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## Measurement and Enhancement of Teachers' Competencies in Psychological Counseling: The Role of E-Learning

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### Abstract

Teachers need to perform various functions every day. It has been well described that most students with behavioral problems have emotional and behavioral problems, which makes learning more difficult for students. This challenge can occur in many ways, such as self-esteem, peer relationships, personal life, psychological problems, social skills, and various interpersonal relationship problems, which makes teacher learning particularly challenging. The purpose of this study is to measure and enhance teachers' psychological competencies. Aiming at the gap in the knowledge of teachers' psychological competencies, this study measured 83 in-service teachers from different cities, different education departments and different teaching levels, and measured and enhanced their psychological competency in the pre-test and post-test with the help of the self-designed test. In this study, it was found that teachers lacked psychological counseling knowledge during the pre-test period, but after watching the video, their knowledge was enhanced to some extent. In addition, in enhancing the knowledge, the role of e-learning, it has a beneficial and positive impact on the interviewee's knowledge. The results of the current research are very encouraging, especially for managers who can apply this knowledge to their professional endeavors and school environment, while hiring teachers and in-service staff, teachers should attend appropriate seminars.

**Keywords:** Teachers, Psychological Counseling, Measurement, Enhancement, E-learning

### Introduction

Over the years, the field of education has changed to better adapt to the different needs of students. The large number of students facing mental health problems has forced institutions to find more successful ways to support the community (Mowbray, 2006). California promulgated the "No Child Left Behind Act", which involves schools turning to an integrated model, in which students with social challenges integrate all or part of the day with some adaptations and changes into the general education curriculum Medium (Camille and Whitney, 2017). Because it brings many new challenges and concerns, which makes the task of teachers more challenging. Students are also at high risk of social and emotional problems.

Teachers have the responsibility to support students by developing social skills, resolving disputes, and educating students to solve many problems that may arise (Hui, 2010). The social and emotional functioning of learners is a key component of how they see themselves, perform, and think about the world around them in order to remain effective in the classroom (Elizabeth et al., 2017). Teachers have quite a huge impact on society and emotional functioning of their learners (Terhoeven, 2009). Teachers are considered as a role model in a student's life but, nowadays apart from teaching teacher's duty is much more than that (Simons, 2016). A teacher grants information, great qualities, custom, problems of today and approaches to determine in which students can overcome them (Kubanyiova, 2015). First of all, the teacher is an educator, and it is not enough to establish the atmosphere in order to shape and improve the personality of the student, but teachers primarily influence it through the representation of their very own personality (Lungu, 2016). Strong personality effects can also provide students with a thorough understanding of what is being learned and can attract students and teachers to effectively communicate amongst each other (Norsidah Ahmad, 2017). Teachers who facilitate complicated cognitive interaction among students improve the quality of social relationships and success (Clark et al., 2000).

Teachers, however, seem to have trouble teaching students in using pretty impressive support (Gillies, 2003). To support student learning and well-being, the awareness of counselling skills is important for teachers. In addressing student problems and issues, teachers may play a pivotal part (Brundrett, 2013). The teacher spends a lot of time with students than any other school employee and is therefore more able to affect students. They are indeed the people, and besides, who communicate on a regular basis with children. If a child is planning to ask an adult for assistance or guidance, over several hours of work and play together it will probably be the teacher he/she has come to trust (Xhemajli, 2016). Competency, acceptance and versatility, honesty, sensitivity, listening, empathy, confidentiality and comprehension are the key skills that can be used in therapy (Behrani 2. , 2016). Teachers should encourage students to share their thoughts and ask for clarification before they are fully understood, they need to set up an atmosphere of mutual trust, encouragement, empathy, and mutual respect in order to achieve this kind of learning climate. In quite an atmosphere, students recognize that they can often struggle while studying, but they have to rise up and continue their combat, this attitude helps them to fully involve in the learning environment (Sharma, 2017). Many teachers agree that new learning visions that have developed over the last decade can contribute to substantial improvements in teaching as this implies that approaches are required in teacher training that will assist future teachers with interpreting such new perspectives and speculations about learning into genuine teaching practices in the schools (Lunenberg et al., 2007).

