

# Adoption of Online Social Support Scale in Indonesian Text-Based Online Counseling Context

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**Abstract:** Social support can be received online through text-based online counseling (TBOC) provided by trained yet non-professional volunteers. The growing popularity of peer TBOC in Indonesia raises question whether the service really provides social support. Adopting Online Social Support Scale (OSSS) in Indonesian Text-Based Online Counselling context could bridge this question through proper measurements. OSSS was translated into Bahasa Indonesia, then adopted by adjusting the wordings to fit the context of peer TBOC. Content validity of the adopted scale is assured through Content Validity Index, scored by four licensed psychologists who offers text-based psychological services. Criterion validity and scale reliability were assured by distributing the scale through convenient sampling targeting participants who have used peer TBOC services. The adopted version of OSSS showed good validity and reliability, and therefore can be used to measure the degree of online social support received through peer TBOC services.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In Indonesia, 90% of individual respondents aged 15-24 years reported mental health complaints, but 70.5% of them preferred to seek help from peers (Kaligis et al., 2021). Furthermore, the findings of Kaligis et al. (p. 9) shows that assistance services that can be accessed online are the form of interest by 84.5% of respondents. This finding is supported by the Behavioral Report on the Use of Mental Health Services in Indonesia 2021 (Into The Light Indonesia, 2021) which states that the majority of participants prefer to access mental health services through online applications or through websites. In line with the high interest in online mental health services, one of the providers of text-based online counseling services in Indonesia, Riliv, reported an increase in service users of nearly 400% during the pandemic (Burhan, 2022).

Even so, there are still many individuals who claim to have complaints about mental health who do not access services provided by professionals due to limited funds (Into The Light Indonesia, 2021; Puspitasari, 2021). Social expectations, religion, and cultural stigma inhibit the will and ability of individuals to seek psychosocial support from professionals, resulting in unfulfillment of the need

to obtain adequate mental health support and the slow development of available mental health resources (Gronowski, 2020).

Instead, free online peer counseling is a popular alternative for obtaining support for mental health complaints (Coady et al., 2022; Nurlaila, 2021; Yip et al., 2021). The form of mental health services that are of interest to the 16–23-year-old age group is text-based online counseling (TBOC) provided by individuals of the same age (Fukkink, 2011). Peer TBOC is in particular demand because this service is provided online and the interaction is carried out on a text basis so that the anonymity of service users is maintained which minimizes the knowledge of others that they are seeking mental health assistance, and is easily accessible via mobile phone whenever support is needed without the need to make an appointment and wait in line (Navarro et al., 2020).

Social support is a subjective perception regarding the availability of emotional attention and real help when dealing with stress (House, 1987; House et al., 1988). Nick et al. (2018) shows that social support theory does not distinguish the phenomenon of support provided in person or online. Nick et al. (2018) categorizing online social support into four major sub-types, namely

Esteem/Emotional Support, Social Companionship, Informational Support, and Instrumental Support.

Measurement of the level of online social support obtained by users of peer TBOC services can provide an overview of the evaluation of the satisfaction of recipients of support for services. more people (Larson & Bock, 2016; Rickwood et al., 2017). The Online Social Support Scale (OSSS) developed by (Nick et al., 2018) measures the level of social support that individuals receive online. Table 1 shows the OSSS blueprint.

Table 1: Blueprint of adapted OSSS.

Sub-scale	Definition
Esteem/Emotional online social support Item no. 1-10	Text-based online social support from service companions that express acceptance, closeness, concern, liking, respect, validation of feelings, empathy or sympathy.
Social Companionship online social support Item no. 11-20	Text-based online social support from service assistants that creates a sense of belonging for recipients of support because they are involved in positive social interactions.
Informational online social support Item no. 21-30	Text-based online social support from service companions to help support recipients address issues through advice, situation assessment, sharing information, and providing new references.
Instrumental online social support Item no. 31-40	Text-based online social support from service assistants in the form of real practical assistance for support recipients to solve the problems they are facing.

OSSS has good discriminant validity with a variance score of less than 2% compared to the MCSF-C (social desirability) and EPQR-S (lie scale). OSSS has convergent validity with the Perceived Social Support Scale (PSSS) with a correlation of 0.38 ( $p < 0.1$ ). OSSS reliability is in the form of an alpha coefficient for each sub-scale, including 0.95 for Esteem/Emotional support, 0.94 for Social Companionship, 0.95 for Informational support, and 0.95 for Instrumental support. The OSSS scale consists of 40 questions, 10 items for each sub-scale. Assessment is given via a Likert scale with a range of 0-4 where 0=Never, 1=Rarely, 2=Sometimes, 3=Pretty Often, 4=A Lot.

Referring to Stewart et al., (2012), the research instrument can be modified when there is a difference in the research context from the original scale to prevent the items from being interpreted differently by the respondents. All OSSS items were modified by changing the terms to fit the context of receiving online social support from online support service providers, not when carrying out activities on online social media. For the purposes of statistical tests, the adoption of measuring tools is also done by changing the scale to 1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Very often.

Adopting instruments to measure online social support is expected to be able to provide information about what support is most effectively delivered by TBOC services.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Social Support

The concept of social support has various definitions which are considered circular and overlapping (Wilcox & Vernberg, 1985). Even so, the definition coined by House is widely used because it fulfils multidimensional rules (Cooke et al., 1988; Malecki & Demaray, 2003; Song et al., 2011). House defines social support as a one's subjective perception of the availability of emotional attention and real help when facing stress (House, 1987; House et al., 1988).

