseling services through E-Counseling is quite influential in solving various problems experienced by the counselee as expressed by the E-Counseling Sahabat-Ku counselor who is also an alumni of Islamic Guidance and Counseling. However, there are a few limitations where counseling services use chat or audio calls. "Because it does not interact directly, the observation is some what less than optimal" (Interview Whith Abi Apriadi, 3 September 2020). In terms of implementation, all counselors say that all implementation processes which include the stages and techniques used are basically the same as the usual counseling, but the difference is only in the use of technology as a medium in conducting counseling. The effectiveness of E-Counseling services also has an impact on the counselees who have carried out counseling services. Three of the counselees said that the counseling services provided were very helpful (Interview With SA a counselee from Purwakarta, 4 september 2020), relieving (Interview With NS a counselee from Bandung, 4 September 2020) and comfortable (Interview With II a counselee from Tegal, 4 September 2020). ne in four counselees interviewed said that "counseling is a little less effective, it should also be done using a zoom application so that it can be face to face" (Interview With ST a counselee from Klaten, 4 September 2020).

From the results of the above discussion, it can be seen that new media is an alternative that is quite beneficial for counselors and counselees who carry out counseling services. Although new media is not too new, in the sense that it has been used long before the Covid-19 pandemic broke out, new media is increasingly effective, especially in the New Normal era which is being run by every human being.

The challenge of Islamic counselors in conducting counseling in the New Normal Era

A counselor in general can be defined as someone who has the skills of counseling and has an educational background related to the Guidance and

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Counseling disciplines. The demand of every counselor is to really understand the world of counseling so that they are able to solve problems with the counselee appropriately (Lumongga, 2014, p. 24). The characteristics of a counselor according to Sofya S Willis as quoted by Namora Lumongga include:

Beriman dan bertakwa, menyenangi manusia, komunikator yang terampil dan pendengar yang baik, memiliki ilmu dan wawasan tentang manusia, sosial budaya yang baik dan kompeten, fleksibel, tenang dan sabar, menguasai keterampilan teknik dan memiliki intuisi, memahami etika profesi, respek, jujur, asli, menghargai, dan tidak menilai, empati, memahami, menerima, hangat dan bersahabat, fasilitator dan motivato, emosi stabil, pikiran jernih, cepat dan mampu objektif, rasional, logis dan konkret serta memiliki sikap konsisten dan bertanggung jawab (Lumongga, 2014, pp. 30–31).

"Be faithful and pious, like humans, skilled communicators and good listeners, have knowledge and insight about humans, good and competent socio-culture, flexible, calm and patient, master technical skills and have intuition, understand professional ethics, respect, are honest, genuine, respectful and non-judgmental, empathetic, understanding, accepting, warm and friendly, facilitator and motivator, emotionally stable, clear minded, fast and capable of being objective, rational, logical and concrete and having a consistent and responsible attitude"

Different from counseling in general, the definition of an Islamic counselor certainly cannot be separated from the basis of Islam, namely the Al-Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. M. Fuad Anwar said that the figure of a counselor must be Muslim (Anwar, 2019, pp. 20–21). Not only that, the requirements to become an Islamic counselor must also be equipped with a background in Islamic counseling, seeing that there is the possibility of general counseling being carried out by anyone, not only Muslims. According to Tohari Musnamar, there are several personalities that an Islamic counselor must have, namely *Shiddiq*, *Amanah*, *Tabligh*, *Fathanah*, *Mukhlis*, *Sabar*, *Tawadlu*, *Saleh*, *Adil* and being able to control himself in maintaining the counselee's honor (Rizqiyah, n.d., p. 30). In addition, the criteria for an Islamic counselor as formulated by Maslina Daulay that an Islamic counselor must master the science of Islam, practice, be able to transfer religious principles, master counseling, have commendable morals and personality, master psychology internally(Daulay, 2015, p. 9). From several studies that have been investigated, there is no specific

background of Islamic counseling education as the basis for becoming an Islamic counselor. However, in terms of criteria, the content of material on Islamic Counseling is mostly obtained by those who are studying in the Islamic Guidance and Counseling Department. So those with basic education in Islamic Guidance and Counseling can be called Islamic counselors. This conclusion also does not rule out the adoption of those who come from the Guidance and Counseling department as long as they have criteria as Islamic counselors.

The challenges of Islamic counselors can be divided into two groups, namely challenges from the aspect of service and challenges from the aspect of knowledge.

First, the challenge from the service aspect can include the capacity of a counselor who is basically not a certified professional counselor. Although in counseling-based education, the counselor is taking education in Islamic Guidance and Counseling has not been able to take part in professional studies carried out by the Indonesian Guidance and Counseling Association (ABKIN) because one of the requirements to be able to take the profession is education at least bachelor degree (s1) Guidance and Counseling (Tehape, n.d.) which is usually found in The Teaching and Education Faculty (FKIP) and Counseling at the Tarbiyah Faculty at the Islamic Religious College (PTAI). The Islamic Counseling Guidance, which is under the auspices of the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, has just had its own association called the Association of Indonesian Islamic Guidance and Counseling Experts (PABKI). Although the discussion about an Islamic counseling association has been discussed since 1985, it was only declared in 2014 under the name Aspro BKPI which later changed its name to PABKI until now (Jejak Historis – PABKI – Perkumpulan Ahli Bimbingan dan Konseling Islam Indonesia, n.d.). In its development in 2019 PABKI collaborated with the Department of Islamic Counseling Guidance, Faculty of Da'wah, UIN Sunan Ample Surabaya in the agenda of "National Workshop on Islamic Counselor Certification".

