

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS ONLINE COUNSELLING IN THE
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

BENEDICTA SARFO ARTHUR

2020

© Benedicta Sarfo Arthur

University of Cape Coast

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS ONLINE COUNSELLING IN THE
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

BY

BENEDICTA SARFO ARTHUR

Thesis submitted to the Department of Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of
Educational Foundations, College of Education Studies, University of Cape
Coast, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of
Philosophy degree in Guidance and Counselling

FEBRUARY 2020

DECLARATION

Candidates' Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: Date:

Name:

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature: Date.....

Name:

Supervisor's Signature: Date.....

Name:

ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to ascertain the attitude university students have towards online counselling in the College of Humanities, University of Ghana. The study employed the descriptive survey design. Simple random sampling technique was employed to select 500 respondents from a population of 17,815 students from the College of Humanities, University of Ghana. The study made use of primary data through the use of an adapted Online Counselling Attitude Scales for data collection. The data collected were analysed with the use of descriptive statistics (frequency and percentages, means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA). The study found that university students have positive attitude towards online counselling. However, they have negative attitude towards the utilisation of online counselling. Also, the attitude of university students towards online counselling does not differ with respect to gender and student's academic level. Finally, university students' attitude towards online counselling differs with respect to age. The study recommended that workshops be organised by university counselling centers to heighten the utilisation of online counselling.

KEY WORDS

Online Counselling

Attitude

Utilisation

Beneficial

University students

College of Humanities

University of Ghana

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am greatly indebted to my supervisors, Prof Godwin Awabil and Rev. Fr. Dr. Anthony Kwabena Nkyi, whose able leadership and guidance have seen me through this task. I also appreciate the effort of Mr. George Sarfo, whose motivation has kept me to accomplish this work. I also wish to express my immense, deep, sincere and heartfelt gratitude to the staff and authorities of the University of Ghana where the data were collected; they accepted and helped me during the data collection. Also, I am really appreciative of the respondents who participated in the study.

DEDICATION

To my dad and mum, Mr. James J. Arthur, Miss Jane Akakpo and siblings,

Ishmael, Linda and Gregory

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
KEY WORDS	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
DEDICATION	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Background to the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	5
Purpose of the Study	6
Research Questions	7
Research Hypothesis	7
Significance of the Study	8
Delimitation	9
Limitations	9
Organisation of the Study	9
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Introduction	11
Theoretical Framework	11
Person-Centered Theory	11
Ajzens and Fishbein's (1991) Theory of Reasoned Action	14
Social Cognitive Theory BY Bandura (1977)	18

Conceptual Review	21
Concept of Counselling	21
Academic/Educational Counselling	24
Career / Vocational Counselling	25
Personal/Social Counselling	28
Online Counselling	29
Technological Tools for Online Counselling	32
Web-Based Messaging	34
Instant Messaging and Chat	35
Video Conferencing	37
Digital Games in Counselling	39
Benefits of Online Counselling in Schools	41
Cost savings for travel, accommodation and time	42
Time control (time management)	43
Reduction of potential intimidation of client	43
Problems of Online Counselling	47
Empirical Review	50
Attitudes Toward Online Counselling	50
University Students' Attitudes Towards Online Counselling with Respect to Gender	53
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS	
Introduction	55
Research Design	55
Population	57
Sample and Sampling Procedures	58

Data Collection Instrument	61
Validity and Reliability of the Instrument	63
Data Collection Procedure	64
Data Processing and Analysis	64
Ethical Consideration	65
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DICUSSION	
Introduction	67
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	67
Main Results and Discussion	70
Research Question One	71
Research Question Two	80
Research question Three	84
Research question Four	87
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Introduction	104
Summary of Research Process	104
Key Findings	105
Conclusions	106
Recommendations	107
Suggestions for Further Research	108
REFERENCES	109

APPENDICES		128
A	Students' Questionnaire	128
B	Results	130
C	Introductory Letter	153
D	IRB	154

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Population Distribution of Respondents	58
2	Sample Distribution of Respondents	60
3	Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	68
4	Attitude Towards Beneficial Nature of Online Counselling	72
5	Attitudes Towards Utilisation of Online Counselling	75
6	Attitudes Towards Online Counselling	79
7	Attitude Towards Online Counselling with Respect to Gender	81
8	Attitude Towards Online Counselling with Respect to Academic Level	84
9	Attitude Towards Online Counselling with Respect to Age Groups	87
10	t-test Results Comparing Attitude Towards Online Counselling with Respect to Gender.	91
11	t-test Results Comparing Attitude Towards Online Counselling with Respect to Academic Level	95
12	Descriptives and Homogeneity of variance Results	99
13	One Way ANOVA Results Showing Differences in Attitude within Age Groups	100
14	Post Hoc Comparisons	102

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour.	16

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The numerous advantages attached to utilization of counselling services have made the delivery of such services inevitable in the life of humans. This has made the focus on counselling gain much grounds in the daily affairs of humans, with the international front holding it in high esteem, and has generated programmes and courses to be mounted in educational setups. The relevance attached to the counselling institutions signifies that its access should not be restricted to a confined room of a face to face interaction. This idea necessitates that a more innovative way of counselling should be investigated into to help achieve the numerous advantages counselling comes with. Online counselling has been identified in the literature as an alternative approach to the traditional face to face counselling. In addition to the already identified advantages embedded in counselling, online counselling comes with its own unique concepts and much desired benefits.

Background to the Study

The revolution of technology and the use of the Internet and its related web resources have taken counselling service beyond the face-to-face to electronic-based counselling services (Aaron, Rochlen, Vogel & Michael, 2005). Clinical psychologists and counsellors are turning to new ways to help their patients. Instead of coming to the office, they can simply register an online counselling website. This new way of counselling is also known as e-counselling (Brown, 2011; Chester & Glass, 2006), cyber-counselling or tele

therapy (Suler, 2000). Some clients consider e-counselling as a substitute to in-office counselling (Tannous, 2017) while others do not think it replaces the traditional methods, so they still visit the office even if they use e-counselling (Delida, 2005). This method can be done using traditional communication tools over the Internet such as E-mails, internet-voice calls, chat rooms, IM, and video conferences (Alleman, 2002).

According to Njagi (2005), the relevance of counselling cannot be downplayed. To Njagi, counselling is important because it gives an individual the opportunity to sort out a problem that he or she has had trouble figuring out on his or her own. Narrowing it down to students, Gysbers and Henderson (2001) added that counselling helps students learn new coping skills, set goals, solve problems, make decisions, and manage stress. In addition, it also provides a safe and structured environment in which students can explore various aspects of their emerging adult lives, specifically, independence, values, personal goals and friendships. Other studies suggested that counselling helps those in need of consultation to discover their abilities (Kraus, Zack & Stricker, 2004) determine their goals and help individuals to draw their plans in line with their abilities. (Kanz, 2001). Owing to these great benefits derived from counselling, it would not be out of place to eradicate potential challenges to successful counselling services.

Studies have revealed that counselling has been challenged by the nature of its conduct (Bojuwoye & Sodi, 2010; King, Bambling, Lloyd, Gomurra, Smith, Reid & Wegner, 2006; Sanders & Rosenfield, 1998; Murphy, Parnass, Mitchell, Hallett, Cayley & Seagram, 2009). Researchers like Bojuwoye Sodi (2010) and King et al. (2006) have specifically expressed

a negative effect the face-to-face can have on the openness of the client while others have posited that the inability of some clients in accessing counselling has rendered poor utilization of counselling services (Sanders, & Rosenfield, 1998; Murphy, Parnass, Mitchell, Hallett, Cayley, & Seagram, 2009). With these numerous criticisms, there surely should be other means of accessing successful counselling sessions.

Some reasons have been outlined for people employing online counselling services. Gelso (2000) asserted that people started to use online counselling because e-counselling is relatively cheaper than traditional counselling. Gelso added that e-counselling specialists do not require insurance. In other studies, the privacy of the clients was seen as a reason for online counselling choice (Glueckauf, 2002). It was explained in the study that taking therapy at home instead of visiting the psychiatrist's office allows them to take their time to organize their thoughts. Also, online counselling is preferred because clients can easily reselect their counsellors, extend, delay or even cancel the sessions at any point in time (Van de Luitgaarden, & van der Tier, 2018). Clients who prefer to stay unknown, use this kind of therapy (Glueckauf, 2002). In addition, young teenagers who cannot get to the counsellor's office because they cannot drive will prefer to opt for online counselling.

There are plenty more who find e-counselling beneficial. Such people are of the opinion that people with disability find it difficult accessing the counsellor in their offices due to their state. Others prefer not to leave their houses to avoid chaotic environments surrounding them (Holmes, Levine, & Weaver, 2004). As clients find time to arrange their thoughts, therapists

benefit from that time to carefully structure their questions (Holmes, Levine, & Weaver, 2004; Van de Luitgaarden, & van der Tier, 2018). Chatting online also makes it easier for the therapist to supply his client with many websites which may help his/her case. Online counselling also makes it easier for the therapist to talk to his clients anywhere in the world, without necessarily being present in the same country. Online counselling is distinguished to have some special characteristics like appropriateness, lack of social communication, unknown parties, distances and time frames (Jeffrey, 2005). The pre-mentioned features are associated with some positive and negative issues. Mostly, they were dealt with through providing appropriate guidelines to handle ethical and practical points (Kanz, 2001).

It is concluded from these arguments that online counselling has multiple benefits and advantages which have led to the widespread use of the service in recent times (Larsen, 1998). There are many essential elements of online counselling such as the contact form which consists of four basic elements: consulting provider and who receive counselling (Lewis & Coursol, 2007), information and communication channel that is divide between face-to-face counselling and online counselling (Rochlen, et al., 2004). Online counselling consists of the following elements: Consulting provider “counsellor” (Shaw & Shaw, 2006). It is a people who design the contents of online counselling on the Internet and explains the knowledge and contact with any one need counselling by contacting methods (Rochlen et al., 2004), Online counselling content: the information and knowledge that are the content of the scientific material that interacts with who receive counselling and counsellor consultation interface (Rummell & Joyce, 2010). The means

that will allow the interaction between who need counselling and counsellor via the Internet on one hand and between who receive counselling and the content of material on the other hand by using contacting methods (Rockwell et al., 1999) Counselling receiver: a person who requests counselling in the vicinity of the connection by communication interface (Sampson, et al., 1997).

Statement of the Problem

In Malaysia, Wong, Bonn, Tam and Wong (2018) conducted a study to examine students' attitudes towards and likelihood of using both online and/or face-to-face counseling. Tannous (2017) also conducted a study to examine the perceptions of University of Jordan students toward online counseling. Additionally, Bato and Marcial (2016) conducted a research on Philippines students' attitudes towards the development of an online guidance counselling system. Following studies conducted in Africa, the work of Kamunyu, Ndugo and Wango (2016) aimed at investigating the prevalence of counselling services among university students in Kenya. It can be deduced that these studies conducted were in different geographical settings from the Ghanaian context. This implies that the findings may not be the same if the study is replicated in the Ghanaian context. This provides the reason to investigate the attitudes Ghanaian university students possess towards online counselling.

In the Ghanaian society, researches conducted on counselling issues have been in the senior high schools and the universities. In the senior high schools, Kolog, Sutinen and Vanhalakka-Ruoho (2016) explored the extent to which Information Communication Technology (ICT) is currently being used to provide counselling services to senior high school students from Osei

Kyeretwie Senior High School. Studies on university students' attitude towards counselling was by Awabil and Akosah (2018) who investigated the attitude of University of Cape Coast students towards online counselling. Also, Arku (2015) examined the attitudes of University of Cape Coast male students towards counselling. Arguably, these studies appear to have been concentrated in the University of Cape Coast, leaving the other traditional universities, which also employ counseling and online counselling services, unexplored. There was, therefore, the need to explore the attitude state of other university students in the traditional universities. The researcher was motivated to examine the attitudes of university students towards online counselling using University of Ghana, Accra as a study area on the grounds that other universities like University of Cape Coast have been explored.

Purpose of the Study

The primary purpose of the study was to examine the attitudes of students of the University of Ghana towards online counselling. Specifically, the study sought to examine the;

1. attitude of university students towards online counselling;
2. attitude of university students towards online counselling with respect to gender;
3. attitude of university students towards online counselling with respect to academic level in the university; and
4. attitude of university students towards online counselling with respect to age.

Research Questions

1. What is the attitude of university students toward online counselling?
2. What is the attitude of university students towards online counselling with respect to gender?
3. What is the attitude of university students toward online counselling with respect to the academic level?
4. What is the attitude of university students toward online counselling with respect to the age?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study.

1. H₀: There is no statistically significant difference in students' attitudes towards online counselling on the basis of gender.
H₁: There is a statistically significant difference in students' attitudes towards online counselling on the basis of gender.
2. H₀: There is no statistically significant difference in students' attitudes towards online counselling with regard to academic level.
H₁: There is a statistically significant difference in students' attitudes towards online counselling with regard to academic level.
3. H₀: There is no statistically significant difference in students' attitudes towards online counselling with respect to age.
H₁: There is a statistically significant difference in students' attitudes towards online counselling with respect to age.

Significance of the Study

Firstly, the findings would bring to light the knowledge level of the university students towards online counselling. Knowledge on students' attitude towards online counselling would provide counselling units and concerned stakeholders to channel attention to educating students on the importance of the service and heightening the utilization of the service. Secondly, the findings of the study will create awareness among the various counselling units in the university campuses on the specific attitudes of university students towards online counselling. This would make it possible for authorities of university education to address the challenges that have bedeviled counselling services in the university that have led to the students developing a negative attitude towards counselling and also online counselling.

In furtherance, the results provided on the variation in online counselling attitude between female and male, would furnish the various gender organisations with empirical evidence of the situation. This would make them employ various means such as workshops, seminars, and symposia to sensitise the gender deficient group on online counselling utilization and alleviate their fears with the use of the service. Also, knowledge on the differences in the students' attitude towards online counselling with respect to their ages would provide the counselling units of the school how to tailor their counselling presentations to help bridge the gap in attitude towards online counselling for the various age groups. Finally, the findings of the study would serve as a source principal document to other researchers who are interested in conducting further studies on the same topic.

Delimitation

In terms of content, the study was delimited to attitudes of university students and the focus was on online counselling. The study focused on three demographics, namely gender, age, and academic level of students. The students' attitude towards online counselling were measured on only two attitude scales. These attitude scales were attitude towards beneficial nature of online counselling and attitude towards utilization of online counselling. Geographically, the study was delimited to University of Ghana, Accra. For the respondents, the study was delimited to only the College of Humanities in the university and not the other remaining four colleges. Finally, the study was delimited to only the first and second year students in the College.

Limitations

The study could not be entirely generalized to determine the attitude all university students have towards online counselling because it was narrowed to focus on only the College of Humanities students in the university of Ghana. In addition, the use of the survey design and the added use of the questionnaire poses inherent limitation on the credibility of the data gathered as respondents could be dishonest in the provision of responses that can undermine their competency in the execution of their tasks. This limitation was however reduced to the barest minimum as questions crafted were not directed at appraising their performances.

Organisation of the Study

The study was organized into five chapters. Chapter One covered the introduction of the study which centred on the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions,

significance of the study, delimitation of the study, limitations of the study and operational definition of terms. Chapter Two presented the review of related literature, with emphasis on specified concepts, highlighting the theoretical frameworks as well as related empirical studies on the research questions that guided the study. Chapter Three was devoted to the research methods that was used for the study. This comprised the research design, population, sample and sampling procedure, research instrument, data collection procedure and data analysis procedure. Chapter Four concentrated on the discussion of the results on the basis of the research questions formulated to guide the study. Chapter Five provided a summary of the research process, key findings, conclusion, recommendations based on the findings of the study and areas for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter deals with review of related literature that is relevant to the study. It covers theoretical review, conceptual review and empirical review.

Theoretical Review

Person-Centered Theory

Based on his experience as a psychotherapist, Rogers postulated that persons possess resources of self-knowledge and self-healing, and that personality change and development are possible if a definable climate of facilitative conditions is present (Rogers, 1957). The implication of Rogers' position is that some persons and environments foster growth and development in human beings, and some undermine and inhibit growth. The person's inherent self-directive processes promote greater self-differentiation, more efficient self-regulation, self-understanding, and acceptance (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Rogers utilized the construct of the "actualizing tendency" to describe the organism's motivation to realize and enhance inherent potentials (Goldstein, 1940; Rogers, 1959; Bozarth & Brodley, 1991). The therapeutic relationship has been identified repeatedly as a significant part of successful outcome in psychotherapy (Patterson, 1984; Lambert, 1992; Wampold, 2001). Regardless of therapeutic orientation, therapists who provide Rogers' core

conditions at a high level are likely to attain better outcomes than therapists who do not.

Client-centered therapy, also called the person-centered approach, describes Carl Rogers' way of working with persons experiencing all types of personal disturbances or problems in living (Rogers, 1980). As early as 1939, Rogers developed his theory of psychotherapy with troubled children, and went on to expand his theoretical approach to include work with couples, families, and groups. Over his long career, Rogers extrapolated client-centered values to the education, marriage, group encounter, personal power, and conflict resolution (Rogers, 1972).

According to (Cherry, 2017), there are three key qualities that make for a good client-centered therapist:

- (a). Unconditional Positive Regard: As mentioned earlier, unconditional positive regard is an important practice for the client-centered therapist. The therapist needs to accept the client for who he or she is and provide support and care no matter what he or she is going through.
- (b). Genuineness: A client-centered therapist needs to feel comfortable sharing his or her feelings with the client. Not only will this contribute to a healthy and open relationship between the therapist and client, it provides the client with a model of good communication and shows the client that it's okay to be vulnerable.
- (c). Empathetic Understanding: The client-centered therapist must extend empathy to the client, both to form a positive therapeutic relationship and to act as a sort of mirror, reflecting the client's thoughts and feelings back to him or her; this will allow the client to better understand him- or herself.

According to the theory, problems in the personality development process arise when significant people in their lives, such as parents, teachers, and peers place a condition of worth upon us, rather than accept us unconditionally (Ruto, Manduku, & Kosgey, 2017). They value us only if we meet certain conditions and expectations. For the reason that humans need the regard of others in order to have self-respect, we strive to meet the expectations of others, although this often requires us to suppress, or ignore, our self-actualising tendency and the opportunity to accept and value ourselves unconditionally.

A false self-image is created, based on meeting the conditions of worth, and we then distort and deny reality, in the quest to confirm our maladjustment. The key to healthy personality development and self-generated rehabilitation of psychological problems, therefore, lies in the 'necessary and sufficient conditions of personality change' (Rogers, 1957). These conditions consist in the counsellor expressing, and the client perceiving, unconditional positive regard, empathetic understanding, and congruence, or honesty. When clients interact with counsellors who behave in this manner, they begin to share their experience, the self-actualisation tendency is activated, they question and cast off conditions of worth, and move towards unconditional acceptance and respect.

In client-centred counselling, the counsellor genuinely accepts the student being counselled, whatever his thoughts, feelings and behaviour. An unconditional respect is transmitted through the counsellor's words and non-verbal behaviour, and deep empathetic understanding is communicated through reflective responses. Moreover, the counsellor listens and reflects on

the intra-personal and experiential domain of the student. On receiving such counselling, the student explores himself and describes experiences, feelings and attitudes which he denied, and of which he became aware. A re-organisation of the self takes place, and a more authentic person emerges, free of previous defences, disturbed emotions and disordered behaviour (Ruto, Manduku, & Kosgey, 2017).

Relating this theory to online counselling, students receive counselling services at their own convenience without necessarily being present. With this, students' welfare and satisfaction is prioritized and their easy to access services become the focus of the process. The person-centered counselling relates enormously with the current study in the sense that students' personalities remain anonymous to the service providers or counsellors as everything seem to be conceived virtually except their appointment and pseudo codes or identifiers. In this sense, if students possess a good attitude about the worth of the counselling platform as their information can be safeguarded and made confidential, they are likely to patronize it and if they possess a bad attitude about with the perception that their secrets would be shared online without their notice or approval, they are likely not to patronize it.

Ajzens and Fishbein's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is an extension of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) and Ajzen and Fishbein 1980. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) started as the Theory of Reasoned Action in 1980 to predict an individual's intention to engage in a behaviour at a specific time and place. The theory was intended to

explain all behaviours over which people have the ability to exert self-control. The key component to this model is behavioural intent; behavioural intentions are influenced by the attitude about the likelihood that the behaviour will have the expected outcome and the subjective evaluation of the risks and benefits of that outcome.

To undertake any new activity, with which online counselling is no exception, has a psychological nature. Psychologists have proven that intentions are the best predictors of any planned behaviour, particularly when the behaviour is rare, hard to observe, or involves unpredictable time lags (Krueger, Reilly, & Carsurd, 2000). To utilise online counselling is not just an activity thought through and executed in a day. Undertaking online counselling could be seen as a type of planned behaviour (activity). In order to understand the intention of people about a behaviour, Ajzen and Fishbein (1991) developed the 'Theory of Planned Behaviour' (TPB). The TPB of Ajzen (1991) helps to understand how the intentions of people about a behaviour is formed and also, whether they will eventual exhibit the behaviour. The central factor in Ajzen and Fishbein's (1991) TPB is the individuals' intentions to perform a specific behaviour. The thrust of the theory stipulates that the intention to undertake a particular project has a greater bearing on the actual performance of the project. Intentions are assumed to be the motivation to certain behaviour. Thus, the stronger the intention to perform certain behaviour, the more likely it will be performed.

