

Digital Psychological Counseling at the University: Theoretical Foundations and Professional Challenges

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Abstract

This study explores digital psychological counseling in the university context, with a focus on its theoretical foundations and professional challenges. It examines the conceptual basis of digital counseling, its relevance to the university environment, and the main justifications for its use in supporting students' mental health. The study also highlights key professional and ethical challenges, including digital competence, confidentiality, informed consent, and crisis management. It concludes that digital psychological counseling can enrich university counseling services when it is institutionally organized, professionally supervised, and adapted to the cultural and educational context of Arab universities.

Keywords: Digital psychological counseling; university students; mental health; higher education; professional challenges.

Introduction

The contemporary university environment is undergoing rapid transformations driven by digitalization across various domains of university life. The presence of technology is no longer confined to educational or administrative aspects; rather, it has extended to the fields of guidance, psychological support, and student services. In this context, digital psychological counseling has emerged as a modern form of service delivery that seeks to expand access to psychological care, facilitate follow-up, and achieve a degree of flexibility in communication with students, especially in environments where academic, emotional, and social pressures are increasing (Abdel Bari, Al-Kayyal, & Al-Deeb, 2022; Al-Khalaf, 2021). Recent Arab studies confirm that electronic counseling is no longer merely a circumstantial practice; rather, it has become a field that requires both theoretical and procedural grounding to define its concept, tools, and professional conditions.

On the other hand, psychological counseling, in its essence, is based on helping the individual understand the self, develop the ability to adjust and make decisions, and improve the relationship with oneself and the surrounding environment. This makes the shift to the digital environment a shift in the medium of service delivery, not in its human essence. Foundational Arab references in psychological counseling, such as *Principles of Guidance and*

Psychological Counseling by Sami Mohammad Malham and *Principles of Psychological and Educational Counseling* by Saleh Hasan Al-Daheri, have presented the general foundations of counseling practice in terms of concept, objectives, principles, and theories. These are foundations upon which thinking about digital counseling within the university can be extended (Malham, 2010; Al-Daheri, 2000). It therefore appears that any scientific treatment of this topic should not begin from technology alone, but from the theoretical structure of psychological counseling itself, because understanding the digital medium without understanding the counseling function may reduce the service to its communicative dimension while neglecting its professional dimension.

The importance of this topic within the university is further reinforced by the fact that university students are among the groups most exposed to digital environments and, at the same time, among those most exposed to multiple forms of psychological and academic stress. Hence, digital psychological counseling appears to be a promising option if framed within clear professional guidelines. However, this option is not without challenges related to digital professional competence, confidentiality, informed consent, emergency management, and professional boundaries in communication through technological media. This indicates that digital transformation in university counseling should not be viewed merely as a technical response, but rather as a transformation in the philosophy of delivering psychological services to students, one that requires a balance between Arab grounding in psychological counseling and openness to modern professional standards.

1. The Conceptual and Theoretical Framework of Digital Psychological Counseling

1.1 The Concept of Digital Psychological Counseling

Psychological counseling is defined as an organized professional process aimed at helping the individual understand the self and one's problems, develop psychological, social, and educational adjustment capacities, and make more balanced decisions in light of one's abilities and circumstances. Some researchers have addressed this concept as a human and professional activity grounded in the relationship between counselor and counselee and in the use of technical methods that assist in guidance, understanding, and adaptation (Malham, 2010; Al-Daheri, 2000). This definition reveals that psychological counseling, in its essence, is inseparable from the human dimension based on listening, understanding, and organizing psychological experience, which makes it necessary to be cautious of any conception that reduces counseling to a mere exchange of information or advice through technological media. Digital psychological counseling, by contrast, represents a modern extension of this conception, whereby counseling services are delivered through digital media such as electronic platforms, video chats, email, applications, and synchronous and asynchronous communication tools. The study by Abdel Bari, Al-Kayyal, and Al-Deeb (2022) showed that electronic counseling is based on theoretical frameworks and practical applications that make technology an effective medium for providing support and counseling whenever suitable professional controls are available. Al-Khalaf (2021) likewise demonstrates that remote counseling and psychotherapy require accurate knowledge of challenges, controls, and ethical principles in accordance with best modern practices. Accordingly, digital counseling does not represent a departure from the general concept of psychological counseling; rather, it represents a reorganization of this concept within a new communicative environment.