Gottlieb and Bergen (2010) define social support as "social resources that people perceive as available or actually provided to them by non-professionals in the context of formal support groups and informal assistance associations".

### 2.2 Online Social Support

Social support provided online or online social support is internet-facilitated assistance received from friends, family, and other people in the social sphere (Nick et al., 2018). Online social support is a form of social support that emerged because of the development of the internet (Wong & Ma, 2016). Online social support can be in the form of support obtained from virtual social support groups (LaCoursiere, 2001; White & Dorman, 2001), as well as social media (Nick et al., 2018; Walter, 2019).

Nick et al. review (2018) shows that social support theory does not distinguish the phenomenon

of support provided in person or online. Nonetheless, individuals who have low levels of social support in real life tend to benefit more from social support obtained online (Cole et al., 2017, 2019).

### 2.3 Types of Online Social Support

Nick et al. (2018) conducted a systematic review of 22 social support studies and found that the majority of social support sub-types currently circulating overlap with one another. Of these 22 studies, Nick et al. obtained 21 sub-types of social support which can be categorized into four major sub-types, namely Esteem/Emotional Support (EE), Social Companionship (SC), Informational Support (INF), and Instrumental Support (INS).

Esteem/Emotional Support (EE) refers to communication from other people that is rated high (high esteem) or meaningful for managing emotional states. Communication expresses acceptance, closeness or intimacy, attention, conveys likes, respect or respect, validation of feelings, empathy, or sympathy.

Social Companionship Support (SC) shows a sense of involvement or being part of the interaction (sense of belonging). This acceptance is expressed directly through inclusivity or involving individuals in real interactions, or indirectly, for example by accompanying them in fun and recreational activities. This social support is shown through positive social interactions that make a person feel welcome, involved, and accompanied.

Informational Support (INF) is carried out by helping to explain, provide understanding, and solve problems. Support can be provided by providing advice, offering an appraisal of the situation being experienced, sharing information or different perspectives, or providing references to access new resources.

Instrumental Support (INS) is provided, for example through the assistance of funds, materials and services needed. Included in instrumental support is offering help to complete a task, providing something to use, carrying out a job, or taking responsibility for something.

## 3. RESEARCH METHOD

The content validity test was carried out with expert judgement by panellists who practice as text-based online psychologists. OSSS validation is carried out by a panel of experts who understand the concept

through the Content Validity Index or Content Validity Index (Yusoff, 2019). VCI OSSS scores were obtained from four text-based online practicing psychologists (3 females and 1 male psychologists) whom have been delivering their services through text-messaging apps for 2 – 20 years.

Reliability test data for this research item were collected using a quantitative survey method. According to Howitt and Cramer (2011) quantitative research at least involves calculating the frequency of categories in the main variables studied. Reliability test participants were recruited using the convenient sampling method by spreading OSSS on social media to fill in participants with criteria aged 18-25 years who had used peer TBOC services. In total there were 55 participants with the majority age 20-21 years (76.4%) where 80% of the participants were women.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Content Validity

Referring to Yusoff (2019), apart from providing comments regarding the items that have been adopted and translated into Indonesian, the four panellists also assessed the relevance of the items to the construct and the clarity or ease of understanding the items which were then processed to obtain S-CVI (Scale-Level Content Validity Index) or Content Validity Index for each aspect. S-CVI is obtained by dividing the I-CVI (Item-Level Content Validity Index) value or the value of relevance and clarity of items on a scale of 1 to 4 which is transformed into a value of 0 (scores 1 and 2) to 1 (scores 3 and 4) by the total the whole item in the aspect that is observed.

The closer to the score 1, the better the CVI of the instrument. The CVI OSSS and YSSS of the four panellists are shown in Table 2 indicating that the two instruments have very good content validity.

Table 2: OSSS S-CVI.

OSSS sub-scales	S-CVI Relevance	S-CVI Clarity
Esteem/Emotional online social support	1,0	1,0
Social Companionship online social support	1,0	1,0
Informational online social support	1,0	1,0
Instrumental online social support	0,9	1,0

## 4.2 Reliability

Reliability is the ability of an instrument to provide similar results when measuring the same participants at different times (Azwar, 2021). The reliability test was carried out with Jamovi 1.8.1. to obtain Cronbach's alpha coefficient which is useful in obtaining internal consistency scores in a group of participants. The descriptive test showed that the OSSS data were normally distributed (Saphiro-Wilk  $p = 0.082$ ). Cronbach's alpha value which states the reliability of each dimension of OSSS can be seen in Table 3. Cronbach's alpha value itself is the average of all possible correlations of instrument item divisions from a series of question items (Jhangiani et al., 2019). The item sub-scale is declared reliable if it has a Cronbach's alpha coefficient greater than 0.7 (Azwar, 2021).

Table 3: OSSS inter-item reliability

OSSS sub-scales	Cronbach's Alfa	Reliability
Esteem/emotional online social support	0,976	High
Social companionship online social support	0,947	High
Informational online social support	0,939	High
Instrumental online social support	0,938	High

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

Content validity and reliability analysis showed that the adopted version of OSSS has good validity and inter-item reliability, and therefore can be used to measure the degree of online social support received through peer TBOC services.

However, the analysis done in this research can be considered as basic, primary analysis. Thus, further research needs to re-validate in more depth to obtain convergent and discriminant validity, as well as to test the nomological validity of OSSS.

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