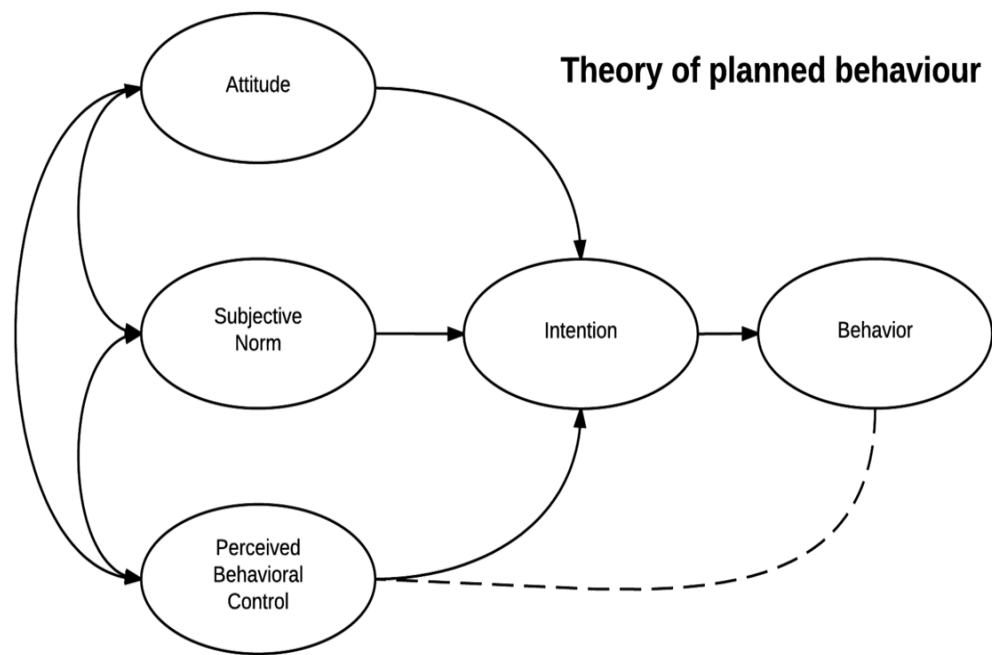


Figure 1: Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behaviour.

Ajzen (1991) explains three factors which are crucial in changing the intention and the actual behaviour. First of all, the belief and attitude somebody has towards the behaviour. A student could, for instance, have a positive attitude towards online counselling because of the how time saving, cost saving, free expression of oneself, among others. The second factor is a social factor termed subjective norm. This factor refers to the social pressure from the environment on the individual to perform or not to perform the behaviour; e.g. discouraged people who could not get their problems resolved from online counselling, people who have been frauded over the Internet before, people who have had their privacy invaded on the Internet, among others. The third factor influencing intention is the perceived behavioural control. This factor distinguishes the model from previous behavioural models. The idea is that the actual behaviour does not only depend on the motivation or intention to perform certain behaviour, but also on the

perception of the difficulty of performing the behaviour. This perception can be developed through for instance experience. Further research of the TPB (Ajzen, 1991) identifies antecedents of each of these factors, which have been included in figure 1 as well (Krueger et al., 2000).

The TPB (Ajzen, 1991) has been tested on a wide range of human behaviour, takes online counselling intentions. Autio, Keeley, Klofsten, Parker, and Hay (2001) mention how Ajzen's TPB helped to explain how advertising campaigns should be structured. Only providing information does not change the behaviour of the receiver, the aim should be at changing the attitudes and perception toward a product. Moreover the TPB (Ajzen, 1991) has been used to explain e.g. voting decisions, problem drinking, and losing weight (Krueger et al., 2000). Autio et al. (1997, p.3), go even further with stating that, "previous research successfully tested the theory of planned behaviour." It is stated that attitudes explain approximately 50% of the variance in intentions, and intentions explain approximately 30% of the variance in behaviour. Autio et al. (1997, p.3) suggest: "the greater the degree to which behaviour can be controlled, the greater is the influence of intentions on the eventual behaviour".

The current study is situated in the theory of planned behaviour because it explains how someone will eventually use an activity. The theory aids the current study in unravelling the final desirous intent of people to enrol on online counselling services. The theory justifies that their attitude towards online counselling has an overall effect on their intentions to use the service and finally employ the service. The theory was, therefore, chosen because the objective of finding out the attitude students have towards online counselling

is explained by the theory to finally have a predictive value on their usage of the service. Hence, the theory was seen fit for the study conducted.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is a well-validated decision-making model that has been applied to counselling services in schools and other places. Based on the TPB proposal of attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioural control that controls one behaviour, it is likely students would patronize online counselling services based on their personal disposition of these control factors. When students possess the attitude that patronizing online counselling services will result in a de-burdening them of their counselling needs, they will engage in services through that medium and vice-versa. When students perceive online counselling services are equally supported their colleagues and spoken about by others, they may engage in the act and vice-versa. Again, students are likely or not to engage online counselling service if they understand can be accessed anywhere and anytime without conflicting with their busy schedules. These determinants are key in rendering online counselling services to students as their attitudes, social influence and personal convictions are relevant to successful process.

Social Cognitive Theory by Bandura (1977)

Bandura's social cognitive theory is based on the idea that we learn from our interactions with others in a social context. Separately, by observing the behaviours of others, people develop similar behaviours. New concepts of social learning are being formed as new trends in distance education programmes emerge. The rise in popularity of these programmes increases the physical distance between educators and students. With this in mind, relying

on in-person classroom and face-to-face interactions to provide all of social learning needs is a thing of the past.

Social cognitive theory in psychology is generally associated with the work of Bandura and his research on modelling and imitation (Feldman, 1993; West, 1988; Ewen, 1980). Bandura postulated that behaviour could be learned at the cognitive level through observing other people's actions (Blackburn, 1993; Feldman, 1993; Hollin, 1989). Bandura believed that people were capable of imagining themselves in similar situations, and of incurring similar outcomes (Ewen, 1980). Once the behaviour is learned, it may be reinforced or punished by the consequences it generates.

Bandura focused on several key concepts of the operant conditioning theory: reinforcement, punishment, and motivation (Feldman, 1993). According to Bandura, there are three aspects to motivation: external reinforcement, vicarious reinforcement, and self-reinforcement (Ewen, 1980; Feldman, 1993; Hollin, 1989). External reinforcement is similar to B.F. Skinner's concept of reinforcement, and refers to stimuli in the environment that influence the likelihood of a response occurring (Ewen, 1980). Vicarious reinforcement is derived from observing other people's behaviour being either reinforced or punished (Ewen, 1980). Self-reinforcement refers to one's sense of pride, or to the meeting of standards in one's own behaviour (Ewen, 1980).

Some concepts of social cognitive theory are applicable to education. There are three key components to Bandura's social cognitive theory that are manifesting themselves in the education environment: observational learning, imitation, and behaviour modelling (Bruner, 1990; Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Bandura's social cognitive theory is based on the idea that

observational learning involves the fact that humans often cannot teach themselves.

This theory combines behaviouristic reinforcement theory and cognitive psychology to describe the learning process in individuals. Bandura emphasizes the personal or self-system which controls learning by influencing attentional processes, schematic processing of experiences, memory representation and reconstruction, cognitively-based motivation, emotion activation, psycho-biologic functioning and the ease and skill to which these are employed to deal with everyday life experiences (Bandura, 1986). The learner has the power to influence their own learning in new situations by controlling the environment around them whether that environment is imposed, selected or constructed (Hathaway, Muse, & Althoff, 2007).

Learners observe behaviours by others in order to start the learning process. This happens in the learning environment constantly, especially when faced with a new activity such as becoming a student. The next concept in Bandura's theory that manifests in learning is imitation. After observing the behaviour of others, people assimilate and imitate that behaviour, especially if their observational experiences are positive ones or include rewards related to the observed behaviour. According to Bandura, imitation involves the actual reproduction of observed motor activities. The third component of Bandura's theory that happens is behaviour modelling. Behaviour modeling, the learner takes everything positive about the observed and imitated behaviour, and begins acting according to the experiences (Bandura, 1977).

Bandura (1995) coined the concept self-efficacy as an individual's beliefs or judgments about his or her ability to accomplish a given goal or task. This self-efficacy concept is applied in counselling as counselling self-efficacy (CSE). CSE was birthed from Bandura's theory of perceived self-efficacy. Bandura defined perceived self-efficacy as "people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Bandura noted that a person with high self-efficacy is more likely to accept greater challenges, recover quickly from failures, and attribute failures to a lack of training. Self-efficacy is important in relation to counselor and counsellee competence in counselling process (Barnes, 2004). Larson (1998) suggested that self-efficacy is a critical influence on one's self-determining mechanisms and as a result is a critical variable in supervision.

Linking to the current study, as students examine themselves that they can engage in online counselling activities, they are likely to patronize them than when they possess mindset of having no skill or technique in accessing the service due to its technological orientation. When students become technologically inclined, online counselling services are possible when they are not properly oriented, online counselling become impossible because they might possess a low self-efficacy towards anything online related.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Counselling

Counselling has been given different definitions and interpretations. The term "counselling" has been used to denote a wide range of procedure meant to bring about a positive change in the behaviour of the individual.

According to Gesinde (1991), counselling refers to an in-depth interaction between two or few individuals with the intent of assisting the client to better understand him/herself in relationship to his/her present or future problems. Counselling is oriented towards assisting an individual or groups of people in solving problems which arise in various aspects of his or their life. Counselling also assists people in their overall personal development so they can be more effective satisfied, productive, and more beneficial to the society in which they live. Counselling deals with the affective realm, which involves feelings, emotions, attitude and not simple ideas. It is more than advice giving (Akinade, 2002).

Bakare (as cited in Akinade, 2002) defined counselling as a number of procedures used in assisting an individual in solving problems which arise in various aspects of his life or in assisting him to maximize his overall development in order to be more effective, productive and functional in the society. (Rogers, 1961) referred to counselling as ‘series of direct contacts with the individual who aims to offer assistance in changing attitudes and behaviour’. Rogers further wrote that effective counselling consists of a definitely structured, permissive relationship which allows a client to gain an understanding of himself to a degree which enables him to take positive steps in the light of new orientation. Also, Perez (1965) opined that counselling is an interactive process co-joining the counsellee who is vulnerable and who needs assistance, and the counsellor who is trained and educated to this assistance, the goal of which is to help the counsellee learn to deal more effectively with himself and the reality of his environment. Pietrofesa, Hoffman, and Splere (1984) also defined counselling as a relationship between

a professionally trained and competent counsellor and an individual seeking help in gaining greater self-making, behaviour change skills for problem solution and developmental growth.

Makinde (1990) defined counselling as a service designed to help an individual analyze himself by relating his capabilities, achievements, interests and mode of adjustment to what new decision he has made or has to make. Makinde went further to say that counselling is concerned with the feelings, attitudes and emotional dispositions of an individual about himself and the situation facing him. Thus, counselling is designed to provide an interesting relationship where the counsellor is attempting to help a student to better understand himself in relating to his present and future decision or problems. Counselling should, therefore, be regarded as a method of helping the individual utilise his/her psychological resources by focusing on the individual's positive strength for development and by concentrating on the individual's personality, behavioural and emotional assets that could be mobilized (Ipaye, 1990). According to Ipaye, the counsellor assists the counsellee to make interpretations of facts relating to a choice, plan or adjustment. This assistance may be educational, vocational, social, personal, emotional or moral.

Counselling is concerned with creativity, opportunities and suitable environment for personal, social, educational and vocational growth of the individual. Buku and Taylor (2006) sees counselling as a relationship bringing together the counsellee who needs help and the counsellor who is professionally trained and educated to provide this help. The purpose is to help the client to learn and to be able to deal more effectively with his situation.

The client, by understanding himself, will make the best decision in dealing with the reality of his environment. In the view of Buku and Taylor (2006), through the face-to-face relationship, the individual develops better self-understanding of his/her strengths and weaknesses. When a feeling of inadequacy in certain dimensions of life affect an individual, seeks help through counselling; actions designed to aid the individual in taking vital decisions or make adjustments are encouraged and performed. Such actions may take the form of interview, giving information, undertaking a tour or excursion, giving a test, writing reports or participation in the group activity. This is why counselling is seen as a process in the modification of one's behaviour in an environment.

The nature of counselling has always been misconstrued by people. It is believed that counselling should lead to self-development rather than issuing of directions to the clients. Counselling, again, is said to be the process that focuses on enhancing the psychological well-being of the client, such that the client is then able to reach their full potential. The psychological well-being is achieved by the facilitating personal growth, development and self-understanding in the client, which in turn will empower the client to adopt more constructive life practices. Counsellors' work in a problem-solving manner with the particular issue and the need for guidance and counselling in tertiary institutions.

Academic/ Educational Counselling

Landers and Nahon (2008) describe academic development as acquiring skills, attitudes and knowledge that contribute to effective learning in school, thereby achieving success and to understand the relationship of

academics to the world of work, home and in the community. Hope is needed as the very basic requirement for one to attain academic success. Nothing works well if there is no hope for one's aim and aspirations.

Education has many functions from which a child benefits after going through it. Academic work is the main function of education. Learner support (academic) is one of the three areas of guidance in the school set-up (Esbroeck, 2008). Esbroeck (2008) further explains that academic counselling helps to maximize the effect of the learning process. This includes the support to acquire appropriate learning skills and methods, attitude and motivation to excel. Academic counselling may be perceived by many as giving solutions to academic problems. However, counselling does not offer direct solutions to students. Academic counselling rather dwells on helping students with perennial life problems, and they are also taught on the strategies to cope (Ghana Education Service, 1995). Counsellors do not advise, but rather analyze one's life situation out of their academic challenges and render counselling services. The onus lies with the individual to make his or her decision. Academic counselling exposes students to the realities and the road map to achieve academic success. The environmental impact due to the current social change is a threat to students staying focused in their academic perseverance. Students are easily veered off the academic ladder irrespective of their previous academic success.

Career/Vocational Counselling

The term career-counselling services first appeared at the turn of the 20th century from Parsons (1909) as a redefinition for a process termed vocational guidance. According to Moore, Gunz and Hall (2007), Parsons is

generally acknowledged to have been the originator of career counselling. Parsons's work focused on the early career decision-making process, with the central proposition that individuals should engage in a process of "true reasoning" to achieve a good match between their own characteristics and the demands of a job. This was exactly what the aim of vocational guidance was to encourage. However, in the context of more flexible and diverse career patterns, the view of career counselling as a process of helping people make wise career decisions that set them on a particular career pathway for life is increasingly inappropriate.

Career counselors work with clients of any age and at any stage in their careers, helping individuals with a wide range of career-related concerns. Although work and educational choices are likely to be important issues, many clients will also need help in dealing with broader concerns, such as coping with the frustrations of redundancy and unemployment, deciding whether to return to study or work, and finding ways to balance different life roles. In addition, the problems clients voice in the early stages of career counselling may mask deeper emotional issues that will not become apparent until later in the counselling process. Career counselling can therefore be seen as a process that helps individuals not only to make career-related decisions but also effectively manage their careers over the life course and develop the emotional resilience to cope with the challenges that arise as their working lives progress. More specifically, the definition of career counselling offered here is given as a one-to-one interaction between practitioner and client, usually ongoing, involving the application of psychological theory and a recognised set of communication skills (Kidd, 2007).

Traditional approaches to career counselling view career planning and career management as ideally rational processes. They are rooted in a positive epistemology, which assumes that objective reality exists and can be assessed through objective observation and measurement. Positivist theories can be criticized for over simplifying relationships between phenomena, failing to acknowledge the influence of social structure and culture on people's experiences, and assuming that the structure of opportunities is set (Watts & Kidd, 2000). There have, however, been some newer orientations to career counselling that take the view that there are multiple realities, that individuals construct their own reality, and that therefore there are many versions of people's career experiences (Watts & Kidd, 2000). Exploring career-counselling interventions in these ways opens up possibilities for multiple interpretations of the career-counselling process and of clients' accounts of their career development. They do not replace understandings based on underlying cognitions and individual agency, rather, they offer additional lenses through which to view the process.

Kidd's (2007) model of career-counselling stages and tasks views career-counselling process as comprising four stages, with associated tasks. The first stage is building the relationship. The main task from this stage is to establish the working alliance. In the second stage, which is enabling clients' self-understanding, has the key task of helping clients assess their attributes and their situation. The third stage, exploring new perspectives, involves challenging and information giving. In the last stage, forming strategies and plans, reviewing progress and goal setting are the main activities.

Personal/Social Counselling

Personal counselling deals with emotional distress and behavioural difficulties which arise when individuals struggle to deal with developmental stages and tasks. Any aspect of development can be turned into an adjustment problem, and it is inevitable that everyone encounters, at some time, exceptional difficulty in meeting an ordinary challenge. For example, these are anxiety over a career decision, lingering anger over an interpersonal conflict, insecurities about getting older, depressive feelings when bored with work, excessive guilt about a serious mistake, a lack of assertion and confidence, grief over the loss of a loved one, disillusionment and loneliness after parents' divorce, among others. Davis et al. (2009) adds that personal counselling is used as a complement for social counselling. He added that it assists students in learning to cope with the demands in their lives. This, he outlined to entail dealing with issues such as grief/loss, suicide, family issues, relationship issues, harassment, loneliness, sadness, financial problems, health concerns, school difficulties, stress, anxiety and substance abuse.

Hughes (2014) posited that personal and social counselling should assist in awakening students to educational and vocational opportunities. Exter gave a detailed example that the image of a girl in most African communities is that of a passive, submissive person, who remains in the background. Generally, these girls have a negative self-image and a feeling of inferiority. This is increased by the attitudes of parents, teachers and society. Personal counselling empowers these girls and people in such situations, and teaches them to develop positive attitudes towards themselves, and is marked by an

ability to acknowledge areas of expertise and to be free to make positive choices.

Online Counselling

Online counselling is effective particularly when it is conducted by skilled and qualified professionals. Various terms are used for online counselling, including e-therapy (Manhal-Baugus, 2001), cyber therapy (Suler, 2000), online or Internet therapy (Rochlen, Zack & Speyer, 2004), e-mail therapy (Shapiro & Schulman, 1996), e-counselling (Tate, Jackvony & Wing, 2003), Internet counselling (Pollock, 2006), web counselling (Young, 2002), cyber counselling (Maples & Han, 2008), and therapy-e-mail (Murphy & Mitchell, 1998). A number of definitions of online counselling have been proposed, including the following. (Bloom, 2008) defines online counselling as “the practice of professional counselling that occurs when client and counsellor are in separate or remote locations and utilize electronic means to communicate with each other”. Alleman (2002) refers to online counselling as ongoing, interactive, text-based, electronic communication between a client and a mental health professional aimed at behavioural or mental health improvement. Mallen and Vogel (2005) define online counselling as any delivery of mental and behavioural health services, including but not limited to therapy, consultation, and psychoeducation, by a licensed practitioner to a client in a non-face-to-face setting through distance communication technologies such as the telephone, asynchronous e-mail, synchronous chat, and videoconferencing.

These definitions suggest that online counselling can take many forms. Internet based mental health interventions can include mental health

information websites, online mental health screening and assessment tools, online support groups, individual therapy, group therapy and self-help programmes (Ybarra & Eaton, 2005), as well as online forums, bulletin boards and chat rooms (Fenichel et al., 2002). Individual therapy carried out over the Internet can include asynchronous methods, such as email, or synchronous methods, such as web-based messaging (instant messaging), chat, videoconferencing or voice-over IP (Internet phone) (Kanani & Regehr, 2003). Virtual reality therapy (Luo, 2009) and online video game therapy (Wilkinson, Ang, & Goh, 2008) are two additional emerging online modalities. Online counselling may be provided as the primary treatment modality or as an adjunct to more traditional forms of mental health treatment (Wells, Mitchell, Finkelhor, & Becker-Blease 2007).

The advent of Information and Communication Technology has brought about the diversity in counselling methodologies. It was discovered gradually over the years that it is possible to administer e-counselling in schools to provide remote counselling to students over a long distance. Researchers in this area have given several definitions of e-counselling. E-counselling is an electronic way of receiving supportive counselling either through an exchange of emails, live webcam session over the Internet or via telephone and through digital games. Though face-to-face counselling has been the predominant practice before the emergence of e-counselling, e-counselling has an edge over face-to-face because of its versatility and relative low cost. E-counselling uses ICT resources to engage clients in counselling services. E-counselling is often referred to by many scholars as online counselling or Internet counselling.

The world is now a global village for which information can easily be shared irrespectively of the distance and location. Challenges posed by the traditional face-to-face counselling have practically been fully or partially dealt with through the advent of ICT and this has opened up a new era for the counselling profession. Thus, ICT has created opportunities for counselling centers to be established and to reach many people around the world. Therefore, Zamani (2009) indicated that technological advances and emphasis on time-limited, inexpensive treatment have ushered in counselling through the use of communication via Internet.