Thus, the difference between traditional psychological counseling and digital psychological counseling does not lie in the overall objective of the service, but rather in the nature of the medium, the characteristics of interaction, the mechanisms of documentation, the regulation of confidentiality, session management, and the skills required of the counselor. Digital counseling does not cancel the essence of the counseling process; rather, it reorganizes it within a technological environment that imposes additional conditions on professional practice (Al-Khalaf, 2021; Abdel Bari et al., 2022). It therefore appears that the most accurate scientific conception of this form of counseling is to regard it as a transformation in the mode of service delivery rather than in its essence, because exaggerating its portrayal as a rupture with familiar counseling leads to a misunderstanding of its nature, while simplifying it as merely ordinary counseling through a screen results in overlooking the qualitative challenges imposed by the digital medium.

1.2 The Theoretical Foundations of Digital Psychological Counseling

From a theoretical perspective, digital psychological counseling is grounded in the general foundations upon which psychological and educational counseling are based in Arab studies, particularly their reliance on the principles of human understanding, respect, confidentiality, consideration of individual differences, and helping the counselee grow, adjust, and solve problems. Arab counseling literature, especially in the works of Malham (2007) and Al-Daheri (2000), has presented these principles as the basis of counseling practice in its different forms, which makes it possible to extend them to the digital space as long as the nature of the professional relationship is preserved and technology is employed to serve counseling goals rather than displace them. This means that the theoretical foundation of digital counseling does not begin with technology, but with the logic of psychological helping itself, because technology remains a means, not an end.

This mode of counseling is also grounded in a clear university and educational basis represented by the specificity of the university stage, with its transformations in identity, self-reliance, academic stress, and anxiety related to professional and social future prospects. From this standpoint, digital counseling becomes suitable for the university environment because it enables access to students in a space that is familiar to them and provides possibilities for initial support, follow-up, guidance, and referral. Recent Arab studies on electronic counseling have highlighted that this form of service can contribute to widening the circle of beneficiaries and supporting traditional practices rather than eliminating them (Abdel Bari et al., 2022; Al-Khalaf, 2021). However, the suitability of this form for the university does not mean that it is unconditionally appropriate for all cases; rather, it means that the university environment provides a communicative climate that allows its effective use if the characteristics of the target group are taken into account.

Digital psychological counseling is also based on a modern professional and ethical foundation which emphasizes that remote practice can only be effective when accompanied by training, proper use of platforms, assurance of privacy, and clarity of professional boundaries. These are issues that have been elaborated in recent international professional guidelines and may be employed here as references that support framing, not as substitutes for foundational Arab references. This interaction between the Arab reference framework and the modern professional framework reveals that a balanced study of this topic should not fall into one of two extremes: one that is satisfied with classical concepts without paying attention to digital

transformation, and another that follows contemporary technical studies without theoretical Arab grounding. The more rigorous scientific approach is to combine both dimensions.

