

Cyber- Counseling: Is It Really New?

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Abstract - This is a conceptual review paper to evaluate the effects of the revolution of cyber-counseling. The study reviews literature on the history of computer using in counselling services as early as the 1960s, the evolution and relevation of using the computer in providing counselling services. Studies and surveys were analysed and lay out chorologically the evolution of cybercounseling based on the years. The paper also analyses two historical eras, the history of computer usage in counselling and the history of internet usage in counselling. The findings of the paper also identified softwares created and used, followed by how the counsellors practising the counselling using computer and internet. Conclusions from the literature are drawn that cyber-counseling seems new but it is actually has been practising decades ago. The paper ends with recommendation on future research.

Keywords -- Cybercounseling, Computer, Computer Assisted Counselling, Internet, Online

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I. INTRODUCTION

Many people say that the Cyber-counseling service as an alternative service to counseling is impossible and nonsense (Barak, 1999; Griffiths, 2005). This opinion is expressed because for them counseling services are a combination of face-to-face interaction and body language combinations. However, there is another party supporting the Cyber-counseling service offered because of the simultaneous technological explosion, counselors should take advantage of every available space in their services (Alleman, 2002; Colon, 1996; Hanley, 2006).

In the debate about the suitability of Cyber-counseling services as an alternative counseling service, this Cyber-counseling service is seen to be more widespread (Lago, 1996; Manhal-Baugus, 2001, Zaida Nor, 2006). More and more researchers are keen to find the comparisons of Cyber-counseling Service with Face-to-face Counseling (Stommel, et.al., 2014; Skinner & Latchford, 2006; Young, 2005). But is counseling using this computer and internet really new?

II. THE HISTORY OF USING COMPUTERS IN COUNSELING

The use of computers in the Counseling service has long existed. History begins with an introduction to the use of computers in Counseling services as early as the 1960s. Since then, computer use was seen as a catalyst in the development of Counseling services (Bluhm, 1988; Lunt, 2004; Sampson et al., 1997).

It all started in 1963, computer-assisted counseling began to be developed. In 1966, computer-assisted career counseling was successfully developed to facilitate clients

and counselors to determine career awareness. Subsequently in 1974, an intake client interviewing system was developed to facilitate the counselor to record client data (Bluhm, 1988).

In the early 1980s, more computer programs were developed. The rapid development of this computer program is supported by the formation of the United States Federal Law and granting research grants to government bodies and professional organizations. Among the programs developed are Record Management, Test Management and Interpretation Program, Information System Program and Career Consultation and College Selection, as well as Individual Counseling Program (Bluhm, 1988, Lunt, 2004).

The evolution of the Individual Counseling program using the computer broke out around the 1960s when some researchers had created a program that allowed humans to 'communicate' with the computer. This great program is called ELIZA. The ELIZA program was developed by Joseph Weizenbaum at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, USA. This ELIZA program allows individual counseling sessions to be conducted with the help of a clientless client meeting with a face-to-face counselor. The counseling process is carried out by the way the client types his feelings on the computer screen. Then the computer will identify the words that are programmed as key words. The next ELIZA program will produce programming questions that are related to the client-assigned keywords. The client will then respond to the question and the 'quizzes' session will continue as if the client is communicating with the counselor. The success of the individual counseling sessions using the ELIZA program took place as the program was developed based on the reflective techniques applied in the Individual Convergence Theory that pioneered Carl Rogers. What really happened was the client was exploring his feelings based on the questions given by ELIZA. This program is the first attempt in the field of counseling to use computers for the purpose of communication in the form of therapeutic (Bluhm, 1988; L'Abate, 2001; L'Abate, 2001; Lunt, 2004; Sanders & Rosenfield, 1998). The ELIZA service was first introduced at the International Conference on Computer Communication in October 1972. The recording of the ELIZA simulation sessions at University Stanford and UCLA was presented to the conference participants. The outcome of the discussion and in the resolution of the conference, the participants of the conference agreed that the counseling service used the computer to potentially be developed (Ainsworth, 2002).

The success of ELIZA thus led to another program called Programed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations (PLATO). PLATO is produced by the United States Computer Education Research Laboratory which focuses on computer-assisted education research. Individual counseling processes using PLATO programs

are almost identical to the ELIZA process but PLATO emphasizes more when clients have few choices but are difficult to make decisions (Lunt, 2004; Wagman & Kerber, 1984). PLATO will guide clients to make decisions based on pre-programmed keywords. PLATO's success is also seen as significant when linked to Computer-Counseling relationships because PLATO is a user-friendly program as if clients are communicating with humans rather than computers (L'Abate, 2001; Lunt, 2004; Stommel, et.al., 2014). Even the program is still available online. The existence of the Internet-based Information Technology (ICT) era has expanded the wider use of computers in Counseling services (Astramovich et al., 2004; Bluhm, 1988; Collie et al., 2002; Stommel & van der Houwen, 2014).

