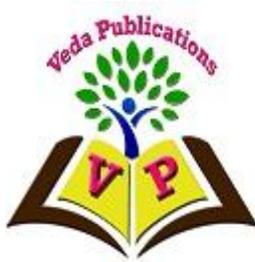


## TRAINEES INTERNET USAGE IN PSYCHOTHERAPY PRACTICE IN TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGES, KENYA

Janipher Ocholla , Prof. Florence Odera

Email: [ocholajanipher@gmail.com](mailto:ocholajanipher@gmail.com)

### ABSTRACT



Information Communication and technology in particular internet aimed at widening access to flexible distance education and psychotherapy in learning institutions. In developed countries online psychotherapy has been practiced in learning institutions. However there is limited information on whether it has been established in public teacher training colleges in Kenya as an alternative approach to psychotherapy practice. Teacher trainees in Kenya are at the early adulthood stage of human growth and development. This is a critical period with myriads of psychological, social, and academic issues which affect them, most of which require a personal and confidential psychotherapeutic intervention. One of the key objectives of the study was to establish the trainees' internet usage in Psychotherapy practice in Public Teacher Training Colleges in the Lake Region, Kenya. This paper explores the teacher trainees' level of internet usage within their work-based training situation, especially for psychotherapy practice with a view of giving a critical perspective of evidence based approach for this practice. Teacher trainees will be able to access and interact online with their psychotherapist, give reports, and provide peer reviewed presentations that relate to psychotherapy practice. The study findings will challenge trainees to embrace technology integration policy within the college, especially the internet in psychotherapy practice. The findings may assist the government, non-governmental organization and professional psychotherapists to allocate more resources for the development of psychotherapy practice in Teacher Training Colleges.

**Keywords:** *Internet Usage, Online, Psychotherapy Practice, Teacher Trainees*

## INTRODUCTION

Online psychotherapy is a field that has seen tremendous growth in the world today. National Institute for Clinical Excellence (2006) a mental health institute in United Kingdom (UK) documented that the advances in technology and widespread use of the internet has made many clients turn to online psychotherapy which has greatly impacted the provision of psychotherapy services. In Nigeria Chi-Chun (2001) proposed the integration of information technology and communication in the provision of counseling services. Alleman (2002) defines online psychotherapy as the practice of professional therapy that occurs when a client and a counselor are in separate locations and utilize electronic means to communicate with each other. Kenya Education Management Institute (2014) noted that one of the strategies of Sessional Paper No.1 of 2005 on ICT is to establish an interactive email communication channel. Interactive channels can facilitate greater dissemination of online psychotherapy services in teacher training colleges.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kenyan suffers from various forms of mental health related ailments that require attention, which would be prevented if online psychotherapy was fully in operation. Trainees are struggling with layers of past experiences and trauma still lives on. All these traumatic experiences need attention which can be easily accessed through online services. In order to address these concerns, this study sought to establish the trainees' internet usage in psychotherapy practice in teacher training colleges in the lake region, Kenya. Colleges with internet connectivity have exposed both the trainees and lecturers to Information Communication and Technology knowledge. Teacher training colleges have websites displaying all the courses and services offered in the institutions. This is in line with MOEST (2005) when the Government made education the natural platform for equipping the nation with ICT skills. From the colleges' website one is able to obtain directions from the lead therapist. A client can send his/her username to the email address provided in the website which can only be accessed by the professional therapist in the institution. From the account the therapist is able to get the clients' contact for attention directly. Confidentiality is assured to the client depending on the terms and conditions of the agreed psychotherapeutic relationship. Ricky (2011) proposed that chats are deleted immediately after conversations between the psychotherapists and the client. Kenya Education Management Institute (2014) explained that one of the goals of National ICT Policy is to address issues of privacy, e-security, ICT legislation, and cyber-crimes, ethical and moral conduct. Privacy options could be secret locked chats and use of passwords. International Communications Union (2007) emphasized on the use of firewalls and avoiding networked computers during the ongoing psychotherapeutic relationship. Specific computers can be allocated for online therapeutic sessions, unless for clients who may need help outside the office hours. Social platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Telegram, email can be used to create online groups where therapists can reach many clients at the same time.

