

ABSTRACT

BARRETT, BRIANA JAYNE-RUTH. An In Depth Look at Technology Use in Counselor Education Since the Onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Consensual Qualitative Research Study. (Under the direction of Dr. Adria Dunbar).

This research study utilizes a consensual qualitative research (CQR) design to investigate how the COVID-19 pandemic affected how counselor educators use technology. Research suggests that technology use in counselor education was steadily becoming more integrated before the onset of the pandemic. Following March 2020, there was an observable shift in how counselor educators continued using technology in counselor education. Through semi-structured interviews, this study analyzes how attitudes and beliefs about technology in counselor education have changed since the onset of the pandemic. The results suggest that counselor educators have and will continue to incorporate different forms of technology into their profession.

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An In Depth Look at Technology Use in Counselor Education Since the Onset of the COVID-19
Pandemic: A Consensual Qualitative Research Study

by
Briana Jayne-Ruth Barrett

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APPROVED BY:

Adria Dunbar
Committee Chair

Peter Hessling

Rolanda Mitchell

Tamecia Jones

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my mom and dad. You all were my first teachers, and I am so thankful that you instilled a love of learning in me at an early age. This dissertation would not have been possible without your love and support, and since we share the same last name, you can say that it is yours. I love you very much, and thank you.

BIOGRAPHY

Briana Barrett holds a doctorate in Counseling and Counselor Education at North Carolina State University. She is a Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor Associate (LCMHCA) in the state of North Carolina and a National Certified Counselor (NCC). Briana specializes in working with adults experiencing mental health and/or substance use concerns.

She earned her Bachelor of Arts in English and Psychology from the University of Virginia in 2018. During her time as an undergraduate student, Briana discovered her passion for helping others through mentoring and peer counseling programs. She decided to pursue a career in mental healthcare and earned her Master of Education in Clinical Mental Health Counseling from North Carolina State University in 2020. Throughout her time in graduate school, Briana served as a research assistant, a teaching assistant, and as a career services advisor for the College of Design at North Carolina State University.

Outside of her practice, Briana's research interests include behavioral health care and technology use in counseling. In her free time, Briana enjoys traveling, reading, crocheting, trying out new restaurants, and spending time with her friends and family.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

When COVID-19 was declared a pandemic in March of 2020, universities across the country began to shift their course delivery format from traditional face-to-face learning to online or distance education learning. While the stay-at-home orders undoubtedly reduced the transmission of the virus at the time, such precautions also meant that students, faculty, and staff had to make an often-challenging shift to online education in a short period of time to complete the semester. Many faculty members and students alike had little to no experience with online education and the required infrastructure, techniques, and resources necessary to be successful in this conversion (Moore et al., 2021).

Counseling has been historically advertised as an interpersonal, in-person tool to assist people in navigating their lives. The integration of online platforms such as web conferencing and medical records software may positively or negatively alter the trajectory of growth within the counseling field, as technological competencies are not always emphasized within counselor training programs. A major concern within the field is that many graduate programs in counselor education have specific requirements that must be met to be in compliance with accrediting entities such as the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). These accreditation requirements, exacerbated by the pandemic, created an additional problem to solve for many programs due to requirements such as student completion of face-to-face interaction (Moore et al., 2021).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine how counselor educators' use of technology has been affected by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The research questions are designed to 1) determine how technology was being used by counselor educators prior to the pandemic, 2)

determine how the pandemic affected counselor educators' use of technology and their attitudes and beliefs around technology integration, and 3) inform how technology has been integrated into counselor education practices since the onset of the pandemic.

Research Questions

This research study aims to answer five questions to contribute to the growing body of literature on how COVID-19 has affected the technology use of counselor educators. The research questions to be addressed are as follows:

1. How was technology being used in counselor education prior to the 2020 global pandemic?
2. In what ways did the 2020 global pandemic impact counselor educators' use of technology?
3. In what ways did the 2020 global pandemic impact counselor educators' attitudes and beliefs about technology use in the counseling field?
4. How do counselor educators make adoption decisions about technology in clinical practice, research, and teaching?
5. In what ways has technology influenced counselor educators' attitudes and beliefs around social justice and multiculturalism since the onset of the 2020 pandemic?

Research Design

The consensual qualitative research (CQR) method was used for this study. CQR assumes that complex issues involve multiple perspectives, and these multiple perspectives increase our deduction of the truth, which are more likely to reduce researcher bias (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The use of multiple researchers highlights the process of reaching a consensus, or a single unified version of what was deemed the best representation of the data and establishes a systemic way of examining the representativeness of results across cases (Hill et al., 1997).

A research team of three researchers including the primary student researcher conducted the primary data analysis. Research team members examined the data independently to define domains and themes, then came together to discuss their ideas until a consensus was reached. One auditor was tasked with providing feedback to the other researchers on the data analyses.

Serving as a check for the research team, the auditor was responsible for reviewing each domain that was decided upon by the research team. They examined how well the domains fit together, and if the established categories and subcategories chosen by the research team made sense. Following the cross-analysis of data, the research team reviewed the auditor's feedback and adjusted their analysis accordingly until consensus was reached (Hill & Knox, 2021).

Need for Study

The body of research on the COVID-19 pandemic is current and developing, and new information about the virus and its long-term effects are being published constantly. News of the virus mutating to form different variants that are resistant to certain treatments have influenced the protocols being taken to remain safe as a populace. How the pandemic has affected interpersonal professions such as counseling is being analyzed through different lenses, given the scope of this ongoing phenomenon.

Articles discussing technology integration in the field of counseling comprised only 0.9% of the articles published in American Counseling Association (ACA) journals from 2000-2018 (Woo et al., 2020). Despite there being a present interest in how technology has been integrated into the counseling profession, researchers and practitioners are tasked with contributing to the evolution of counseling and counselor education in accordance with the needs of a growing population in addition to their personal interests in research and practice. The relatively small percentage of publications in technology integration in counseling before the onset of the pandemic leaves space for analysis of trends from 2019 to present day.

