



## PREFERENCE FOR CYBER-COUNSELLING AMONG STUDENTS OF FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF KASHERE, GOMBE STATE

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### **Abstract**

This study was carried out to investigate the preference for cyber-counselling among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State students with reference to Lagos State University. Specifically, the study aims assess the accessibility of cyber-counselling services among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State students, investigate the preference for cyber-counselling among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State student, evaluate the effectiveness of cyber-counselling among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State students and identify the factors hindering the implementation and uptake of cyber-counselling services among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State students. The study employed the survey descriptive research design. A total of 259 responses were validated from the survey. From the responses obtained and analyzed, the findings revealed that there is a preference for cyber-counselling among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State student. The study thereby recommend that 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. Also, teachers and academic advisors are to employ more online counselling techniques in addressing the needs of their students as and when they are approached. Lastly, 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.

**Keywords:** Investigate, Preference Cyber-Counselling, Students.

### **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. The number of students in higher education has been increasing every year in Nigeria (Sani, 2024) and the total number of them reached 2.924 million during the 2023-2024 academic year (Wale, 2023). To meet the increased demands for higher education, it becomes necessary to establish new universities around the country. Recently, fifteen state universities have been established and at present there are 139 universities, of which 45 are private. Today, it is obviously clear that the focus of universities is to provide educated and trained manpower to meet the demands of



labor market. However, universities have responsibilities not only in cognitive and occupational development but also in personal, social, and psychological development of students. Since 2017, it is mandatory to establish student services to meet those needs in universities (Dan, 2022). Cyber-Counselling but, the student services, especially counseling centers, do not fulfill the tasks expected them due to lack of enough personnel and physical facilities, administration or organizational structure, lack of job descriptions, and work over loading (Tata, 2023; Yohanna, 2023). Throughout the university years, students face with many difficulties which range from normal student problems (developmental or informational) to more severe psychological problems (Eli, 2020). Student needs are influenced by individual and contextual factors and sometimes take a complex form including many problems (Gani, 2020). 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 (Umar, 2020). As clients find time to arrange their thoughts, therapists benefit from that time to carefully structure their questions (James, 2024).

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 (Omar, 2021). The prementioned features are associated with some positive and negative issues. Mostly, they were dealt with

through providing appropriate guidelines to handle ethical and practical points (Peters, 2024). Therefore, the study investigate preference for cyber-counselling among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State student.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Cyber-counselling, defined as the provision of counseling services through online platforms, has emerged as a potential alternative or complement to traditional face-to-face counseling methods. Despite its increasing prevalence globally, there remains a gap in understanding the preference for cyber-counselling among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State students. Nigeria, with its rapidly growing internet penetration and youth population, presents a unique context where cyber-counselling could address barriers to accessing mental health support services (Ade, 2020). Accessibility to mental health services, including counseling, remains a significant concern among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State students. While cyber-counselling has the potential to overcome geographical and logistical barriers, such as limited availability of counseling centers or transportation challenges, it is essential to assess the extent to which students perceive cyber-counselling as accessible and convenient. Cultural norms, attitudes, and perceptions regarding mental health and help-seeking behaviors may influence the acceptability of cyber-counselling among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State (Fada, 2022).

In light of these considerations, this research aims to investigate the preference for cyber-counselling among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State students, examining factors influencing accessibility, acceptability, effectiveness, technological readiness, and



ethical considerations. By addressing these issues, the study seeks to contribute to the development of evidence-based strategies for enhancing mental health support services in Nigerian higher education institutions through cyber-counselling interventions. Hence, the study preference for cyber-counselling among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State students.

### Objective of the Study

The following objectives guided the study;

- i. To assess the accessibility of cyber-counselling services among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State students.
- ii. To investigate the preference for cyber-counselling among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State student.
- iii. To evaluate the effectiveness of cyber-counselling among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State students
- iv. To identify the factors hindering the implementation and uptake of cyber-counselling services among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State students

### Research Questions

The following questions have been prepared to guide the study

- i. Is cyber-counselling services accessible to Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State students?
- ii. Is there a preference for cyber-counselling among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State student?
- iii. How effective is cyber-counselling among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State students?
- iv. What are the factors hindering the implementation and uptake of cyber-counselling services among

Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State students?