1.3 Characteristics of Digital Psychological Counseling at the University

Digital psychological counseling at the university is characterized by a set of features that give it a distinct character from traditional counseling without separating it from the essence of the counseling process. One of its most prominent characteristics is its reliance on interaction through a digital medium, which makes the counseling relationship subject to technical factors such as connection quality, platform suitability, and the privacy of the place in which the student is located during the session. This form of counseling is also characterized by flexibility in terms of time and place, as it provides broader opportunities to reach students who are unable to attend in person or who prefer to begin contact through digital media (Al-Khalaf, 2021; Al-Amin, 2022). This flexibility is one of the major strengths of digital counseling, but at the same time it may turn into a source of confusion if it is not regulated by schedules, policies, and boundaries that distinguish professional interaction from ordinary day-to-day communication. Another characteristic is that it is more closely connected to the digital structure of contemporary university life, as students now deal daily with electronic platforms in learning, communication, and administration, which makes digital counseling relatively consistent with their familiar communicative environment. Yet this characteristic, despite its positive aspect, may lead to an excessive simplification of the counseling process if digital psychological counseling is viewed merely as a natural extension of everyday electronic communication. Similarity in medium does not necessarily mean similarity in function, because counseling communication remains professional communication governed by objectives, ethics, and boundaries that differ from forms of ordinary digital interaction (Abdel Bari et al., 2022; Abu Asaad, 2015). Hence, the specificity of digital psychological counseling at the university lies not only in its closeness to the student's world, but also in its need for framing that prevents it from dissolving into non-professional communication patterns.

Digital psychological counseling at the university is also characterized by its ability to combine the therapeutic function with preventive and psychoeducational roles, as it can be used for initial intake, psychological awareness, follow-up, referral, and short-term support. This makes it more suitable for the university context, which needs multi-level services not limited to intervention in complex cases, but also including prevention, psychoeducation, and the promotion of student well-being. It thus appears that the characteristics of digital counseling at the university do not merely indicate a difference in medium; they also reveal the breadth of possible functions that this form of service can perform within the university environment.

2. Justifications for Employing Digital Psychological Counseling at the University

2.1 The Specificity of the University Environment and Students' Psychological Needs

The university environment is characterized by psychological and educational specificity that makes it one of the environments most in need of psychological counseling services in their various forms. The university student passes through a transitional stage in which the demands of academic achievement intersect with the challenges of social adaptation, identity formation, autonomy, and decision-making related to professional and personal future. Arab studies in psychological and educational counseling have shown that this stage is one in which the need for organized psychological accompaniment increases, especially when the student's ability to

adjust is shaken under the impact of academic, emotional, or social pressures (Malham, 2010; Al-Daheri, 2000). This indicates that the need for counseling at the university is not accidental, but structural and connected to the nature of the stage itself.

From this standpoint, the modern university is no longer required only to provide cognitive and academic training; it is also required to provide an environment supportive of mental health and student well-being. This idea becomes even more important in light of digital transformation, which has made students more connected to electronic spaces in learning, communication, and help-seeking. Thus, digital psychological counseling appears to be a logical response to a transformation in the university student's lifestyle, because it approaches the student in the student's daily communicative space rather than always expecting a transition to the traditional in-person format (Abdel Bari, Al-Kayyal, & Al-Deeb, 2022; Al-Amin, 2022). Nevertheless, the closeness of this mode to the student's world is not sufficient by itself to justify its adoption; it must also be understood in light of the type of psychological needs at stake, because some problems may benefit from the digital format, whereas others may require direct presence and deeper professional assessment.

2.2 Advantages of Digital Psychological Counseling in the University Context

One of the most significant justifications supporting the employment of digital psychological counseling at the university is that it broadens access to the service, especially for students who face temporal, spatial, or psychological barriers to in-person counseling. Recent Arab reviews have confirmed that electronic counseling offers more flexible modes of communication, whether through synchronous sessions or asynchronous media, thereby increasing opportunities for benefit and making the service more capable of being integrated into the daily lives of beneficiaries (Abdel Bari et al., 2022; Al-Khalaf, 2021). One of the most important advantages of digital counseling, therefore, is that it reduces the distance between the student and the psychological service, not only in the geographical sense but also in the psychological sense related to hesitation and fear of stigma.