Definition of Constructs

The following constructs are used throughout the research study. While the definitions of these terms may vary, the following definitions will be used for the purposes of the current

study.

Technology

Technology can be defined as the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes. This can be through the development of machinery, equipment, and software to further the application of scientific knowledge.

Counselor Educator

For the purposes of this research study, the American Counseling Association's (ACA) definition of counselor educator will be used. The ACA (2014) defines a counselor educator as "a professional counselor engaged primarily in developing, implementing, and supervising the educational preparation of professional counselors" (p. 20).

Professional Counselor

Professional counselors help clients identify goals and potential solutions to problems which cause emotional turmoil; seek to improve communication and coping skills; strengthen self-esteem; and promote behavior change and optimal mental health (American Counseling Association, 2023).

Counseling

Professional counseling is a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals. Counseling is a collaborative effort between the counselor and client (American Counseling Association, 2023).

CACREP

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) is an independent national organization formed by the ACA to provide program-level accreditation, specific to the standards and needs of the counseling profession (CACREP, 2016).

CACREP-Accredited Program

A CACREP-accredited program is a master's and/or doctoral-level counseling program that has successfully completed the accreditation application process and been granted approved accreditation status by CACREP.

Telehealth

Telehealth services are defined as “the use of telecommunications and information technology to provide access to health assessment, diagnosis, intervention, consultation, supervision, education, and information across distance” (Nickelson, 1998, p. 527).

Distance Learning

For the purposes of this research study, distance education will be defined as instruction between a teacher and students when they are separated by physical distance and communication is accomplished by one or more technological media (American Association of University Professors, 2007; Oregon Network for Education, 2000).

Hybrid Learning

The hybrid learning model is defined by the intentional use of technology as a replacement of seat time in class to foster an environment for student learning (Saichaie, 2020; Linder 2017).

Flipped Learning

Flipped learning is described as a type of hybrid learning, in which students are tasked with watching pre-recorded lectures outside of class and engaging in activities applying course concepts in-person (Merlin-Knoblich et al., 2019).

Blended Learning

Blended learning is defined as a combination of face-to-face and online instruction. In blended learning, seat time is not typically replaced, but rather the learning process (Strayer, 2012).

Videoconferencing

Videoconferencing is a synchronous channel of communication that supports the transformation of interactive voice, video, and data between two or more groups of people (Correia et al., 2020; Gough, 2006; Wiesemes & Wang, 2010).

COVID-19 Pandemic

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 as a pandemic in the Spring of 2020. COVID-19 prompted mass stay-at-home orders to reduce the rapid transmission of the virus and resulted in the deaths of millions.

Organization of the Study

This dissertation is presented in five chapters. The first chapter provides an overview of the research on technology integration in counselor education, describes the need for the proposed study to expand this research into the field of counselor education following the onset of the pandemic, and states the research questions. The second chapter gives a detailed review of literature related to the topic of technology in counseling before the onset of the pandemic and further elaborates on the need for the proposed study following the onset of the pandemic.

Diffusion of Innovations theory was used to inform the structure of the study. The third chapter describes the methods that were used to collect data on counselor educators' use of technology following the pandemic, as well as information about participants, and limitations of the study. The fourth chapter describes the results of the study presented. In the fifth chapter, a summary of the research findings and areas of future research are discussed.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review is to provide an overview of technological applications to the field of counseling and counselor education. The focus will be to provide insight into how the adoption of technology has and will continue to propel counselor education forward in a way that will positively impact counselors-in-training, counselors, and counselor educators, as well as the body of research forming around this topic following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Before the Pandemic: Technology Use in Counseling and Counselor Education

Telehealth services are defined as “the use of telecommunications and information technology to provide access to health assessment, diagnosis, intervention, consultation, supervision, education, and information across distance” (Nickelson, 1998, p. 527).

Administration of counseling services through communications technology platforms is a part of the telemedicine umbrella, as therapists can virtually conduct supervision and counseling sessions.

There have been sporadic, but significant publications of scholarly writing and research on how technology has been applied to the field of counseling. The Journal of Counseling and Development released four issues in 1984, featuring several articles on the advancement of technology and its applications to counseling. A content analysis of articles published on technology integration in counseling found that of the 9537 articles published in 21 American Counseling Association (ACA) journals from 2000-2018, 88 were related to technology integration in the counseling profession (Woo et al., 2020). The Journal of Technology in Counselor Education and Supervision was recently launched following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and currently features several publications on how the pandemic has continued to influence the use of technology in counseling.

A review of literature regarding the controversy of technology use in counseling highlights the rise of computer-based test administration within the past forty years (Abney & Maddux, 2004). Counselors, psychologists, and other assessment professionals questioned whether the conversion of a test from human to computer administration legitimately changes what is being measured and at the time of this review, a question that results of the research remain inconclusive.

A pilot study on web-based cognitive behavioral training for therapists addressed a shortage of therapists formally trained in using Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) (Kobak et al., 2013). Results found a significant increase in knowledge of CBT concepts and a significant increase in clinical skills after the web-based training. User satisfaction was high for both the online tutorial and the videoconference training.

Online and Distance Learning in Counselor Education

Doctoral students in counselor education programs are often adult learners who take nontraditional pathways to completing their degrees. Such students may have full-time jobs, familial responsibilities, and other extracurricular activities that supplement their educational endeavors. There are currently 100, CACREP-accredited online counseling programs in the United States according to the CACREP website. The breakdown of the types of counseling programs and degrees are referenced below.

