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**DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A  
COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT) PLATFORM  
(VIRTUAL COUNSELLOR)**

**CASE STUDY: BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY**

**BY**

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A Project Proposal Submitted to the Faculty of Science & Education  
for the Study Leading to a Project in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Bachelor of Science in  
Computer Science of Busitema University.

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February, 2022.

**DECLARATION**

I Gerald Kisangala declare that the project/research work prepared and presented in this report submitted as partial fulfillment for the award of a Degree in Bachelor of Science in Computer Science is entirely a reflection of my findings and has never been delivered for any academic award in Busitema University.

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Date: .....

**APPROVAL**

This is to certify that Gerald Kisangala, a final year student of Busitema University pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science Degree fully did this project work for the partial fulfillment of the requirements of this degree under my supervision.

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## ABSTRACT

With the rapid in surge of technology in every field, there arises a need to evaluate the proceedings of psychological working on the cyber-sphere. The popular thoughts is that online therapy is a duplication of what happens in the expanse of face-to-face traditional psychotherapy. However, the said therapy is an amalgamation of the benefits of traditional setting with the added benefits taken from various therapeutic practices. Communication, being one major contributor; based on which the efficacy of online counseling is underlined. This paper attempts at elucidating the benefit online counseling.

Counseling has primarily been contained as a face-to-face (f2f), 'in the therapy room' practice. However, the development of internet has over the ages facilitated an 'indirect' form of therapy. The online channel is not a mere mirroring of the traditional f2f; rather a whole new paradigm of counseling with some built in advantages to facilitate therapy. Traditional therapy has many benefits to its credit. The client and counselor know of each other as being 'real' owing to the physical presence. The counselor has access to the client's abstract senses, body-language, phase shift, tonal shifts, etc. which helps them assess the situation and move the session in the apt direction. However, many individuals have reported to being elusive of going to a psychologist at the first place; owing to the stigma attached to it. Even if they take the step and see a shrink, it may take many sessions to break out of the overt personality and reach catharsis. Hence, in turn it may take many more sessions to reach to the real problem.

One of the most notable aspect of online therapy is dissolving of the '*power differential*' (Owen, 1995). In a traditional set-up, the psychologist is the 'authority figure'. On the virtual front, however, the client and psychologist becomes co-author to the process and the client assumes an automatic control of the therapy in terms of level of disclosure, time, duration and interaction level. This in turn puts the client in a 'responsible' position and take charge of their change; rather than relying on the counselor.

The text-based chats also help in re-wiring the associations one creates in their life to trauma. The exchange enables the client to create new memories, review the old ones and come to a new level of insight; all by their own writing. The client and counselor enter a *zone of reflection* (Suler, 2000) where both the parties can pay close attention to their thoughts while in dialogue.

The platform of **Virtual Counsellor** will provide an anonymous chat-space where clients can be availed with the benefits of online therapy while revealing their identity only to the level they are comfortable with. The platform will be available in both mobile and web applications, hence accessible anytime from anywhere. The interactions the client has with their counselor is contained in the platform to protect the anonymity. The chat history enables the client to access their sessions anytime, giving them an opportunity to re-read and rehearse their sessions; sometimes mid-way of a stimulating situation.

Given that there is not enough empirical research on therapeutic techniques directly modelled in online practices, I suggest further research on the practices used online in accordance to progress of the client with measurable modifications.

## LIST OF ACROMYMS

<b>BU:</b>	<b>Busitema University</b>
<b>CS:</b>	<b>Computer Science</b>
<b>DB:</b>	<b>Data Base</b>
<b>DFD:</b>	<b>Data Flow Diagram</b>
<b>GUI:</b>	<b>Graphical User Interface</b>
<b>CBT:</b>	<b>Cognitive Behavioral Therapy</b>
<b>VC:</b>	<b>Virtual Counsellor</b>
<b>SQL:</b>	<b>Structured Query Language</b>
<b>MYSQLi:</b>	<b>My Structured Query Language Improved</b>
<b>AI:</b>	<b>Artificial Intelligence</b>
<b>F2F</b>	<b>Face to Face</b>