In addition to challenges in terms of capacity, the implementation of new normal era counseling was also influenced by the smooth running of the internet network. Most of those interviewed said that the slow network affected the speed of response in counseling and it took a long time for only one case. Three out of

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nine counselors said that it was constrained by the network that made the duration of counseling longer

"Iya, terkadang terkendala oleh jaringan" (Interview With Sella Pebrianti, 3 September 2020).

"Yes, sometimes constrained by the network"

"Karena jaringan internet yang kurang bagus, respon klien yang terkadang agak sedikit lambat dan tidak bisa melihat secara langsung gesture klien terutama kalau via chat" (Interview With Nona Nurfadhilla, 3 September 2020).

"Because the internet network is not good, the client's response is sometimes a bit slow and they cannot see the client's gesture directly, especially when via chat."

"Saya merasa senang bisa membantu klien dan di satu sisi lagi interaksi dengan klien terkadang membutuhkan banyak waktu dikarenakan client lambat dalam typing atau menjelaskan masalahnya dan interaksi atau respon konseli lama" (Interview With Ratna Wulan, 3 September 2020).

"I feel happy to be able to help clients and on the one hand, interaction with clients sometimes takes a lot of time because the client is slow in typing or explaining the problem and the interaction or response of the counselee takes a long time".

Three of the counselors interviewed said there were difficulties in exploring problems and the other three said they did not experience any obstacles in carrying out the entire counseling process.

"Sedikit kesulitan ketika klien masih membatasi diri dalam mencurahkan isi hati mereka (masalah)" (Interview With Melsani, 3 September 2020).

"A little trouble when clients are still limiting themselves in expressing their hearts (problems)".

"Faktor utama adalah sulitnya keterbukaan diri klien terhadap masalah yang dihadapinya yang diceritakan secara detail" (Interview With Abi Apriadi, 3 September 2020).

"The main factor is the difficulty of the client's self-disclosure to the problems he is facing which is described in detail".

"Ya, sulit untuk berempati" (Interview With Nurasiah Hasanah, 3 September 2020).

"Yes, it's hard to be empathetic."

When viewed from the challenges in the service aspect, it is found that there are two challenges encountered, namely challenges originating from internal Islamic counselors such as certification and professions that do not have legality, because they are still being designed by PABKI and will only be held soon. Then the challenges that come from externals such as limited networks and indirect contacts make it difficult to get intensive interactions as well as direct counseling.

The second challenge is from the knowledge aspect. What is meant by knowledge in this research is knowledge in E-Counseling services as well as the use of the media in conducting counseling services. Four out of nine respondents interviewed said that knowledge about E-Counseling was never obtained in the world of lectures during the study period. Meanwhile, five of the rest said that they had received knowledge about E-Counseling services. Two of the Five who had received knowledge of E-Counseling services said that the provision of understanding of E-Counseling material was still inadequate because the material provided was very little and not in-depth.

"Pernah, akan tetapi tidak mendalam" (Interview With M. Wafiq Firdaus Islmi Aziz, 3 September 2020).

"Yes, but not deep".

"Iya, saya mendapatkan materi tentang layanan konseling saat menempuh pendidikan strata 1 namun dalam hal ini materi yang didapatkan sangat sedikit" (Interview With Ratna Wulan, 3 September 2020).

"Yes, I got material about counseling services when I took my undergraduate education, but in this case the material I got was very little".

Mastery of E-Counseling knowledge is basically not only limited to the implementation of counseling services which is limited to the service process, but there are several important points that must be considered as expressed by Deder Rahmat which includes marketing, providing self-help materials and supervision and research (Rahmat, 2018, pp. 87–88). So that the counselors do not only have to understand the counseling techniques and processes, knowledge about the use of media as a promotional and socialization tool such as Facebook, Instagram,

Linkedin, Twitter and so on. Another knowledge that must be possessed is that it is not only limited to delivering self-help material, but also must be able to package the material in an attractive form with various media presentations, videos, pamphlets, web and so on. Therefore it is necessary to have knowledge about how to use these media such as video editors, ms. Office, Photoshop, Coreldraw, Pixelap and other editor applications. In the case of supervision in the middle of implementing all forms of counseling processes carried out online, all forms of evaluation and assessment sheets must also utilize technology to make it easier, both for the counselor and for the counselee. Therefore it is necessary to increase knowledge about the use of online media for data collection, such as google forms.

### Conclusion

The use of new media as an alternative in conducting the counseling process, especially in the new normal era. The E-Counseling Service that is carried out can be the right step to stop the spread of the Covid -19 pandemic because it does not interact directly. However, what is a challenge for Islamic counselors can be seen from two aspects. First, the service aspect is that Islamic counselors do not fully have professional capacity in providing counseling services and a stable network that makes it easier to provide services. The second aspect of knowledge is that there is a need for improvement and training in the use of technology that is more comprehensive in utilizing technology that supports E-counseling services.

Increasing the capacity and capability of the alumni of Islamic Guidance and Counseling, especially those under the Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, should be of great concern to both the Prodi and the PABKI Association. With the improvement of human resources capacity which is getting better, it will achieve a big goal and that is very useful in developing the discipline of Islamic Guidance and Counseling.

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