Egbochukwu (2008) stated that the aims of school psychotherapy services are based on students' opportunities to develop knowledge, relationship skills, a sense of responsibility, attitude necessary to enable them make informed decisions about life and career opportunities. According to Zunker (2002) the term counseling involves work with individuals and with relationships which may require support, guidance and problem solving. Furthermore, counseling task also involve giving the client an opportunity to explore, discover and clarify ways of living more satisfying and resourcefully.

Leibert (2006) pointed out that online psychotherapy has several advantages, including accessibility, anonymity, invisibility and status neutralization, greater individual control over time and pace of interactions. These characteristics make it comfortable for men to discuss their psychological challenges freely with the online psychotherapist. The unique variations of intimate communication provide support for those who avoid the traditional mental healthcare system.

According to Egbochukwu (2008) the growth of websites and help lines as forms of technically mediated service delivery means has enhanced the potential of ICT in Guidance and Counseling in Nigerian Secondary Schools. Bolaji (2007) proposed that the potential roles of public policy in relation to ICT-based provision include general funding for guidance and information services. ICT has the potential to significantly increase access to psychotherapy services, freeing it from constraints of time and space. Palmer (2007) stated that counseling is an educational process used in solving problems of the learner and can provide a forum for putting users in contact with other clients with similar issue with the psychotherapist. Shiran (2001) opined that investment in ICT facility will help in counseling and other support services necessary for effective delivery of an ICT-based curriculum in learning institutions. According to Ocholla (2014) in Africa, male gender role, emphasize on being independent and in control, this may increase the perceived risks associated with seeking help for emotional issues, because it may mean that a man must admit that he is unable to handle problems on his own. Traditionally men are viewed as strong, independent, and emotionally controlled, while women are seen as weak and emotionally expressive. Men may be more reluctant to seek help when it is emotion-focused versus when it is cognition-focused.

According to Ocholla( 2014) increased social stigma and decreased pro psychotherapy social norms are associated with women and men seeking help for certain issues. Thus, some men may avoid seeking help because of the increased social stigma. There is scarce information on trainees' internet usage in online psychotherapy practice in the teacher training colleges in the Lake Region in Kenya. Therefore there is need to carry out more research and provide more knowledge on the area. Schultze (2006) expressed concerns about the limitations of online interventions to the lack of accessibility to nonverbal behaviour of patients, difficulties establishing working alliances, inadequate online facilities, online skills and the lack of legal guidelines for online therapy.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Teacher trainees in Kenya are at the early adulthood stage of human growth and development. This is a critical period with myriads of psychological, social, and academic issues which affect them, most of which require a personal and confidential psychotherapeutic intervention. In developed countries online psychotherapy has been practiced in learning institutions. However there is limited documented information that it has been established as an alternative approach to psychotherapy practice in teacher training colleges. The focus of this study was therefore to establish trainee's internet usage in psychotherapy practice in teacher training colleges in the lake region, Kenya

## **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study was to;

To establish Trainees' Internet Usage in Psychotherapy Practice in Teacher Training Colleges in Lake Region, Kenya

## **OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The objective of the study was to;

Establish trainees' level of internet usage in psychotherapy practice in teacher training college in Lake Region, Kenya.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

The study utilized descriptive survey design that is used to gather information as it is during the study period. Kothari (2011) observed that the purpose of descriptive survey design is the description of the state of affairs as it exists at. The objectives in this study was to be analyzed by use of both quantitative and qualitative tools, to realize the findings. Location of the Study: This Study was conducted in Teacher Training Colleges in the Lake Region, Kenya. The region comprise of Homa Bay, Kisii, Kisumu, Migori and Siaya Counties Population of the study: The population of the study was confined to trainees from five public teachers training colleges within the lake region, namely Migori, Asumbi, Bondo, Kenya and Ugenya .