Counselling is a necessity and indispensable tool in senior high school education. The zeal and the youthful exuberance to explore the ICT world could of course be geared towards helping and shaping students to meet the running pace of technology. Ralls (2011) points out that professional counsellors in schools are responsible for providing students with a schedule of times, during which the online counselling services are available, including a reasonable anticipated response time. This provides students with an alternative means of contacting the school counsellors at other times, including emergencies (Ralls, 2011).

E-counselling is an ideal platform for counselling in this technological age to reach remote students. Sanders and Rosenfield (1998) define e-counselling as a counselling method through the medium of telecommunication technologies such as telephone, internet and teleconferencing. Digital counselling game is also gradually emerging as an effective tool to leverage students into holistic self-management and development (Bada, 2013).

Technological Tools for Online Counselling

Traditional face-to-face counselling was by far the most common method of counselling that has been used for a long time before the emergence of ICT. In spite of the existence of ICT methods of counselling, traditional face-to-face counselling is still practised. Ralls (2011) believed that the traditional face-to-face counselling may never be entirely eliminated. Both methods need to exist alongside each other in order to complement each other where necessary.

There are many methods for using ICT in counselling and each respective method is used based on the relevance and model for counselling. Zamani (2009) and Shiller (2009) identified five e-counselling tools: these are email, chat, web-based messaging, video-conferencing and text messaging or short message system (SMS). Future-based simulation with role-playing in which learners' imaginations are engaged is one of the most effective strategies for learning and to develop career and life management (Jarvis & Gangitano, 2007). Digitizing a real life situation in the form of the game is currently an important tool to sensitize and expose students to the realities of life. The increasing pace of technological change could see more of these technologies cropping up as a means of sharing information. Counselling as a professional activity is obliged to embrace these technologies as they develop and mature.

Email

Electronic mail, widely known as email is a form of communication transmitted electronically using computers. It is tremendously faster than all previous means of communication, for instance sending letters using the

traditional postal system. It is therefore not surprising that email has been widely adopted by a large section of the world's population as their preferred means of communication. It is widely used in business communication because of its nearly instantaneous nature. Sending email is free, except the cost of paying for the infrastructure such as a computer and internet connection. It goes without saying that to have access to email there must be electricity. In that connection, most rural dwellers in the world may not have email facilities because most rural areas around the world have no electricity.

Zamani (2009) points out that email is an ideal platform or medium for people with different time schedules, providing an opportunity for introspective responses. Email is used as an electronic tool for counselling services, but it requires that both the counsellor and the client have access to the facility in order for the counselling to take place. In this connection, counsellors in the ICT departments of the various senior high schools should create email accounts for students as a motivation to use the medium for counselling services.

The relevance of email in counselling cannot be overemphasized. It is important that students disclose information deemed necessary for counsellors to consider in rendering efficient counselling services. Consequently, clients may forget to raise vital information during a face-to-face session, but email contact allows the clients ample time without pressure to provide that information through text. Shiller (2009) reveals that emails can be used by clients as a self-monitoring facility. With the proliferation of ICT tools, students seeking counselling remotely can use the platform at any convenient time with the counsellor provided there is an availability of Internet. The

thesis has demonstrated that students face life challenges through their life stories and their reasons for their reluctance in seeking counselling through the face-to-face session.

The confidentiality of the client in counselling is a very sensitive issue and crucial in counselling which calls for careful handling on the part of the counsellor. However, sending email is associated with security issues which make it difficult for the counsellor to guarantee a water-tight confidentiality. The world is now flush with information and knowledge for which leakage of confidential information about someone could create a serious jeopardy. Ralls (2011) worries about the confidentiality issues associated with the use of email in counselling, and cautions that email conversations are not secured without any means to protect it. However, he advises that confidential information on the Internet can be shared over a secured server; otherwise, only general information could be requested and provided. Indeed, emails can also be encrypted over the Internet for secure confidential materials. Conversely, when the email is not encrypted, then it is best to ensure that the information provided is general. This is a precautionary measure to ensure its (data) safety.

Web-Based Messaging

Web-based messaging is the newest form of e-counselling (Zamani, 2009). Web-based counselling is a method of service delivery with the potential to supplant traditional face-to-face counselling thereby releasing resources to engage in counselling either by peer counselling or with a professional counsellor. Unlike counselling with a professional counsellor, Wang et al., (2010) described peer counselling as a form of counselling which focuses on academic work. They further added that college peer counsellors

use this method for students to assist themselves by exploring and resolving personal concerns. Students are more likely to discuss personal concerns with a peer counsellor rather than a school counsellor or a teacher or other professional counsellors. Zamani (2009) also indicated that web technologies allow the counsellor and the client to interact in a secure, web-based environment using a third-party host. Dzulkefli et al., (2012) identified 3,000 web technologies that are reported to be available on the Internet and are widely being used in education. Consequently, schools are already motivated by these technologies for counselling, especially in the developed countries and have adopted to provide counselling services to students. Ghanaian counsellors are still yet to adopt most of these facilities largely because the Internet is not yet well developed and is very slow at times. In spite of the significant strides achieved by the traditional face-to-face counselling practices, web application is gradually supplanting it though the two are often used in parallel.

Instant Messaging and Chat

Instant messaging and chat are communication technologies which use text-based communication. The communication often involves two or more people over the Internet or other related networks. Instant messaging (IM) is a private network communication between two users, whereas a chat session is the network communication between two or more users (Jennings et al., 2006).

Africa is considered as one of the continents for which mobile telephony usage is high (Aker & Mbiti, 2010). Aker and Mbiti (2010) observed that mobile telephony has brought new possibilities to the African continent. They also believe that mobile phones can connect people anywhere,

highlighting the connection of individuals to individuals and across urban to rural and rich to the poor divide. In this case, counsellors could take up the advantage of the widely used device to efficiently engage clients in counselling services. IM or chat applications are often designed for portable devices like mobile phones. Chat provides virtual group session for chatting, and permits more than one person for information sharing or counselling services. Counsellors could virtually engage students into counselling with the intent of providing group or individual counselling.

Zamani (2009) described chat and IM as synchronous (happens in real-time), and noted that participants have to be logged on at the same time for chatting or messaging. In this regard, time and scheduling become vital since parties have to be on the platform at the same time. Chat or IM sessions can either be private, where each user is invited to join the session, or public, where users also join the session on their own initiative (Jennings et al., 2006). In addition, some IM systems allow file transfers, webcam usage, using privacy controls, maintaining buddy lists, voice chat sessions, and other options (Jennings et al., 2006). Grohol (2003) also identified chat as one of the widely used forums for online counselling in the world. Chats and IM platforms virtually run on portable device, ranging from standard mobile phones (Aker & Mbiti, 2010) to smart phones. The widely used public IM networks include AOL Instant Messenger (AIM), Skype, Microsoft messenger (MSN) or Yahoo messenger (YMSG), though there are other useful IM networks for counselling. The user name is usually defined as a unique name when using the platform.

Considering the enormous relevance of using instant messaging or chat in counselling, Ralls (2011) disagreed, and was of the view that chat rooms do not offer enough confidentiality to the clients. He further argued that they are best used for distributing general information to an individual or group of students rather than using it for more confidential issues. This is because chat messages can be hacked, and the intended confidential information may be leaked to the public depending on the intent of the hack. However, he alluded that secure live chat usually requires a messenger service housed in a secure site within a school website or on other secured software such as Blackboard or Moodle. Nonetheless, the security issues and confidentiality can easily be controlled. For instance, instant messaging software such as Yahoo messenger and AIM are not secure methods of chatting, and care must be exercised about the kinds of information that need to be shared over the platform.

Video Conferencing

Down (2009) described video-conferencing as a method of conferencing between two or more locations where both sound and vision are transmitted and received. The platform allows simultaneous interactive communication between users. In its most basic form, a video-conference involves transmission of image and voice of the participants over a long distance. Optional sources include still images and/or moving sequences from a video recorder, a DVD or a PC (Down, 2009). The platform is dynamic and can also be used for other purposes in an educational set up. Suler (2000) described video conferencing as synchronous (real time). In this regard, teachers can also use the platform for virtual learning, especially for online and distance learning. This is to bridge the gap between students and the

teacher. The traditional face-to-face counselling involves the physical presence of the counsellor and counsellee who engage in information exchange with the former rendering counselling services, and this is similar to the video conferencing. However, video-conferencing provides participants with the visual as well as spoken communication. In spite of having a serene environment for the conduct of video conferencing for participants, Down (2009) indicated that a basic conference requires a television camera to capture images of the participants, a microphone to pick up their speech and a means of transferring this sound and vision information to the remote location. Video conferencing requires the participants to sit in front of a camera and are indeed expected to have compatible video equipment (Zamani, 2009).

Suler (2000) discussed the importance of video conferencing in psychotherapy in cyberspace for which he discovered that video conferencing provides multiple sensory cues, such as visual appearance, body language and vocal expression that can provide valuable information for understanding the client. Zamani (2009) also argued that video conferencing may be less ambiguous than typed text, which may lead to fewer misunderstandings. As much as speaking is faster than typing, video conferencing conveys information more quickly, and readily has a consequential benefit to those who express themselves better through speaking than writing.

Though video conferencing may be quite expensive to set up in schools, its impact on counselling cannot be overlooked. Unlike the chat platform, it also allows counselling of two or more students at the same time. Students on holidays can still use video conferencing to seek guidance and counselling services, especially in areas of health, academic and career

development. Hence, it is important to raise awareness among students to accept this use of electronic means of counselling.

There are challenges that impede the smooth running of video conferencing. The quality of the received images can be compromised by the technology. The body language can be lost if movement is jerky or picture quality is reduced. Body language is a form of communication which helps counsellors to identify certain facts about their client even if the client is not disclosing the truth. Also, there may be delays in the sound. When this happens, it is not good to continue exchanging information using the platform. The session becomes inappropriate because the sound comes in pieces and it becomes extremely difficult to put the pieces together in order to understand each other. This creates significant interruption when dealing with a group of students synchronously.

Digital Games in Counselling

Game is a competition among players or against oneself (Reisch, 2008). Bada (2013) described games as a set of activities that involves one or more players who has goals, constraints, payoffs and consequence. The motivational aspect of a game is to win or play for fun. The thrilling part is the failure to attain the desired winning points. This, intention drives people to continue playing. Students may have perceived winning as the motivational factor but, games are usually meant to carry a message or to educate. Different kinds of games for example; role play, simulations, knowledge games have existed for a long time. The current generation's taste for technology is overwhelming.

ICT is still gradually developing in Ghana and Africa as a whole. As a consequence, digitizing a real life situation in the form of a game is a huge motivation for students to use. Some students do not give serious attention to seeking for guidance and counselling services from professionals. Although a digital game may not be popularly known as a tool to facilitate counselling in the Ghanaian context, nevertheless a digital game simulates a real life situation and provides students with the opportunity to ask questions and clarification through the game. In spite of the above discussed electronic platform to facilitate information sharing between the counsellor and the client digital game can also facilitate student development by providing relevant information to students on their academic progression, health issues and career choices. Students can adequately learn from playing and this enhances the understanding of the game platform in relation to real life situations.

Real game is a type of digital game that seeks to focus solely on students' counselling services (Jarvis & Gangitano, 2007). Digital real game is an electronic game that simulates a real life situation in the form of role play. Real game is an original game purposely designed to enhance counselling for students, especially in their career development. Real game programmes are also designed to bring real life into the classroom. The educational curriculum which recognizes real game focuses on teaching useful or practical skills through non-threatening role-play activities. Jarvis and Gangitano (2007) estimate that millions of children and adults today are engaged daily in the programmes of the real game series, thereby acquiring critical career management skills that they would use throughout their lives. Jarvis and Gangitano (2007) believes that digital real game increases awareness of

potentially satisfying career opportunities, and gaining hope and confidence about their future. Despite the instituted counselling unit in schools, Jarvis and Gangitano (2007) believe that educators find it difficult to help students to make informed career decisions in an area of academic accountability and high stakes testing.

Digital game concept as presented in this study was to demonstrate its relevance and how digital game can be used to augment counselling services in schools. Digital game is not just a game that students play for point, more than that, it is a platform that focuses on helping students to understand real life situations, and the intent of leading them to make an informed decision regarding their academic and career development. Digital games practically provide students with the opportunity to find questions about their future through role-play and scenarios relevant to their current development and future lives. The game shows students how their school works, social life, work and community experience contribute to the many opportunities open to them.

Benefits of Online Counselling in Schools

In spite of the benefits associated with the traditional face-to-face counselling, e-counselling is more flexible and has diverse benefits to deal with students' health, academic and career development. The underneath are some benefits of e-counselling services.

Convenience

E-counselling is convenient to use. The electronic method of counselling can either be synchronous or asynchronous. Both parties (client and counsellor) can access the services anytime and anywhere. Unlike the

face-to-face method, clients are not confined to the limits of traditional counselling services. E-counselling is intended to increase easy accessibility, save resources and decrease frustration. Life design development process is continuous and must be consistent with the monitoring of students' life development. Thus, e-counselling offers the opportunity for students to access the service anytime including the holidays. In this way counsellors are able to keep in touch while students are far apart. As a result, e-counselling makes it convenient for students to contact counsellors remotely.

Cost savings for travel, accommodation and time

Acquiring the resources such as mobile phone or laptop to use for counselling services may be expensive. However, one enjoys cost savings for travel, accommodation and time, once the tools have been acquired. This is because the counsellor and counsellee may live far apart from the counselling unit or office. Instead of the time and traveling expenses involved to enable the parties to meet, e-counselling offers both parties the alternative to engage in counselling services, thereby saving time and travel expenses. It is of tremendous benefits to people living in remote or isolated areas, people homebound due to disability or agoraphobia, those relocating but still wanting to work with their current therapist, and people with fast-paced lifestyles or unusual employment schedules (Attridge, 2004; Collie, Cubranic & Long, 2002; Robson, 2000; Stevens & Shulman, 2003; Sussman, 2004). Another benefit of online counselling services is that clients have the opportunity to be served by specialists in their areas of concern regardless of geographical location (Sussman, 1998).

Time control (time management)

Time is a vital resource that once lost cannot be recovered. Time needs to be managed effectively if one intends to achieve success in professional life. E-counselling provides the opportunity for the counsellor and client to arrange and agree on the time of meeting. Having decided on the time for the meeting, e-counselling encourages more control and less time wasted on non-agenda items. Thus, the parties are focused on the main agenda for which the time was arranged.

Reduction of potential intimidation of client

A student may be addicted to an illegal activity such as drugs which is not acceptable in the rest of the society. Morality varies from society to society; for instance, homosexuality is widely condemned in Ghana while it is even legalized in many parts of the world. Some students may not withstand the embarrassment and end up committing suicide if their personal secrets are disclosed to the public. Others may never disclose their personal problems even to their closest friends and therefore find it extremely embarrassing and difficult to disclose to a counsellor. In this regard, e-counselling offers the opportunity for clients to discuss and share their problems without letting out their identity to the counsellors. There are several e-counselling platforms that render counselling to client without knowing them. Also, child abuse victims or people who are facing criminal charges can testify over a video link without fear of being intimidated.

Online counselling is considered to be cost-effective for clients and increases a sense of privacy while decreasing concerns about interpersonal risk. According to Sampson, Kolodinsky and Greeno (1997), typically in the

Western world, where online counselling seems to be more popular, online counsellors may charge as little as \$15 per e-mail and up to \$65 for a 1-hour chat session which is not comparable to what is charged in face-to-face encounter. Clients may feel more comfortable and emotionally open in their own homes. They also can share their sessions with significant others, if they desire.

For counsellors, online counselling offers cost-containment. This is the ability to potentially serve more clients daily, scheduling flexibility, and the opportunity to interact with peers in other locations (Attridge, 2004). One can work from his or her home without renting office space, hiring ancillary help, or providing furnishings. Entire sessions are automatically recorded and preserved, eliminating the need for progress notes and enhancing supervisory capabilities (Sussman, 2004). A counsellor could be supervised by another professional in a completely different location without any concerns about scheduling conflicts. Some even argue that counsellors have a high ethical standard with Internet counselling because the clients have transcripts of the sessions immediately and readily available (Robson, 2000). Professionals working in online counselling find that most individuals are more willing to write while asking for information than they might not otherwise solicit (Murphy & Mitchell, 1998) in verbal communication. It also reduces likelihood of counsellor dependence and allows the potential for family members to be involved in the therapeutic process (Collie et al., 2002).

An extensive review of the literature presents these perceived advantages of online counselling that are investigated in this study: accessibility, convenience and availability, sense of safety, anonymity, and

elimination of social stigma. Online counselling is credited for being accessible to anyone who can log on to the Internet. This is true even among those who reside in remote areas or are geographically isolated (Cook & Doyle, 2002; Haberstroh, Parr, Bradley, Morgan-Fleming, & Gee, 2008), and those who have physical limitations and may not be able to leave the house (Cook & Doyle 2002; Maples & Han, 2008), have social phobia (Fenichel et al., 2002), and have tentative feelings about going through face-to-face counselling (Barnett, 2005). Thus, having Internet access alone can enable a person to undergo online counseling.

Online counselling is seen as convenient and readily available because clients can access counselling services at any time of the day, when they feel most in need of it, and even in the comforts of their home (Haberstroh, Duffey, Evans, Gee, & Trepal, 2007; Peterson & Beck, 2003; Richards, 2009). E-mail counseling, in particular, gives the perception that the counsellor is available 24/7 due to its asynchronous nature (Manhal-Baugus, 2001). In turn, this allows counselees to receive instant advice or information from counsellors (Griffiths & Cooper, 2003) even beyond normal office hours (Menon & Rubin, 2011; Young, 2005).

Online counselling may increase the sense of safety because clients are able to receive help from the counsellor within their home environment (Centore & Milacci, 2008). This may make it easier for them to disclose their personal issue and express themselves more fully. Anonymity creates a safe distance between the clients and therapists, thereby allowing clients to feel less defensive, less pressured, and less uncomfortable in disclosing embarrassing and very personal thoughts and behaviours (Bambling, King, Reid, & Wegner,

2008; Manhal-Baugus, 2001; Suler, 2000). Leibert, Archer, Munson, and York (2006) found that loss of nonverbal information, which is often cited as the main disadvantage of online counseling, is offset by the advantage of anonymity. Because the client does not have to be physically present in the clinic or office of the counsellor, online counselling may be effective in reducing, if not eliminating, social stigma (Menon & Rubin, 2011).

The time delay inherent in the asynchronous method of online counselling gives counsellors and clients the opportunity to read, reread, and reflect on their thoughts, insights, questions, or stories. Moreover, clients may reply when they feel ready or when they have reflected on their experiences instead of being pressured to think quickly or being interrupted by the counsellor (Centorre & Milacci, 2008; Haberstroh et al., 2008; Tulião, Torres, & Hechanova, 2010). The electronic nature of online counselling provides counsellors and counselees a permanent record of their conversations. Counselling transcripts are also easy to save and to access, which allows for monitoring of client's progress, identification of counsellor's counselling style, or use for other future references (Pollock, 2006). Compared with face-to-face counselling, transcripts reduce the need to memorize and recall information. Rereading the transcripts could enable counsellors determine which issues need to be discussed further in succeeding sessions (Tulião et al., 2010). The act of writing gives the client control of the content, the pace, and depth of the written material, which can foster a sense of psychological safety (Wright & Chung, as cited in Richards & Vigano, 2013). Some counselees perceive writing or typing as therapeutic (Wright, 2002) as it can facilitate self-disclosure and ventilation that can promote self-awareness (Suler, 2000).

Online counselling enhances patient's autonomy in the therapeutic relationship and decreases the power differential between client and therapist. This is particularly evident in e-mail counselling where clients are allowed to transmit their ideas without interruption (Finfgeld, 1999; Yager, 2001). Because online counselling is a new method in counselling, it may be particularly effective in gaining the trust of adolescents who desire novelty and creativity (Mehta & Chalhoub, 2006). In addition to the above, other researchers found that online counselling is viewed as cost effective (Cook & Doyle, 2002). Griffiths and Cooper (2003) found that online counselling is advantageous in that professional fees of online counsellors are often cheaper than those of face-to-face counsellors. While there is the added expense in terms of Internet access, this is far less than the cost of travelling to see a counsellor. Additionally, a study by Richards (2009) showed that online counselling can serve as a gateway to traditional counselling services (i.e., it can be seen as the first point of contact that could impel clients to seek further counselling in other forms). Lastly, Menon and Rubin (2011) found that online counselling enables counsellors to answer clients' questions about diverse topics such as relationships, diagnoses, and health issues.

Problems of Online Counselling

The very nature of online counselling inevitably leads to a number of disadvantages, which include the loss of the human factor and the lack of non-verbal cues. These are actually the strongest argument in favour of face-to-face counselling and are the factors looked into in this study.

A major problem with regard to online counselling is the loss of the human factor brought about by the distance between the counsellor and the

client (Bambling et al., 2008). This may reduce rapport, sense of intimacy, and trust (Griffiths & Cooper, 2003; Menon & Rubin, 2011; Suler, 2000). In a study by Lewis, Coursol and Wahl (2003), both clients and counsellors acknowledge the lack of emotional bond in online counselling such that as clients experience a depth of emotional experiences, their relationships with their counsellors appear to remain in the cognitive level. Related to the loss of human factor is the lack of nonverbal cues as the counsellor and the client do not see each other (Bambling et al., 2008; Menon & Rubin, 2011; Tulião et al., 2010). This could lead to problems in communicating oneself and in assessing client concerns (Haberstroh et al., 2008). The above weaknesses of online counselling are the inherent advantages of face-to-face counseling. Because of the personal connection between the therapist and client, it is easier to establish rapport, provide empathy and emotional support, and build a therapeutic relationship with the client.