Table 1
CACREP Accredited Counseling Programs Offered Online

Program Specialty	Number of Schools Offering Program Specialty Online
Clinical Mental Health Counseling	48
School Counseling	21
Student Affairs and College Counseling	2
Career Counseling	1
Rehabilitation Counseling	3
Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling	3
Clinical Mental Health/Rehabilitation Counseling	1
Addiction Counseling	5
Marriage Couple and Family Counseling	7
Counselor Education and Supervision	9

Note. This table is a representation of the information provided on the CACREP website: Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. (n.d.). *Find a Program*. CACREP. cacrep.org/directory

Table 2
CACREP-Accredited Degree Programs Offered Online

Degree	Number of Schools Offering Online Degree Programs
Master's	91
PhD	6
PhD/EdD	1
EdD	2

Note. This table is a representation of the information provided on the CACREP website: Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. (n.d.). *Find a Program*. CACREP. cacrep.org/directory

Cybersupervision

In counselor education programs, a portion of doctoral training involves clinical practice, which requires students to receive clinical supervision for their practicum and internship experiences. A supervisor is a state-licensed mental health professional and/or counselor educator supervising counselors-in-training (Vaccaro & Lambie, 2007). Online clinical supervision, or cybersupervision is being integrated into counselor education programs as a method to increase flexibility and accessibility for students in need of fulfilling their program requirements. Students and practitioners acquire economic savings due to a decrease in travel expenses and they have access to a more diverse pool of professionals. Disadvantages of cybersupervision include technical issues during meetings, ethical concerns with confidentiality, and a lack of direct human contact (Bender et al., 2018).

Bender, et al., (2018) reports a study on doctoral students' experiences with cybersupervision in counselor education programs. One participant expressed initial skepticism on the effectiveness of cybersupervision but eventually found it preferable to face-to-face supervision meetings. Another participant mentioned that because of their age, cybersupervision was not as effective as in-person supervision. Contact was an essential part of their supervision process.

Chapman et al. (2011) investigated the effectiveness of synchronous and asynchronous supervision within a counselor education graduate program. Synchronous communication may be defined as real-time or live communication with others, such as web chatting services like Skype or Zoom. Asynchronous communication occurs in delayed time. Discussion threads and E-mail are examples of asynchronous communications. The determined findings indicate that the supervisors and supervisees in the present study were able to communicate successfully via both

the synchronous and asynchronous modalities. Additionally, this study mentions the existence of distance education programs and how oftentimes, the graduate curriculums do not lend themselves to supervisory practices that are not in-person.

Cybersupervision was also mentioned to be something that “is not going to go away” by one of the participants (Bender, et al., 2018). They found that some doctoral students imply that there are feelings of skepticism regarding the efficacy of surrounding cybersupervision, and it may be the responsibility of the supervisors to reorient supervisees to cybersupervision and the use of technology throughout the process. Counselor educators who work with counselor education doctoral programs may need to better familiarize themselves with the process of cybersupervision and take more time to understand the experiences of supervisees in such contexts with cybersupervision (Bender et al., 2018).

Student Engagement with Virtual Learning

Higher education institutions all over the world opted for remote learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to effectively reduce the spread of the virus to faculty, staff, and students. Remote learning refers to scheduled courses being held online on platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams. Some courses allow students to work asynchronously, where they could complete assignments at their own pace. Other classes were held at a regularly scheduled time for students to join and actively participate. Virtual learning environments implies that students and teachers are physically distanced from each other, and their interactions are mediated by some technological platform.

The ways in which the transition to online learning has affected student engagement in higher education following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic is currently being studied. A recent study on the college students’ perceptions about their adoption of online learning in

response to the stay-at-home orders in 2020 describes the attitudes and motivations of students around learning and engagement with learning (Aguilera-Hermida, 2020). The results found that there was a stronger preference among students for face-to-face learning. The biggest challenge reported by students was being physically at home while trying to complete online coursework. Aguilera-Hermida (2020) mentions perceived instructional challenges of abrupt online learning, noting that teaching students online implies a need for self-regulation on behalf of students and a strong sense of self-directed motivation to learn.

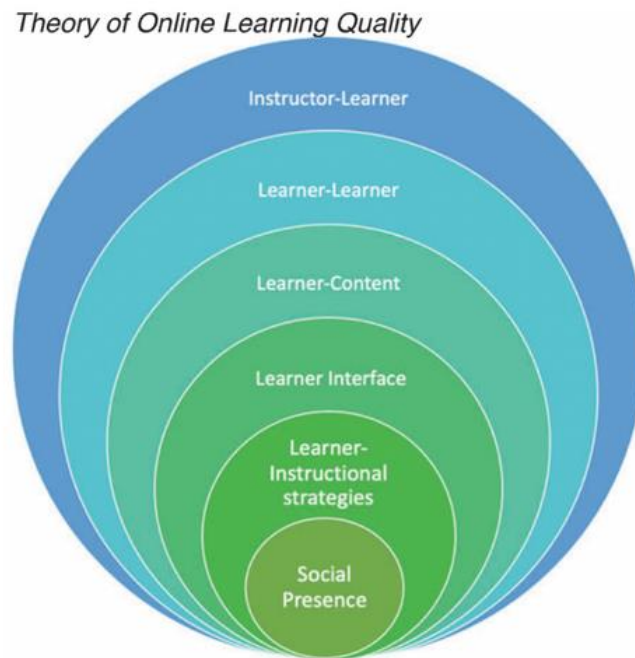
Sehran (2020) found that in response to the move from face-to-face learning to online learning, university students have negative perceptions towards the use of Zoom for online learning with a perceived lack of motivation to actively engage with schoolwork. Using Engestrom's (1987) activity theory, a multi-case study involving two postgraduate courses addresses learner disengagement with web-based videoconferencing supported online lessons (WVCOL) (Maimaiti et al., 2021). Researchers found that providing students with more opportunities to interact with each other and emphasizing application of content in addition to the delivery of the content may help with overall engagement with course material.

