

## CONDUCT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE SERVICES OVER THE INTERNET: CONVERGING COMMUNICATIONS

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### ABSTRACT

Technology brings novelties among human beings' lives and human psychology is also influenced by these novelties in positive and negative way. In the study, positive contribution of the technology and the importance of counseling services were wished to be indicated. School counseling services were conducted to illustrate the importance of online counseling services in the study. The method of the study was preferred as mix-method. The population of the study is Eastern Mediterranean University of psychological counseling and guidance's undergraduate students, Turkish Cypriot School Counselors and Turkish School Counselors. Data collection instruments were determined as a scale and semi-structured interview questions. Quantitative data analysis was done according to SPSS (T-Test, One Way ANAVO, Two Ways ANAVO) and qualitative data analysis was done according to Thematic analysis. Nationality, Gender differences, school counselors views about online counseling services, school counselors students' numbers and academicians' views about online counseling services are significant variables for the study. The findings indicate that online counseling services are essential for school environment to make contribution and to provide more services to students about school counseling services.

### INTRODUCTION

In the field of technology and science, some developments have occurred fast so that interactions are observed in different fields. Thus, these changes lead to looking on every kind of social, political, and cultural infrastructure. Also, people have to keep up with these novelties and have to learn them. These interactions have significant influence on people's perspectives, values, judgments and systems of belief. "The Internet has become the main information and data provider its appearance at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century" .( zad and Kutođlu, 2010, p.245)

Psychological helping vocations have lots of duties because problems which are related to human being, increase and change ways. These helping vocations come across with several developments day by day. These vocations do not only take role in problem areas but also they have to provide supports. In field of health, industry, and education, people need to show own selves and to be successful in their jobs. In the situation, psychological counseling starts to serve different areas and in different ways (Cezmi, 2006).

Today, computer became indispensable part of daily life with help of development of technology. In 2002, more than 600 million people used the Internet. Thereto, more than half of the population of America have used the Internet (Nua Internet Surveys, 2002). The numbers of the Internet users have risen day by day (the most users are young). In schools, expert psychological counselors provide services in the field of psychological counseling and guidance. For providing psychological counseling and guidance services, the help of an administration and a teacher has a big contribution and it is not possible to provide service without the help of administration and teachers. When mothers and fathers join the process, the improvement of students can reach optimum level (Kuzgun, 1992, p.31).

Today, technology is used in each place of education from black board to book, and from projector to computers. Every new technology has impact on class, in other words each brand-new technology causes changes in education. "[T]echnology is also not a collection of machines and devices, but a way of acting. In addition, technology refers to modernity. In other words, technology offers people more opportunities to upgrade all kinds of their life style" ( İřman, 2003, p.28), "With the developments of high technology and globalization, social, cultural, educational aspects of life become different and get better in terms of time space and communication" (İřman.et.al.,2004, p.55). Subsequently, new technologies bring new workloads for teachers.

The increasing usage of computers and idea of generalizing practice fields endorse computers to enter education. Computers have been used to give lectures on a lot of topics fast and provide students with changes to follow

and support their own understanding ways. These supporters can be projectors, computers and so on and so forth. Computers can be beneficial for supporting teachers' lecturing. Also, the Internet can be advantageous to pass from teacher centers education to students' center education in computer based teaching. Through the Internet, people come together to collect information and to set up new group and community (Savaş, 2006). "Rapid technological developments have their impact on education. It can be said that the practice of teaching science has been more traditional than any other curriculum area, but technological developments have affected science education also" (İşman.et.al.,2007, p.54).

The Internet spreads on each side of the whole world in order to help people reach information. The Internet can be used every level of education in every field of education. Computers have little information, inadequate programs and each program have elaborateness. Whereas collecting and finding information is easier (Ergün, 1998, p.128).

In contemporary education institution "students' personality services" set up to gain shift and improvement as well as teaching and management services. Guidance and psychological counseling services are important part of students' personality services. And, that aims to provide maximum level of benefit (Kuzgun, 1992; Yeşilyaprak, 2003). When literature was reviewed, we can say that today several psychological problems increase.

Globalization has brought a great effect to human life not only in economic issues, but also in political, social, and cultural issues. Its effect can be positive, or negative, depends on the quality of human resources. Indeed, human resources with low quality will fail, whether the only human resources with high quality standard will succeed in facing global challenges (Jusuf, 2005, p.33).