Limited accessibility, time delay, and technological failure revolve around technology. For instance, not everyone has access to the Internet. Thus, this digital divide indicates that not everyone can undergo online counselling, particularly those with meager resources (Chope, 2009; Griffiths & Cooper, 2003). Furthermore, an online counselling session tends to have a slow speed of text exchange, which reduces the length and depth of interaction (Bambling et al., 2008; Haberstroh et al., 2008; Tulião et al., 2010). Technological failure can occur in the form of getting lagged, disconnected, or hacked. In times when the Internet gets lagged or disconnected, the flow in communication is consequently impeded (Menon & Rubin, 2011; Tulião et al., 2010). This is especially problematic when the presenting problem is severe or is in need of

immediate response from the counsellor (Haberstroh et al., 2008). Therefore, an alternative means to communicate may be needed to continue the conversation should any of these happen (Haberstroh, Duffey, Evans, Gee, & Trepal, 2007). The possibility of getting hacked raises the question on the confidentiality of the session and privacy of the clients, since transcripts of conversations and electronic records may be accessed by other people, whether authorized or unauthorized (Griffiths & Cooper, 2003; Young, 2005; Rochlen et al., 2004). Because of the relative novelty of online counseling, counsellors and clients alike may lack the technological skills and Internet know-how to engage in counselling online (Alleman, 2002). Thus, only those who are comfortable with technology may benefit from this mode of therapy (Haberstroh et al., 2007).

Lastly, specific to text-based communication like the email, typed text may come across as cold, formal, and lacking in supportive and empathic tone (Stofle, 1997; Suler, 2000). Written messages may also be misinterpreted, especially by hypersensitive clients (Yager, 2003; Ybarra & Eaton, 2005). Clients may also tend to edit themselves and overanalyze what was said, thereby hindering the session to proceed spontaneously and candidly (Tuliao et al., 2010).

Very much related to the foregoing disadvantages of online counselling are some ethical concerns and considerations that need to be addressed, such as client's suitability for online counseling, the need for informed consent including the nature of the services, and the measures to be undertaken in case of disruptions in the session due to technology (Maheu & Gordon, 2000). The American Counselling Association (2014) tried to address

these by devoting an entire section on the use of the Internet in the practice of counselling in their Code of Ethics. Even so, much still needs to be done to regulate the practice of online counselling to protect both the client and the counsellor.

Empirical Review

Attitudes Toward Online Counselling

In Nigeria, following the establishment of an online guidance and counselling service at the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Adebawale (2014) conducted a study on the disposition of students to online counselling. The study was to examine OAU undergraduate students' disposition towards the online counselling services after 24 months. One thousand two hundred undergraduate students of the university participated in the study. The sample was made up of 900 students who made use of the site during the period and 300 students who were selected by proportionate stratified random sampling from students' hostels and two clusters off campus. The instruments for the data collection were the OAU online counsellors' software purposefully developed for the study, an online feedback questionnaire and a self-constructed questionnaire. The data gathered were analysed using simple frequencies.

The results of the study revealed that students were mostly favourably disposed to online counselling services. The results indicated that 94.9% of the respondents strongly agreed to having a favourable disposition about online counselling. The results meant that undergraduate university students were very much comfortable with the implementation and use of the online counselling and guidance services implemented in the school. This also

suggests that, first degree university students have a positive attitude towards online counselling. In addition, the study revealed that students' disposition to online counselling was in terms of the trust, curiosity and their enthusiasm. The result revealed that undergraduate students trusted the online counselling services provided and did not demonstrate a withdrawal attitude to the utilization of the services. They trusted the online counsellors with their personal and intimate issues. They were curious about trying the services and hence aroused their enthusiasm to the use of online counselling. The results indicated that undergraduate students of the university see the online counselling services to be beneficial in nature and have a positive attitude towards the utilization of the service.

In Ghana, Awabil and Akosah (2018) charted in explaining the phenomenon of students' attitude towards online counselling. They, conducted a study to investigate the attitude of Ghanaian students towards online counselling, with University of Cape Coast as the locale. The descriptive survey study employed a sample of 600 students made up of 360 males and 240 females from a total population of all regular undergraduate students in the University of Cape Coast. The proportionate stratified sampling technique was employed for the sampling. Two online counselling attitude scales were used for the collection of the data. The study sought to find out the specific attitudes students have towards online counselling in terms of specific positive attitude and specific negative attitudes. Means and standard deviations were employed as the tools of analysis for the data collected in generating the findings.

The study revealed that on the score of the positive attitude towards online counselling, respondents demonstrated an affirmative response. On the score of the negative attitude towards online counselling too, students demonstrated an affirmative response. This means that it was revealed from the study conducted that university students have both positive and negative attitude towards online counselling. In the two online attitude scale questionnaires used in Awabil and Akosah's study, the positive attitude items represented the beneficial nature of online counselling items, and the negative attitude items, representing the utilization attitude. Hence it is concluded from their findings that undergraduate students from the University of Cape Coast have positive attitude towards the beneficial nature of online counselling and also have a negative attitude towards the utilization of online counselling. This means that university undergraduate students possess a mixed reaction towards the overall attitude towards online counselling. Although they see online counselling to be beneficial to them, utilizing the service will be uncomfortable to them, hence expressing a negative attitude towards the utilization of the online counselling.

The attitudes of clients or potential clients toward online versus face-to-face counselling are likewise mixed. A study by Rochlen, Beretvas, and Zach (2004) reported that undergraduate students expressed more favorable attitudes towards face-to-face than online counselling services. However, a more recent study of college students reveal that 64.4% endorse online counselling as a good alternative for their mental health needs (Brown, 2012). Similar to the attitudes of providers, the attitudes of clients appear to be a function of experience. Skinner and Latchford (2006) found that clients

involved in Internet support groups had significantly more positive attitudes towards using computers to communicate with therapists as opposed to clients of face-to-face therapy.

University Students' Attitudes Towards Online Counselling with Respect to Gender

Adebowale (2014) conducted a research titled; Disposition of students to online counselling: The Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Nigerian experience. The study was designed to examine the undergraduates' disposition to the online counselling services after 24 months. It also investigated the prevalent disposition, dispositional types and distribution of students across the types. One thousand, two hundred (1200) undergraduates of the University participated in the study comprising 900 students who made use of the site during the period and 300 students who were selected by proportionate stratified random sampling from the students' hostels and two clusters off campus. The instruments for the study were the OAU online counsellors' software purposely developed for this study, an online feedback questionnaire and a self-constructed questionnaire. Data collected were analysed using simple percentages, ANOVA, factor, cluster and discriminant analyses. The results showed that students were mostly (94.9%) favourably disposed to online counselling services in OAU, particularly in form of trust (44.4%), curiosity (31.9%) and enthusiasm (13.9%). The results show that in both cases there are significant differences in students' disposition (For sex, $t = -2.872$, $p < .05$, for their awareness, $t = 5.199$, $p < .05$). With regard to sex, the female students were found to possess significantly better (mean = 58.50)

disposition to OAU online counselling services than their male counterpart (mean = 54.016).

Attitudes toward online counselling also vary depending on individual characteristics. Young (2005) reported that online counselling clients tend to be Caucasian, middle-aged males with at least a bachelor's degree who cited anonymity and convenience as reasons for seeking online versus face-to-face counselling.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This section describes the research methods employed in conducting the entire study in achieving the stated objectives by exploring the attitude university students have towards online counselling. The chapter covers the research design employed for the study, population, sample and sampling procedures, data collection instrument, data collection procedures, data processing and analysis and the ethical consideration.

Research Design

The descriptive survey design was employed as the research design for the study. The chosen design is appropriate for the study because the researcher intended to investigate and describe issues as they occur naturally without any form of manipulation entertained. The choice was the best fit for the study because it helped by presenting a comprehensive picture of the situation investigated and this could afford policy makers the opportunity to design measures in bringing counselling close to the reach of every student. A descriptive survey research means the collection and analysis of responses of large sample of people to polls and questionnaires designed to elicit their opinions, attitudes and sentiments about a particular issue (Babbie, 1997). The descriptive survey design is a type of design that can be explained as the process of gathering data in order to answer research questions or test hypothesis which concerns the existing status of a phenomenon. This type of

survey attempts to provide an accurate and objective description of a picture of an on-going situation or real life situation (Quartey & Awoyemi, 2002). Koul (1997) indicated that survey studies are conducted to collect detailed description on existing phenomenon with the intent of employing data to justify current conditions, practices or make more intelligent plans for improving them. He further explained that, in addition to analysing, interpreting and reporting on the status of an organisation for future guidance, descriptive surveys can be used to determine the adequacy of an activity by comparing results to establish standards.

Rea and Parker (1992) maintained that for a survey to be accurate, the sample being questioned must be representative of the population on key characteristics such as sex, age, religion and cultural background. To ensure similarity to the larger population, descriptive survey researches usually try to make sure that they have a random sample, a method of selection in which everyone in the population has an equal chance of being selected.

More so, Bell (1999) descriptive research designs places emphasis on fact-finding but unable to prove causal relationships between variables. Bell also cautioned that with descriptive survey great care must be taken to ensure that the sample population is truly representative of the whole population. The descriptive survey design is ideal because this study was poised to examine the attitudes of university students towards online counselling in the University of Ghana, Accra.

Descriptive survey was chosen because it had the advantages of producing good responses from a range of people. At the same time, it provided a meaningful picture of events and sought to explain people's

opinion and behaviour on the basis of data gathered at a point in time. Furthermore, it can be used with greater confidence with regards to a particular question of special interest or value to the researcher. Also, in-depth follow up questions can be asked and items that are not clear can be explained using descriptive design (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

Despite the advantages alluded to the use of descriptive survey design, Marczyk, DeMatteon and Festinger (2005) observe that survey designs, like all non-experimental designs, no matter how convincing the data may be, cannot rule out extraneous variables as the cause of what is being observed. This is because descriptive survey designs do not have control over the variables and the environment that they study. This means that findings from survey are most often influenced by factors other than those attributed by the researcher. Seifert and Hoffgung (1991) also identify problems of survey designs to include the possibility of producing untrustworthy result because they may delve into people's private matters. Salant and Dillman (1994) added that the descriptive survey research sometimes provide results that can be influenced, and at times biased.

Population

The population of the study was 17,815. The population comprised all first and second year undergraduate students in the College of Humanities, University of Ghana. Specifically, focus was given to five faculties in the College of Humanities. The College of Humanities was chosen because it is the main college of the University that contain many faculties, departments units and programmes with an astronomical students' population. The college's students' population stand as three-quarters of the whole university,

hence its usage because it could serve as fair representation of the whole student body. Due to the huge numbers recorded in the college, it is perceived that students have various socio demographic backgrounds. The third and fourth year students were excluded from the study because the counselling services appeared to be patronized mostly by new entrants than already existing individuals in any organization (Raunic & Xenos, 2008) and for that matter the university first and second year students were seen to be new in the institutions and would demand counselling services than their colleagues in the third and fourth year. The population distribution of the respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: *Population Distribution of Respondents*

School	Population of Respondents					
	Level 100		Level 200		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Business	460	337	451	301	911	638
Arts	1,080	1,512	1,145	1,603	2,225	3,115
Languages	540	756	572	801	1,112	1,557
Social Sciences	1,623	2,268	1,719	2,404	3,342	4,672
Performing Arts	43	82	47	71	90	153
Total (17,815)	3,746	4,955	3,934	5,180	7,680	10,135

Source: Students Records Unit, UG (2018)

Sample and Sampling Procedure

It has been confirmed by some scholars in Social Science that for a sample to be representative in a study, it must be a good proportion of the population (Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2005; Zikmund, 1994). This

establishes the fact that samples of the study population are taken when it is not feasible to carry out whole population studies. Thus observing the characteristics of a sample, one can make certain inferences about the characteristics of the population from which it is drawn. Sampling enables the researcher to study a relatively small number of units in place of the target population, and to obtain a representation of the whole target population. In fact, “samples are expected to be representative. For that reason, samples are expected to be chosen by means of sound methodological principles” (Sarantakos, 1997, p. 140).

The sample size used for the study was 500 students. In selecting the sample for the study, the table of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) was used to as a guide. According to Krejcie and Morgan, the minimum sample size for a population of 17,815 is 377. The researcher, however, increased it to 500 to cater for situations where all responses were not ascertained. The stratified sampling technique, specifically, the proportionate stratified sampling technique was used to determine the sample size that was selected from the five faculties and also distributed among the gender within the college of humanities. The stratified sampling technique was selected because the researcher wanted to avoid biases in gathering data from a dominant stratum.

In arriving at the sample size for each stratum, the population of each stratum was divided by the total population for the study and the results was multiplied by the desired sample size. For example, in determining the sample size for the level 100 males in Business School, the population of level 100 males in the Business School (460) was divided by the total population for the study (17,815) and the result multiplied by the sample size for the study (500)

to arrive at 13 male students from level 100 Business School. This method was repeated for the remaining strata. The result of the sample distribution is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: *Sample Distribution of the Respondents*

School	Sample of Respondents					
	Level 100		Level 200		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F
Business	13	9	13	8	26	17
Arts	30	42	32	45	62	87
Languages	15	21	16	22	31	43
Social Sciences	45	64	48	67	93	131
Performing Arts	2	3	2	3	4	6
Total = 500	105	139	111	144	216	284

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The simple random sampling technique was then used to select the respondents for the study. The technique was used here because the researcher wanted case selection to be free from preconception and unfairness. This technique therefore gave all the respondents equal chance of being selected as part of the study. Specifically, the lottery method was adopted to obtain the sample unit for the study. For the lottery method, ‘Yes’ equaling the number of sample size needed for the stratum and ‘No’ making up the remaining population were written on pieces of paper and presented for students to pick at random. Students who picked ‘Yes’ were included in the study. In the process, every student was asked to pick from the sampling box a piece of paper with the afore mentioned description one after the other. When one

picks “Yes or No”, it is replaced for reshuffling and this process continued until the final respondents was identified in each stratum. The process was open as every member of each stratum had similar experience to the selection process and this made the practice fair and free from bias.

Data Collection Instrument

Instrument refers to the tools or means by which researchers attempt to measure variables or items of interest in the data collection process. Instrument for data collection is a tool that is used by researcher for collection of data in social science research (Bhandarkar & Wilkinson, 2010). It is related not only to instrument design, selection, construction, and assessment, but also the conditions under which the designated instruments are administered (Hsu & Sandford, 2010).

A questionnaire was the sole instrument used to collect data for the study. Questionnaire was employed as the data collection instrument because it is described as a structured instrument for gathering data from a potentially large number of respondents, within a shorter possible time when especially the population is easily accessible (Amedahe & Gyimah, 2005). Also, the instrument has the advantage of large collecting data over less cost relative to the deployment of other instruments like the interview guide (Osuala, 2005). The questionnaire however has the disadvantage of possessing the potential of providing untrue results as respondents could easily lie about their true feelings, especially with respect to sensitive issues (Deng, 2010).

This instrument was an adapted Online Counselling Attitude Scale of Rochlen, Beretvas and Zack (2004). This instrument by the authors were proved fit to measure the constructs as the original instrument had a reliability

Cronbach's alpha of 0.81. For the adaptation process, the word which looked foreign were made to reflect the Ghanaian context. For example, a word "divulge" as used in the original instrument was changed to read "confide" to make it clearer for respondents to understand.

This instrument was made up of 14 items soliciting for responses on respondents' demographic characteristics and their attitude towards online counselling with the utilization and beneficial sub constructs. The instrument was made up of close-ended questions. The questionnaire was divided into two sections with the first section gathering data on the demographic characteristics of the respondents. This section was made up of four questions. Respondents were to provide on formation on their gender, age, academic level, and marital status. The second section of the questionnaire solicited respondents' attitude towards online counselling. This section was made up of 10 items on the specific attitudes of university students towards online counselling. The respondents were to tick in spaces provide on the scale of "Strongly agree" (SA) =4, "Agree" (A) =3, "Disagree" (D) =2 to "Strongly Disagree" (SD) =1.

The interpretation of the mean was based on the average mean scale. With a four-point likert scale, the means scale, obtained by adding all the scales' numerical values and dividing it by the point scale, was seen to be 2.50. This means that any mean value less than 2.50 denotes a negative attitude towards online counselling, hence online counselling is non-beneficial. Any mean value more than 2.50 denotes positive attitude towards online counselling, hence online counselling is beneficial. A standard deviation above 1.00 demonstrates that respondents were dispersed in their

responses. A standard deviation below 1.00 denotes that respondents were homogenous in the responses they produced.

For the attitude towards utilization of online counselling, a statement mean more than 2.50 denotes agreement to the negative statement and hence a negative attitude towards the utilization of online counselling. This means that any mean value less than 2.50 denotes a disagreement to the negative statement and hence a positive attitude towards the utilization of online counselling. A standard deviation above 1.00 demonstrates that respondents were dispersed in their responses. A standard deviation below 1.00 denotes that respondents were homogenous in the responses they produced.

In measuring the overall attitude towards online counselling, all ten items in Section B of the questionnaire were put together to measure the construct. In doing so, the responses of the utilization items, which were negative statements, were recoded to Strongly Agree as 1, Agree as 2, Disagree as 3 and Strongly Disagree as 4, to put all ten items on the same scoring ratings. This recoded utilization construct was used in the inferential statistics (t-test and the One way ANOVA)

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was subjected to validity and reliability tests. The sample questionnaires were given to my supervisors to check its validity. The suggestions that were given by the supervisors were used to effect the necessary changes to improve upon the instruments. A pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted using 40 respondents at the University of Cape Coast. The choice of University of Cape Coast was because the characteristics and the experiences of student-teachers are not significantly different from

their colleagues in the University of Ghana. The reliability of the instrument was estimated on scale with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 programme, on the computer. An overall reliability index of 0.75 was obtained for the attitude towards online counselling construct. For the subscales, that of beneficial had a reliability index of 0.85 and the utilization had a reliability index of 0.62. The results generated support the view of Sekaran (2000) who suggested that 'alpha value less than 0.60 is considered to be poor, those in 0.70 range, acceptable and those over 0.80 high. Hence the instrument was proved valid and reliable before its administration, data collection and results generation.

Data Collection Procedure

The administration of the questionnaires was preceded by a letter of introduction from the Department of Guidance and Counselling to be given to the university authorities upon the arrival of the researcher in the University of Ghana. The distribution of the introductory letter enabled the researcher to obtain permission to collect data from the students. In order to ensure a high return rate, the instruments were administered personally by the researcher. The respondents were briefed concerning how to respond to the items and were supervised by the researcher to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered and the data collected within two weeks of instructional days.

Data Processing Analysis

In order to address the research questions and the hypotheses that were formulated to guide the study, the data obtained from respondents were filtered to remove any irrelevant responses and then coded. Afterwards, they

were processed and handled using Statistical Package for Service Solution (SPSS 23.0). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data to show the direction of the responses. Specifically, the background characteristics of the respondents were analysed with use of simple frequencies and percentages. Data gathered on Research Questions One, Two and Three were analysed with the use of means and standard deviations. The research hypotheses one and two were tested with the use of independent samples t-test and research hypothesis three tested with the use of One Way ANOVA.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues are highly relevant and require due considerations. According to Babbie and Mouton (2006), ethical standards require that researchers do not put participants in a situation where they might be at risk of harm as a result of their participation. The trustworthiness of a quantitative study is judged by whether the researcher conforms to standards for acceptable and competent practices and whether they meet standards for ethical conduct (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). It is as a result of this, that the researcher needed to prepare and consider ethical concerns as he designed the study so that a sound ethical practice was built into the study (Kreuger & Neuman, 2006).

Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009) emphasized that it is important to ensure that the way in which the research is designed is methodologically sound and morally defensible to all those who are involved in it. To ensure this the researcher will obtain consent from respondents and permission to administer the questionnaire, ensure confidentiality of their responses, and inform them about the purpose of the research.

To ensure ethics were not breached, the researcher complied with the dictates of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Cape Coast. Also, the researcher sought the consent of the various participants employed in the study. None of the respondents was made to answer a questionnaire under his or her free will. In addition, the confidentiality code of ethics was observed and respondents' information gathered were treated as such. The researcher also ensured through the validation and reliability phase of preparing the instrument that, none of the items or the process for the data collection will be an inditement on the image of the respondents.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data collected for the study. The result is discussed intermittently as and when results are described. The results were the product of the data gathered from first- and second-year students in the University of Ghana. Structured questionnaires were used to solicit the answers from the respondents. The demographic characteristics of the respondents were first analysed. The main discussion of the results followed, specifically under the various research questions guiding the study. Descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages; and means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA) were employed as the statistical tools for analysis and aided the generation of the results used for the discussion. Results were presented in the forms of tables. For the means, a mean of approximately 2.50 and above shows positive response while a mean of approximately 2.50 and below shows negative response to the statements presented to respondents. A standard deviation of less than one shows homogeneity in responses whilst a standard deviation of more than one shows diverse responses of respondents.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

For a detailed understanding of the results generated on what the attitudes of students towards online counselling was, it was deemed important by the researcher to provide a detailed description of the demography of the

respondents that partook in the study. The first four items on the questionnaire sought to find out the age distribution of the respondents, their gender distribution, their respective years in the university, and finally, their marital status. In all responses were gathered from 493 students spanning from the various schools and faculties within the College of Humanities. The demography of the respondents gathered were analysed with the use of simple frequencies and percentages. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: *Demographic Characteristics of Respondents*

Variable	Sub Variable	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	281	57.0
	Female	212	43.0
Level	100	202	41.0
	200	291	59.0
Age	17-20 years	360	73.0
	21-24 years	120	24.4
	25 years and above	13	2.6
Marital Status	Single	485	98.4
	Married	8	1.6
Total		493	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2019

The first item enquired on respondents' gender distribution. The results gathered on the gender distribution showed that majority (n = 281; 57.0%) of the respondents are male university students with the simple minority (n = 212; 43.0%) of the respondents being female university students. It could be implied from the responses gathered on the gender demography

that there appear to be more males in the universities than the females. This further suggests that education and especially, higher education, is presumed to be patronised mainly by the males than females.