Student Experiences with Technology and Online Learning in Counselor Education

There is a noticeable gap in literature regarding the effectiveness of distance learning in counselor education, which has become even more present since the mass adoption of distance learning in 2020. Counselor education programs rely heavily on the implementation of experiential learning, and Rollins et al. (2022) seeks to address the challenge of maintaining an environment for active engagement of counselors-in-training who intended to receive in-person training. Through the Theory of Online Learning Quality (Hathaway, 2009), Rollins et al. (2022) established strategies and guidelines for counselor educators to help counseling students learn

with technology as an aid instead of a barrier. Suggestions to promote student-student interaction through video conferencing and mentorship were mentioned as important components in overall engagement with learning.

Figure 1
Theory of Online Learning Quality



Note. The above figure displays the different dimensions represented in the Theory of Online Learning Quality. It can be referenced in Rolins, D., Herbert, L., & Wright, G. (2022). Logged In, Zoomed Out: Creating & Maintaining Virtual Engagement for Counselor Education Students. *Journal of Technology in Counselor Education and Supervision*, 2(1), 1.

Flipped learning has been examined as a potential method for enhancing student engagement with learning. Flipped learning is described as a type of hybrid learning, in which students are tasked with watching pre-recorded lectures outside of class and engaging in activities applying course concepts in-person. This method appears to be particularly effective for counselor education programs, where in one study, students enrolled in flipped counseling

courses reported higher levels of classroom engagement than students in non-flipped courses (Merlin-Knoblich et al., 2019).

In one study on adult students, researchers compared the learning outcomes of adult students who were enrolled in traditional and hybrid sections of a group counseling course (Renfro-Michel et al., 2010). Students self-enrolled in their chosen section of a group counseling course taught by the same professor. Results showed that adult learner students enrolled in using a hybrid group counseling course sections with adult learners was more effective in promoting learning more than those in a traditional face-to-face class.

Counseling and Counselor Education Following the Onset of the Pandemic

The expansive growth of computer and Internet-based technologies offers new alternatives for the delivery of counseling services amidst the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Conducting counseling sessions on-line has become more common, given the circumstances and the need to reduce risks of transmitting the virus in-person (Woo et al., 2020).

Scholarly literature on the use of technology in counseling and counselor education is forthcoming and current, as the pandemic is an ongoing phenomenon. A study of Portuguese psychologists' practices before and during the COVID-19 lockdown showed that most Portuguese psychologists had never or rarely used digital technologies as a means of delivering psychological counseling and therapy before the COVID-19 pandemic. Psychologists who did use Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in their practice tend to report a positive or very positive experience regarding the use of these online technologies in counseling and therapy (Dores et al., 2020).

Dores et al. (2020) found one of the reasons for the psychologists' rare use of ICTs in their practice prior to the COVID-19 pandemic was attributed to a lack of knowledge and

training about the use of ICTs. In this study, participants mentioned that they were familiar with several forms of ICTs used in counseling, but they were rarely used as the primary mode of administering therapeutic services to clients.

A study on a tele-counseling helpline in Bangladesh found that most callers displayed anxiety and sleeplessness related to the lockdown (Iqbal et al., 2020). The helpline was established to meet the expected rise in mental health issues due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and Iqbal et al. (2020) provides general perspectives from clients or people who are not necessarily providing counseling services to others.

Another study examining how preexisting racial and ethnic disparities, exacerbated by COVID-19, have negatively affected communities of color that tend to be overrepresented in lower socioeconomic groups, have limited access to health care and education, have an undocumented status, and work in jobs considered “essential.” One of the main implications of the study is that counselors need to assess whether basic needs are being met during the pandemic and use interventions that incorporate crisis management and grief counseling influenced by COVID-19 stressors (Litam & Hipolito-Delgado, 2020).

Technology Competencies in Counseling and Counselor Education

Technology innovation offers counselors and counselor educators the ability to digitally store case notes, advertise counseling services to broader client populations, consult professionally with colleagues, and internationally share and receive information via professional listservs. Technology also makes it possible for counselors and counselor educators to provide and/or participate in distance education programs, online conferences and presentations, and other video conferencing opportunities (Suggs et al., 2021).

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) and the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) promote the acquisition and application of technological competencies in diagnostics, digitized assessments, resource searches, and knowledge of the ethical and legal guidelines for distance counseling as integral to the training and development of counseling professionals (ACES, 2007; CACREP, 2016; Suggs et al., 2021).

Ethical Considerations for Technology Use in Counseling and Counselor Education

Confidentiality, liability, and competence have all been cited as serious ethical concerns for the integration of technology into the field of counseling (Vaccaro & Lambie, 2007). For the purposes of this paper, professional ethics are defined as good practice according to agreed-upon rules or standards of practice established by a profession, such as counseling or psychology (Cottone & Tarvydas, 2003). Sampson and Makela (2013) cite ethical issues of social equity, resources, and services as active agents in the progression of information and communication technologies in counseling as well.

Confidentiality

There are present risks of security breaches within technology-based communication channels such as email or web-based chat rooms, and counselor educators are responsible for maintaining the protection of sensitive information of clients, students, and faculty. Educators serving in multiple roles should utilize encrypted software and secure networks when conducting professional business to ensure sensitive information remains protected and unavailable to the public (Vaccaro & Lambie, 2007).