### **THE STUDY POPULATION**

The study population comprised 1100 and a sample size of 330 respondents. This population provided the samplesizebecause the respondents have been exposed to curriculum in counseling and computer studies. Furthermore, they are familiar with the content of data collection instruments.

### **SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES**

Kombo and Tromp (2006) pointed out that sampling is the process of selecting a suitable sample or representative part of a population for determining parameters or characteristics of the whole population. The study targeted a sample size of 330 second year trainees drawn from the 5 teachers training college. Simple Random Sampling was used to select 66 trainees from each college while stratified sampling was used to select 8 male and

female respondents per class to participate in the study. The selected male and female trainees were coded as 1 and 2 respectively.

### **INSTRUMENTS OF DATA COLLECTION**

Data for the study was collected through a self-structured questionnaire and a predetermined interview schedule. The researcher constructed the questionnaire and interview schedule based on the objectives, research questions and the literature review.

### **VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENTS**

To enhance validity, the research questionnaire was constructed based on research objectives and questions. The questionnaire and predetermined interview schedule was viewed by the members of the research committee. Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) noted that reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results after repeated trials. Reliability of the instrument was established by Test retest procedure which was done through piloting on selected respondents identical to the ones used in the study from a public college.

### **DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES**

The researcher sought an introduction letter from the Dean, Graduate School, Rongo University to facilitate the acquisition of research permit from the National Council of Science and Technology, Nairobi. The researcher also sought permission from the principals of Migori, Asumbi, Kenyenia, Ugenya and Bondo Teacher Training Colleges, concerning the intended data collection. On the agreed date the researcher administered the questionnaire and interview schedule in person.

### **METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS**

Data was cleaned, coded, organized and subjected to Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). Qualitative data from interview schedule was analyzed based on themes. Quantitative data from closed ended questions was grouped and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics entailed frequency count, percentages and means to analyzed data obtained from the questionnaire. Frequency counts were computed for data collected by use of tables to establish various distributions that occurred from the study. The results were displayed by use of tables.

### **RESULTS**

This information was based on the background of the respondents on the internet usage in Psychotherapy practice in Teacher Training Colleges in the Lake Region, Kenya. The results are indicated in table 1 and 2

**Table 1: Distribution of participants' gender per college**

College	Male	Female	Total
Migori	22	33	55
Kenyenia	21	26	47
Ugenya	19	29	48
Asumbi	18	32	50
Bondo	23	27	50
Total	103	147	250

The study targeted 1100 respondents from the five public teacher training colleges, a sample size of 330 trainees participated in the study. Simple random technique was used to select 66 respondents to participate in the study. Stratified sampling procedure was used to select male and female trainees from each class. Out of 330 a population of 250 trainees participated in the study. A total of 33 questionnaires were not returned while 48 were spoiled making a total of 81. The findings revealed that 42% male trainees and 58% female trainees participated in the study.

**Table 2: Distribution age of the respondent per college**

College				Total
30 and below	31-35	36 and above		
Migori	51	4	1	56
Kenya	45	2	0	47
Ugenya	38	8	2	48
Asumbi	44	6	0	50
Bondo	32	9	7	49
Total	208	36	6	250

The study targeted 1100 respondents from the five public teacher training colleges, a sample size of 331 trainees participated in the study. Participate in the study. Out of 331 a population of 250 trainees participated in the study, a total of 33 questionnaires were not returned while 48 were spoiled making a total of 81. Research analysis on age of trainees who participate in the study found out that, out of 250 trainees, the findings showed that 82.4% of the trainees were 30 years and below. The results revealed that trainees between 31-35 years were at 14.4% and those within 36 years of age and above were 2.4%. It was established that out of 250 trainees, 91.6% have been trained while 8.4% have not been trained in computer studies. This result is attributed to the fact that all trainees in teacher training colleges have been exposed to computer studies as a subject.