According to Celkan (2004). Turkish community moved away from traditional family structure and wrapped fashionable structure. Because of immigration to big cities, the quantity of population increases rather than quality of population so that pathologic and unhealthy society occurred. Inside the problematic society, students have serious problems for over problematic students. In this situation, classic school counseling is not enough. Technology should be used to provide enough level of psychological counseling and guidance.

The Internet is used for prevention, evaluation and psychological counseling abroad. These services provide , groups of e-mail, websites, chat rooms, teleconferences (Garlier, Anumada, Hinkeman, Munaz & Quezada, 1995). Also, some programs are used in different areas to give up smoking (Escoffery, McCormick, & Bateman, 2004) and planning vocation (Malone, Miller & Hargraves, 2001). In the study, Zalaquette and Sullivan (1998) found out that psychological counseling programs are often used over the Internet and the study emphasizes that the reaching process to these programs is very easy.

In the country (our country), the usage of the Internet is limited in the field of psychological counseling and guidance services. Computer based vocational guidance practicing is only used in schools (Kuzgun & Sözalın, 2000). School psychological counseling and guidance services are weak inside of developing education systems. In psychological counseling and guidance services, technological innovations should be used.

Because of these weaknesses, we felt necessity of conducting the research about using internet in counseling services. According to the researchers' literature review, limited numbers of studies were conducted in this concept.

The aim of the study is to designate view of psychological counseling and guidance students, expert psychological counselor, and academician's in concept of using the Internet in psychological counseling and guidance services. For that purpose, social demographic characteristics (gender, nationality etc), psychological counselors' views plus students' views and the students' number in the school were taken into consideration for analyzing in terms of providing psychological counseling and guidance services.

## **METHOD**

The study was conducted in 2011-2012 (spring semester) with 120 EMU's undergraduate students (in department of Psychological counseling and guidance), 60 expert psychological counselors (30 Turkish, 30 Turkish Cypriot) and 10 academicians were participants of the study.

In the study, data collection instruments were determined as a questionnaire and semi-structure interview's questions. The questionnaire belongs to Savaş (2006). Savaş (2006) developed the questionnaire "Liselelerde Rehberlik ve Psikolojik Danışmanlık Hizmetlerinde İnternet Kullanımına İlişkin Görüş Anketi". The

questionnaire involves 4 parts. The research method of the study is mixed method and the design of the study is comparative.

For analyzing the questionnaire, one-way ANOVA, two-way ANOVA, T-Test and descriptive statistics, for doing the process, SPSS 15.1 were used. For determining, significant point was determined as 0.05. Semi-structure interview questions were analyzed according to Thematic Analysis. (The thematic analysis were done according to Patton 2002's 7 criteria).

**FINDINGS**

Quantitative data analysis: For the study, T-Test, One way ANAVO, two ways ANAVO were done to make interpretation for a quantitative data.

T-Test analyses were done for predicting relationships between gender differences and total grade of the questionnaire. Also, for predicting relationships between students and school counselors and total grade of questionnaire.

Independent Sample T-Test, there is no significant relationship between gender and views about online counseling services. Also, independent Sample T-Test was done for revealing participants' statues and their views about online counseling services.

Totally, over 180 participants, 130 participants claim , “Yes” and 50 participants proclaim , “No” about ‘What is your opinion about online counseling service implementation?’.

Table 1. *The result of total grades of the scale according to participants’ opinion about using online counseling services*

Total Grade	N	X	SD	df	t	P
Yes	130	55.32	9.15	176	4.76	0.00
No	50	47.90	9.44	81.74	4.69	0.00

Independent Sample T-Test was conducted to analyze the result of total grades of the scale according to participants’ opinion about online counseling service implementation. The results show that the total grades of the scale differs significantly among participants’ opinion [t(df=179)=4.76].

Table 2. *The result of status and nationality according to school counselors’ and students view of online counseling services two-way ANAVO*

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	P
Status	94.667	1	94.667	0.98	0.33
Nationality	2.043E-02	1	2.043E-02	0.00	0.99
Status*Nationality	397.926	1	397.926	4.10	0.04
Error	17271.106	177	97.029		
Total	530957.000	180			

A 3 X 2 ANOVA was conducted to evaluate the nationality and status on online counseling services. The ANAVO indicated that there is a cogent interaction between nationality and status.