### Methodology

Research designs are perceived to be an overall strategy adopted by the researcher whereby different components of the study are integrated in a logical manner to effectively address a research problem. In this study, the researcher employed the survey research design. This is due to the nature of the study whereby the opinion and views of people are sampled. According to Simon, (2023), Survey research can use quantitative research strategies (e.g., using questionnaires with numerically rated items), qualitative research strategies (e.g., using open-ended questions), or both strategies (i.e., mixed methods). As it is often used to describe and explore human behaviour, surveys are therefore frequently used in social and psychological research. According to Udo (2024), a study population is a group of elements or individuals as the case may be, who share similar characteristics. These similar features can include location, gender, age, sex or specific interest. The emphasis on study population is that it constitutes of individuals or elements that are homogeneous in description. A study sample is simply a systematic selected part of a population that infers its result on the population. In essence, it is that part of a whole that represents the whole and its members share characteristics in like similitude. In this study, the researcher adopted the convenient sampling method to determine the sample size. Out of the entire population of Selected students in faculty of Arts, the researcher conveniently selected two hundred and sixty-six (266) participant as the sample size for this study. The research instrument used in this study is the questionnaire. Two methods of data collection which are primary source and secondary source were used to collect data. The primary sources were the use of questionnaires, while the secondary sources



include textbooks, internet, journals, published and unpublished articles and government publications. The responses

were analyzed using the frequency percentage tables, which provided answers to the research questions

**Results**

**Question 1: Is cyber-counselling services accessible to Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State?**

**Table 1.1:** Respondent on question 1

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	121	46.71
No	89	34.36
Undecided	49	18.91
<b>Total</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>100</b>

From the responses obtained as expressed in the table above, 46.71% said yes, 34.36% said no, while the remaining 18.91% were undecided.

**Question 2: Is there a preference for cyber-counselling among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State?**

**Table 2.2:** Respondent on question 2

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	141	54.44
No	89	34.36
Undecided	29	11.19
<b>Total</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>100</b>

From the responses obtained as expressed in the table above, 54.44% said yes, 34.36% said no, while the remaining 11.19% were undecided.

**Question 3: How effective is cyber-counselling among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State?**

**Table 3.3:** Respondent on question 3

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very effective	127	49.03%
Not effective	46	17.76%
Undecided	86	33.20%
<b>Total</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>100</b>

From the responses obtained as expressed in the table 4.5 above, 49.03% of the respondents said very effective, 17.76% said not effective while 33.20% were undecided.

**Research Question 4:** What are the factors hindering the implementation and uptake of cyber-counselling services among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State?



**Table 4.4: Responses on question 4**

SN	Item	N	SA	A	SD	$\bar{X}$	SD	Decision
1	Limited access to reliable internet connectivity	170	60	20	9	3.7	2.63	Accepted
2	Deep-seated stigma surrounding mental health issues and help-seeking behaviors may discourage Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State students from accessing cyber-counselling services	100	59	75	25	4	2.82	Accepted
3	Concerns about the confidentiality and security of personal information shared during cyber-counselling sessions undermine students' trust in online counseling platforms	200	20	9	30	3.8	2.76	Accepted
4	Some students prefer traditional face-to-face counseling sessions over cyber-counselling due to the perceived value of in-person interaction	95	79	60	25	3.2	2.50	Accepted

In table 4.4 above, on the factors hindering the implementation and uptake of cyber-counselling services among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State, the table shows that all the items (item1-item4) are accepted. This is proven as the respective items (item1-item4) have mean scores above 2.50.

#### **Findings**

The calculated  $X^2 = 17.0$  and is greater than the table value of  $X^2$  at 0.05 significant level which is 5.991.

#### **Decision**

Since the  $X^2$  calculated value is greater than the critical table value that is 17.0 is greater than 5.991, the Null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis which states that there is a preference for cyber-counselling among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State student is accepted.

#### **Summary**

In this study, the focus was on the preference for cyber-counselling among

Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State students using Federal University of Kashere as a case study. The study specifically was aimed at highlighting the assess the accessibility of cyber-counselling services among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State, investigate the preference for cyber-counselling among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State, evaluate the effectiveness of cyber-counselling among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State and identify the factors hindering the implementation and uptake of cyber-counselling services among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State. A total of 259 responses were validated from the enrolled participants where all respondents are drawn from students in the faculty of Education, Federal University of Kashere.



## Conclusion

Based on the finding of this study, the following conclusions were made:

- a. Cyber-counselling services is accessible to Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State?
- b. There is a preference for cyber-counselling among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State.
- c. Cyber-counselling is effective among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State?
- d. The factors hindering the implementation and uptake of cyber-counselling services among Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State includes:
- e. Limited access to reliable internet connectivity
- f. Deep-seated stigma surrounding mental health issues and help-seeking behaviors may discourage Students of Federal University of Kashere, Gombe State from accessing cyber-counselling services
- g. Concerns about the confidentiality and security of personal information shared during cyber-counselling sessions undermine students' trust in online counseling platforms
- h. Some students prefer traditional face-to-face counseling sessions over cyber-counselling due to the perceived value of in-person interaction.

## Recommendation

Based on the responses obtained, the researcher proffers the following recommendations:

- a. University counselling centres should organize numerous workshops and sensitization programmes on the effortless utilization of

onlinecounselling to sustain and improve on the positive attitude universitystudents have towards online counselling.

- b. Teachers and academic advisors are to employ more online counsellingtechniques in addressing the needs of their students as and when theyare approached.
- c. Symposia and seminars are to be conducted on the relevance of theutilization of online counselling to generate the interest in the pursuitof such services.

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