## DISCUSSIONS

In United States of America, NIHM (2016) documented that e-health has become a possibility for providing interventions that can reach people in areas where mental health professionals may not easily be available. The use of telephone, internet and mobile phone services involves a therapist providing help at a distance. Other approaches such as web-based programs and cell phones are designed to provide information and feedback in the absence of a therapist. Online psychotherapy is a field that has seen tremendous growth in the world today. Afifi (2007) noted that there are gender differences towards distress and healthcare seeking among those suffering from mental health problems. Women are more likely to recognize their emotional and psychological challenge and seek help than men with similar symptoms. The result also indicates that most of the participants were within the age of 35 years and below. This is in agreement the current trend that a large number of youth who use internet and can be easily reached by the therapists. Pew Research Centre (2017) reported that 93% of teens ages 15-17 go online while 93% of young adults ages 18-29 use

internet. The report affirms that over the past ten years the two groups consistently used internet.

### **Trainees' Internet level of usage in psychotherapy practice**

The participants were asked to indicate to what extent they use online communication in their individual colleges. The respondents were required to respond to the questionnaire by indicating their level of agreement as per the likert scale's levels of intensities. Thus, 4 Very frequently, 3 being frequently, 2 occasionally and 1 being very rarely. The study findings are displayed in the tables 3

**Table 3 Participants' level of internet usage of online communication**

College	Very Rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very Frequently	Total
Migori		7	5	12	31
Kenya		2	6	16	23
Ugenya		2	6	11	29
Asumbi		1	7	13	29
Bondo		7	9	16	18
Total		19	33	68	130

The result in table 3 showed that from 250 trainees, 52% said that they use online communication very frequently while 27.2% used online communication frequently. This makes a total of 79.2% which confirms the high rate of online communication in teacher training colleges. When asked whether it is necessary to have online communication, the result indicated that 32.5% of the trainees acknowledged high need for online communication. 20% of the trainees chose moderate need for online communication in teacher training colleges, 11.6% of the trainees indicated low need and no need for online communication. Trainees were further asked to state how frequently and confident they are in communication over email and the responses were as indicated in table 4.

**Table 4 : Use of email service**

College	Very rarely	Occasionally	Frequently	Very frequently	Total
Migori	16	12	20	7	55
Kenya	4	7	29	7	47
Ugenya	11	11	19	7	48
Asumbi	13	16	18	3	50
Bondo	1	12	21	16	50
Total	45	58	107	40	250

The results indicated that out of 250 trainees, 16% and 42.8% used email very frequently and frequently in that order making a total of 48.8% of respondents in teacher training colleges. According to table 4, out of 250 trainees, 37.2% indicated that they are confident while 24.4% said that they are very confident with use of email. 25% revealed that they are somehow confident while 13.2% mentioned that they are not confident at all.

**Table 6: Participants' preference for online psychotherapy**

College	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Migori	3	5	0	18	29	55
Kenya	6	4	5	15	17	47
Ugenya	5	5	8	20	10	48
Asumbi	7	6	9	17	11	50
Bondo	6	2	12	14	16	50
Total	27	22	34	84	83	250

