



## AN ASSESSMENT OF COUNSELLORS' E-COUNSELLING KNOWLEDGE AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ADJUSTMENT TO E-COUNSELLING IN THE SOUTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON

Elime Teddy Enongene, Bongwong Bruno and Tante Charles Achu

Faculty of education, university of Buea, Cameroon.

### Abstract

*The advent of technology has transformed the counseling landscape, with e-counseling emerging as a viable alternative to traditional face-to-face counseling. However, the effectiveness of e-counseling hinges on counselors' competence in using digital platforms and students' willingness to adapt to this new paradigm. E-counseling is a vital tool in promoting school adjustment, as it provides students with accessible, confidential, and flexible support to address emotional, social, and academic challenges. This digital approach breaks down barriers to traditional counseling, ensuring that students receive the necessary support to thrive in their educational environment. This study aimed to assess counselors' e-counseling knowledge and secondary school students' adjustment to e-counseling, exploring the relationship between these two variables. The objective of this paper was to examine Counsellors' Knowledge of E Counselling and the School Adjustment in secondary school students of the South West Region? The target population was made up of 240 school counsellors selected from 274 counsellors in the different schools in the South West Region. A google form questionnaires and an interview guide were the research instruments used to collect the data. Purposive sampling, simple random, convenience, and proportionate sampling techniques were used data for the study. The study employed Person Centered Therapy by Carl Rogers, in order to establish the relationship between E counselling knowledge and School adjustment. The findings revealed that counselors' e-counseling knowledge was moderately high, with areas of strength in technical skills and areas for improvement in ethical considerations. Students' adjustment to e-counseling was also moderate, with concerns about confidentiality and technical issues. A significant positive correlation was found between counselors' e-counseling knowledge and students' adjustment. Results revealed that there is a significant relationship between E-counselling knowledge and school adjustment of secondary school students as was established (R-value 0.451, p-value < 0.001. It was recommended that counsellors should seek avenues for self-improvement in digital technology through free online programs and that training schools make efforts to include e counselling modules in their training programs. This study highlights the need for ongoing professional development for counselors to enhance their e-counseling competencies. It also underscores the importance of addressing students' concerns and preferences when implementing e-counseling services. The findings have implications for counseling practice, education, and research, emphasizing the need for a collaborative effort to ensure the effective integration of e-counseling in secondary school settings.*

**Keywords:** *E-counseling, counselors' knowledge, students' adjustment, secondary school.*

DOI:- 10.5281/zenodo.15661614

Manu script # 298

## Introduction

The advent of technology has revolutionized the way counseling services are delivered, with electronic counseling (e-counseling) emerging as a viable alternative to traditional face-to-face counseling. E-counseling offers numerous benefits, including increased accessibility, convenience, and flexibility, making it an attractive option for secondary school students who may face barriers in accessing traditional counseling services. However, the effectiveness of e-counseling depends on several factors, including counselors' competence in using digital platforms and students' willingness to adapt to this new paradigm. Research has shown that counselors' knowledge and skills in e-counseling are crucial in determining the success of e-counseling interventions (Cook & Doyle, 2002; Haberstroh et al., 2014). Similarly, students' adjustment to e-counseling is critical in ensuring that they can effectively utilize these services and achieve their counseling goals.

Despite the growing importance of e-counseling, there is a dearth of research on counselors' e-counseling knowledge and secondary school students' adjustment to e-counseling. This study aims to address this knowledge gap by assessing counselors' e-counseling knowledge and secondary school students' adjustment to e-counseling. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the factors that influence the effectiveness of e-counseling in secondary school settings and inform the development of e-counseling programs and services that meet the needs of counselors and students.