Teachers undoubtedly need specific training because they strongly stress the exponential growth of the psychological, emotional and behavioral problems of students and the higher demands put on them in order to cope effectively in a variety of problems (Antonioni et al., 2009). In reality, in conjunction with early teacher guidance, a healthy relationship with a supportive teacher decreases the likelihood of the student who begins an unending loop of reciprocal refusal with his teachers and classmates, educational and behavioral dissatisfaction, or failing out. Research findings demonstrated that along with the effective participation of teachers and peers, the introduction of flexible in-school psychosocial and therapy initiatives that address the most distressed and students at risk may become quite successful as well as even less expensive other than the much-complicated psychological wellbeing care inside or elsewhere of institute (Lunenberg et al., 2007). A

significant aspect of successful alliance care models in the school setting is the engagement and contribution of teachers in activities that seek to support children at risk.

The rationale of the study was to explore teachers' competencies in psychological counselling. By measuring and enhancing the competencies of an instructor we came to know that the role of the teacher also required the capacity of students to efficiently mediate academic conflicts, misconduct, and everyday life pressures, while addressing the social and emotional needs of all students in the class (Kottler & Kottler, 2006). Effective communication, cooperative work, self-control, empathy, issue solving, conflict resolution, self-awareness, and other related domains are examples of social and emotional obstacles (Falk, 2009). Students who confront these issues require additional guidance beyond academics. Students' psychosocial development are critical components of how they view themselves, behave, and react to the world around them in order to be successful in the classroom. Teachers have a huge influence on the students' socioemotional wellbeing, and if they are not properly trained, they risk having a long-term unfavorable impact on students. Students that are ignored and less welcomed in school will also be more vulnerable to adverse peer influence, choices and affiliations with peer groups, and general social experiences (Pearl, 2002). Teachers thus need training in counselling. So, this study gives right way to overcome this problem.

### **Objectives**

The main objectives of this research were:

1. To measure the teachers' competencies in psychological counseling
2. To enhance teachers' competencies in psychological counseling.
3. To analyze the effect of e-learning on teacher's counselling competencies.

### **Hypothesis**

1. There would be an effect of e-learning on teacher's counselling competencies.
2. E-learning would have a positive impact on teachers' competencies in psychological counselling.
3. Teachers would have not enough knowledge about psychological counselling.

### **Literature Review**

"The profession of teaching is simple" (Danielson, 2007) but the idea of teachers' role is elusive in education (Cooper, 2020). One explanation teacher's role stays subtle might be identified with developing understanding among researchers that teacher's role is a position, or perspective and being, instead of a bunch of practices (Hunzicker et al., 2017). Teachers have the chance to have a permanent effect on their students' lives (Gourneau, 2005). Teachers play a vital role in fostering the resilience process and growth in their students (John Hattie, 2011). It is undeniable, however, that teachers are key players in the social integration of students and school experiences (Maele, 2011). Teachers become models for youngsters who emulate how they deal with their own feelings, just as from continuous discussions about their enthusiastic encounters (Kitzmann, 2012) and discussing ways to handle thoughts in a suitable way (Thompson, 2013). The teacher is a mentor (Kadam, 2020). Teachers will serve as mentors by teaching integrity and the ethical principles of honesty, loyalty, equality, respect, as well as commitment (Lumpkin, 2008). Some of the tasks performed by a teacher when working with students are as continues to follow: learner, benefactor, evaluator,

manager and assessor, however, teachers become a perfect guide for shaping their future by playing different roles (Archana, 2017).