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

The use of videoconferencing software is new enough to leave some ambiguity in the regulations surrounding recording of classes or supervision sessions, but counselor education programs are encouraged to incorporate FERPA guidelines into program compliance protocols to increase uniformity for technology integration in counselor education (Sheperis et al., 2020). The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (1974) is a federal regulation that protects the privacy of a student's educational record. Under FERPA, a photo or video of a student is considered an educational record when it is directly related to the student and is maintained by the program (Student Privacy Policy Office, n.d., para. 1; Sheperis et al., 2020). A video of a class is considered to be directly related to the student if they are visible doing a class presentation or even asking questions. Counselor educators and programs using online providers to help track internship hours, supervisor evaluations, and other paperwork need to be in line with FERPA best practices as well.

The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA)

Online counselor education students and faculty frequently use various forms of software or other communication technology to communicate about client issues in practicum or internship classes and supervision sessions. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) provides protections for confidential and protected health information, but it unfortunately does not cover every aspect of technology as it relates to counselor education and personal health information. Despite how quickly technology has advanced, the user, meaning counselor educators, supervisors, and/or students are responsible for maintaining compliance with HIPAA regulations (Sheperis et al., 2020).

Liability

On-campus counselor education programs using web-based technologies or online counselor education programs with students in varying locations need to consider the extent of liability when using technology. Appropriate liability insurance for counselor educators, counselors, and counselor-in-training needs to be in place to explicitly address legal concerns that may arise and limits to confidentiality (Vaccaro & Lambie, 2007).

Vicarious liability refers to one individual being responsible for the actions of another, which is most often observable in supervisory relationships (Sheperis et al., 2020). Regarding supervision, counselor educators serving as clinical supervisors are dually liable for their active clientele as well as their supervisees' practice as developing counselors. There is the possibility that counselor educators and/or supervisors will be overseeing counselors and students who are seeing clients in different cities, states, and countries. Supervisors must adhere to the laws of both their state and their supervisee's state (or international laws, where applicable) when conducting computer-based supervision, while remaining technically competent to ensure that supervision flows smoothly (Vaccaro & Lambie, 2007).

Reciprocity Across States

Although counseling theory and educational practices may be similar from state to state, regulations around practicum, internship, and licensure will most likely differ across state lines. Codes of ethics and laws on client/patient care will often vary from state to state, and counselor educators are responsible for understanding and navigating these differences. The ACA Code of Ethics (2014) is the most used ethical code used by counselors in the United States, however there is no universal adoption of a code of ethics across the states. As reported in ACA (2015),

only 19 of the 52 jurisdictions with licensure laws have adopted the ACA Code of Ethics into their rules and regulations.

Competence

Another ethical concern brought on by Barak (1999) is the issue of clientele being unable to identify professionals who are sufficiently credentialed in their field. Depending on technological competency, users may be unable to fully examine information about service providers and will subsequently be left unprotected.

Social Equity and Resources

In addition to limitations in accessibility to computers and financial resources, access to technology may be hindered by gaps in digital literacy. Digital literacy can be defined as a foundation of skills, attitudes, and knowledge for individuals to interact with technology-based services (Hooley et al., 2010). Social environments and culture heavily influence the ways in which people engage with technology and develop their digital literacy, and the relevance of ethical guidelines may falter in response.

Interventions in Counseling

Childress (2000) provides ethical issues in administering psychotherapeutic interventions, such as cognitive behavioral therapy, through online platforms. Asynchronous, text-based communication, such as email, allows for therapists and clients to carefully edit their speech and respond on their own time. Crisis intervention planning, the establishment of boundaries, and informed consent are among the few ethical issues regarding technology use in counseling (Childress, 2000). Counselors may be required to develop a treatment plan for clients in crisis who are not able to be seen in person. Boundaries may be crossed if clients attempt to contact

their therapists outside of working hours or if counselors are consistently contacting clients outside of their scheduled sessions.

Personal Ethics vs. Professional Ethics

A study of graduate student therapists' use of the Internet to access information about clients found that the majority of participants felt that using search engines or social networking sites to gather information about clients was "always" or "usually" unacceptable (DiLillo & Gale, 2011). DiLillo and Gale (2011) found that 97.8% of participants reported searching for at least one client's information using search engines in the past year and 94.4% reported searching for client information on social networking websites.

Diffusion of Innovations Theory

The following section provides an overview of Diffusion of Innovations theory and its main constructions. Diffusion of Innovations will inform how technology integration in counselor education has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Rogers (2003) defines diffusion as "the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system" (p. 11). Diffusion of innovation can be defined as the adoption and implementation of new ideas, processes, products, and services (Lundblad, 2003).

Key Constructs

According to Rogers (2003), the four main elements which impact the diffusion of an innovation are: a) the innovation, b) communication channels, c) time, and d) a social system. Following the completion of diffusion is adoption, implementation, and institutionalization (Murray, 2008).

The Innovation

The five attributes of innovations are: a) relative advantage, b) compatibility, c) complexity, d) trialability, and 5) observability (Ratts & Wood, 2011). Relative advantage refers to the extent to which innovations will increase one's motivation to improve, often thought of as a cost-benefit analysis. Compatibility is defined as the level of congruence of the proposed innovations with an existing set of values, needs, and past experiences. Complexity is the ease or difficulty with which innovations can be learned and comprehended by potential users, including the degree of effort required to adopt the innovations. This could mean continuing education opportunities, seminars, or higher education courses. Trialability, which can be thought of as the application stage, is the degree to which innovations can be tested on a small scale to determine their relative efficacy. The final attribute of observability refers to any positive outcomes that can be observed from implementing the innovations. (Lovejoy et al., 2009)

Communication Channels

Communication, the second element of Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovations theory, requires an innovation, a unit of adoption that knows the innovation and has used it, unexposed units of adoption, and a channel for communication between these two units. "Communication channels are the pathways an innovation is transferred from one individual to another. Rogers (2003) asserts there are two ways to communicate the innovation: mass media channels and interpersonal channels. Mass media channels involve transmitting innovations through media such as the social networks and news outlets, whereas interpersonal communication channels involve exchanging an innovation through in-person interactions between two or more individuals (Ratts & Wood, 2011).