Guidance and counselling contain educational values and functions to glorify humanity so that humans can live effectively. Practically, the counselling process will deliver an individual to a pleasant, safe, and effective state in his daily life. The process of school adjustment plays a pivotal role in shaping how secondary school students navigate academic demands, social expectations, and emotional challenges within the school setting. In Cameroon, where secondary education signifies a shift towards a more independent phase of learning and growth, successful adjustment is crucial for student retention, motivation, and academic performance. The significance of school adjustment is further underscored in environments characterized by socio-political unrest and public health crises, such as the Anglophone conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Historically, the concept of adjustment dates back to the Darwinian theory of evolution in 1859. The Theory propounded the concept of survival of the fittest, wherein only those organisms most fitted to adapt to changing circumstances could survive. Adjustment as a psychological term may be another name for the term adaptation, as used in the biologically that is, physiological survival of all species. In essence then, adjustment in all its connotations, suggests a satisfactory adaptation to the demands of our day-to-day life in an ever-changing environment. 'The process of adjustment helps a person to lead a happy and contented life by enabling him or her to maintain a balance between his needs and his capacity to fulfill them. It enables him or her to change his or her way of life according to the demands of the situation and likewise provides the strength and ability to bring about the necessary changes in the conditions of his or her environment where required. Adjustment must thus be envisioned as a dynamic interactive process between the individual and the world in which he or she lives and experiences (Chauhan, 1984).

Goodstein (1979), assert that Adjustment to our world today is no simple task. The fast pace of life and rapid changes in society, pose great challenges to our wellbeing and create a number of choices for the individual. Guidance and counseling services are specifically designed to enhance students' academic, emotional, and social development, thereby improving their ability to adapt to the school environment. These services are essential in helping students navigate the complexities of adolescence, make informed career decisions, and cope with personal and academic obstacles. Anyi (2017) emphasizes that counseling services contribute to unlocking students' potential, aiding in career planning, and offering support for personal and social issues, all of which are vital for successful school adjustment. Additionally, the study

necessitates the creation of a supportive environment that nurtures the holistic development of a child, a goal that can be achieved through comprehensive counseling services. E-counseling has the potentials of providing school adjustment support when face-to-face counselling is not feasible, such as during lockdowns. The emergence of digital platforms has made e-counseling a flexible and accessible solution, allowing individuals to receive therapy from the comfort of their own homes, overcoming geographical, physical, and psychological barriers to seeking help (Békés & Aafjes-van Doorn, 2020).

Recently the educational landscape in Cameroon has been significantly disrupted by two major crises: the Anglophone Crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. Both crises forced the closure of schools, disrupting learning continuity. During the Anglophone crisis, more than 80% of schools in affected areas were shut down, denying education to over 600,000 children (UNICEF, 2019). The pandemic added to this, closing schools nationwide and introducing unfamiliar online learning methods. Many secondary school students lacked the digital literacy and internet access required for virtual classes, especially in rural and conflict zones (Njoh & Etta, 2021). As a result, many students fell behind academically or dropped out altogether. Thousands of students were internally displaced due to the conflict, forcing them to relocate to safer regions. This displacement often resulted in enrollment in unfamiliar schools with different curricula, languages, and cultural expectations, making adjustment difficult (Fonkeng, 2020).

E-counseling in Cameroon emerged in the late 2010s as internet accessibility grew and mobile phone usage became more widespread. By 2020, internet penetration in the country had reached about 35%, with mobile phones serving as the primary means of internet access (Internet World Stats, 2020). This technological growth coincided with the realization that e-counseling knowledge could provide a solution to the country's significant gaps in mental health care, especially in rural and conflict-affected regions. The need for alternative counselling methods became more urgent with the advent of the Anglophone crisis, which created a mental health emergency, particularly among displaced populations (Kamedje et al., 2021). As mobility and safety in affected areas decreased, e-counseling through platforms like SMS, WhatsApp, and other telecommunication methods became increasingly viable. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 accelerated the adoption of digital services across sectors, including mental health, as face-to-face interactions were restricted (Beteck, 2020).

Despite these advancements, several challenges persist. There is a limited knowledge of E-Counseling by teachers of Secondary schools as well as some Guidance Counsellors. While significant progress has been made, ongoing efforts are necessary to address existing challenges and to fully realize the potential of guidance and counselling services in fostering well-rounded, competent individuals equipped to navigate the complexities of modern society.

### **Statement of the Problem**

It appears that while the Cameroon secondary school system is adopting technology-based transformation through digitalization, with advancements in online modules, courses and enhancements of ICT initiatives, the extension of these technological advancements to the domain of student Counselling and support appears to be lagging due to little or no knowledge by most teachers and Schools Counsellors. This could explain why the closure of schools during the corona virus pandemic led to a temporal halt in the activities of school counselors even though teaching and learning continued through the exploitation of the different online/electronic platforms. This tendency might have been as a result of inadequate knowledge on e-counseling. It is against these perspectives that this paper aims at assessing the electronic counselling knowledge possess by Guidance Counsellors.