Teachers guide students for a variety of reasons (Julianne Wenner & Todd Campbell, 2016). As per Henderson and Milstein, teachers encourage endurance by promoting constructive opportunities to devote their abilities and energies to their students, it also means encouraging students to make decisions, share ideas, solve problems, and work to support others (Andrea Nolan, 2014). The teacher's role is to empower, facilitate and educate the child in becoming a respected group member (Lungu, 2016). The aim of a teacher is to help students understand (Boland, 2015). Teachers play a vital role, both in creativity in the classroom and, usually, in learning for students (Borko, 2004). 'Teachers' strong interaction is an important factor in the sustainability of any educational change (Ofra & Pnina, 2004). According to Harrison & Killion there are ten teacher's roles: Provider of resources, educational consultant, curriculum expert, promoter of the education, facilitator of learning, mentor, school leader, knowledge advisor, progress catalyst, plus learner (Killion et al., 2007). The role of teacher, therefore, is varied and often complex (Todd et al., 2019). Teachers who position themselves as mentors strengthen their ability to improve the learning and expansion of students, make students improve their educational experiences, as well as enrich their own teaching skills and new development (Zachary, 2002). Teachers mentor students to foster personal growth, inspire students to make good decisions, or help them make the transition from school to professional life (Christopher & Lisa Spencer, 2007). Another role for teachers is encouraging proficient learning possibilities among employees (Killion et al., 2007).

Getting a certification or degree does not quite inherently reflect the efficacy of educators in educating students (Thomas et al., 2008). An effective teacher must alter his/her actions or learn skills and good conduct that help to achieve his/her goal for themselves and the society (Ridwan et al., 2019). Effective teachers are open to constructive feedback when the greatest plans have unintended consequences, they ponder their experience, gain from it, and afterward with versatility push ahead to the following test (Hunzicker et al., 2017). A teacher must be patient, objective and non-discriminatory, open and accessible to his students, and should understand exactly how to motivate and attract their attention by teaching his own subject in such a way (Lungu, 2016). An effective teacher would be someone by whom the reality conveyed by the students could fit the background culture of the students (Ida, 2017). An effective teacher is a thoughtful person; is non-critical and arranged to look at her/his own inclination routinely; ought to have an awareness of what's actually funny and a verve forever and learning; ought to be interested, quick to investigate new perspectives, methods of reasoning and approaches and open to new learning; can remain quiet under tension; is solution focused instead of harping on negative issues; is adaptable; is a decent communicator/arbitrator; should be thoughtful, empathic, dependable, coordinated, a powerful supervisor, a good listener, an astounding homeroom professional who can display viable practice, an associate, a communicator, a basic scholar, energetic, eager and so on; should have assurance, resistance, versatility, sympathy, trustworthiness, energy, enthusiasm, positive thinking and empathy (Douglas, 2019).

Poekert, Alexandrou, and Shannon earlier revealed that teacher guidance is "one methodology with scientific findings exhibiting its practicability as a remedy to ensuring the integrity of comprehensive teacher and school enhancing endeavors'" (Philip Poekert et al., 2016). Smulyan expressed that a counselor role for teachers is based on three assumptions:



a) teaching is a profession, b) teaching is a moral matter, and c) teaching is a process of collaborative efforts. In that same manner, the role of teacher as a counselor consists of coaching, teaching students, also conflict management characteristics, or views, attitudes, and values (Smulyan, 2016). Teachers strengthen their pedagogical knowledge and competencies through practice (Mary et al., 2012) and strengthen expertise in counseling such as cooperation, mentoring and communication (Geraldine et al., 2012). Teachers can create ties to their own experiences via contemplation (Aharonian, 2016), optimizing their self-perception about teachers' counselling and guidance (Smulyan, 2016), and start to serve as a counsellor. When teachers become counselors, for instance, they "discover, embrace or establish strategies to help others" and "avoid conventional barriers and move around freely between groups of training (Hord, 2004).