Time

The third element of the diffusion of innovations, time, refers to the moments between the introduction of an idea and the subsequent adoption or rejection of the idea (Rogers, 2003). There are three areas within the time dimension that are important to consider in the diffusion of an innovation (Rogers, 2003): (a) the innovation-decision process, (b) adopter categories, and (c) the rate at which an innovation is adopted.

Innovation-decision Process. The innovation-decision process involves (a) having knowledge of an innovation, (b) being persuaded to form an opinion about an innovation, (c) deciding to adopt or reject an innovation, (d) implementing the innovation, and (e) using results to confirm whether to continue with the innovation or reject it (Ratts & Wood, 2011).

Adopter Categories. Rogers (2003) describes five categories of people that emerge when an innovation is diffused: (a) Innovators tend to be venturesome, open to new ideas, and can handle the uncertainty that comes with an innovation. (b) Early adopters are highly respected and are respected in an organization. (c) Members of the early majority tend to deliberate more than innovators and early adopters before deciding whether to adopt an innovation. (d) Late majority tend to be more cautious when determining whether to adopt an innovation. They are inclined to adopt an innovation if most of the group is in favor of the new idea. (e) Non-adopters dislike change and tend to uphold tradition. Their comfort with the past encourages them to shy away from new ideas and individuals that promote change. Of all the groups identified, they tend to take the longest when it comes to embracing an innovation.

Rate of Adoption. Rate of adoption is the speed an innovation diffuses throughout an organization. Initially, Rogers (2003) asserts that it is usually only the innovators who buy into an innovation but as an idea gains traction, so does the number of people who want to adopt the

innovation. Ultimately, the rate at which an innovation is adopted reaches its peak as adopters outnumber those who reject the innovation (Ratts & Wood, 2011).

Social System

All diffusion occurs within the final element of the theory, the social system (Rogers, 1995). Rogers (2003) states that an organization's social structure, the norms established within an organization, and change agents within a social system often influence innovations that occur within the system itself. The consequences of an innovation and the means by which an organization makes innovation decisions can influence the rate at which an innovation becomes adopted or rejected (Rogers, 2003). Consideration of all these factors is essential when new ideas are proposed to be integrated into a social system (Ratts & Wood, 2011).

Once the innovation or innovations are completely diffused, and individual (a) adopts an innovation upon the decision to acquire it, (b) implements the innovation by putting it into practice, and (c) institutionalizes an innovation by supporting it fully and incorporating it into typical practice routines (Murray, 2018).

Integration of Multicultural and Social Justice Concepts

Effectively integrating Diffusion of Innovations theory into a counseling context would mean facilitating conversations with counselors, supervisors, and counselor educators about what innovation is and how its diffusion can inform the advancement of the counseling field (Ratts & Wood, 2011). Along with the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies, Diffusion of Innovations has the potential to address issues of diversity, multiculturalism, and intersectionality within counseling practice (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2016). Application of this theory to the innovative practices emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic would address accessibility to counseling, technology, education, and job

opportunities. As a lot of this work is currently happening, counselors and educators are tasked with critically understanding these advancements and remaining current on how diffusion and learning manifest for certain populations.

In terms of innovation, counselor educators could create a space for students to benefit from and effectively implement social justice frameworks into their practice and advocacy efforts. Working from a social justice perspective gives counselors and counselors-in-training the space to view clients from a holistic lens as opposed to a biological perspective. Conceptualizing clients from a strict biological perspective often simplifies the complexities of the therapeutic process. Having social justice-based counselor education programs is crucial to the advancement of the field, as seen with professional ethical codes and accreditation standards. The innovation of social justice could also come in the form of critical analysis and advocacy assignments for students to explore how they can serve as change agents in their communities (Ratts & Wood, 2011).

Communicating innovations in counseling and counselor education often comes in the form of peer-reviewed journals and publications (Ratts & Wood, 2011). Emphasizing the importance and relevance of social justice-oriented practice in counseling through research furthers the diffusion process and promotes greater access to research. Administrators and counselor educators are also encouraged to communicate with one another and curriculum committees to effectively integrate social justice and multicultural instruction into counselor education programs.

When referring to social justice as innovation itself, it is important to consider that people are at different stages of development in terms of accepting or rejecting constructs of social justice (Goodman, 1995). For example, faculty members who are tasked with integrating the

innovation that is social justice into program requirements should be allowed the opportunity to address personal viewpoints around social justice to promote a transformative learning environment for all students. The integration of social justice into counseling and counselor education takes time, so it is important for students, counselors, and counselor educators to collaborate for the purpose of developing a long-term strategic plan of diffusion (Ratts & Wood, 2011).

Understanding the social system while diffusing multiculturalism and social justice may look like awareness of norms within organizations and learning environments. If there are counselor education programs housed within universities with strong religious associations, the tenets of social justice may not be able to be properly diffused for students who may feel institutionally discriminated against (Ratts & Woods, 2011). Remaining cognizant of consequences experienced by individuals is an important consideration in the implementation of innovations such as social justice.

Critique/Limitations

Similar to the COVID-19 pandemic, Diffusion of Innovations is evolving in response to the diversifying world. Whereas Roger's original intent was for this theory to be applied to how individuals adopt or reject new ideas, Diffusion of Innovation is being applied to communities, organizations, and technological advancements (Lundblad, 2003). Despite this theory not being critically analyzed until decades after its inception, Diffusion of Innovation has expanded its horizons to accommodate the natural process of scientific discovery. A framework that is constantly improving requires theorists and practitioners to grow and learn along with it.