**Objectives**

To access the extent to which counsellors' knowledge of E counselling enhances the school adjustment of secondary school students in the South West Region.

**Research Questions**

To what extent does counsellors' knowledge of E counselling enhance the school adjustment in secondary school students in the South West Region?

**Research Hypothesis**

**Ho:** There is no significant relationship between counsellors' knowledge of E counselling and school adjustment in secondary school students in the South West Region.

**Ha:** There is a significant relationship between counsellors' knowledge of E counselling and school adjustment in secondary school students of the South West Region.

**Literature Review****Counsellors' knowledge of E counselling and students' school Adjustment**

Kraus (2011), portray online counselling as becoming increasingly popular being a convenient and accessible option for individuals seeking support. As a result, counsellors must possess a solid understanding of online counselling and its potential impact on client adjustment. This essay will explore the knowledge and skills counsellors must possess to effectively navigate the landscape of online counselling and promote client adjustment. Counsellors must be knowledgeable about the unique characteristics of online counselling. Unlike traditional face-to-face therapy, online counselling takes place in a virtual setting, where communication occurs through various digital platforms. Counsellors must understand the nuances of online communication, including the potential for misinterpretation and the absence of nonverbal cues. By understanding these factors, counsellors can adapt their therapeutic approach to ensure effective communication and accurate understanding of client concerns (Smith, Clance & Imes, 2001).

Counsellors must be familiar with the ethical considerations specific to online counselling. These considerations include issues such as confidentiality, informed consent, and technological limitations. Counsellors must have a thorough understanding of these ethical guidelines to protect client privacy and ensure a safe and secure therapeutic environment. By staying up-to-date with emerging research and guidelines in the field of online counselling, counsellors can provide a reliable and ethical service to their clients. Counsellors must possess the technological skills necessary to effectively utilize online platforms. This includes proficiency in digital communication tools, video conferencing software, and data protection measures. Counsellors must be able to troubleshoot technical issues and provide appropriate guidance to clients in navigating the online counselling process. By having a solid foundation in technology, counsellors can enhance the client's online counselling experience and ensure seamless communication (Koocher & Keith-Spiegel, 2008).

Malchiodi (2018) admits that online therapy may present challenges such as internet connectivity issues, privacy concerns, and technological glitches. Counsellors should educate clients about these potential limitations as part of informed consent. Additionally, counsellors must be aware of the benefits of online counselling, such as increased accessibility, reduced travel time, and the ability to engage in therapy from the comfort of one's own home. By recognizing and discussing these factors with clients, counsellors can help manage their expectations and promote a positive adjustment to the online counselling process.

Counsellors must possess cultural competence in the context of online counselling. As with traditional counselling, cultural considerations play a crucial role in effective therapy.

Online Counselling is a process of helping an individual gain self-knowledge, self-awareness, self-direction, self-determination, self-development and self-actualization that will usher the individual to fullness of living, knowledge acquisition and problem-solving skills using internet-based methods such as email, online chat or webcam video. It is glaring that counsellors have a lot to do in the area of identity and adjustment of secondary school students. Online Counsellors are the best resourceful persons that could render services for an individual to attain positive identity for an admirable personality as a whole. Although other agencies such as family, teachers, school, religion, friends, peers, the media and the society also contribute to the development of an individual cognitively, emotionally, socially, spiritually, etc. (Onyekuru and Ekechukwu, 2009).

Counsellors' knowledge of e-counselling significantly influences students' school adjustment by improving access to support services, enhancing emotional well-being, and promoting academic engagement. This influence is particularly evident in African contexts such as Cameroon, where traditional counselling systems are increasingly being complemented by digital tools. Counsellors equipped with e-counselling skills can offer timely psychological and academic support, particularly in under-resourced or remote areas. The Ministry of Secondary Education implemented a toll-free e-counselling helpline to provide accessible guidance and psychosocial support to students, teachers, and parents (Ministry of Secondary Education, 2022).