Counseling is particularly difficult for teachers since it is usual for the teachers to do psychological therapy as a semi-role in which incorporated therapy is practiced. (McLeod & McLeod, 2014). Counselling directly relates to education's important predictor by fostering collaboration, that is critical for efficient learning. (Roux, 2002). Instead, it allows a teacher to provide students with moral support so that they can recognize and deal with their educational and/or psychological problems. (Malikiosi-Loizou, 2001). Teacher counsellors are instructors responsible for the offering of lay therapy services to students in educational setting (John Mushaandja et al., 2013). Teachers, usually, are not trained in counseling related skills (Eastmon, 2015).

Teachers equipped with counseling skills are more effective (Peterson, 2002). Teachers as counselors guide students for career choices (Greene, 2005), and counsel the students with bullying related issues (Boyle, 2015). Effective mentors discuss whatever has been achieved and experienced with their students so that all the current learnings are translated into some kind of attractive side created by students (Gray, 2015). The essential task of teachers inside and outside the classroom is to provide students with guidance and counselling (Lai-Yeung, 2014).

An extensive numerous studies analyzing teacher well-being variables recently reported that teachers classify student misconduct as especially disruptive and regularly experience diminished health whenever they experience high levels of forgetfulness, disruptions in the classroom, or behavioral problems (Ariel et al., 2014). There is still, however an urgent need to investigate the psychological mechanisms influencing this (Jantine et al., 2011). The goal of the teacher education program was to provide teachers the ability to improve competencies and characteristics that promote communication and also to strengthen the competence of teachers to implement the prevention strategies of social and emotional (SEL) programs in the classroom (Doikou, 2011). Just like teachers realign oneself to counselling, their task shifts very dramatically from language teaching to learning advice (MarinaMozzon-McPherson, 2007). The complex method involved training in career development to support and alleviate the shift in management positions (Brian Morrison, 2012). Psychological complexity is a significant element of counseling ability (Fauth et al., 2007).

Eventually, the evaluation of explicit response styles, nonverbal actions, and deliberative factors within counselling (for instance, Counseling Skills Scale [CSS], Skilled Counseling Scale [SCS]) has indeed been embedded into counselling competency evaluations over the last 12 years. The evaluation of counselling has thus grown into a critical analysis (Jacqueline et al., 2012).

The Scale of Counseling Competencies is a metric for evaluating counselling competencies in the fields of counselling abilities, professional auras and ethical behavior (Swank, 2010). For

counselors, educational counsellors, career counsellors and psychiatrists, there are a lot of scales to assess the self-effectiveness of therapy, such as Yuen's exploratory study, the Counseling skills scale for master-level consultants (Mantak et al., 2010) and Swank, Lambie, and Witta research, however there are currently zero scales that explicitly assess teacher's skills in psychological counseling (Jacqueline et al., 2012). Iliescu argued that in theory, current measures or models may often be deemed unacceptable, and test creation might be quite appropriate than implementing certain methods (Iliescu, 2017). At TLU, during an Interdisciplinary Project (IDP), the e-scale of Estonia "Counselling Self-Efficacy Scale for Teachers (CS-EST)" on the self-efficacy of teachers' counselling competency was created. (Seema Riin, 2020).

The absence of a standardized evaluation tool to measure counselling competencies generates challenges for counsellor educators and administrators as analysts and enforcers enough for counselling profession to uphold certain professional ethics. (Kocet, 2006). Multicultural counselling competence is already defined as the sum of the attitudes/beliefs, skills and abilities of counsellors in dealing with people from a variety of cultural backgrounds (D'Andrea, 2003). Such scales include the (a) Multicultural Awareness/Knowledge/Skills Survey, (b) Multicultural Counseling Inventory, and (c) Multicultural Counseling Awareness Scale. The Cross-Cultural Counseling Inventory, a fourth scale, was developed for the use of supervisors to assess the multicultural counselling skills of the teachers (Ladany, 2000).