The second item sought to find out the respondents' years of being in the university. This item was necessitated as the researcher was interested in finding the difference in the attitude between the years of education of the respondents. After the analysis of the data, it was revealed that majority (n = 291; 59.0%) of the respondents were second year students with the relative minority (n = 202; 41.0%) of the respondents being first year students in the university. The results obtained indicated that the responses generated for determining the attitudes of the students towards online counselling will be marginally dominated by the views of second year students. The results, as a representation of the year groups of the university students, also demonstrate that the college of humanities students are more for the second years than the first years (Student Management Information Records System, University of Ghana, 2019).

The third item asked of respondents, before their attitude towards online counselling was collected, was on their age. This question with its associated responses will aid the extent of the generalizability of the findings to be generated. The analyses of the demography on age distribution of respondents indicated that majority (n = 360; 73.0%) of the respondents were within the age brackets of 17 years to 20 years. Students who were above 20 years but less than 25 years were shown to the next to (n = 120; 24.4%) the majority age group. Respondents who were 25 years and above were the least (n = 13; 2.65) of the respondents' age group. The results gathered indicated

that students in the university are mostly within their late teens and mid-twenties, especially if they are in first and second years. The results also suggest that the overall findings of the study could be generalized to students in such settings and are mostly within the age ranges of 17year to 24 years.

The final item on the demography of the respondents was on the marital status of the respondents. This demographic characteristic ascertained gave a clearer image of the caliber of respondents addressing the need for online counseling, and in effect counseling. The data after the analysis showed that majority (n = 485; 98.4%) of the respondents are single in their marital status. The relative minority (n = 8; 1.6%) of the respondents were found to be married students. The results imply that most students enrolled on the four year programmes in the various universities are within their youthful ages and are hence not married.

Main Results and Discussions

This section presents and discusses the results obtained on the attitude students have towards online counselling and the differences that exist in the attitude between and among gender and age groups. The presentations and discussions of results were done under each of the research questions and the hypotheses that were formulated to guide the study. The results were analysed using the descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (independent samples t-test and One-way ANOVA). The results were presented in tables.

Research Question One: What is the attitude of university students towards online counselling?

The first research question was to address the attitude university students have towards online counseling. In addressing this question, a total of ten items were drawn on a four-point, Likert-type scale from strongly disagree coded as 1, disagree coded as 2, agree coded as 3 and strongly agree coded as 4. The ten items were categorised into two; five questions touching on whether online counselling is beneficial and the remaining five questions on whether online counselling would be utilized by the students.

Attitude towards the Beneficial Nature of Online Counselling

In addressing the attitude towards online counselling, the first five items were analysed with the use of means and standard deviations. The interpretation of the mean was based on the average mean score. With a four-point likert scale, the mean score, obtained by adding all the scales' numerical values and dividing it by the point scale, was seen to be 2.50. This means that any mean value less than 2.50 denotes a negative attitude towards the beneficial nature of online counselling, hence online counselling being non-beneficial. A mean value more than 2.50 denotes a positive attitude towards the beneficial nature of online counselling, hence online counselling being beneficial. A standard deviation above 1.00 demonstrates that respondents were dispersed in their responses. A standard deviation below 1.00 denotes that respondents were homogenous in the responses they produced. The results from the analysis is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: *Attitude towards the Beneficial Nature of Online Counselling*

Statement	N	Mean	SD
Using online counselling would help me learn about myself	493	2.71	.833
If a friend had personal problems, I might encourage him or her to consider online counselling	493	2.66	.806
I would confide my personal problems in an online counsellor	491	2.29	.890
It could be worthwhile to discuss my personal problems with an online counsellor	491	2.49	.856
If an online counselling were available at no charge, I would consider trying it	491	2.95	.883
Mean of Means / Average SD	491	2.62	.854

Source: Field Survey, 2019

From Table 4, it is evident that aside two statements which had the means less than the cut off of 2.50, the remaining three items scored mean points higher than the cut off point. This indicates that there appears to be a general acceptability of how beneficial online counselling is to students. For instance, respondents homogeneously agreed ($M=2.95$; $SD=.883$) to the statement that if online counseling were available at no charge, they would consider trying it. This means that university students would have no issue resorting to online counselling if it is available at no charge. This statement presupposes that university students might consider the benefits derived from online counselling to be on the same pedestal with other counselling means, such that, given it as a substitute for any of the counselling means, they will

homogeneously consider it. In furtherance, the respondents affirmed ($M=2.71$; $SD=.833$) that using online counselling would help them learn about themselves. This response from the university students suggest that online counselling provides other improved avenues that helps the counsellee attain more knowledge of him or herself. In addition, respondents reiterated ($M=2.66$; $SD=.806$) that given the beneficial significance of online counselling, they might encourage their friends to consider online counselling if their friends had personal problems. Respondents who were on the same pedestal in their responses suggested that a good testimony about the use of online counselling is not far-fetched, as individuals will easily try the use of online counselling.

Although respondents agreed on three of the items, they, however, expressed ($M = 2.49$; $SD = .856$) that it would not be worthwhile discussing their personal problems with an online counsellor. The respondents further added that ($M = 2.29$; $SD = .890$) confiding their personal problems in an online counsellor, is something they will never do. These assertions by the respondents indicate that university students, although might find online counselling to be beneficial, are skeptical about letting an unknown person in their personal problems. This further insinuates that university students might not prefer the idea that they are receiving solutions to personal issues from someone they are not seeing. They might be reading several meanings into it and then consider not opening up to such people. This results further indicates that if online counselling is tried in the universities, students might not utilize the services.

Gathering from the results generated, the overall means of means (Mean of Means = 2.62; Average SD = .854). showed that students on the average have a positive attitude towards online counselling with respect to how beneficial it is. This result suggests that students in the university see online counselling to appeal to their special needs and hence see it to be beneficial to them. It adds that if online counselling is a substitute for face to face counselling, aside the personal connections to warrant confiding in the invisible counsellor, students will have no reservations trying it.

The findings from the study is in same light with Adebowale (2014) who found from a survey among busy workers that they see online counselling to be beneficial. Sussman (2004) also revealed from studying students in the university that they perceive online counselling to be beneficial. In the Ghanaian setting, the study falls in line with Awabil and Akosah (2018) who found out on the same scale that University of Cape Coast students have positive attitude towards online counselling. These studies support the current findings that students have a positive attitude towards online counselling being beneficial. However, the current findings contrast the findings of Cook and Doyle (2002) who revealed that online counselling is not beneficial.

Attitude towards Utilisation of Online Counselling

With the quest to unravel the overall attitudes university students have towards online counselling, the next five items on the construct specifically dealt with the attitude towards utilization of online counselling. The other five items were also analysed with the use of means and standard deviations. The interpretation of the mean was based on the average mean score. With a four-point likert scale, the mean score, obtained by adding all the

scales' numerical values and dividing it by the point scale, was seen to be 2.50.

A mean score more than 2.50 denotes agreement to the negative statement and hence a negative attitude towards the utilization of online counselling. This means that any mean value less than 2.50 denotes a disagreement to the negative statement and hence a positive attitude towards the utilization of online counselling. A standard deviation above 1.00 demonstrates that respondents were dispersed in their responses. A standard deviation below 1.00 denotes that respondents were homogenous in the responses they produced. The results from the analysis is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: *Attitude towards Utilisation of Online Counselling*

Statement	N	Mean	SD
If I were having a personal problem, seeking help with an online counsellor would be the last option I would consider	491	2.68	1.679
I would feel uneasy discussing emotional problems with an online counsellor	490	2.51	1.010
I would dread explaining my problems to an Online counsellor	490	2.50	.847
I think it would take a major effort for me to schedule an appointment with an online counsellor	490	2.66	.860
I would be afraid to discuss stressful events with an online counsellor	490	2.39	.965
Mean of Means / Average SD	490	2.55	1.07

Source: Field survey, 2019

In determining the attitude of students towards the utilization of the online counselling, respondents expressed negative attitudes. Of all the negative utilization questions asked, only one of them attracted a disagreement. Although students have seen online counselling in the preceding analysis to beneficial, they dread its utilization. For example, respondents agreed ($M = 2.68$; $SD = 1.679$) that if they were having personal problems, seeking help with an online counsellor would be the last option to be considered. With this response it implied that, although respondents were diverse in expressing their views, online counselling would not be given preference over any other means of counselling available. This suggests that university students will never resort to online counselling as the first means of seeking help on personal matters. In addition, respondents viewed ($M = 2.66$; $SD = .860$) online counselling as taking much efforts to initiate. Respondents, who were on equal pedestal in their responses, are of the view that scheduling online appointment with any of such counsellors will take an appreciable amount of time. This assertion by university students makes the utilization of online counselling difficult for them and hence resulting in a negative attitude of students towards the utilization of online counselling. Further, in expressing their resentments for the utilization of online counselling, respondents added ($M = 2.51$; 1.010) that they would feel uneasy discussing emotional problems with an online counsellor. This statement might be on the back of the preclusion that emotional issues are best discussed among individuals with mutual relationships. Although respondents were diverse in expressing their opinions, as indicated by the standard deviation, this response generated has

contributed to the overall negative attitude students have towards the utilization of online counselling services.

Despite the negative attitudes expressed by respondents in the items analysed, respondents were, however, indifferent ($M = 2.50$; $SD = .847$) when it comes to explaining their problems to an online counsellor. University students were uncertain on their stand in presenting their problems, which are not necessarily personal in nature, to an online counsellor. They, however, would not be afraid to discuss any stressful events with an online counsellor ($M = 2.39$; $SD = .956$). This response suggest that university students are open for discussions on matters that stress them in their actualization of their ultimate goal of studies. This means that students are likely to utilize online counselling only when matters involved are not personal and emotional, but rather normal problems on that stresses them in their academic work.

On the whole, the mean of means and the average standard deviation were used in determining the attitude students have towards the utilization of online counselling. Judging from the mean of means (Mean of means = 2.55; $SD = 1.07$), it confirms the individual responses gathered that students have a negative attitude towards the utilization of online counseling. Although respondents were heterogenous in their responses, as indicated by the average standard deviation, they expressed that they would not consider the use of online counselling in addressing their counselling needs. This expression suggests that university students appear to be skeptical in the release of personal information to people via the Internet, hence marring their positive attitude earlier expressed towards the beneficial nature of online counselling.

The finding of the study is in congruence with the findings from other studies. Menon and Rubin (2011) revealed that online counselling, despite its numerous advantages faces serious utilization issues as people turn to be skeptical about its usage. Chope (2009) also added that due to financial hinderances, online counselling is less utilized across the world. This shows negative attitude towards the utilization of online counselling. Narrowed to the university context, Rochlen, Beretvas, and Zach (2004) reported that undergraduate students expressed more favorable attitudes towards face-to-face than online counselling services. Awabil and Akosah (2018) also added that university students have negative attitude towards the same scale of measuring the utilization of online counselling. The findings of the current study confirm the findings of the numerous studies enumerated that people have negative attitude towards the utilization of online counselling.

Attitude towards Online Counselling

After the analyses of the two components as the determinants of students' attitude towards online counselling, the ten items were brought together to measure the construct attitude students have towards online counselling. To aid a valid statistical interpretation, the response coding for the last five items (as they measured attitude towards utilization of online counselling) was recoded to reflect a higher numerical value assigned to the negative response (as that negates the negative question asked) and a lower numerical value assigned to the positive response (as that affirms the negative question asked). Thus, strongly agree was recoded as 1, agree as 2, disagree as 3 and strongly disagree as 4. Means and standard deviations were employed as the analytical tools for addressing the question. A mean higher than 2.50

shows a positive attitude towards online counselling and through the respective sub scales. A mean below 2.50 denotes a negative attitude towards online counseling and through the respective sub scales. The results generated is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: *Attitude towards Online Counselling*

Scale	N	Mean	SD
Beneficial Attitude	493	2.62	.673
Utilisation Attitude	491	2.48	.671
Overall Attitude	493	2.55	.539

Source: Field Survey, 2019

From Table 6 it is seen that the sub-constructs attitudes towards the beneficial nature of online counselling is positive ($M = 2.62$; $SD = .673$). This means that, as discussed in the preceding results generated, university students perceive online counselling to be beneficial and hence have a positive attitude towards it. However, attitude towards the utilization of online counselling appears to be negative ($M = 2.48$; $SD = .671$). This explains that although online counseling is perceived to be beneficial among university students, they dread to utilize it in dealing with their counselling needs. In addressing the first research question, it is found that students however have a positive attitude towards online counselling. This is indicated by the mean value assigned to the attitude towards online counselling of 2.56 which is above the cut off mean mark. The results generated shows that although students might not utilize the online counselling services, they generally tend to have a positive attitude towards the service.

The finding of the current study agrees with studies conducted by other researchers. Brown (2012), revealed that college students endorse online counselling as a good alternative to the face to face counselling. This shows that college students have positive attitude towards online counselling. Also, Skinner and Latchford (2006) found that clients have positive attitudes towards using computers to communicate with therapists as opposed to clients of face-to-face therapy. This also contributed to the complementing findings to the current study that students have positive attitude towards online counselling.

Research Question Two: What is the attitude of university students towards online counselling with respect to gender?

The second research question was to describe the differences that existed in the attitude of university students towards online counselling between the gender distribution of the respondents. To gain a full understanding of the kind of difference that existed, the researcher ensured proportionate representation of each of the gender to avoid dominance of responses from one class of gender over the other. To address this question, the results were presented in the various sub-constructs as they formed the overall attitude towards online counselling construct. Means and standard deviations were the statistical tools employed for the analyses. The result is presented in Table 7 and the discussion follows.

Table 7: *Attitude towards Online Counselling with Respect to Gender*

Construct	Gender	n	Mean	SD
Beneficial Attitude	Male	281	2.67	.665
	Female	212	2.56	.681
Utilisation Attitude	Male	279	2.51	.675
	Female	212	2.44	.666
Overall Attitude	Males	281	2.59	.525
	Females	212	2.50	.554

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Providing a description of whether attitude towards online counselling through the sub scales differ between gender, Table 7 shows that there appear to be differences. For example, it is obvious from Table 5 that although both gender of university students have a positive attitude towards the beneficial nature of online counselling, male university students ($M = 2.67$; $SD = .665$) appear to have a more positive attitude towards the beneficial nature of online counselling than their female colleagues ($M = 2.56$; $SD = .681$). This result, although cannot be relied upon a hundred percent, seems to suggest that male students perceive the online counselling to be beneficial to their counselling needs.

The findings from the study is in agreement with studies conducted by other researchers. For instance, Awabil and Akosah (2018) who found that female students expressed a more positive attitude in expressing their positive attitude towards online counselling. This result suggests that there appeared to be a difference in the descriptive statistics of the mean scores of females and males in expressing their positive attitude towards online counseling. In

contrast, the study contradicts the specific findings in Awabil and Akosah's (2018) conducted study. This is because, in the current study in the university of Ghana, the male students however have a more positive attitude towards online counselling being beneficial as found otherwise in the study conducted by Awabil and Akosah (2018) in the University of Cape Coast.

In addition, male university students appeared to have an improved negative attitude ($M = 2.48$; $SD = .615$) towards the utilization of the online counselling than the female university students ($M = 2.47$; $SD = .710$). This is to suggest that although on the whole, attitude towards the utilization of online counselling is negative, female university students appear to have a more negative attitude towards the utilization of online counselling services than their male counterparts. The results suggest that given an enhancing mechanism to make online counselling service appealing, male students will be quick enough in embracing it than female university students.

The current finding of the study is in congruent with the study conducted by Awabil and Akosah (2018). They found in their study that there is a variation in the specific negative attitude expressed by males and females in determining their attitude towards online counselling. Their descriptive statistics showed that male university students expressed a more negative attitude towards online counselling than their female counterparts. However, in the current study, there is a contrast in the gender that shows a more negative attitude towards the utilization of online counselling. There is, therefore, a contrast in the current study alongside the study of Awabil and Akosah (2018). The current study rather found that male students rather have positive attitude towards the utilization of online counselling with female

students rather expressing a negative attitude towards the utilization of online counselling.

On the whole, the results gathered on the attitude of students towards online counselling appears to differ between the gender distribution. Table 5 shows that the mean attitude score for males ($M=2.59$; $SD = .525$) is higher the mean attitude scores for females ($M = 2.50$; $SD = .554$). This result illustrates that female university students appear to be indifferent in expressing their attitude towards online counselling. This is informed by their dislike for the utilization of the service and their expression of somewhat little positive attitude towards the beneficial nature of the service. The result however demonstrates that the overall positive attitude university students have towards online counselling appears to be mostly due to the positive attitude expressed by the male university students.

The findings from the study falls in line with studies conducted by other researchers. The findings from the study, for example, agrees with the findings from the study conducted by Adebowale (2014) who found that dispositions of undergraduate university students varies with the sex distribution of the students. The study found that there the gender of the student affects the disposition of the student to online counselling. Also, the study falls in line with conducted study by Young (2005) which revealed that attitude towards online counselling varies with respect to individual characteristics, outlining the gender of the person as one of the characteristics.

Research question Three: What is the attitude of university students towards online counselling with respect to academic level?

The third research question was to describe the differences that existed in the attitude of university students towards online counselling between the academic levels of the respondents. The academic level of the respondents was conceptualized to be either Level 100 (being first year students) and Level 200 (second year students). To obtain a valid difference that existed, the researcher ensured proportionate representation of each of the levels was ensured to avoid dominating responses from either of the levels over the other. To fully address this question, the results were presented in the various sub-constructs as they formed the overall attitude towards online counselling construct. Means and standard deviations were for the analyses. The result employed presented in Table 8 and the discussion follows.

Table 8: *Attitudes towards Online Counselling with Respect to Academic Level*

Construct	Level	n	Mean	SD
Beneficial Attitude	100	202	2.55	.690
	200	290	2.67	.659
Utilisation Attitude	100	201	2.48	.615
	200	289	2.48	.709
Overall Attitude	100	202	2.52	.495
	200	290	2.57	.568

Source: Field Survey, 2019

In addressing the third research question, analysis was first done with cognizance of the two sub constructs measuring the overall attitude construct.

The analysis revealed that the attitude expressed towards the beneficial and the utilization of online counselling turned to differ between the levels for attitude towards beneficial nature and remains unchanged for the attitude towards the utilization of online counselling. For instance, although students on the average expressed positive attitude towards the beneficial nature of online counselling, the descriptive statistics suggest that level 200 students ($M = 2.67$; $SD = .659$) have a more positive attitude towards how beneficial online counselling is than the level 100 students ($M = 2.55$; $SD = .690$) in the university.

The finding of this study is in agreement with the findings from Adebowale (2014) who found that the descriptive statistics of the mean attitude scores towards online counselling varied among the academic level of undergraduate students in OAU. The results revealed that level 300 students had a more positive attitude towards online counselling. This suggests that students' attitude towards the beneficial nature of online counselling does varying with respect to the academic level of undergraduate students.

In addition, for the attitude towards the utilisation of online counselling, the descriptive statistics suggest that there is no difference in the means of the level 100 students' attitude and the level 200 students' attitude towards the utilization of online counselling. This is so because of the recorded means of 2.48 for each of the levels of education. This means that both level of students is on the same page in expressing a negative attitude towards the utilization of online counselling. Thus, attitude towards the utilization of online counselling appears not to differ in terms of the level of education of the student.

The finding of this study is in agreement with the findings from Adebowale (2014) who found that the descriptive statistics of the mean attitude scores towards online counselling varies among the academic level of undergraduate students in OAU. The results revealed that level 300 students had a more positive attitude towards online counselling. This suggests that students' attitude towards the utilization of online counselling does varying with respect to the academic level of undergraduate students.

With respect to the overall attitude towards online counselling, the descriptive statistics shown in Table 8 suggests that although the students have expressed a positive attitude towards online counselling, level 200 students ($M = 2.57$; $SD = .568$) appear to have a better positive attitude towards online counselling than the level 100 students ($M = 2.52$; $SD = .495$). This result suggests that level 200 university students appear to have a better positive attitude towards online counselling as communicated from their view point on the beneficial nature of online counselling and the ultimate effect on the attitude towards the construct.