Another important advantage is that this mode of counseling may help reduce certain forms of stigma associated with seeking psychological help, as some students find in the digital environment a safer or more private space for requesting initial support, making inquiries, or beginning the counseling relationship before moving, when needed, to an in-person meeting. Recent reviews on electronic psychological counseling during the COVID-19 pandemic have shown that digital media provided multiple opportunities for addressing anxiety, depression, and psychological stress, and highlighted the need to qualify counselors to use these technologies more effectively (Al-Amin, 2022). This allows one to say that the value of digital counseling lies not only in being a new medium, but also in its ability to open initial doors of communication with groups that might remain distant from psychological services if delivery were limited to the traditional form.

Digital counseling also gives the university the possibility of developing faster and more regular follow-up services, especially in cases that require initial psychological support, reminders, short-term accompaniment, or organized referral. This dimension appears important in the university environment, which is characterized by large numbers and the difficulty of responding immediately to all requests through in-person meetings alone. Some recent studies focusing on university students have also supported the idea that digital mental health interventions may be promising in reducing some emotional symptoms and improving

psychological well-being when they are well designed and tailored to the characteristics of young users (Lattie et al., 2019). However, these advantages, despite their importance, should not lead to imagining digital counseling as a magical solution, because its effectiveness remains dependent on quality of design, quality of implementation, and the suitability of the service to students' actual needs.

2.3 Limits of Digital Counseling at the University

Despite the previous advantages, digital psychological counseling should not be presented as a complete solution or an absolute substitute for in-person counseling. Arab and foreign studies indicate that the effectiveness of this mode of intervention is linked to the type of problem, the level of severity, the student's ability to engage, the counselor's competence, and the quality of the technological platform used. Some cases also require direct observation, more precise clinical judgment, or immediate intervention for which the digital format alone is insufficient (Al-Khalaf, 2021; APA, 2024). This shows that discussing digital counseling at the university must be a discussion of both possibilities and limits, not of advantages alone.

In addition, the digital environment may sometimes weaken certain nonverbal indicators from which the counselor benefits in building a professional understanding of the case. Challenges may also arise related to connection interruptions, lack of privacy in the place from which the student connects, or reluctance to continue sessions via digital media. Accordingly, the success of digital counseling at the university remains conditional on the existence of a clear institutional conception that specifies when this mode is used, when it is integrated with in-person services, and how referral between the two forms is managed in a way that ensures the student's best interests first (Abu Asaad, 2015; Al-Sharifin&Miqdadi, 2021). The real risk therefore does not lie in the use of digital counseling as such, but in its use without standards that define its proper place within the university's mental health care system.

Some systematic reviews on electronic psychological counseling during the pandemic period also showed that expanding use does not necessarily mean the maturity of the professional and organizational structure; rather, it highlighted the need for training, the inclusion of modern technologies within counselor preparation, and the establishment of clearer national and institutional programs in this field (Al-Amin, 2022). Hence, the limits of digital counseling are not an argument for excluding it; rather, they are a call for its organized integration in a way that prevents overreliance on it and guards against its superficial use as a compensatory measure.

2.4 Areas of Use of Digital Psychological Counseling at the University

The areas of use of digital psychological counseling at the university are multiple, which increases its functional importance within the student mental health care system. Among the most prominent of these areas is initial case intake, where the digital space can form a preliminary gateway for identifying the student's problems and determining whether the case needs digital counseling follow-up, an in-person meeting, or specialized referral. Digital counseling can also be employed in short-term psychological support and in the periodic follow-up of some cases that do not require continuous direct presence (Al-Khalaf, 2021; Abdel Bari et al., 2022). These areas reveal that digital counseling is not limited to a remote therapeutic session, but can be part of a broader organization of the counseling pathway.

It is also used in the field of psychological awareness and prevention through the provision of digital counseling content, the organization of awareness meetings عبر platforms, and the

sending of supportive and psychoeducational messages, which makes it suitable for guidance and psychological follow-up services seeking to reach the largest possible number of students. It may also be an effective means in academic-psychological guidance, especially in cases related to difficulties in university adjustment, test anxiety, and pressure related to choosing a specialization or professional future (Malham, 2010; Al-Amin, 2022). This shows that digital counseling is capable of serving preventive and developmental functions, not merely narrow therapeutic ones.