Bama (2019), found that psychosocial factors such as emotional stability, peer support, and self-concept significantly affect students' school adjustment. Counsellors who leverage e-counselling platforms can more effectively address these factors by providing continuous support through mobile devices and digital platforms, reducing the stigma often associated with face-to-face counselling. Knowledge of e-counselling enables counsellors to use online tools like learning management systems, career guidance platforms, and virtual support forums to engage students academically. Katami and Diri (2023) reported that online counselling platforms in Nigeria significantly improved female students' academic achievement in tertiary institutions, suggesting that counsellors who are proficient in digital counselling strategies can positively influence students' motivation and academic success.

Amos (2021) observed that students valued e-counselling for its confidentiality and convenience, although some still preferred face-to-face engagement. When counsellors possess strong e-counselling skills, they are better positioned to meet diverse student needs and overcome institutional limitations. Counsellors' knowledge of e-counselling has the capacity to expand access to services, addressing psychosocial challenges, and supporting academic development. This digital competency is essential in modern education systems, especially in African contexts where educational and psychological resources may be limited.

## **Theoretical Review**

### **Client-Centered Therapy of Carl Rogers (1959)**

Client-centered therapy, also called the person-centered approach, describes Carl R. Rogers' way of working with persons experiencing all types of personal disturbances or problems in living (Rogers, 1986). 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. 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, 1980). The implication of Rogers' position is some persons and

environments foster growth and development in human beings, and some undermine and inhibit growth. Person-Centered theory, or client-centered therapy, being a humanistic approach to Counselling focuses on the individual's unique experiences and perspectives.

Client-centered therapy places great value on the therapeutic relationship, and e-counselling can foster this relationship through regular virtual check-ins, consistent communication, and open dialogue. The theory also emphasizes the therapist's ability to be transparent and authentic in their interactions. Despite the advantages of person-centered theory in e-counselling, there are also unique challenges that may arise. Therapists must rely heavily on written communication to gain insight into the client's experiences, leading to more intentional and focused responses. The theory has proven to be a valuable approach in the realm of e-counselling, providing individuals with valuable mental health support.

The Person-Centered Theory is highly relevant to counselors' knowledge and use of e-counseling in promoting school adjustment, since it emphasizes creating a supportive and empathetic environment where students feel heard, valued, and understood. This theory focuses on the individual's capacity for growth and self-direction when provided with empathy, unconditional positive regard, and genuineness. In a school context, students often face challenges such as academic pressure, peer conflicts, or emotional stress that can hinder their adjustment. E-counseling offers a flexible and accessible platform for delivering person-centered support, especially for students who may be hesitant to seek face-to-face help. Through virtual means, counselors can foster trust and provide a safe space where students feel comfortable expressing themselves, thus facilitating better emotional regulation, social adaptation, and academic engagement. Should Counsellors align with the core values of Person-Centered Theory, they can use e-counseling to empowers students to navigate their school environment more confidently and independently.

### **Methodology**

This paper uses a quasi-experimental research design, supported by a descriptive survey, to evaluate guidance counsellors' knowledge of E-counselling and its impact on students' adjustment in secondary schools. The study focused on 291 guidance counsellors in government secondary schools across the South West region, excluding the Lebialem division due to non-functional schools. A sample of 240 counsellors was calculated using Epi-Info 7.0 for a more accurate estimation, allowing for a higher design effect than the standard Krejcie and Morgan table. The sample was distributed proportionately across subdivisions to avoid bias. Various sampling methods, including purposive, random, convenience, and proportionate sampling, were used to select participants. Data collection was conducted through face-to-face meetings and an online platform (Kobo) for convenience, allowing the researcher to engage directly with the guidance counsellors.

### **Findings**

The main objective of this study was to assess counsellors' knowledge of E-counselling in the enhancing of the school adjustment of secondary school students in the South West Region. This chapter therefore focuses on the presentation of findings and analysis of data collected from the field from 230 guidance counsellors. The findings were presented based on the research questions and hypotheses tested. Below is the presentation of the research questions.

To what extent does counsellors' knowledge of E-counselling enhance the school adjustment in secondary school students in the South West Region?