III. THE HISTORY OF INTERNET USAGE IN COUNSELING

In the late 1980s, there has been a change in technology that has led to new developments in Computer-Counseling relationships. The explosion of Information Technology has brought about changes to the field of counseling and the general public. The potential of the Internet and the 'www' (World Wide Web) have had a profound impact in the world of Counseling. (Bloom, 1998; Lunt, 2004; Roszita & Fairuz, 2014; Sampson et al., 1997).

Given the Internet's ability to create the right infrastructure to build relationships, Counselors have taken the initiative to maximize Internet space. An alternative service helps through virtual interaction. Services helping with using the Internet are known as Cyber-counseling. This service is also known as web-counseling, cyber-counseling and e-therapy (Amir Awang, 2007; Manhal-Baugus, 2001; Nor Ba'yah Abdul Kadir & Yahaya Mahamood, 2001).

In 1986, an E-Counseling program was developed by University Cornell and was named "Ask Uncle Ezra". This program resembles ELIZA and PLATO programs but does not require any software. This program operates directly through the Internet. Clients can obtain individual counseling services by accessing the "Ask Uncle Ezra" website for online counseling services. However, in this website, clients are still communicating with computer programs, rather than counselors. The site is still alive and well received today (Ainsworth, 2002; Lunt, 2004; Roszita & Fairuz, 2014).

In 1993, Ivan Goldberg embarked on the evolution of the Cyber-Counseling service when he offered counseling sessions through the Internet. He embarked on the phenomenon of bilateral interactions between humans through the Internet. Goldberg offers counseling sessions by providing a chat room (online). In this counseling session, clients no longer have to interact with computer programs but can get sessions with actual counselors. Goldberg's success has opened a new dimension in offering online counseling services. In 1995, John Grohol also offered a special Cyber-counseling service for mental health. He also uses the chatroom in his service offering.

(Ainsworth, 2002; Lunt, 2004). Both of these practitioners offer free Cyber-counseling services.

In 1995, David Sommers offered the Cyber-counseling service on a paid basis. The service is an Individual Counseling session conducted within a period of agreed upon clients and counselors. The fee is charged according to the number of sessions performed. During 1995 to 1998, Sommers offered Cyber-counseling services to more than 300 clients (Ainsworth, 2002; Lunt, 2004).

In the following years, the Cyber-counseling service has increased its offerings as many qualified counselors began offering Cyber-counseling services (Bloom, 1998; Robson & Robson, 1998; Sanders & Rosenfield, 1998; Sampson et al., 1997). In 1997, approximately 275 Counseling practitioners provided Counseling via the Internet and were expected to have a sharp increase in the following years (Sampson et al., 1997). In fact, the International Society for Mental Health Online (ISMHO) expects Cyber-counseling services to increase from 300 websites in 2000 to 5000 websites in 2005 (Dawn, 2004) and Cyber-counseling services are expected to increase dramatically (Griffiths, 2005 : Lauerman, 2002; Roszita & Fairuz, 2014; Sampson et al., 1997). In fact, Malaysia's Cyber-counseling service has been offered by 44 Government, Private and Individual Bodies websites in 2006 (Zaida Nor Zainudin, 2006). Increased Cyber-counseling offers are expected because counselors no longer place modernity as a hitch but instead see the Internet as a potential and convenience (Bloom, 1998; Dawn, 2004; Lunt, 2004).

Cyber-counseling Services can be offered in several ways or better known as modality. Cyber-counseling is offered in two main modalities ie electronic mail and chat room (Amir Awang, 2007; Hall, 2004; Nor Ba'yah Abdul Kadir & Yahaya Mahamood, 2001; Lily Mastura Harun, 2000; Sussman, 2004; Zaida Nor Zainudin , 2006). The first method is by electronic mail. Cyber-counseling Services via electronic mail is a Counseling service offered through electronic mail replies. The client only needs to contact the counselor through the email address supplied in the website. The client can send electronic mail to the counselor to solve the problem he is facing. Responses between counselors and clients are promised within a certain period such as 24 hours or 48 hours (Manhal-Baugus, 2001; Nor Ba'yah Abdul Kadir & Yahaya Mahamood, 2001; Lily Mastura Harun, 2000; Sampson et al., 1997; Sanders & Rosenfield, 1998; Tait, 1999; Tate, et al., 2001).

The second Cyber-counseling method is the chatroom method. The chat room method is when clients and counselors meet and interact in cyberspace at the same time (synchronous). They meet in the chat room offered on the website or instant messaging system. Counseling in the chat room also operates directly in the chat room provided. Clients can make date and time appointments to enable both client and counselor to interact directly or continue to log in during counselor's day. To assist the client, the schedule of counselors is provided for client convenience. Counseling through the chat room can be done by contacting a counselor's website or a Counseling service organization, making an appointment, paying a fee (if any)

and then attending a session in the chat room provided (Bloom, 1998; Colon, 1996; Manhal-Baugus, 2001; Nor Ba'yah Abdul Kadir & Yahaya Mahamood, 2001; Oravec, 2000; Zaida Nor Zainudin, 2006).