## DISCUSSIONS

In this section trainees were asked to mark the level of their preference for online psychotherapy according to levels given in the likert scale. According to the table, out of 250 trainees, 33.2% chose strongly agree while 33.6% chose agree. This makes a total of 66.8% while 8.8% and 10.8% strongly disagreed and disagreed in that order. Reasons given for the preference of online psychotherapy to face to face contact included accessibility. Pew Research Center (2017) reported that confirmed that trainees use the internet and own technological devices than the rest of the general population. The report further confirmed that nearly 100% of college trainees are internet users. Therefore the college trainees are likely to access psychotherapy practice by use of internet. Sussman (2004) noted that one of the primary advantages of online counseling is its potential for increasing access to online services. It can bring services to persons in underserved or geographically isolated areas, as well as to those who cannot leave their home due to illness, physical limitations, transportation difficulties or family obligations. Trainees cited the convenience as another reason for preference for online psychotherapy in relation to face to face contact. The trainees further cited time saving as one of the reasons why they prefer online psychotherapy. Griffiths (2008) said that the use of computer-mediated communication may allow family therapists to engage absent family members in therapy. Private therapists may offer online counseling services at less than the cost of a face-to-face therapy session, making online counseling services more financially accessible. Maheu (2003) argued that online counseling is a convenient service which can be provided at any time and clients can send messages

whenever they feel most in need for therapy. He further argued that online counseling allows more flexibility in the counselors' work schedules.

Suler (2009) stated that there are no difficulties in having to schedule a particular appointment time because the therapist and client do not have to be sitting at their computers at the same time. Leibert (2006) recognized that the flexibility of electronic communication can also increase a therapist's accessibility, especially for clients with erratic and demanding personal schedules. Therefore each of the counties in the Lake region has recognized the importance of ICT which forms the foundation for economic and educational growth in the region. Currently a limited number of schools and colleges have computers and this should be a priority area as it will ensure that the students in this region have equal access to online resources and services. Ricky (2011) revealed that client's information can be kept confidential by limiting access of information to the counselor and the client. This can be done by having personal computers for sessions fixed with passwords that are changed regularly. He observed that information can be kept confidential by the counselor by using external storage devices that are separate from the networks or computers used during the psychotherapy sessions. The system vaults can be set up by server administrators to keep the data secure and enable counselor and the client to converse without any restriction. Information can be encrypted so that only the client and counselors understand the counseling conversation and the therapeutic relationship. Ricky (2011) argued that encryption could be in form of acronyms, abbreviations and pseudonyms used to keep the therapy information confidential. The use of firewalls and corporate perimeter firewalls can be used to manage the entry and exit of information exchanged between the counselor and client.

## SUMMARY

The use of online psychotherapy is useful as responses revealed from the teacher training colleges. From the literature review and participants' responses provided, the study established that the trainees' internet usage level in Psychotherapy practices is beneficial in Teacher Training Colleges in Lake Region, Kenya. The findings have been presented in the previous chapter of this document and the summary is given below.

- i. The findings revealed that 42% male trainees and 58% female trainees participated in the study. Research analysis on age of trainees who participate in the study found out that, out of 250 trainees, 82.4% were 30 years and below, between 31-35 years were 14.4% and 36 years and above were 2.4%. It was established that out of 250 trainees, 91.6% are trained while 8.4% are not trained in computer studies.
- ii. The trainees showed frequent online communication and that there is a high need for online communication. Trainees further stated that they are confident with email as a tool for communication. Trainees said that they prefer online psychotherapy practice because of its accessibility, convenience, privacy and flexibility.

## CONCLUSION

Online psychotherapy has been practiced in United States of America, United Kingdom and other developing countries like Nigeria and Kenya. The study revealed that among the respondents, the female trainees were more than the male trainees. The researcher

found out that the majority of the participants in the study were within the age of 30 years and below. The findings showed evidence of trainees' internet usage and high level of practice in psychotherapy. The trainees strongly agreed and agreed that they are comfortable and confident with use of internet and this has enhanced online psychotherapy practice in teacher training colleges in the Lake Region, Kenya.

### RECOMMENDATION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study the following recommendations were made;

- i. Internet usage in psychotherapy practice should be included in the primary teacher education syllabus with emphasis on internet usage in psychotherapy practice
- ii. The study was based in the Lake Region and the result may not be generalized for other regions. Therefore a similar study should be carried out in other areas to bring out the real picture of the study

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