Implications for Research

Diffusion of Innovations is a prevalent topic of conversation within technology and mental health, as professionals are tasked with working with diverse populations of people in a variety of settings. In addition to being well-versed in mental health diagnoses and treatment initiatives, counselors need to be knowledgeable of where clients are coming from, how they identify, and what they can do within their spheres of control outside of therapy. As the global public health crisis gained traction in 2020, fears regarding physical health, education, and employment warped into mental health crises at varying degrees fast-tracked the need for the advancement of various technologies to accommodate a populace in crisis.

Counselors and counselor educators need to participate in consistent training opportunities to stay current on ethical guidelines relating to innovation. With the use of technology in counseling becoming more commonplace, concerns of privacy and confidentiality associated with different virtual learning and software programs for remote healthcare are more prevalent. While Diffusion of Innovations seeks to name, evaluate, and eventually disseminate the advancement of knowledge, the framework acknowledges that there are groups of people who may not intend to actively participate in organizational restructuring. Innovative thought has the potential to address the unique experiences of individuals as well as communities and organizations, but whether a consensus is reached to either adopt or reject knowledge is a present concern.

CHAPTER III: METHODS

The purpose of this research is to determine how the COVID-19 pandemic affected counselor educators' technology use in the field. This qualitative study utilizes a theoretical framework based on Diffusion of Innovations theory (Rogers, 2003). This chapter describes the Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) approach that provided the study's methodological framework and presents an overview of the research methods that were derived from that framework. Consensual Qualitative Research was chosen as the study's primary methodological framework because of its ability to address complicated phenomena and synthesize research findings using multiple perspectives (Hill et al., 1997). The research questions to be addressed are as follows:

1. How was technology being used in counselor education prior to the 2020 global pandemic?
2. In what ways did the 2020 global pandemic impact counselor educators' use of technology?
3. In what ways did the 2020 global pandemic impact counselor educators' attitudes and beliefs about technology use in the counseling field?
4. How do counselor educators make adoption decisions about technology in clinical practice, research, and teaching?
5. In what ways has technology influenced counselor educators' attitudes and beliefs around social justice and multiculturalism since the onset of the 2020 pandemic?

The chapter presents the rationale for the research questions, participant information, instrumentation, and procedures for participant recruitment, participant selection, data collection, and data analysis. The chapter describes the measures taken to ensure the study's trustworthiness and concludes with a brief statement of the researcher's positionality.

The intent of this research is to inform how technology is being integrated into counselor education and how these adaptations can be applied to counselor educators and counselor education programs. This paper examines how the perceived capabilities of mental health professionals changed, if at all, following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, as expectations

for counselor educators were being discussed in accordance with those of students and clients. Attitudes and beliefs about social justice and multiculturalism within counselor education are explored as well.

Research Design

Qualitative Research Methodology

Qualitative research is inductive, meaning researchers gather data to build concepts, hypotheses, or theories rather than deductively testing hypotheses (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). While causation is not the primary focus of qualitative research, it may influence how meaning is created from personal experiences. Each participant of the current study for example, had their own defined experiences of the pandemic, despite it being a world-wide phenomenon. Qualitative methodology was chosen for the current study to observe the unique experiences of counselor educators at the onset of the pandemic and how their use of technology was affected rather than trying to prove that the pandemic caused a shift in technology use.

Consensual Qualitative Research

Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) is used to study experiences, attitudes, and beliefs, which are oftentimes not easily observable. It is widely used for understanding topics in education and the socio-behavioral sciences (Hill & Knox, 2021). In terms of qualitative research classification, CQR is said to be predominantly constructivist with post-positivist elements (Hill & Knox, 2021). CQR takes a constructivist approach through its acknowledgement of multiple, socially constructed versions of the truth. Within its pursuit of consensus amongst team members and auditors, CQR exemplifies postpositivism through its claim that knowledge is relative rather than absolute (Patton, 2002). The key features of CQR are outlined in Hill and Knox (2021):

1. The method is inductive rather than deductive.
2. Open-ended questions are used rather than closed questions.

3. Data involve words, narratives, and stories rather than numbers.
4. Context is important in understanding the data.
5. Rich, in-depth data are gathered from a small number of participants.
6. Multiple perspectives (research team and auditors) are used to understand the data.
7. Research team members and auditors are encouraged to be aware of and bracket biases and expectations.
8. Consensus is to be reached among team members to resolve differences of opinion.
9. Continuous return to the raw data to check understandings of information.

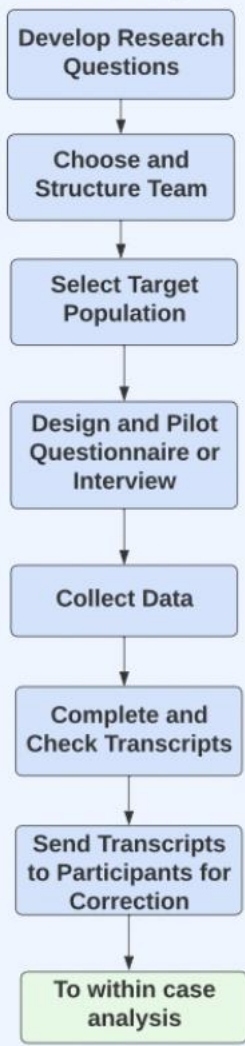
CQR assumes that complex issues involve multiple perspectives, and these multiple perspectives increase our deduction of the truth, which are more likely to reduce researcher bias (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The use of multiple researchers highlights the process of reaching a consensus, or a single unified version of what is deemed the best representation of the data and establishes a systemic way of examining the representativeness of results across cases (Hill et al., 1997). One of the benefits of including a research team on this project is that multiple viewpoints have the potential to evaluate the complex nature and influence of the COVID-19 pandemic. The personal experiences shared by participants were examined by several people, who have undoubtedly been affected by the pandemic as well. Despite what can be considered a universal experience, the onset of the pandemic offers a unique opportunity to observe how fields such as counselor education have adapted and grown. The research team collaborated with each other to evaluate the uniqueness of each participant's experiences and their commonalities (Hill & Knox, 2021). The data analysis methods of CQR are outlined in Hill and Knox (2021):

1. Within cases, the research team divides data into domains (topic areas).
2. Within cases, the research team develops core ideas for all ideas.
3. Auditors check the domains and core ideas for each case.
4. Across cases, themes and patterns are established (a cross-analysis is conducted).
5. Auditors check the cross analysis.