The findings for research question were derived from responses gathered from 9 close ended test items which dwelt on the extent to which counsellors' knowledge of E counselling enhances the school adjustment of secondary school students. The findings are presented on the table below.

**Table 11: Counsellors’ Knowledge of E-counselling In Relation to the Enhancement of School Adjustment of Secondary School Students**

Item	Stretched				Collapsed		Mean	Std. Dev
	SA	A	D	SD	SA/A	SD/D		
I am familiar with E counselling as a tool and platform for school adjustment of students.	34 (14.8)	146 (63.5)	38 (16.5)	12 (5.2)	180 (78.3)	50 (21.7)	2.88	.714
I have received Electronic/computer training of any nature.	54 (23.5)	110 (47.8)	50 (21.7)	16 (9.0)	164 (71.3)	66 (28.7)	2.88	.848
I have received specific training on the practice of E counselling in schools.	18 (7.8)	76 (33.0)	106 (46.2)	30 (13.0)	94 (40.9)	136 (59.1)	2.36	.806
I am aware that E counselling can be an important tool in solving adjustment challenges for students.	112 (48.7)	110 (47.8)	4 (1.7)	4 (1.7)	222 (96.5)	8 (3.5)	3.43	.622
I am comfortable with the technological innovation in the field of counselling especially with respect to E-Counselling and adjustment related issues.	80 (34.8)	104 (45.2)	38 (16.5)	8 (3.5)	184 (80)	46 (20)	3.11	.801
I am aware of the security, legal and ethical issues associated with E counselling.	40 (17.4)	140 (60.9)	34 (14.8)	16 (7.0)	180 (78.3)	50 (21.7)	2.89	.768
Counselee’s (students) engagement and satisfaction can be attained with the use of E counselling for adjustment.	48 (20.9)	140 (60.9)	36 (15.7)	6 (2.6)	188 (81.7)	42 (18.3)	3.00	.687
Counsellor’s engagement and satisfaction can be attained with the use of E counselling for adjustment.	48 (20.9)	134 (58.3)	40 (17.4)	8 (3.5)	182 (79.1)	48 (20.9)	2.97	.723
E counselling provides a sense of privacy and anonymity in managing issues of adjustment of students	72 (31.3)	112 (48.7)	34 (14.8)	12 (5.2)	184 (80)	46 (20)	3.06	.818
<b>Multiple response set</b>	<b>506 (24.4)</b>	<b>1072 (51.8)</b>	<b>380 (18.4)</b>	<b>112 (5.4)</b>	<b>1578 (76.2)</b>	<b>492 (23.8)</b>	<b>2.95</b>	<b>.754</b>

Source: Field work (2024)

A survey of 230 guidance counsellors revealed that a majority are comfortable with e-counselling (80%) and recognize its importance in helping students adjust (96.5%). Most respondents (78.3%) are aware of the security and ethical issues related to e-counselling, and they believe it can enhance both student and counsellor engagement. However, only 40.9% have received specific training in e-counselling, with 59.1% reporting they have not. Overall, while 76.2% displayed a positive outlook on how knowledge of e-counselling aids school adjustment, the overall knowledge level among respondents was moderate (mean score of 2.95 on a 1-4 scale). This indicates a need for further training to improve counsellors' expertise in e-counselling practices.

**Verification of Research Hypothesis**

The research question was to examine the extent counsellors' knowledge of E counselling enhances the school adjustment of secondary school students in the South West Region.  $H_{o1}$  was used to verify this objective

**$H_{o1}$ :** There is no significant relationship between counsellors' knowledge of e-counselling and school adjustment in secondary school students in the South West Region

**$H_{a1}$ :** There is a significant relationship between counsellors' knowledge of e-counselling and school adjustment in secondary school students in the South West Region

This hypothesis was tested using the correlation analysis procedure to obtain a correlation coefficient between counsellors' knowledge of e-counselling and school adjustment in secondary school students. The choice of this correlation test was because the hypothesis was concern of establishing whether or not there is a relationship between counsellors' knowledge of e-counselling and school adjustment in secondary school students. Thus, the finding is presented below.