## **Methodology**

### **Sample**

This study included 83 on service teachers for both pretest and posttest questionnaire. Convenience Sampling was used for this research. Availability sampling is a form of non-probability sampling in which the sample is collected from a part of the whole population because of various reasons. 83 conveniently selected on service teachers from different major cities of Pakistan including different schools, colleges, universities from private and public sector were included in this study. The researcher has tried to get sufficient variance in the selection of the participants based on their age, education, and experience etc.

### **Procedure**

Data was collected through emails, WhatsApp, and by meeting people. Some of the participants were the researcher's acquaintances and the rest of the participants were selected through indirect contact with the help of third parties which were known to the researcher. The researcher approached the conveniently selected participants on the basis of their willingness and availability. In different locales, such as neighborhoods, schools, universities, educational institutions, participants were approached. Participants were briefly told about the purpose of the study after establishing satisfactory relationships with the respondents, and their consent was obtained. Participants were provided directions to read the items carefully and ask questions if they had any doubt about any question or trouble interpreting it. Participants were given 3 hours for the pretest to read and thoroughly fill out the questionnaire as they needed and 14 days for the posttest to watch the videos and answer the questions carefully. They were respectfully asked for reasons and allowed to withdraw if any member wished to withdraw. The data gathered was analyzed by evaluating pretest and posttest questionnaire and giving marks to the participant out of 100 in both pretest and posttest after that SPSS was used to analyze the data.

### Analysis Scheme

IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 20, was used to analyze the data of the study. Descriptive statistics were run to get mean, frequency and percentage of each demographic variable. Paired T-test was applied to compare data of pretest and posttest marks.

### Results

#### *Paired Differences on Total Scores Pre and Post Test of Counselling Competency Test (CCT)*

Variable	Paired Differences ( <i>n</i> = 83)		<i>t</i> (82)	<i>p</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
CCT	46.09	15.66	-26.80	0.00	2.94

M= Mean, SD= standard Deviation, \**p*<.05

findings are like the previous knowledge that e-learning has a positive impact (Intel, 2009). However, as per the literature review that suggested e-learning can be a totally powerful and functional studying method (Thin, 2016). Furthermore, concurrent with the previous studies, that distance learning and flexible learning are natural fits for e-learning, but it can also be used in combination with face-to-face learning (Kalaivani, 2014). The current findings approved the hypothesis of the study that there would be an effect of e-learning on teachers' psychological competency. The study's findings revealed that the majority of teachers who took part in it were under-trained or lacked basic knowledge about psychological counseling that they could use in their classrooms. Teachers are, in turn, the very first line of protection for students struggling with social and personal problems, and they may be deemed ill-equipped to support them due to their lack of training. Teachers partaking in guidance and counseling with students who have not received such training may be at risk of making mistakes with their assistance to students, putting students at risk as well (Falk, 2009).

Second hypothesis that e-learning has a positive impact, in current research it has been found that there is a positive effect of e-learning in enhancing teachers' competencies in psychological counseling. These results have been supported by previous research that learners also highlight using e-learning approach makes learning simpler and more fun, and that today's education would be difficult to imagine without the use of technology and e-learning methods (Osepashvili, 2014).

E-learning promise that it will include revolutionary tools for enhancing competency, capability, efficiency, and results, whether a company operates in one location or many (Nagy, 2005). People are increasingly empowered to learn on their own and to learn just what they need to know to do their role well (Nagy, 2005). Teachers may use e-learning materials to bring new knowledge to their students, and they can do so in a variety of ways. It enhances the learning experience while expanding the scope of any teacher or mentor who is interested (Noawanit Songkram et al., 2015). E-learning eliminates the cost and hassle of bringing teachers and students together in one location (Alenezi, 2020). E-learning is more than a feature introduced to facilitate and accelerate conventional education; it is an emerging platform whose integration with various elements of the learning system enables the educational system's internal enrichment (Abaidoo, 2015). E-learning provides a risk-free atmosphere for learning (Alenezi, 2020). E-learning, on the other hand, is impossible to



achieve without the help of technology, enabling applications and the technologies that support them play a critical role. (Clarke, 2001).