Enhanced Information Technology efficiency has allowed Cyber-counseling services to be offered using video-conference using an additional tool that is web camera. This enabled the main limitations of the Cyber-counseling service ie reduced face-to-face absence (Barak, 1999; Lunt, 2004; Grohol, 2003). Usually a counselor who offers Cyber-counseling services will use various modalities to expand its supply chain (Granello, 2000, McCord, et al, 2011).

Recognition of Cyber-counseling services is also sought. From the perspective of counselor training, there is an organization that offers the field of study in E-Counseling, Counseling Online Ltd operating in the United Kingdom. The organization offers courses from certificate, advanced certificate and diploma in online-counseling. Certificates are certified by Counseling and Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body (CPCAB). Even teaching and teaching sessions are done by e-learning. (Alleman, 2002; Counseling Online Ltd., 2001)

In 1999, The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), a branch of the American Counseling Association, has published 10 technical skills that need to be included in the Development of Education Programs for Institutions that offer Colleges and Psychotherapy. These components include knowledge of the guidelines and ethics in conducting Cyber-counseling, knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of Cyber-counseling (Alleman, 2002; Haberstroh, 2014).

There are many advantages in offering Cyber-counseling services that are reported in writing. Among some of the advantages and benefits of Cyber-counseling is that clients can re-read all their electronic mail and counselors for self-reflection purposes (Caudron, 1998; McCord, et al., 2011; Murphy & Mitchell, 1998; Robson & Robson, 2000). Cyber-counseling Services via electronic mail also allow clients to refer to their electronic mail when the same problem is repeated (Alleman, 2002; Caudron, 1998; Cook & Doyle, 2002; Robson & Robson, 2000). The ease of referring electronic mail can then help clients deal with their problems quickly. The Cyber-counseling Service involves the process of expressing feelings in writing. The writing or typing process is a process of self-exploration and one therapy (Caudron, 1998; Hall, 2004; Oravec, 2000; Robson & Robson, 2000).

In regards to the goodness of the Cyber-counseling service, school counselors can use this Internet advantage in connecting him closer to teachers, parents and students. This is in line with one of the role of counselor, to combine resources to maximize the extension of its services. The counselor's wisdom combines the skills of helping the Internet to build a collaborative environment among students, teachers and parents (Amir Awang, 2007).

The Cyber-counseling Service has also been recognized by the world Counseling bodies. There is ethical formulation and Cyber-counseling guidelines are to be followed in order to obtain a standard e-counseling process to prove recognition for this alternative Counseling

service (Bloom, 1998; Graham, 2000; Griffith & Cooper, 2003; Hall, 2004; Manhal-Baugus, 2001 ; Robson & Robson, 2000; Sampson et al., 1997). Malaysia has also recognized this service by providing guidelines and ethics of Cyber-counseling services in the Code of Counselor Ethics (Amir Awang, 2006; Haberstroh, 2014).

In Malaysia there are a series of seminars and conferences that discuss Cyber-counseling issues. In 2001 Universiti Utara Malaysia also held a National Counseling Seminar which discussed the issue of Cyber-counseling. Universiti Malaysia Sarawak also held a Counseling on Organizational Development and Communities in 2005 which discussed the use of technology in Counseling. The Board of Counselors also held a National Conference in 2006 with themed "Beyond Human Touch" held at Legend Hotel, Kuala Lumpur. In these seminars and conferences, many papers were presented which discussed this alternative service.

The easing of the Cyber-counseling service and the recognition of Cyber-counseling services is uncertain to ensure its effectiveness. High curiosity among counseling practitioners led them to conduct a survey to measure the effectiveness of this service compared to conventional methods of Face-to-face Counseling (Barnett, 2005).

Many articles display the results of the study that have been conducted to see the effectiveness of Cyber-counseling services compared to Face-to-Counseling. The comparison is done using a variety of research instruments to measure the results of different studies. The results of this study were compared with the results of similar studies using the Face-to-Counseling method. Most studies have proven empirical about the ability of Cyber-counseling to achieve its effectiveness in comparison to the Counseling Methods for People (Barak & Bloch, 2006; Barak & Dolev-Cohen, 2006; Cohen & Kerr, 1998; Cook & Doyle, 2002; Chester & Glass, 2006; Leibert et al., 2006; Mallen et al., 2003; Ramlan Hamzah, 2009; Reynolds, et al., 2006; Robinson & Serfaty, 2001; Yager, 2000; Yager 2001; Zaida Nor Zainudin, 2001; 2010).

IV. CONCLUSION

The emergence and the explosion of ICT have had a huge impact on the field of counseling, especially Internet technology (Oravec, 2000; Robson & Robson, 2000). The ability of the Internet to provide intimate settings led to some Counseling practitioners taking the initiative by offering alternative counseling services (Skinner & Latchford, 2006; Oravec, 2000). The history of computer usage and internet usage in counseling has provided another alternative to practitioner. By understanding the history of the evolution and revolution of this cyber-counseling brings new information to counselors. For the future discussion and research, the issues and opportunities of Cyber-counseling services can be addressed. This will enrich the data of the new services, as well as be part of the history of coming revolution of cyber-counseling, the AI-Counseling may be.

V. REFERENCES

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