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Entitled

EXAMINING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HELP-SEEKING BEHAVIOURS, MENTAL HEALTH PERCEPTIONS, AND PREFFERED MODALITY OF THERAPY SERVICES AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN ARAB COUNTRIES

by

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Abstract

As mental health concerns continue to grow in the modern world, many are faced with barriers to seeking help due to attitudes, beliefs and self-stigma. This is especially true within Arab cultures. The main objective for this study was to examine how these attitudes, beliefs and self-stigma may impact a person's help seeking behaviours when compared to a preferred modality of treatment, namely online and face-to-face therapy. A cross-sectional study using online surveys consisting of the Self-Stigma of Seeking Help Survey (SSOSH), the Attitudes Toward Seeking Professional Psychological Help Scale - Short Form (ATSPPH - SF), the Online Counselling Attitude Survey (OCAS), and the Face-to-Face Attitude Survey (FFAS) was done to analyze these preferences and to gain a better understanding of the association and predictive power of these factors on the preferred modality. The studies participants consisted of 414 university students from the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt and Oman. The findings showed a significant difference that emerged in how attitudes, beliefs, and self-stigma impacted the intention to seek help between those preferring online versus face-to-face therapy modalities. Results showed a significant influence of these factors on face-to-face counselling, while an elevated level of self-stigma was more strongly associated with online counselling. Results further indicated that attitudes towards therapy displayed a significant positive correlation with the choice of therapy modality in both modalities. The implications of these findings are significant as they allow for a deeper understanding into the benefits of online therapy in reducing the barriers of self-stigma. It also allows for a further understanding into the valuable perspectives for mental health professionals, emphasizing the role of stigma and personal experiences in shaping therapy-seeking behaviors.

Keywords: Attitudes, self-stigma, online therapy, face-to-face therapy, help-seeking behaviours.