The study's findings revealed that the majority of teachers who took part in it were under-trained or lacked basic knowledge about psychological counseling that they could use in their classrooms. Teachers are, in turn, the very first line of protection for students struggling with social and personal problems, and they may be deemed ill-equipped to support them due to their lack of training. Teachers partaking in guidance and counseling with students who have not received such training may be at risk of making mistakes with their assistance to students, putting students at risk as well (Falk, 2009). While evaluating the answers during the pretest nearly 1% of the teachers responded to almost every question as they stated they have been guided about psychological counseling in their induction workshops. In Pakistan only a few private schools are providing such kinds of workshops in which they provide basic knowledge of psychological counseling. Estimated figure is 5 or 6 schools are providing induction workshops that provide information about psychological counseling. Teachers must have psychological counseling knowledge in order to support student performance and well-being (Behrani, 2016). Therefore the third hypothesis of the study is also right.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

The aim of the current study was to measure and enhance the teacher's competencies in psychological counseling: the role of e-learning. The results of research represented that e-learning has a positive effect on the enhancement of the teacher's competencies in the psychological counseling. The hypothesis was affirmed, and the results indicated that E-learning influences teachers' psychological competency skills. This study has provided facts and figures to understand how our teachers lack basic knowledge of teaching as well as psychological counseling from the pretest results, we can clearly see where our teachers stand in psychological counseling knowledge. It has been found that majority of the teachers were unable to answer the questions in pretest while after watching the videos it was clearly seen that there is some enhancement in their knowledge about psychological counseling. This is an important finding for the administrators or higher education hiring departments that they should train their teachers regarding psychological counselling skills in the induction workshops which will influence the school environment as well as the student's mental health.

This study can provide a hint to future studies that it is self-evident that teachers from different disciplines should obtain the requisite psychological counseling skills to effectively teach and evaluate. It has been found that E-learning has the potential to be a useful method for transmitting information. Consequently, a well-established e-learning system on which learners can rely is essential.

Since this study was done only in Pakistan, future researchers may focus on increasing the sample population so a rather diverse opinion can be generated. Future researchers can use the findings of this study and develop action plans for future, relate and apply the findings to see the effect of workshops and e-learning both on enhancing teachers psychological counseling competencies.

Results in current study indicated positive effect of e-learning on enhancing teachers psychological counseling competencies. It is suggested that further research should focus on qualitative part to find out the reasons behind why our teachers lack basic psychological counseling skills as it is important for the school environment as well as the student's mental

well-being because we consider our teacher as our role models and the first person with whom the student interact more. Future studies should further explore these discussions.

On a similar note, it is also recommended for future studies to focus on what might be the confounding factors that our teachers are not well-equipped with such an important psychological skill and why the higher authorities are not taking this issue seriously or even considering this an issue. As the major purpose of the study was not comparing the responses among genders future research can focus on gender comparisons as well.

Furthermore, self-efficacy beliefs should be tested prior to online learning in order to recognize individuals at risk of underperforming. Whereupon, to assist these participants in successfully passing the test, effective programs and feedback could be planned.

There has never been a study in Pakistan before that can measure and enhance teacher's competency in psychological counseling both at the same time. The study has, uniquely, provided the latest facts and figures that the role of e-learning has a positive impact in enhancing teachers' psychological competencies. A very important discovery of the current study is that E-learning does not affect the learner's skills based on their gender, it impacts as a whole. Moreover, before appointing any teacher the school administration must provide a training workshop in which they should guide the teachers about the basic knowledge of psychological counseling, shed light on different learning theories and after that there should be a proper test for the teachers and those who qualify psychological counseling skill test must be appointed as a teacher.

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