The finding of this study is in agreement with the findings from Adebowale (2014) who found that the descriptive statistics of the mean attitude scores towards online counselling varies among the academic level of undergraduate students in OAU. The results revealed that level 300 students had a more positive attitude towards online counselling. This suggests that students' attitude towards the beneficial nature of online counselling does varying with respect to the academic level of undergraduate students.

Research question Four: What is the attitude of university students towards online counselling with respect to age?

The fourth research question was to describe the differences that existed in the attitude of university students towards online counselling in terms of the age distribution of the respondents. The ages of the respondents were grouped into three ranges. To gain a full understanding of the kind of difference that existed, the researcher ensured proportionate representation of each of the levels to avoid dominating responses from either of the levels over the other. To fully address this question, the results were presented in the various sub-constructs as they formed the overall attitude towards online counselling construct. Means and standard deviations were the statistical tools employed for the analyses. The result is presented in Table 9 and the discussion follows.

Table 9: *Attitude towards Online Counselling with Respect to Age Groups*

Construct	Age Group	n	Mean	SD
Beneficial Attitude	17-20 years	360	2.59	.636
	21-24 years	120	2.72	.759
	25 years and above	13	2.60	.825
Utilisation Attitude	17-20 years	359	2.42	.627
	21-24 years	119	2.65	.786
	25 years and above	13	2.57	.468
Overall Attitude	17-20 years	360	2.51	.519
	21-24 years	120	2.68	.587
	25 years and above	13	2.58	.441

Source: Field survey, 2019

To answer the fourth research question, analysis was done to find out whether the various sub constructs will also differ according to the age distribution of the respondents. The descriptive statistics showed that for the attitude students have towards how beneficial online counselling is, university students within the age ranges of 21-24 years appear to have the most of ($M = 2.72$; $SD = .759$) the positive attitudes. University students within the ages of 17-20 years, although were heavily represented in the data gathering, recorded the least ($M = 2.59$; $SD = .636$) towards the beneficial nature of online counselling. The results suggest that attitude students have towards the beneficial nature of online counselling appear to be more positive when an individual grows older. It finally suggests that students' attitudes towards the benefits derived from online counselling appears to differ in terms of age.

The finding of this study is in agreement with the findings from Adebowale (2014) who found that the descriptive statistics of the mean attitude scores towards online counselling varies with respect to the ages of undergraduate students in OAU. This suggests that students' attitude towards the beneficial nature of online counselling does varying with respect to the age distribution of undergraduate students. Also, it tallies with the findings of Young (2005) who revealed that individual characteristics influences the disposition of people towards online counselling. This means that attitude towards online counselling, with which the beneficial nature falls within, differs in terms of the age of people.

Also, considering the attitude towards the utilisation of online counselling, students in the age ranges of 21-24 years, still appear to have a more positive ($M = 2.65$; $SD = .786$) attitude towards the construct. Students

in the age ranges of 25 years and above appear to have a positive attitude towards the utilization of online counselling, with the students within the 17 to 20-year range demonstrating a negative attitude towards the utilization of online counselling. The results projects that the attitude students demonstrate towards online counselling appear to vary per the age group of the university student. This assertion further suggests that the older a university student is, the better his or her attitude towards the utilization of online counselling techniques.

The finding of this study is in disagreement with the findings from Adebowale (2014) who found that the descriptive statistics of the mean attitude scores towards online counselling varies with respect to the ages of undergraduate students in OAU. This suggests that students' attitude towards the utilization of online counselling does varying with respect to the age distribution of undergraduate students. Also, it contrasts the findings of Young (2005) who revealed that individual characteristics influences the disposition of people towards online counselling. This means that attitude towards online counselling, with which the utilization attitude falls within, differs among the age distribution of people.

To finally address the main construct, attitude towards online counselling, and how it differs among the age groups of the students, the descriptive statistics was relied upon to establish the difference. The descriptive statistics showed that on the whole, the attitude of students towards online counselling differs among the three age groups. For instance, students within the 21-24 years ($M = 2.68$; $SD = .587$) group seem to have a more positive attitude towards online counselling than those in the 25 year and

above group ($M = 2.58$; $SD = .441$) and the 17-21 year group ($M = 2.51$; $SD = .519$). The results suggest that from both sub constructs of the determining the attitude towards online counselling, there appears to be a difference in attitude among age distribution of the respondents.

The finding of this study is in agreement with the findings from Adebowale (2014) who found that the descriptive statistics of the mean attitude scores towards online counselling varies with respect to the ages of undergraduate students in OAU. This suggests that students' attitude towards online counselling does varying with respect to the age distribution of undergraduate students. Also, it tallies with the findings of Young (2005) who revealed that individual characteristics influences the disposition of people towards online counselling. This means that attitude towards online counselling differs among the age distribution of people.

Research Hypothesis One

H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference in students' attitudes towards online counselling on the basis of gender.

H_1 : There is a statistically significant difference in students' attitudes towards online counselling on the basis of gender.

To state that differences existed in the attitude of university students towards online counseling with respect to gender, then it should be subjected to a statistical testing. The hypothesis, therefore, sought to find the statistical proof that indeed there is a difference in the attitude of university students with respect to the gender, as posited and described from research question two. To aid the testing of this hypothesis, an independent samples t-test was used. The choice of the statistical tool was adhered to because, the hypothesis

sought to compare the means of a ratio scaled variable (attitude) for a dichotomous variable (gender). Thus, the independent variable (gender) had two sub levels (male and female). The result of the analysis is shown in Table 10.

Table 10: *t-test Results Comparing Attitude Towards Online Counselling with Respect to Gender*

Construct	Gender	N	Means	SD	t	df	sig. (2-tailed)
Beneficial Attitude	Male	281	2.67	.665	1.667	491	.096
	Female	212	2.56	.681			
Utilisation Attitude	Male	279	2.51	.675	1.165	489	.245
	Female	212	2.44	.666			
Overall Attitude	Male	281	2.59	.525	1.801	491	.072
	Female	212	2.50	.554			

Source: Field Survey, 2019

For the first sub construct, the descriptive statistics from Table 10 shows that it appears male university students have quite an improved attitude towards the beneficial nature of online counselling than their female counterparts. However, the equality of means tests results suggest otherwise. An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the mean attitudes university students have towards the beneficial nature of online counselling. The result indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in the attitude of male students ($M = 2.67$; $SD = .665$) and female university students ($M = 2.56$; $SD = .681$); $t(281) = 1.667$, $p = .096$ (two tailed) towards online

counselling. This means that attitude towards beneficial nature of online counselling is the same between gender. Hence the mean difference observed in the descriptive statistics can be due to chance.

The findings from the study fall in line with the findings from other studies. For instance, Awabil and Akosah (2018) who found that there is no statistically significant difference in the positive attitudes exhibited by male students and female students towards online counselling. This explains that the current study is agree with the study that gender does not affect the attitude university undergraduate students' have towards online counselling. On the contrary, the study disagrees with Adebowale (2014) who found from undergraduate students in OAU that there is a statistically significant difference in the disposition to online counselling with respect to sex. This means that, given that the attitude towards the beneficial nature of online counselling falls within the overall attitude towards online counselling, then it is deduced that Adebowale's (2014) study found that gender influences the attitude students have towards online counselling.

The second sub construct, also, the descriptive statistics from Table 10 shows that it appears male university students have a mean attitude higher than the female university students when it comes to their attitude towards the utilization of online counselling. This appears that male students' attitude towards the utilization of online counselling differs from female university students' attitude towards the utilization of online counselling. Subjecting the mean values to statistical testing proved otherwise. An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the means attitudes of university students towards the utilization of online counselling. The result indicated that there

was no statistically significant difference in the utilization attitude of male university students ($M = 2.51$; $SD = .675$) and female university students ($M = 2.44$; $SD = .666$), $p = .246$ (two tailed) towards online counselling. This means that the attitude university students exhibit towards the utilization of online counselling does not differ significantly between male and female students.

The findings from the study falls in line with the findings from some studies. For instance, Awabil and Akosah's (2018) found that there is no statistically significant difference in the negative attitudes exhibited by male students and female students towards online counselling. This explains that the current study agrees with the study that gender does not affect the attitude university undergraduate students' have towards online counselling. On the contrary, the study disagrees with Adebowale (2014) who found from undergraduate students in OAU that there is a statistically significant difference in the disposition to online counselling with respect to sex. This means that, given that the utilization attitude towards online counselling falls within the overall attitude towards online counselling, then it is deduced that Adebowale's (2014) study found that gender influences the attitude students have towards online counselling.

Judging from the overall attitude construct, the descriptive statistics projected that male university students have a positive attitude towards online counselling, with their female university students expressing an uncertain attitude. This presupposed that attitude towards online counselling differed between gender. An independent samples t test was deemed appropriate to be run to compare the mean differences in the male and female attitude towards online counselling. The result revealed that there is no statistically significant

difference between the attitude of male university students ($M = 2.59$; $SD = .525$) and female university students ($M = 2.50$; $SD = .554$) towards online counselling $t(491) = 1.801$; $p = .072$ (two tailed). It is then concluded that although differences appear to exist in the various sub constructs of the attitude measure and the overall attitude measure, these differences that appear to exist are not statistically significant. Hence it is arrived at that the gender of the university student does not result to a difference in their attitude towards online counselling. This means that the attitude towards online counselling is the same between both genders.

The findings from the study disagrees with Adebowale (2014) who found from undergraduate students in OAU that there is a statistically significant difference in the disposition to online counselling with respect to sex. This means that, given that the attitude towards the beneficial nature of online counselling falls within the overall attitude towards online counselling, then it is deduced that Adebowale's (2014) study found that gender influences the attitude students have towards online counselling.

Research Hypothesis Two

H₀: There is no statistically significant difference in students' attitudes towards online counselling with regard to academic level.

H₁: There is a statistically significant difference in students' attitudes towards online counselling with regard to academic level.

To state that differences existed in the attitude of university students towards online counseling with respect to academic level of student, then it should be subjected to a statistical testing. The hypothesis therefore sought to find the statistical proof that indeed there is a difference in the attitude of

university students with respect to the academic level of student, as posited and described from research question three. To aid the testing of this hypothesis, an independent samples t test was deemed appropriate and used accordingly. The choice of the statistical tool was adhered to because, the hypothesis sought to compare the means of a ratio scaled variable (attitude) for a dichotomous variable (academic level of students, grouped into level 100 and 200). Thus, the independent variable (academic level of education) had two sub levels (level 100 and level 200). The result of the analysis is shown in Table 7.

Table 11: *t-test Results Comparing Attitude Towards Online Counselling with Respect to Academic Level*

Construct	Level	n	Means	SD	t	df	sig. (2-tailed)
Beneficial Attitude	100	202	2.55	.690	-1.864	420	.063
	200	290	2.67	.659			
Utilisation Attitude	100	202	2.51	.675	1.165	489	.245
	200	290	2.44	.666			
Attitude	100	202	2.52	.495	-1.190	466	.235
	200	290	2.57	.567			

Source: Field Survey, 2019

For the first sub construct, the descriptive statistics from Table 6 shows that it appears level 200 university students have quite an improved attitude towards the beneficial nature of online counselling than their counterpart level 100 university students. However, the equality of means tests results suggest otherwise. An independent sample t-test was conducted to

compare the mean attitudes of both level 100 and 200 university students have towards the beneficial nature of online counselling. The result indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in the attitude of level 100 students ($M = 2.55$; $SD = .690$) and level 200 students ($M = 2.67$; $SD = .659$); $t(420) = -1.864$, $p = .063$ (two tailed) towards online counselling. This means that attitude towards beneficial nature of online counselling is the same between the academic level of students. Hence the mean difference observed in the descriptive statistics due to chance.

The findings from the study agrees with Adebowale (2014) who found from undergraduate students in OAU that there is no statistically significant difference in the disposition to online counselling with respect to the academic level of students. This means that, given that the attitude towards the beneficial nature of online counselling falls within the overall attitude towards online counselling, then it is deduced that Adebowale's (2014) study found that academic level of students does not influences the attitude students have towards online counselling.

The second sub construct, also, the descriptive statistics from Table 11 shows that it appears level 100 university students have a mean attitude higher than the level 200 university students when it comes to their attitude towards the utilization of online counselling. This appears that level 100 students' attitude towards the utilization of online counselling differs from that of level 200 students' attitude towards the utilization of online counselling. Subjecting the mean values to statistical testing proved otherwise. An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare the means attitudes of university students towards the utilization of online counselling. The result

indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in the utilization attitude of level 100 university students ($M = 2.51$; $SD = .675$) and level 200 university students ($M = 2.44$; $SD = .666$), $p = .246$ (two tailed) towards online counselling. This means that the attitude university students exhibited towards the utilization of online counselling did not differ significantly between first and second year university students.

The findings from the study agrees with Adebowale (2014) who found from undergraduate students in OAU that there is no statistically significant difference in the disposition to online counselling with respect to the academic level of students. This means that, given that the utilization attitude towards online counselling falls within the overall attitude towards online counselling, then it is deduced that Adebowale's (2014) study found that the academic level did not influences the attitude students have towards online counselling.

Judging from the overall attitude construct, the descriptive statistics continually projected that level 200 university students have positive attitude towards online counselling, with the level 100 university students expressing a relatively less positive attitude. This presupposed that attitude towards online counselling differed between academic level of students. An independent samples t-test was run to compare the mean differences in the level 100 and level 200 students' attitude towards online counselling. The result revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between the attitude of level 100 university students ($M = 2.52$; $SD = .495$) and level 200 university students ($M = 2.57$; $SD = .567$) towards online counselling $t(466) = -1.190$; $p = .235$ (two tailed). It is then concluded that although differences appear to

exist in the various sub constructs of the attitude measure and the overall attitude measure, these differences that appear to exist are not statistically significant. Hence it is arrived at that the level of the university student does not result to a difference in their attitude towards online counselling. This means that the attitude towards online counselling is the same between both first and second year students.

The findings from the study agrees with Adebowale (2014) who found from undergraduate students in OAU that there is no statistically significant difference in the disposition to online counselling with respect to the academic level of students. This means that Adebowale's (2014) study found that the academic level does not influence the attitude students have towards online counselling.

Research Hypothesis Three

H₀: There is no statistically significant difference in students' attitudes towards online counselling with respect to age.

H₁: There is a statistically significant difference in students' attitudes towards online counselling with respect to age.

This formulated research hypothesis sought to find out whether the attitude towards online counselling expressed by the students differ with respect to the age group of the student. A One Way ANOVA was seen to be the statistical tool that best addresses the hypothesis. This was because the dependent variable (total satisfaction) was measured on a ratio scale and had passed the normality assumption. Also, the independent variable (age of the student) had more than two sub groups. These two main assumptions coupled with the intent of the hypothesis to compare mean differences warranted the

use of the ANOVA test for the hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 12.

Table 12: Descriptives and Homogeneity of variance Results

Construct	Groups	Descriptive Statistics			Test of Homogeneity of Variance			
		n	Mean	SD	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Beneficial Attitude	17-20 years	360	2.59	.636	3.788	2	490	.023
	21-24 years	120	2.72	.759				
	25 years and above	13	2.60	.825				
Utilisation Attitude	17-20 years	359	2.42	.627	1.034	2	488	.356
	21-24 years	119	2.65	.786				
	25 years and above	13	2.57	.468				
Overall Attitude	17-20 years	360	2.51	.519	1.531	2	490	.217
	21-24 years	120	2.68	.587				
	25 years and above	13	2.58	.441				

Source: Field Survey, 2019

From the descriptive statistics it appears that the mean attitudes in general, coupled with the beneficial attitude and the utilization attitude by students differ with respect to the age of the student. The descriptive statistics, however, does not really tell whether the difference that exists is significant. Hence, a reliance on the ANOVA test results to determine that. In employing the ANOVA results for confirmation, the homogeneity of variances

assumption was not met for the attitude means. The results, indicated from the Levenes test, showed that equal variances were assumed for both utilization attitude (levenes statistic (2, 488) = 1.034; p = .356), and overall attitude (levenes statistic (2, 490) = 1.531; p = .217). The Welch Brown significant value and its test statistics were hence used for the beneficial attitude and the ANOVA test results was regarded on the verification whether the differences existing in the descriptives are statistically significant. The ANOVA results is presented in Table 13

Table 13: *One Way ANOVA Results for Differences in Attitude Within Age Groups*

Construct		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta squared
Beneficial Attitude	Between Groups	1.419	2	.709	1.129	.287	
	Within Groups	221.728	490	.453			
	Total	223.146	492				
Utilisation Attitude	Between Groups	4.761	2	2.381	5.377	.005*	.02
	Within Groups	216.075	488	.443			
	Total	220.837					
Attitude	Between Groups	2.824	2	1.412	4.948	.007*	.02
	Within Groups	139.852	490	.285			
	Total	142.677	492				

Source: Field Survey, 2019

*Significant, p< .05

A one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to compare the mean differences in beneficial attitude of the student among the age group of students. Subjects were divided into three groups according to

delineated age brackets (Group 1: 17-20 years; Group 2: 21-24 years; and Group 3: 25 years and above). There was no statistically significant difference in attitude towards the beneficial nature of online counselling for the three age groups [$F(2, 490) = 1.299, p = .287$]. Upon reaching a no statistical significance, eta squared was not calculated. Also, a post hoc comparison was not deemed to be necessary as there is no statistical significant difference. This ANOVA results indicates that although the descriptive suggest there is a difference in the attitude of students towards the beneficial nature of online counselling with respect to their ages, this difference is not statistically significant. It is concluded that no difference exists between beneficial attitude of students towards online counselling so far as age is concerned, probably the difference might have occurred per chance.

The findings from the study agrees with Adebowale (2014) who found from undergraduate students in OAU that there is no statistically significant difference in the disposition to online counselling with respect to age of students. This means that, given that the attitude towards the beneficial nature of online counselling falls within the overall attitude towards online counselling, then it is deduced that Adebowale's (2014) study found that age does not influences the attitude students have towards online counselling.

Also, for the attitude towards utilization of online counselling, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to compare the mean differences in utilisation attitude of the students among their age group. Subjects were in three age groups (Group 1: 17-20 years; Group 2: 21-24 years; and Group 3: 25 years and above). There was a statistically significant difference in attitude of students towards the utilisation of online counselling

for the three age groups [$F(2, 488) = 5.377, p = .005$]. Despite reaching a statistical significance, the actual difference in mean attitudes between the three groups was quite small ($\eta^2 = .02$). A post hoc comparisons was conducted and the results shown in Table 14.

Table 14: *Post Hoc Comparisons*

		Mean Difference		
(I) Age	(J) Age	(I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
17-20yrs	21-24yrs	-.22812*	.07926	.012
	25yrs n above	-.15029	.13393	.517
21-24yrs	17-20yrs	.22812*	.07926	.012
	25yrs n above	.07783	.14843	.860
25yrs n above	17-20yrs	.15029	.13393	.517
	21-24yrs	-.07783	.14843	.860

Source: Field Survey (2019)

This post hoc results indicate that indeed statistically the attitude demonstrated by university students towards the utilization of online counselling is not the same across age groups. Hence attitude towards online counselling utilization varies in terms of age groups. It is concluded that difference exists between utilization attitude of students towards online counselling so far as age is concerned.

The findings from the study contradicts Adebowale (2014) who found from undergraduate students in OAU that there is no statistically significant difference in the disposition to online counselling with respect to age of students. This means that, given that the utilization attitude towards online counselling falls within the overall attitude towards online counselling,

then it is deduced that Adebowale's (2014) study found that age does not influence the attitude students have towards online counselling.

Finally, for the overall attitude towards online counselling, a one-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to compare the mean differences in the general attitude of university students among the age group of students. Subjects were divided into three groups according to delineated age brackets (Group 1: 17-20 years; Group 2: 21-24 years; and Group 3: 25 years and above). There was a statistically significant difference in attitude of students towards online counselling for the three age groups [$F(2, 490) = 4.948, p = .007$]. Despite reaching a statistical significance, the actual difference in mean attitudes between the three groups was quite small ($\eta^2 = .02$). A post hoc comparison was conducted and the results shown in Table 13. This ANOVA result indicates that indeed, statistically, the attitude demonstrated by university students towards online counselling is not the same across age groups. Hence attitude towards online counselling varies in terms of age groups of university students. It is concluded that a difference exists between the overall attitude of students towards online counselling so far as age is concerned.

The findings from the study disagree with Adebowale (2014) who found from undergraduate students in OAU that there is no statistically significant difference in the disposition to online counselling with respect to age of students. This means that Adebowale's (2014) study found that age does not influence the attitude students have towards online counselling.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter summarises the entire study. It highlights the research methods employed, specific objectives guiding the study, key findings arrived at, conclusions drawn from these findings and the appropriate recommendations made. Areas for further studies were also suggested for other users of the study.

Summary of Research Process

The main purpose of this study was to examine the attitude university students have towards online counselling. The specific objectives for the study included, finding out the attitude of university students toward online counselling, whether the attitude varies with respect to gender, academic level and age group of students. The specific research questions and hypotheses underpinning the study were;

1. What is the attitude of university students toward online counselling?
2. What is the attitude of university students towards online counselling with respect to gender?
3. What is the attitude of university students towards online counselling with respect to academic level?
4. What is the attitude of university students towards online counselling with respect to age?