Table 3. *The relation of the school counselors’ students’ number and the views of the school counselor about online school counseling services*

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p.
Between Groups	1276,651	3	425,550	8,619	,000***
Within Groups	2764,999	56	49,375		
Total	4041,650	59			

\*\*\*p<.00001

ANOVA was conducted the school counselors’ students number are related with the views of the school counselor about online school counseling services. Levene test indicated that variance of the school counselors’ student number was heterogeneous. ANOVA results showed that the views of the school counselors’ students is

different from the school counselors' student number. The result indicates that for the views of the views of the school counselor about online school counseling services [F (df=3) =8,61 p<.00001], Scheffe was conducted Post Hoc the views of the school counselor about online school counseling services in the number of student between 701-900 was significantly higher than 14.79 the number of the student between the number of students of school counselors between 301 and 500 (p<.05, p<.001) respectively.

Qualitative data analysis: the view of academician about online counseling services. The academicians claim that online counseling services will be useful for shy students who could not come to school counseling services. The online counseling services should be available 24 hours in a day. The academicians also claim that online counseling services will provide opportunities to reach more students than classic counseling services. Additionally, counselors can provide immediate services to clients together. The drawbacks of online counseling services cause lack of giving enough attention to facial expression and body languages. The counselors are likely to miss these particular important signs. The academicians state that students like following novelties and they are the most of the population of the novelties, therefore, students are going to be voluntarily to take online counseling services. Also, academicians focused on importance of ethics issues in online counseling services.

## DISCUSSION

The study emphasizes several important points for students in light of online counseling services. Robinson (2009) states that "The speed with which technology has become an integral part of modern day living is astounding" (p.1). Technology brings changes every phase of life. Therefore, school environments are influenced by these changes and people are also affected by these changes. Education system is also influenced by these changes. Namely, technological developments cause differences for human beings. The purpose of the study is to indicate psychological counseling students' and experts (who are psychological counselor)'s views about the online counseling services. The findings of the study illustrate that psychological counselors and students (who are studying psychological counseling and guidance) want to get benefit from online counseling services. For instance, school psychological counselors are not content with the numbers of students. Generally, they complain about students' numbers. Also, school counselors do not have enough course time especially in state schools, that is why, school counselors are willingly to use online counseling services to reach students more than classic counseling services. "Online modules offer an opportunities to overcome barriers to educational delivery" (Skye.et.al., 2011, p.185).

As already mentioned, nationality is an important variable for the study because two different nations were taken into account to show the difference between nations. Turkish and Turkish Cypriots are participants of the study and they live in different cultural environments and they are busy with different school environments. Thus, nationality has importance to show differences from country to country. For instance, school counselors who work in Turkey, have to work with different population and the numbers of population are not same with Turkish Cypriots' school counselors.

Increased accessibility, for example, for rural and remote persons (although limited by bandwidth and availability of carriers), single or at-home parents, people with a disability, in cases of fear of violence or intimidation, people with agoraphobia, people who are relocating but want to work with the same therapist, fast-pace lifestyles, unusual employment hours (Robinson, 2009, p.3).

The following review of the online-counseling literature includes all known, relevant, published articles or chapters in professional journals through December 2004. Dissertations and online journals without a peer-review process were not included; however, because the online-counseling field is in its infancy, all other published articles were included (Mallen et al., 2005, p.827).

Shortly, the field is very new and the researcher should give enough importance to conduct research in the field.

## CONCLUSION

Technology is part of our lives and people should get benefit from it as well. In the study, the advantages of technology were discussed in light of online counseling services. Day by day, people face different problems and some of the problems are related to education systems. Education systems involve counseling services and these problems also have an impact on counseling services. Therefore, school counseling services need supports to cope with these difficulties via online services. School counselors and students views are mentioned about the benefit of online counseling services which mentioned in the study.

In the light of the research findings, the following can be recommended:

- Education systems should involve basic ground for online counseling services
- People should be aware of benefits of online services
- Family members (father, mother and sibling of the students ) should be part of the process
- Government (Ministry of education) should give enough importance to online services
- Government should provide opportunities to learn basic skills about computer based counseling
- Ethical issues also should be taken into consideration. For instance, APA (American Psychology Association ) and American Counseling Association (ACA) put particular criteria for determining ethics issues in online counseling services. In our systems, we have to give enough importance to ethics issues (Guillot, 2003 :20, ACA, 2006).

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