Another important area is referral and post-referral follow-up, as digital counseling can be used to accompany the student during transition from one service to another or to provide initial psychological support prior to specialized intervention. This highlights the importance of digital counseling not as a separate alternative, but as a component within an integrated network of university psychological services. It thus appears that broadening the discussion around areas of use gives the study a more realistic dimension, because it moves it from the level of general theoretical justification to the level of precise functional specification of what this form of counseling can offer within the university.

3. Professional Challenges and Requirements for the Success of Digital Psychological Counseling at the University

3.1 Professional and Ethical Challenges

The professional challenge is one of the most sensitive issues in digital psychological counseling within the university, because the transition from in-person counseling to counseling through digital media does not represent merely a change in the means of communication; rather, it imposes a reconsideration of counselors' competencies, the conditions of practice, and the nature of the professional relationship itself. Recent Arab studies have confirmed that electronic counseling requires special preparation that integrates psychological and counseling knowledge on the one hand, and the ability to employ technology professionally on the other, because the success of the service is measured not only by ease of access, but also by the soundness of its procedural and ethical construction (Abdel Bari, Al-Kayyal, & Al-Deeb, 2022; Al-Khalaf, 2021). This reveals that digital psychological counseling is not a simplification of counseling practice; in some respects it may be more complex than in-person counseling.

One of the most prominent of these challenges is digital professional competence. It is not sufficient for the counselor to be qualified in psychological counseling in general to be automatically qualified for digital practice. Remote service requires knowledge of platform characteristics, the limits of electronic interaction, the etiquette of professional communication in the digital environment, and methods of managing the session when a technical disruption, weak connection, or disturbance in the privacy of the place where the student is located occurs. For this reason, the ACA Code of Ethics stressed that those who use distance counseling, technology, and social media must develop knowledge and skills related to the relevant technical, ethical, and legal considerations, which is consistent with what Arab studies have called for in terms of integrating digital skills into the preparation of the contemporary psychological counselor (ACA, 2014; Al-Amin, 2022). It therefore seems that malfunction in digital counseling often does not stem from technology alone, but from its poor use by a practitioner who has not been adequately prepared for it.

The challenge of confidentiality, privacy, and data security is also particularly sensitive in the university environment, because the student may seek counseling from a non-isolated place, through a shared device, or via an insecure network, and the university itself may not yet have developed clear protocols for preserving digital psychological information. Recent professional evidence indicates that digital practice requires special care in relation to data security, management, transfer, and disposal, along with the need to clarify the limits of confidentiality to the client explicitly. Arab studies on remote counseling have also stressed that the digital environment, despite the flexibility it offers, may open the door to professional risks if it is not technically and organizationally regulated from the outset (Al-Khalaf, 2021; APA, 2024). This means that expanding access to psychological services through digitalization should not come at the expense of the student's right to privacy and professional safety.

Digital informed consent is not merely a formal procedure; rather, it is a fundamental element of practice because it includes clarification of the nature of the service, its limits, potential technical risks, how information will be stored, emergency procedures, whether sessions will be recorded or not, and what alternatives are available if the digital service cannot continue. Recent American professional guidelines have highlighted this aspect as one of the central pillars of telepsychology, and the contemporary Arab perspective on electronic counseling likewise emphasizes the necessity of procedural clarity in dealing with the beneficiary, especially when the service is relatively new within the university institution and has not yet fully settled in the awareness of students and counselors alike (APA, 2024; Abdel Bari et al., 2022). Hence, informed consent in digital counseling is not merely a document, but a foundational gateway for organizing the professional relationship on the basis of transparency. Another important challenge is the management of emergencies and psychological crises at a distance, because some cases may exceed the limits of ordinary digital support, especially where there is risk of self-harm, severe disturbance, or the need for urgent intervention. Here, it is not enough for the counselor simply to be present through the screen; the counselor must be trained to define the limits of the service, make rapid referrals, and possess a prior conception of crisis intervention procedures. This issue is among those to which modern guidelines have given clear attention, placing it among the core competencies of remote practice, and the need for it within the university appears even more pressing given the nature of the target age group and the diversity of pressures to which it is exposed (APA, 2024). This aspect reveals that digital counseling should not be built upon the assumption of constant smoothness, but also upon preparedness for critical situations that may arise.