1. H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference between gender of the university students and their attitudes towards online counselling.
2. H_0 : There is a statistically significant difference between academic level of the university students and their attitudes towards online counselling.
3. H_0 : There is a statistically significant difference between age of the university students and their attitudes towards online counselling.

The study employed the descriptive survey design. Simple random sampling technique was employed to select 500 respondents for the study. The sample was out of a population of 17,815 university students who were drawn from the college of humanities. Data was collected from five schools in one university. The study made use of primary data through the use of an adapted structured questionnaires to solicit for the views of students on their attitude towards online counselling. The data were collected over two weeks. The data collected were analysed with the use of descriptive statistics (frequency and percentages; means and standard deviations) and inferential statistics (independent samples t-test and One Way ANOVA). The results were presented in tables.

Key Findings

The following key findings were obtained after analyses:

1. University students have a positive attitude towards online counselling.
2. Per the descriptive statistics, attitude towards online counselling appear to be different with respect to gender. Male students have positive attitude while female students have negative attitude.

3. Per the descriptive statistics, attitude towards online counselling appears to be different with respect to academic level. Level 200 students have more positive attitude whereas level 100 students have a least positive attitude.
4. The descriptive statistics shows that attitude towards online counselling vary with respect to age.
5. The inferential statistics revealed that there is no statistically significant difference in the attitude towards online counselling with respect to the gender of students.
6. The inferential statistics revealed that there is no statistically significant difference in the attitude towards online counselling with respect to the academic level of the student.
7. The inferential statistics revealed that there is a statistically significant difference in the attitude of students towards online counselling with respect to the age distribution of the student.

Conclusions

Having found that there is a positive attitude towards online counselling by student, it means students perceive the online counselling service to be beneficial and would be patronized as one of the counselling means. However, they are still unwilling in exposing their personal issues with an online individual. This implies that although the service is found to be beneficial, students dread the utilization of the service. It is therefore concluded that, online counselling is a mix bag of both positive and negative issues.

Additionally, it has been revealed that university students' attitude towards online counselling does not differ in terms of gender. This result

means attitude towards online counselling does not vary or depend on the gender distribution of the university students. Hence the attitude expressed by male students are the same as the attitude expressed by the female students. This implies that when university students dislike online counselling, gender will not play a role in such a situation.

Having found that there is no statistically significant difference between the attitude of university students towards online counselling and the academic level, it means that academic level of university student does not influence the attitude they have towards the service. This implies that the both first years and second years have the same attitude towards online counselling with no superiority of any of the years over the other. It is concluded that when the utilization of online counselling is shown a positive attitude towards, that will not be dependent on the academic level of students.

Recommendations

In the lights of the findings and conclusions drawn, it is recommended that

1. University counselling centres should organize numerous workshops and sensitization programmes on the effortless utilization of online counselling to sustain and improve on the positive attitude university students have towards online counselling.
2. Teachers and academic advisors are to employ more online counselling techniques in addressing the needs of their students as and when they are approached.
3. Symposia and seminars are to be conducted on the relevance of the utilization of online counselling to generate the interest in the pursuit of such services.

Suggestions for Further Research

After exploring the attitude university student have towards online counselling in the University of Ghana, it is suggested that further research should focus on:

1. employing more than one university institutions as the geographical setting;
2. changing the setting to reflect the pre-tertiary institutions; and
3. Approaching the study of the concept (attitude towards online counselling) in a qualitative manner.

REFERENCES

- Aaron, B., Rochlen, D, Vogel, L., & Michael, J. M. (2005). The practical aspects of online counseling, ethics, training, technology and competency. *The Counselling Psychologist, 1*(33), 776-818.
- Adebowale, O. (2014). Disposition of students to online counselling: The Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigerian experience. *International Journal of Education and Development using ICT, 10*(3), 22-31.
- Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behaviour. *Organizational behaviour and human decision processes, 50*(2), 179-211.
- Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1975). *Predicting and changing behaviour: The reasoned action approach*. Australia, Sydney: Psychology press.
- Ajzen, I., & Fishbein, M. (1980). Misconceptions about the Fishbein model: Reflections on a study by Songer-Nocks. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 12*(6), 579-584.
- Aker, J. C. & Mbiti, I. M. (2010). Mobile phones and economic development in Africa. *Journal of Economic Perspectives 7*(6)207-232.
- Akinade, A. E. (2002). The precarious agenda: Christian-Muslim relations in contemporary Nigeria. *Public Lecture, 118-127*.
- Alleman, J. R. (2002). Online counseling: The internet and mental health treatment. *Psychotherapy: Theory/Research/Practice/Training, 39*(2), 199-209
- Amedahe, F. K., & Gyimah, E.A. (2005). *Introduction to educational research*. Cape Coast, Ghana: Centre for Continuing Education.
- American Counseling Association (2014). *ACA code of ethics and standards of practice*. Retrieved from <http://www.counseling>.

- Arku, B. (2015). *Attitudes of University of Cape Coast male students towards counselling*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast.
- Attridge, W. C. (2004). *Current practices and future implications for internet counselling*. Greensboro. NC: CAPS Press.
- Autio, E., H. Keeley, R., Klofsten, M., GC Parker, G., & Hay, M. (2001). Entrepreneurial intent among students in Scandinavia and in the USA. *Enterprise and Innovation Management Studies*, 2(2), 145-160.
- Autio, E., Keeley, R. H., Klofsten, M., & Ulfstedt, T. (1997). *Entrepreneurial intent among students: Testing an intent model in Asia, Scandinavia and USA*. Frontiers of Entrepreneurship Research Edition. Retrieved from: <http://www.babson.edu/entrep/fer/papers97/autio/autl.htm>
- Awabil, G., & Akosah, J. C. (2018). Attitude of Ghanaian university students towards online counselling. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 9(11), 10-16.
- Babbie, E & Mouton, J. (2005). *The practice of social research*. Oxford University Press. Cape Town: South Africa.
- Babbie, E. R. (1997). *The practice of social research* (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Bada, K. (2013). *Integrating digital learning objects for HIV/AIDS prevention: A contextualized approach*. (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Wisconsin) UEF No. 96. ISBN: 978-952-61-1016-5.
- Bakare, C. G. M. (1996). *Overview of principles of modern counselling psychology*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Callop Publication Ltd.

- Bambling, M., King, R., Reid, W., & Wegner, K. (2008). Online counselling: The experience of counsellors providing synchronous single-session counselling to young people. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research, 8*(2), 110-116.
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: toward a unifying theory of behavioural change. *Psychological Review, 84*(2), 191-120.
- Bandura, A. (1986). The explanatory and predictive scope of self-efficacy theory. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 4*(3), 359-373.
- Bandura, A. (1995). *Self-efficacy in changing societies*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.
- Bandura, A., & Walters, R. H. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Barnes, K. L. (2004). Applying self-efficacy theory to counselor training and supervision: A comparison of two approaches. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 44*, 56–69. doi:10.1002/j.1556-6978.2004.tb01860.x
- Barnett, M. (2005). Power in international politics. *International Organization, 59*(1), 39-75.
- Bato, J. A., & Marcial, D. E. (2016). Students' attitudes towards the development of an online guidance counselling system. *Information Technologies and Learning Tools, 56*(6), 40-50.
- Bell, G. (1999). Design ethnography. *Design Management Journal (Former Series), 10*(4), 35-41.
- Bhandarkar, P. L., Wilkinson, T. S., & Laldas, D. K. (2010). *Methodology and techniques of social research*. Mumbai, India: Himalaya Publishing House.

- Blackburn, R. (1993). *The psychology of criminal conduct: Theory, research and practice*. Vinstol: J. Wiley Press.
- Bloom, J. (2008). The ethical practice of web counselling. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 26, 53–60
- Bojuwoye, O., & Sodi, T. (2010). Challenges and opportunities to integrating traditional healing into counselling and psychotherapy. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 23(3), 283-296.
- Bozarth, J. D., & Brodley, B. T. (1991). Actualization: A functional concept in client-centered therapy. *Journal of Social Behaviour and Personality*, 6(5), 45-55.
- Brown, C. (2012). *Online counseling: Attitudes and potential utilization by college students* (Unpublished Master's thesis). Humboldt State University, California, USA
- Brown, G. W. (2011). *Social work and social services web sites*. Retrieved from <http://gwbweb.wustl.edu/resources/pages/socialservicesresourcesintro>
- Bruner, J. (1990). Celebrating divergence: Piaget and Vygotsky. *Human Development*, 40(2), 63-73.
- Buku, O. K., & Taylor, A. I. (2006). *Basics in guidance and counselling* (2nd ed.). Accra: Salt and Light Publications.
- Centore, A. J., & Milacci, F. (2008). A study of mental health counselors' use of and perspectives on distance counseling. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 30(3), 267-282.

- Cherry, J. (2017). Investigating the active ingredients of cognitive behaviour therapy and counselling for patients with chronic fatigue in primary care: developing a new process measure to assess treatment fidelity and predict outcome. *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 46(3), 253-272.
- Chester, A., & Glass, C. (2006). Online counseling: A descriptive analysis of therapy services on the internet. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 34(2), 145-160.
- Chisnall, P. M. (1997). *Marketing research*. Clifton, NJ: McGraw-Hill Publishing Company.
- Chope, R. C. (2009). Distance counseling. *Career Planning and Adult Development Journal*, 25(2), 8-16.
- Clark, M. A., & Stone, C. B. (2002). Clicking with students: Using online assignments in counsellor education courses. *Journal of Technology in Counseling*, 2(2), 22-37.
- Collie, K., Cubranic, D. & Long, B. C. (2002). Autographic communication for distance counselling: A feasibility study. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 30(30) 269-284.
- Cook, J. E., & Doyle, C. (2002). Working alliance in online therapy as compared to face-to-face therapy: Preliminary results. *Cyber Psychology & Behaviour*, 5(2), 95-105.
- Davis, J. C., Furstenthal, L., Desai, A. A., Norris, T., Sutaria, S., Fleming, E., & Ma, P. (2009). The microeconomics of personalized medicine: today's challenge and tomorrow's promise. *Nature reviews Drug discovery*, 8(4), 279-285.

- Delida, S. P. (2005). The online-counselling debate: A view toward the underserved. *The Counselling Psychologist, 1*(33), 891-899.
- Deng, L. (2010). *Benefactive/malefactive event and writer attitude annotation*. Proceedings of the 51st Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics.
- Down, P. (2009). *Introduction to videoconferencing*. Version 2.1. Available from:
<<https://www.ja.net/sites/default/files/Introduction%20to%20Videoconferencing.pdf>>[12th Nov. 2013].
- Dzulkefli, Z. M. S., Sin, N. M., & Mohamad, N. (2012). *Selection of web 2.0 technologies and teaching practices among lecturers in selected Malaysia higher education institutions*. IEEE Colloquium on Humanities, Science and Engineering (CHUSER).
- Esbroeck, R. (2008). Career guidance in a global world. *International handbook of career guidance*, 23-44.
- Ewen, R. (1980). *An introduction to theories of personality*. Greenville, SC: Psychology Press.
- Feldman, P. H. (1993). *Labor market issues in home care*. Harvard University: School of Government.
- Fenichel, M., Suler, J., Barak, A., Zelvin, E., Jones, G., Munro, K., & Walker-Schmucker, W. (2002). Myths and realities of online clinical work. *Cyber Psychology & Behaviour, 5*(5), 481-497.
- Finfgeld, D. L. (1999). Psychotherapy in cyberspace. *Journal of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association, 5*(4), 105-110.

- Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N. E., & Hyun, H. H. (2003). *How to design and evaluate research in education*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Gelso, C. J., & Lent, R. W. (2000). *Scientific training and scholarly productivity: The person, the training environment, and their interaction*. New York, NY: John Wiley.
- Gesinde, S. A. (1991). *Reading in counselling practicum*. Ibadan, Nigeria: Vantage Publishers.
- Ghana Education Service (1995). *Teacher's guide on the preventive of drug abuse in schools*. Prevention of Drug Abuse Unit, Division for the Renovation of Educational Curricula and Structures, UNESCO.
- Glueckauf, R. L. (2002). Videoconferencing-based family counselling for rural teenagers with epilepsy: Phase 1 findings. *Rehabilitation Psychology, 47*(1), 49-56.
- Goldstein, K. (1940). *Human nature in the light of psychopathology*. Washington, DC: Fiscal Press
- Griffiths, M., & Cooper, G. (2003). Online therapy: Implications for problem gamblers. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling, 31*(1), 113-13
- Grohol, J. (2003). *Online therapy: A minefield of treasures*. Easton, NY: New Therapist Press.
- Gysbers, N. C., & Henderson, P. (2001). Comprehensive guidance and counselling programs: A rich history and a bright future. *Professional School Counseling, 4*(4), 246.

- Haberstroh, S., Duffey, T., Evans, M., Gee, R., & Trepal, H. (2007). The experience of online counseling. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling, 29*(3), 269-282.
- Haberstroh, S., Parr, G., Bradley, L., Morgan-Fleming, B., & Gee, R. (2008). Facilitating online counseling: Perspectives from counselors in training. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 86*(4), 460-470.
- Hathaway, T., Muse, E. J., & Althoff, T. (2007). *Report on pedagogical practices and methods in e-learning*. University of Wales, Bangor: School of Education Press.
- Hollin, C. R. (1989). Drinking and delinquency: Another look at young offenders and alcohol. *The British Journal of Criminology, 29*(4), 386-394.
- Holmes, K. K., Levine, R., & Weaver, M. (2004). Effectiveness of condoms in preventing sexually transmitted infections. *Bulletin of the World Health Organization, 82*, 454-461.
- Hsu, C., & Sandford, B. A. (2010). *Delphi technique. encyclopedia of research design*. Ed. Neil J. Salkind. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE
- Hughes, G. (2014). *Competence and self-care in counselling and psychotherapy*. Coventry, UK: Routledge.
- Ipaye, T. (1990). *Guidance and counselling practices*. Ile-Ife, Nigeria: University of Ife Press.
- Jarvis, P., & Gangitano, M. (2007). *The real game series: Helping students imagine their future*. Empowering the 21st Century Professional School Counselor. Austin, TX: PRO-ED.

- Jeffrey, E. B. (2005). Online counselling new entity, new challenges. *The Counselling Psychologist*, 3(3), 872-880.
- Jennings, R. B., Nahum, E. M., Olshefski, D. P., Saha, D., Shae, Z. Y., & Waters, C. (2006). A study of internet instant messaging and chat protocols. *IEEE Network*, 20(4), 16-21.
- Kamunyu, R. N., Ndugo, C., & Wango, G. (2016) Prevalence of counselling services among university students in Kenya. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 6(10), 204-209.
- Kanani, K., & Regehr, C. (2003). Clinical, ethical, and legal issues in e-therapy. *Families in Society*, 84(2), 155-162.
- Kanz, J. E. (2001). Clinical-supervision: Issues in the provision of online supervision. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 3(2), 415-420.
- Kidd, J. M. (2007). Career counseling. *Handbook of Career Studies*, 97-113.
- King, R., Bambling, M., Lloyd, C., Gomurra, R., Smith, S., Reid, W., & Wegner, K. (2006). Online counselling: The motives and experiences of young people who choose the Internet instead of face-to-face or telephone counselling. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 6(3), 169-174.
- Kolog, E. A. (2014). E-counselling implementation: Students' life stories and counselling technologies in perspective. *International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology*, 10(3), 32-46.

- Kolog, E. A., Sutinen, E., & Vanhalakka-Ruoho, M. (2016). E-counselling implementation: Students' life stories and counselling technologies in perspective. *International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology*, 10(3), 32-48.
- Koul, O. N. (1997). *Kashmiri: A cognitive-descriptive grammar*. New York: Psychology Press.
- Kraus, R., & Zack, J. S. (2004). *The business aspects of online counseling*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.
- Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30(3), 607-610.
- Kreuger, L., & Neuman, W. L. (2006). *Social work research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches with Research navigator*. San Diego, CA: Pearson/Allyn and Bacon.
- Krueger Jr, N. F., Reilly, M. D., & Carsrud, A. L. (2000). Competing models of entrepreneurial intentions. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 15(5-6), 411-432.
- Lambert, G. H. (1992). Guidelines for monitoring and management of pediatric patients during and after sedation for diagnostic and therapeutic procedures. *Pediatrics*, 89(6), 1110-1115.
- Landers, N. R., & Nahon, D. (2008). An Integrity model perspective on working with occupational stress in men. *Journal of Men's Health*, 5(2), 141-147.
- Larson, L. M. (1998). The social cognitive model of counselor training. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 26, 219-273.

- Latchford, G. (2006). Attitudes to counselling via the Internet: A comparison between in-person counselling clients and Internet support group users. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 6(3), 158-163.
- Leibert, T., Archer, J., Munson, J., & York, G. (2006). An exploratory study of client perceptions of Internet counseling and the therapeutic alliance. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 28(1), 69-83.
- Lewis, J., & Coursol, D. (2007). Addressing career issues online: Perceptions of counsellor education professionals. *Journal of Employment Counseling*, 44(4), 146-178.
- Luo, J. S. (2009). The Facebook phenomenon: Boundaries and controversies. *Primary Psychiatry*, 16(11), 19–21.
- Maheu, M., & Gordon, B. (2000). Counseling and therapy on the Internet. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 31(5), 484-489.
- Makinde, K. A., (1990). Cognitive and behavioural aspects affecting early referral of acute stroke patients to hospital. *Journal of Stroke and Cerebrovascular Diseases*, 16(2), 71-76.
- Mallen, M. J. (2002). *Working toward online counsellor training: Dynamics of process and assessment*. Paper presented at annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Chicago.
- Mallen, M. J., Vogel, D. L., & Rochlen, A. B. (2005). The practical aspects of online counseling: Ethics, training, technology, and competency. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 33(6), 776-818.
- Manhal-Baugus, M. (2001). E-therapy: Practical, ethical, and legal issues. *Cyber Psychology & Behaviour*, 4(5), 551-563.

- Maples, M. F., & Han, S. (2008). Cyber counseling in the United States and South Korea: Implications for counseling college students of the millennial generation and the networked generation. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 86*, 178-185
- Marczyk, G., DeMatteo, D., & Festinger, D. (2005). *Essentials of research design and methodology*. London: John Wiley & Sons Inc.
- Mehta, S., & Chalhoub, N. (2006). An e-mail for your thoughts. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health, 11*(3), 168-170.
- Menon, G. M., & Rubin, M. (2011). A survey of online practitioners: Implications for education and practice. *Journal of Technology in Human Services, 29*(2), 133-141.
- Moore, C., Gunz, H., & Hall, D. T. (2007). Tracing the historical roots of career theory in management and organization studies. *Handbook of Career Studies, 2*(7), 13-38.
- Murphy & Mitchell (1998). When writing helps to heal: E-mail as therapy. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling, 26*(1), 21-32.
- Murphy, L., Parnass, P., Mitchell, D. L., Hallett, R., Cayley, P., & Seagram, S. (2009). Client satisfaction and outcome comparisons of online and face-to-face counselling methods. *British Journal of Social Work, 39*(4), 627-640.
- Njagi, F. G. (2005). *Students' perceptions of voluntary counselling and testing: A Case Study of the University of KwaZulu-Natal*. (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of KwaZulu-Natal.

- Osuala, E. C. (2005). *Introduction to research methodology* (3rd ed.) Onitsha, Nigeria: Africana –First Publishers.
- Parsons, F. (1909). *Choosing a vocation*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Patterson, G. R., & Forgatch, M. S. (1984). Therapist behaviour as a determinant for client noncompliance: A paradox for the behaviour modifier. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 53(6), 846.
- Perez, J. F. (1965). *Counselling: Therapy and practice*. Lincoln, U. K.: Addison- Wesley Pub.
- Peterson, M. R., & Beck, R. L. (2003). E-mail as an adjunctive tool in psychotherapy: Response and responsibility. *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 57(2), 167-181.
- Pietrofesa, J. J., Hoffman, A. & Splete, H. H. (1984). *Counselling: An introduction*. (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, Company.
- Pollock, S. L. (2006). Internet counseling and its feasibility for marriage and family counseling. *The Family Journal*, 14(1), 65-70.
- Quartey, S. M., & Awoyemi, M. O. (2002). *Research methodology in education*. Accra, Ghana: K “N: AB Ltd.
- Rallis, S. F., & Rossman, G. B. (2003). Mixed methods in evaluation contexts: A pragmatic framework. *Social and behavioural research*, 491-512.
- Ralls, R. S. (2011). *Online services resource guide for advisors and counsellors*. VLC Quality & Assessment Center. North Carolina Community College System.

- Raunic, A., & Xenos, S. (2008). University counselling service utilisation by local and international students and user characteristics: A review. *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, 30(4), 262-267.
- Rea, L. M., & Parker, R. A. (1992). *Designing and conducting research: A comprehensive guide*, Los Angeles, C A: Washington Press
- Reich, R. B. (2008). *The case against corporate social responsibility*. Goldman School of Public Policy Working Paper No. GSPP08-003.
- Richards, D. (2009). Features and benefits of online counselling: Trinity College online mental health community. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*, 37(3), 231-242.
- Richards, D., & Vigano, N. (2013). Online counseling: A narrative and critical review of the literature. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 1(10), 1-18.
- Robson, D. (2000). Ethical issues in Internet counselling. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, 13(3), 249-258.
- Rochlen, A. B., Beretvas, S. N., & Zack, J. S. (2004). The online and face-to-face counselling attitudes scales: A validation study. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counselling and Development*, 37(2), 95-111.
- Rockwell, S., Schauer, S., Fritz, S., & Marx, D. (1999). Incentives and obstacles influencing higher educational faculty and administrators to teach via distance. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration*, 2-16.
- Rogers, C. (1961). *On becoming a person: A therapist's view of Psychology*. London: Constable.