**Table 2: Perceived Relationship between Counsellors' Knowledge of E-counselling and School Adjustment in Secondary School Students**

		<b>Counsellors Knowledge of E-Counselling</b>	<b>School Adjustment</b>
<b>Counsellors Knowledge of E-Counselling</b>	Pearson Correlation	1	0.451**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	<b>N</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>School Adjustment</b>	Pearson Correlation	0.451**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	<b>N</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>230</b>

(Critical  $T_{xy}$  -0.138)

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)**

The result from the table above revealed that the correlation coefficients for counsellors' knowledge of e-counselling and school adjustment in secondary school students (0.451) was higher than the table value (critical  $T_{xy}$ -value) of 0.138at N=230. The decision rule states that if the calculated Pearson correlation value is greater than the Pearson correlation table value (critical  $T_{xy}$ -value), the null hypothesis is rejected in favour of the alternative one. The decision role also states that when the significance or p-value is less than predetermined alpha (0.05) the null hypothesis is rejected. Here, the significance or p-value (0.000) which is less than predetermined alpha (0.05).In this regard the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between counsellors' knowledge of e-counselling and school adjustment of

secondary school students in the South West Region was rejected at alpha 0.05 level of significant and alternative accepted indicating that counsellors' knowledge of e-counselling was significantly associated to school adjustment of secondary school students in the South West Region at 0.01 alpha levels. This means that counsellors' knowledge of e-counselling greatly influenced school adjustment of secondary school students in the South West Region as confirmed by descriptive analysis and mean variation. In fact, the positive sign of the coefficient values (0.451) implies that school adjustment of secondary school students will increase more when guidance counsellors' knowledge of E-counselling is higher.

### **Findings and Recommendations**

The study revealed a significant positive relationship between counsellors' knowledge of E-counselling and secondary school students' school adjustment. Essentially, the more knowledgeable counsellors are about E-counselling, the better students are likely to adjust in school. The regression analysis supported this by predicting that any improvement in E-counselling knowledge would lead to a measurable increase in students' school adjustment, assuming other variables remain constant. However, despite its importance, most counsellors were found to have only moderate knowledge of E-counselling, likely due to limited specific training in this area.

The findings align with existing research indicating that online interventions, such as E-counselling, are more effective when delivered by professionals with adequate digital skills. E-counselling allows students access to support regardless of location and enables counsellors to share resources efficiently. However, the study emphasized that limited E-counselling knowledge among school counsellors could hinder effective service delivery. These inadequacies in training and expertise could be a significant barrier, especially as schools are urged to adopt digital counselling methods in response to global challenges such as pandemics.

Moreover, E-counselling presents unique challenges, particularly in understanding clients' emotions and perceptions without physical presence. Drawing from Gibson's Theory of Perception, the study stresses that successful virtual interaction requires a high level of knowledge to interpret non-verbal cues and foster meaningful communication. Counsellors must be equipped to use tools like video conferencing and chat messaging to create a safe, expressive environment for students. The study recommends that Counsellors be encouraged to actively pursue professional development through continuous training, particularly in digital counselling tools and ethics. This can be achieved by attending workshops, seminars, and enrolling in online certification programs offered by platforms such as Coursera, Future Learn, and WHO. These training opportunities, often free or low-cost, are also provided by NGOs, universities, and international organizations like UNESCO and UNICEF. Additionally, counsellors should engage in peer networking and knowledge sharing by joining professional associations where they can access best practices, e-counselling resources, and benefit from mentorship by more experienced peers.

Moreover, counsellors should advocate for stronger institutional and governmental support by pushing for the inclusion of e-counselling modules in teacher training programs and engaging with policy-makers. Senior counsellors and those in administrative roles should collaborate with bodies like the Ministry of Secondary Education (MINESEC) to secure ICT infrastructure and funding for school counselling services. At the practical level, counsellors must become proficient with digital tools such as Zoom, WhatsApp, Telegram, and Google Forms for sessions and assessments. They should also utilize applications like Trello, Excel, or open-source counselling management systems to digitally manage student progress and case histories effectively.