In addition, there is the challenge of professional boundaries in digital communication. Technology may expand opportunities for contact, but it may simultaneously weaken the boundaries between the personal and professional domains if these are not clearly regulated. This is manifested in messages outside working hours, the use of non-professional accounts, the mixing of counseling interaction with social interaction, or the absence of a clear policy defining when and how communication with the student takes place. The ACA Code of Ethics includes a section specifically devoted to distance counseling, technology, and social media, which demonstrates that the matter is no longer merely technical, but has become a structurally professional issue (ACA, 2014). It therefore appears that digital psychological counseling does not present incidental ethical challenges; rather, it imposes a redefinition of professional

boundaries in a new context in which the personal and the institutional, and the everyday and the therapeutic, become intertwined.

3.2 Requirements for Activating Digital Psychological Counseling at the University

If digital psychological counseling faces clear professional challenges, its success in the university environment remains possible when precise organizational and professional conditions are available. At the forefront of these conditions is the existence of a clear institutional framework within the university that defines the objectives of the service, the beneficiary groups, the types of cases for which digital counseling is appropriate, and the mechanisms of referral to in-person or medical services when needed. Digital practice should not be left to individual discretion alone; rather, it requires a declared policy that makes it part of the university mental health care system and not a marginal or circumstantial activity (Al-Amin, 2022; Al-Khalaf, 2021). This suggests that institutional organization is not merely a complement to counseling work, but a prior condition for its success.

Continuous training and professional development constitute a second condition of no lesser importance, because the counselor in the digital environment needs to develop new skills that go beyond conventional training, such as managing the interview through the screen, observing emotional indicators within a limited context, dealing with technical breakdowns, formulating digital informed consent, and regulating professional boundaries through electronic media. Recent studies have stressed that training and supervision are essential components in this field, and the revised APA guidelines have included supervision and training among the central elements of sound practice. Recent Arab studies also recommend integrating electronic counseling into the preparation programs of psychological and educational counselors so that practice does not remain behind the actual transformations taking place within the university. Hence, the development of digital counseling cannot be achieved without the development of the professional actor itself.

The third condition consists in selecting secure and suitable platforms for the nature of psychological work, because the success of digital counseling depends not only on the existence of a communication tool, but on its ability to guarantee privacy, ease of use, and organized documentation. A university that relies on improvised or insecure means may expose both beneficiaries and professionals to legal and ethical risks. For this reason, recent professional guidelines emphasize the need to take data security, management, storage, and transfer into account, while the emerging Arab practice in this field indicates that part of the problem of digital counseling is related not only to the counselor or the student, but also to the technical infrastructure itself and the extent of its readiness for specialized psychological use (APA, 2024; Abdel Bari et al., 2022). This shows that technical infrastructure is not a secondary element, but part of the ethics of practice.

Added to this is the adoption of a hybrid model that combines in-person and digital counseling, which is one of the most balanced models in the university environment because it allows flexibility without sacrificing professional depth. Some students may begin by seeking help through the digital medium and then require in-person follow-up, while others may benefit from face-to-face meetings followed by short digital sessions for support or follow-up. Recent studies support this approach because they show that the effectiveness of digital mental health services among university students is linked to the degree of good integration in design and the extent to which the service fits users' needs, not simply to its being digital in itself (Lattie et

al., 2019; Orsolini et al., 2021). It therefore appears that the hybrid model is closest to professional realism, because it does not set the digital in opposition to the in-person, but makes it part of one integrated system.