- Rogers, C. R. (1957). The necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change. *Journal of consulting psychology*, 21(2), 95.
- Rogers, C. R. (1959). *A theory of therapy, personality, and interpersonal relationships: As developed in the client-centered framework*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Rogers, C. R. (1972). Bringing together ideas and feelings in learning. *Learning Today*, 2(1), 1-17.
- Rogers, C. R. (1980). *Rogers, Kohut, and Erickson: A personal perspective on person-centered*. The first conference (pp. 179-187).
- Rummell, C. M., & Joyce, N. R. (2010). The ethical implications of online counseling. *Ethics and Behaviour*, 20(6), 482-496.
- Ruto, J., Manduku, J., & Kosgey, A. (2017). Determinants of effective guidance and counselling programmes in public secondary schools in Kericho Sub-County, Kenya. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 2(5), 44-51.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25(1), 54-67.
- Salant, P., Dillman, I., & Don, A. (1994). *How to conduct your own survey*. London: Bistle Press.
- Sampson, J. P., Kolodinsky, R. W. & Greeno, B. P. (1997). Counselling on the information highway: Future possibilities and potential problems. *Journal of Counselling and Development*, 75(3), 203-212.

- Sampson, Jr., J. P., Kolodinsky, R. W., & Greeno, B. P. (1997). Counselling on the information highway: Future possibilities and potential problems. *Journal of Counselling and Development*, 75, 203-212.
- Sanders, P. (2007). *Using counselling skills on the telephone and in computer-mediated communication*. Ross-on-Wye, UK: PCCS Books
- Sanders, P., & Rosenfield, M. (1998). Counselling at a distance: Challenges and new initiatives. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling*, 26(1), 5-10.
- Sarantakos, S. (1997). *Research methods*. Melbourne, Australia: Macmillan.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research methods for business students*. Essex, England: Financial Times/Prentice Hall.
- Seifert, K. L., & Hoffgung, J. R. (1991). *Child and adolescent development* (2nd ed). Boston, MA: Houghton Mufflin Co.
- Sekaran, U. (2000). *Research for business: A skill-building approach*. East Warden, India: John Wiley Press.
- Shapiro, D., & Schulman, C. (1996). Ethical and legal issues in e-mail therapy. *Ethics & Behaviour*, 6, 107-124.
- Shaw, H. E., & Shaw, S. F. (2006). Critical ethical issues in online counseling: Assessing current practices with on ethical intent checklist. *Journal of Counselling and Development*, 8(4), 41-53.
- Shiller, I. (2009). Online counselling: A review of the literature. *East Metro Youth Services*, 11, 103-114.
- Stevens, P. W. & Shulman, K. (2003). *Off the couch and online: Technology in family counselling*. Greensboro, NC: CAPS Press.

- Stofle, G. S. (1997). *Thoughts about online psychotherapy: Ethical and practical considerations*. Retrieved from <http://members.aol.com/stofle/onlinepssch.htm>.
- Suler, J. (2000). Psychotherapy in cyberspace: A 5-dimensional model of online and computer-mediated psychotherapy. *Cyber Psychology & Behaviour*, 3(2), 151-159.
- Sussman, R. J. (1998). *Counselling over the internet: Benefits and challenges in the uses of new technologies*. Greensboro, NC: CAPS Press.
- Sussman, R. J. (2004). *Counselling over the internet: Benefits and challenges in the uses of new technologies*. Greensboro, NC: CAPS Press.
- Tannous (2017). Perceptions towards online counselling among University of Jordan students. *Modern Applied Science*, 11(12), 68-76.
- Tate, D. F., Jackvony, E. H., & Wing, R. R. (2013). A randomized trial comparing human e-mail counseling, computer-automated tailored counselling, and no counseling in an Internet weight loss program. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 166(15), 1620-1625.
- Tuliao, A. P., Hechanova, M. R. A., & Hwa, A. P. (2011). If you build it, will they come? Adoption of online counselling among overseas migrant workers. *Media Asia*, 38(1), 32-40.
- Tuliao, A. P., Torres, V. G., & Hechanova, M. R. M. (2010). *Negotiating counseling virtually: Counselors' perspectives on conducting online counseling*. Paper presented at the Psychological Association of the Philippines Annual Convention, Puerto Princesa, Palawan.

- Van de Luitgaarden, G., & van der Tier, M. (2018). Establishing working relationships in online social work. *Journal of Social Work, 18*(3), 307-325.
- Wampold, B. E. (2001). Where oh where are the specific ingredients? A meta-analysis of component studies in counseling and psychotherapy. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 48*(3), 251.
- Wang, Z., Chen, H., Xin, R. & Chi, Y. (2010). Peer counselling system. *International Conference on Educational and Information Technology (ICEIT), 1*, 535-537
- Watts, A. G., & Kidd, J. M. (2000). Guidance in the United Kingdom: Past, present and future. *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling, 28*(4), 485-502.
- Wells, M., Mitchell, K. J., Finkelhor, D., & Becker-Blease, K. A. (2007). Online mental health treatment: Concerns and considerations. *Cyber Psychology & Behaviour, 10*(3), 453-459.
- Welman, C., Kruger, F., & Mitchell, B. (2005). *Research methodology*. Cape Town, South Africa: Oxford University Press.
- West, L. (1988). A social learning model of peer choice in the natural environment. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 17*(2), 215-237.
- Wilkinson, N., Ang, R. P., & Goh, D. H. (2008). Online video game therapy for mental health concerns: a review. *International Journal of Social Psychiatry, 54*(4), 370-382.

- Wong, K. P., Bonn, G., Tam, C. L., & Wong, C. P. (2018). Preferences for online and/or face-to-face counseling among university students in Malaysia. *Frontiers in Psychology, 9*, 64-71.
- Wood, D., Bruner, J. S., & Ross, G. (1976). The role of tutoring in problem solving. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 17*(2), 89-100.
- Wright, J. (2002). Online counseling: learning from writing therapy. *British Journal of Guidance and Counselling, 30*(3), 285-298.
- Yager, J. (2001). E-mail as a therapeutic adjunct in the outpatient treatment of anorexia nervosa: Illustrative case material and discussion of the issues. *International Journal of Eating Disorders, 29*, 125-138.
- Yager, J. (2003). Monitoring patients with eating disorders by using e-mail as an adjunct to clinical activities. *Psychiatric Services, 54*, 1586-1588
- Ybarra, M. L., & Eaton, W.W. (2005). Internet-based mental health interventions. *Mental Health Services Research, 7*, 75-87
- Young, K. S. (2005). An empirical examination of client attitudes towards online counseling. *Cyber Psychology & Behaviour, 8*(2), 172-177.
- Young, L. R., & Nestle, M. (2002). The contribution of expanding portion sizes to the US obesity epidemic. *American Journal of Public Health, 92*, 246-249.
- Zamani, Z. A. (2009). Computer technology and counseling. *IEEE International Conference on Computer Science and Information Technology* (pp. 488-490).
- Zikmund, W. (1994). *Business research methods*. London, UK: CYNCOED.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

This questionnaire is intended to find out students' attitude towards online counselling (where you interact a counsellor using the internet). Using the internet for counselling involves the use of Skype, E-mail, Facebook and Whatsapp. Your responses to this questionnaire will be used for academic purposes.

SECTION A: Background Information

Please read each item carefully and indicate your response by ticking (✓) the appropriate column.

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Age: | 17-20 years [] | 21-24years [] | 25years and above [] |
| 2. Gender: | Male [] | Female [] | |
| 3. Level: | 100 [] | 200 [] | |
| 4. Marital Status: | Single [] | Married [] | |

SECTION B: Online Counselling Attitudes Scale

This section deals with students' attitudes towards online counselling. Please indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement by circling any of the four options; Strongly Disagree (SD), Disagree (D), Agree (A) and Strongly Agree (SA); for items 5 to 14.

No.	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
5.	Using online counselling would help me learn about myself.				
6	If a friend had personal problems, I might encourage him or her to consider online counselling				
7	I would confide my personal problems in an online counsellor.				
8	It could be worthwhile to discuss my personal problems with an online counsellor				
9	If online counselling were available at no charge, I would consider trying it.				
10	If I were having a personal problem, seeking help with an online counsellor would be the last option I would consider.				
11	I would feel uneasy discussing emotional problems with an online counsellor.				
12	I would dread explaining my problems to an online counsellor				
13	I think it would take a major effort for me to schedule an appointment with an online counsellor.				
14	I would be afraid to discuss stressful events with an online counsellor				

APPENDIX B
RESULTS OUTPUT

Reliability Results

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	491	99.6
	Excluded ^a	2	.4
	Total	493	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.848	.849	5

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Using online counselling would help me learn about myself if a friend had personal problems, i might encourage him or her to consider online counselling	2.71	.835	491
I would confide my personal problems in an online counsellor	2.65	.805	491
it could be worthwhile to discuss my personal problems with an online counsellor	2.29	.890	491
if an online counselling were available at no charge, i would consider trying it	2.49	.856	491
	2.95	.883	491

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	Using online counselling would help me learn about myself	If a friend had personal problems, I might encourage him or her to consider online counselling	I would confide my personal problems in an online counsellor	It could be worthwhile to discuss my personal problems with an online counsellor	If an online counselling were available at no charge, I would consider trying it
Using online counselling would help me learn about myself	1.000	.687	.431	.470	.499
If a friend had personal problems, i might encourage him or her to consider online counselling	.687	1.000	.528	.540	.549
I would confide my personal problems in an online counsellor	.431	.528	1.000	.665	.431
it could be worthwhile to discuss my personal problems with an online counsellor	.470	.540	.665	1.000	.498
if an online counselling were available at no charge, i would consider trying it	.499	.549	.431	.498	1.000

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Inter-Item Correlations	.530	.431	.687	.256	1.595	.007	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Using online counselling would help me learn about myself if a friend had personal problems, i might encourage him or her to consider online counselling	10.38	7.670	.643	.500	.820
I would confide my personal problems in an online counsellor	10.44	7.488	.727	.574	.799
it could be worthwhile to discuss my personal problems with an online counsellor	10.80	7.462	.635	.484	.823
if an online counselling were available at no charge, i would consider trying it	10.61	7.427	.682	.519	.810
	10.14	7.615	.604	.377	.831

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
13.09	11.338	3.367	5

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	490	99.4
	Excluded ^a	3	.6
	Total	493	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.556	.620	5

Item Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
If i were having a personal problem, seeking help with an online counsellor would be the last option i would consider	2.45	1.689	490
I would feel uneasy discussing emotional problems with an online counsellor	2.49	1.010	490
I would dread explaining my problems to an online counsellor	2.50	.847	490
I think it would take a major effort for me to schedule an appointment with an online counsellor	2.34	.860	490
I would be afraid to discuss stressful events with an online counsellor	2.61	.965	490

Inter-Item Correlation Matrix

	If I were having a personal problem, seeking help with an online counsellor would be the last option i would consider	I would feel uneasy discussing emotional problems with an online counsellor	i would dread explaining my problems to an online counsellor	I think it would take a major effort for me to schedule an appointment with an online counsellor	I would be afraid to discuss stressful events with an online counsellor
If i were having a personal problem, seeking help with an online counsellor would be the last option i would consider	1.000	.238	.155	.079	.097
I would feel uneasy discussing emotional problems with an online counsellor	.238	1.000	.430	.154	.378
I would dread explaining my problems to an online counsellor	.155	.430	1.000	.263	.369
I think it would take a major effort for me to schedule an appointment with an online counsellor	.079	.154	.263	1.000	.295
I would be afraid to discuss stressful events with an online counsellor	.097	.378	.369	.295	1.000

Summary Item Statistics

	Mean	Minimum	Maximum	Range	Maximum / Minimum	Variance	N of Items
Inter-Item Correlations	.246	.079	.430	.350	5.416	.014	5

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Squared Multiple Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
if i were having a personal problem, seeking help with an online counsellor would be the last option i would consider	9.94	6.622	.207	.061	.647
I would feel uneasy discussing emotional problems with an online counsellor	9.90	7.707	.455	.267	.427
i would dread explaining my problems to an online counsellor	9.88	8.395	.441	.258	.453
i think it would take a major effort for me to schedule an appointment with an online counsellor	10.04	9.164	.263	.116	.530
i would be afraid to discuss stressful events with an online counsellor	9.78	8.201	.388	.233	.467

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
12.39	11.276	3.358	5

Research Question One

Attitude Towards Beneficial Nature of Online Counselling

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Using online counselling would help me learn about myself	493	2.71	.833
if a friend had personal problems, i might encourage him or her to consider online counselling	493	2.66	.806
I would confide my personal problems in an online counsellor	491	2.29	.890
it could be worthwhile to discuss my personal problems with an online counsellor	491	2.49	.856
if an online counselling were available at no charge, i would consider trying it	491	2.95	.883
Valid N (listwise)	491		

Attitudes towards Utilisation of Online Counselling

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
if i were having a personal problem, seeking help with an online counsellor would be the last option i would consider	491	2.68	1.679
I would feel uneasy discussiing emotional problems with an online counsellor	490	2.51	1.010
i would dread explaining my problems to an online counsellor	490	2.50	.847
i think it would take a major effort for me to schedule an appointment with an online counsellor	490	2.66	.860
i would be afraid to discuss stressful events with an online counsellor	490	2.39	.965
Valid N (listwise)	490		

Attitude Towards Online Counselling

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Attitude	493	2.5506	.53851
Utilisation_Attitude	491	2.4782	.67133
Beneficial_Attitude	493	2.6213	.67346
Valid N (listwise)	491		

Research Question Two: Attitude towards online counselling with respect to Gender

Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Beneficial_Attitude	Male	281	2.6651	.66542	.03970
	Female	212	2.5632	.68121	.04679

Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Utilisation_Attitude	Male	279	2.5090	.67506	.04041
	Female	212	2.4377	.66581	.04573

Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Attitude	Male	281	2.5885	.52464	.03130
	Female	212	2.5005	.55362	.03802

Research Question Three: Attitude towards online counselling with respect
academic level

Group Statistics

	Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Beneficial_Attitude	100	202	2.5545	.69045	.04858
	200	290	2.6693	.65918	.03871

Group Statistics

	Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Utilisation_Attitude	100	201	2.4806	.61520	.04339
	200	289	2.4761	.70986	.04176

Group Statistics

	Level	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Attitude	100	202	2.5172	.49451	.03479
	200	290	2.5745	.56761	.03333

Research Question Four: Attitude towards Online Counselling with respect to Age Groups

Descriptives

Beneficial_Attitude

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					17-20yrs	360	2.5906	.63564
21-24yrs	120	2.7158	.75881	.06927	2.5787	2.8530	1.00	4.00
25yrs n above	13	2.6000	.82462	.22871	2.1017	3.0983	1.00	3.80
Total	493	2.6213	.67346	.03033	2.5617	2.6809	1.00	4.00

Descriptives

Utilisation_Attitude

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					17-20yrs	359	2.4189	.62667
21-24yrs	119	2.6471	.78577	.07203	2.5044	2.7897	1.20	8.20
25yrs n above	13	2.5692	.46795	.12979	2.2865	2.8520	2.00	3.60
Total	491	2.4782	.67133	.03030	2.4187	2.5377	1.00	8.20

Descriptives

Attitude

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
17-20yrs	360	2.5056	.51854	.02733	2.4518	2.5593	1.00	4.00
21-24yrs	120	2.6822	.58688	.05357	2.5761	2.7883	1.40	5.40
25yrs n above	13	2.5846	.44130	.12239	2.3179	2.8513	1.90	3.20
Total	493	2.5506	.53851	.02425	2.5030	2.5983	1.00	5.40

Research Hypothesis One

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Beneficial_ Attitude	Equal variances assumed	.278	.598	1.667	491	.096	.10192	.06115	-.01824	.22207
	Equal variances not assumed			1.661	448.850	.097	.10192	.06136	-.01866	.22250

Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Utilisation_A ttitude	2.284	.131	1.165	489	.245	.07122	.06114	-.04891	.19136
			1.167	457.504	.244	.07122	.06103	-.04871	.19116

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Attitude	Equal variances assumed	1.800	.180	1.801	491	.072	.08802	.04888	-.00801	.18406
	Equal variances not assumed			1.787	441.170	.075	.08802	.04925	-.00877	.18481

Research Hypothesis Two

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Beneficial_ Attitude	Equal variances assumed	.464	.496	-1.864	490	.063	-.11485	.06160	-.23589	.00618
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.849	419.610	.065	-.11485	.06212	-.23695	.00724

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Utilisation_	Equal variances assumed	.367	.545	.072	488	.942	.00447	.06178	-.11692	.12586
Attitude	Equal variances not assumed			.074	465.002	.941	.00447	.06022	-.11387	.12281

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Attitude	Equal variances assumed	4.033	.045	-1.161	490	.246	-.05732	.04938	-.15434	.03970
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.190	466.155	.235	-.05732	.04818	-.15200	.03736

Research Hypothesis Three

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Beneficial_Attitude

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
3.788	2	490	.023

ANOVA

Beneficial_Attitude

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1.419	2	.709	1.567	.210
Within Groups	221.728	490	.453		
Total	223.146	492			

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Utilisation_Attitude

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.034	2	488	.356

ANOVA

Utilisation_Attitude

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.761	2	2.381	5.377	.005
Within Groups	216.075	488	.443		
Total	220.837	490			

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

Attitude

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
1.531	2	490	.217

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Utilisation_Attitude

Games-Howell

(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
17-20yrs	21-24yrs	-.22812*	.07926	.012	-.4155	-.0407
	25yrs n above	-.15029	.13393	.517	-.5020	.2014
21-24yrs	17-20yrs	.22812*	.07926	.012	.0407	.4155
	25yrs n above	.07783	.14843	.860	-.2972	.4529
25yrs n above	17-20yrs	.15029	.13393	.517	-.2014	.5020
	21-24yrs	-.07783	.14843	.860	-.4529	.2972

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

ANOVA

Attitude

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.824	2	1.412	4.948	.007
Within Groups	139.852	490	.285		
Total	142.677	492			

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Attitude

Games-Howell

(I) Age	(J) Age	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
17-20yrs	21-24yrs	-.17667*	.06014	.010	-.3188	-.0346
	25yrs n above	-.07906	.12541	.806	-.4095	.2514
21-24yrs	17-20yrs	.17667*	.06014	.010	.0346	.3188
	25yrs n above	.09761	.13361	.749	-.2452	.4404
25yrs n above	17-20yrs	.07906	.12541	.806	-.2514	.4095
	21-24yrs	-.09761	.13361	.749	-.4404	.2452

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

APPENDIX C

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
FACULTY OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS
DEPARTMENT OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

Telephone: 0332091854
Email: dgc@ucc.edu.gh

UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE
CAPE COAST, GHANA



Our Ref: DGCL.2/VOL.1/ 72
Your Ref:

December 18, 2018

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

We introduce to you, Benedicta Sarfo Arthur a student pursuing a M.Phil Programme in Guidance and Counselling at the Department of Guidance and Counselling of the University of Cape Coast. As a requirement, she is to submit a Thesis on the topic: *"The Attitude of University Students Towards Online Counselling. A Survey in the University of Ghana, Legon"*. We are by this letter affirming that, the information she will obtain from your institution will be solely used for academic purposes.

We would be most grateful if you could provide her the necessary assistance.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony K. Nkyi'.

Rev. Fr. Dr. Anthony K. Nkyi
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

APPENDIX D

IRB

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
ETHICAL REVIEW BOARD

UNIVERSITY POST OFFICE
CAPE COAST, GHANA

Our Ref: CES-ERB/ucc.edu/13/19-37



Date: March 11, 2019

Your Ref:

Dear Sir/Madam,

ETHICAL REQUIREMENTS CLEARANCE FOR RESEARCH STUDY

Chairman, CES-ERB
Prof. J. A. Omotosho
jomotosho@ucc.edu.gh
0243784739

Vice-Chairman, CES-ERB
Prof. K. Edjah
kedjah@ucc.edu.gh
0244742357

Secretary, CES-ERB
Prof. Linda Dzama Forde
lforde@ucc.edu.gh
0244786680

The bearer, Benedicta Sarfo Arthur, Reg. No. EE/66P/17/0007 is an M.Phil. / Ph.D. student in the Department of Guidance and Counselling in the College of Education Studies, University of Cape Coast, Cape Coast, Ghana. He/She wishes to undertake a research study on the topic:

Students' attitude toward online counselling in the University of Ghana: The case of the College of Humanities

The Ethical Review Board (ERB) of the College of Education Studies (CES) has assessed his/her proposal and confirm that the proposal satisfies the College's ethical requirements for the conduct of the study.

In view of the above, the researcher has been cleared and given approval to commence his/her study. The ERB would be grateful if you would give him/her the necessary assistance to facilitate the conduct of the said research.

Thank you.
Yours faithfully,

Prof. Linda Dzama Forde
(Secretary, CES-ERB)