## Conclusion

There is the need to continue with emphasize that counsellors who are seriously lacking in adequate knowledge of E-counselling should seek avenues for self-improvement. The training institutions also need to help them out by offering specialized training in the effective use of E-counselling platforms. This is because they cannot give that which they do not have. As reiterated by Kraus (2011), online counselling has become increasingly popular as a convenient and accessible option for individuals seeking support. As a result, counsellors must possess a solid understanding of online counselling and its potential impact on client adjustment. Counsellors must be knowledgeable about the unique characteristics of online counselling. Unlike traditional face-to-face therapy, online counselling takes place in a virtual setting, where communication occurs through various digital platforms. Counsellors must understand the nuances of online communication, including the potential for misinterpretation and the absence of nonverbal cues. By understanding these factors, counsellors can adapt their therapeutic approach to ensure effective communication and accurate understanding of students.

## References

- Anyi, E. M. E. (2017). Social Life Adjustment and Academic Achievement of Adolescents in the Northwest Region of Cameroon: What Counsellors Need to Know. *Research Journal of Educational and Applied Psychology*, 3(1), 69–74.
- Bama, R. K. (2019). Psycho-social factors and school adjustment dynamics among students in selected schools in Bamenda I and III Sub-Divisions. *Greener Journal of Psychology and Counselling*, 3(1), 33–44.
- Békés, V., & Aafjes-van Doorn, K. (2020). *Psychotherapists' attitudes toward online therapy during the COVID-19 pandemic*. *Journal of Psychotherapy Integration*, 30(2), 238–247.
- Beteck, S. E. (2020). The Impact of COVID-19 on Education in Cameroon: Online Learning as an alternative. *Journal of Contemporary Education Research*, 4(5), 40-48.
- Cook, J. E., & Doyle, C. (2002). Working alliance, interpersonal style, and outcome in non-face-to-face therapy. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 49(3), 270-283.
- Couper, M. P., Alexander, G., Zhang, N., Little, R. J. A., Maddy, N., Nowak, M. A., McClure, J. B., Calvi, J., Rolnick, S. J., Stopponi, M. A., & Johnson, C. C. (2010). Engagement And Retention: Measuring Breadth And Depth Of Participant Use Of An Online Intervention. *Journal Of Medical Internet Research*, 12(4), E52. <https://doi.org/10.2196/jmir.1430>
- Haberstroh, S., Duffey, T., Evans, M., Gee, R., & Trepal, H. (2014). The effects of technology-based interventions on counseling outcomes: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 61(2), 143-153.
- Kamedje, P. T., Etoundi, J. A., & Ndedi, A. A. (2021). Mental health services in Cameroon: The need for more qualified professionals. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 26 (6), 835–847.
- Katami, N. A., & Diri, A. A. (2023). Impact of online counseling platforms on female students' academic achievement in tertiary institutions, Sokoto State. *Research Journal of Educational and Social Studies*, 3(1), 45–58.
- Koocher, G. P., & Keith-Spiegel, P. (2008). *Ethics In Psychology And The Mental Health Professions: Standards And Cases*. Oxford University Press.
- Malchiodi, C. A. (2018). *The Handbook of Art Therapy and Digital Technology*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- MINESEC. (2022). 2022-2023 School Year in MINESEC. Ministry of Secondary Education, Cameroon. Retrieved from ([minesec.gov.cm](http://minesec.gov.cm))
- Ministry of Secondary Education. (2022). E-counselling: A new dawn for guidance counselors in MINESEC.
- Njoh, A. J., & Etta, E. A. (2021). Digital Inequality and Online Education in Cameroon during the COVID-19 Pandemic. *African Educational Review*, 18(3), 120–134.
- Nkengafac, N. A. (2021). Gender, Conflict, and Education: The Impact of the Anglophone Crisis on Girls' Schooling in Cameroon. *Gender and Education Journal*, 33(6), 755–770.
- Rogers, C. R. (1980). The necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change. *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, 21(2), 95-103.
- Smith, E. W. L., Clance, P. R., & Imes, S. (2001). *Touch In Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, And*

- Practice*. Guilford Press.
- UNICEF. (2019). Anglophone Crisis in Cameroon Causes Closure of 80% of Schools in the Region, Denying More Than 600,000 Children Access to Education. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org.uk/press-releases/anglophone-crisis-in-cameroo>
- Amos, P. M. (2021). Digitizing counselling practice: A study of student values and challenges associated with traditional face-to-face counselling and e-counselling modes. *Journal of Pedagogical Research*, 5(2), 112–125