Periodic evaluation of service effectiveness remains a fundamental condition for its continuation and improvement. The university needs to know the extent of students' uptake of the service, their level of satisfaction with it, the types of problems it addresses, the cases for which the digital format is insufficient, and the degree to which counselors adhere to professional protocols. Without such evaluation, digital counseling may become a merely formal initiative rather than a psychological service with real impact. The development of this evaluation should also take into account the cultural and institutional specificity of the Arab university, because the success of global models does not mean that they can be transferred automatically without adaptation to local realities and the characteristics of students, professionals, and the institution (Al-Amin, 2022; Abdel Bari et al., 2022). This indicates that the success of digital counseling is not measured merely by its existence, but by its actual outcomes within the university environment.

3.3 Prospects for Developing Digital Psychological Counseling in the Arab University

The development of digital psychological counseling in the Arab university requires a transition from the stage of partial or circumstantial initiatives to the stage of organized institutional construction. This begins with integrating this field into university policies related to mental health and considering it part of the student support system rather than merely a supplementary service. It also requires the establishment of clear manuals of practice and professional protocols that define the conditions of service provision, documentation procedures, referral pathways, and procedures for dealing with urgent cases, thereby achieving greater institutional clarity and consistency (Al-Amin, 2022; Al-Sharifin&Miqdadi, 2021). It thus seems that the future of Arab digital counseling depends on its ability to move from individual efforts to accredited institutional practices.

Another important prospect for development is the strengthening of academic and professional training in this field, whether in the preparation programs of psychological counselors or in training courses directed to staff working in guidance and psychological follow-up services. Digital counseling cannot develop in the absence of specialized training that combines counseling competence, technical knowledge, and ethical awareness, which is what recent studies emphasize in linking the success of digital practice to the quality of continuous professional preparation (ACA, 2014; APA, 2024). This indicates that the development of digital counseling begins, in one of its central dimensions, with the development of the training programs of specialists themselves.

There is also a clear need to develop secure university platforms adapted to the specificity of psychological work, instead of relying on general tools that may not meet the required conditions of confidentiality and organization. This orientation appears especially important in the Arab university, where many higher education institutions are still in the process of building specialized digital infrastructures for psychological support. In addition, encouraging Arab scientific research on digital psychological counseling remains one of the most important prospects for development, because it allows for the generation of local knowledge about students' needs, the effectiveness of the models used, and the specificity of practice in Arab cultural and institutional contexts. Hence, the development of this field requires not only the

transfer of ready-made models, but also the production of Arab knowledge capable of interpreting local reality and providing solutions appropriate to it.

Conclusion

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that digital psychological counseling at the university does not represent merely a technical development in the means of service delivery; rather, it expresses a professional transformation that requires a rethinking of the nature of counseling practice within the university environment in terms of concept, function, objectives, and conditions of effectiveness. Arab studies and modern professional foundations have shown that this form of counseling derives its legitimacy from the contemporary university's need for services that are more flexible, broader in access, and more capable of accompanying students in a digital context that has become part of their academic and daily lives. It has also become clear that its success is not linked to technology in itself, but to the extent to which it is disciplined within a clear theoretical, professional, and ethical framework.

The study also showed that digital psychological counseling, despite its evident advantages in facilitating access, reducing certain barriers, and diversifying support channels, remains a field conditional upon a set of basic requirements, foremost among them digital professional training, supervision, commitment to confidentiality and privacy, clarity of informed consent, preparedness for emergencies, and the adoption of an organized institutional model that integrates in-person and digital service. Accordingly, the true value of digital psychological counseling at the university does not lie in its being a complete substitute for traditional counseling, but in its being a modern professional extension that can enrich the university's psychological support system if it is properly planned and adapted to the cultural and organizational specificity of the Arab university institution. It thus appears that the future of university psychological counseling is not moving toward the elimination of the human relationship in favor of the screen, but toward rebuilding this relationship within a more flexible and organized space, such that technology becomes a supportive medium rather than a substitute for the professional essence of counseling work.

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