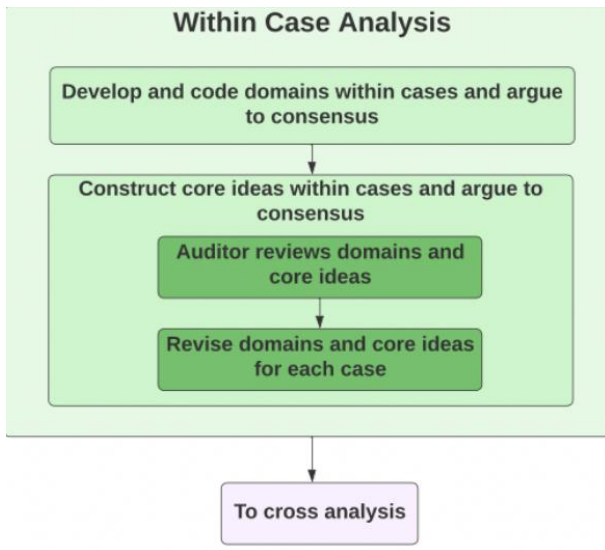
Figure 2*The CQR Process*

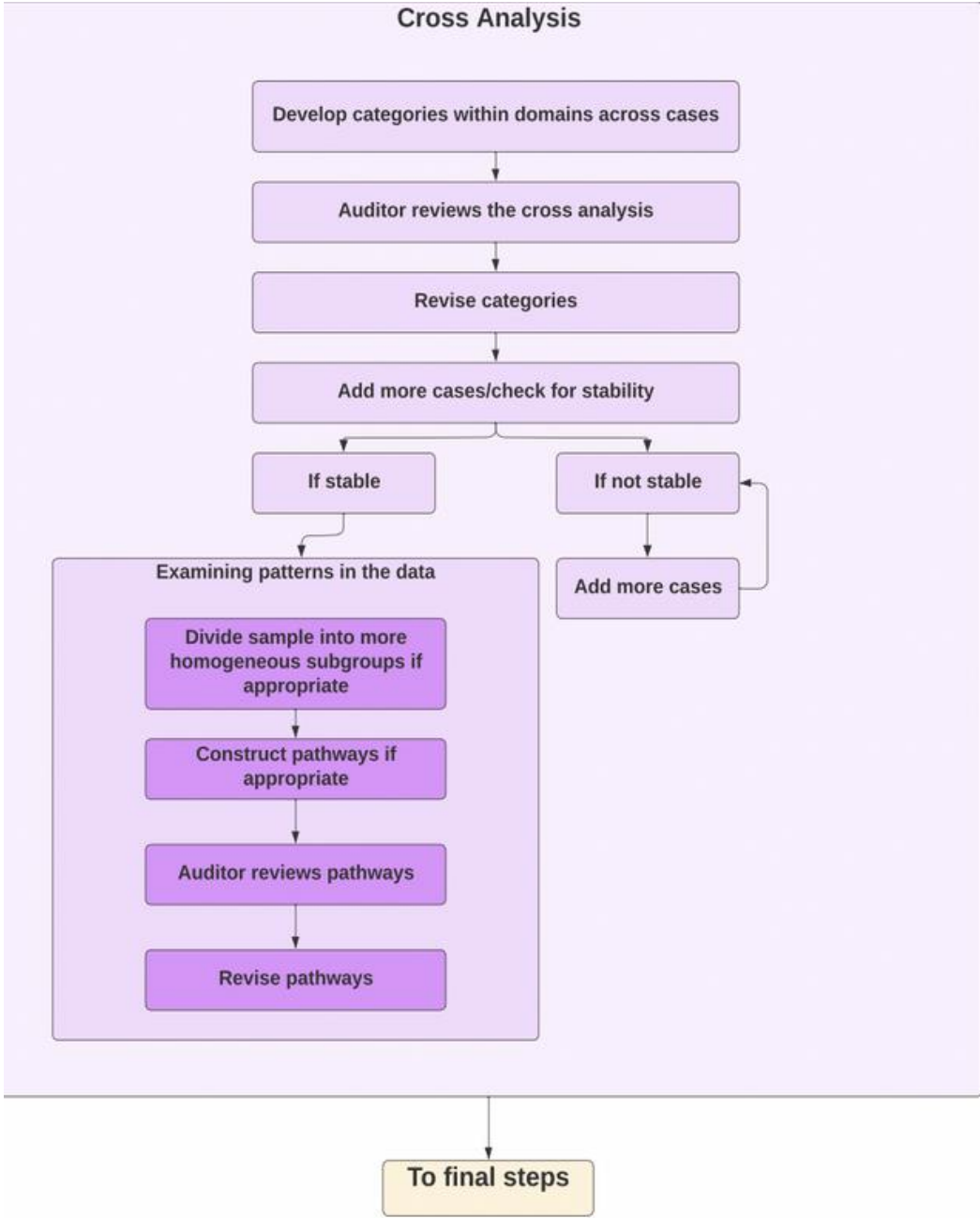
The following figure provides an overview of the CQR process. It is an adaptation from Hill, C. E., Knox, S., Thompson, B. J., Williams, E. N., Hess, S. A., & Ladany, N. (2005). Consensual qualitative research: An update. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(2), 196–205.

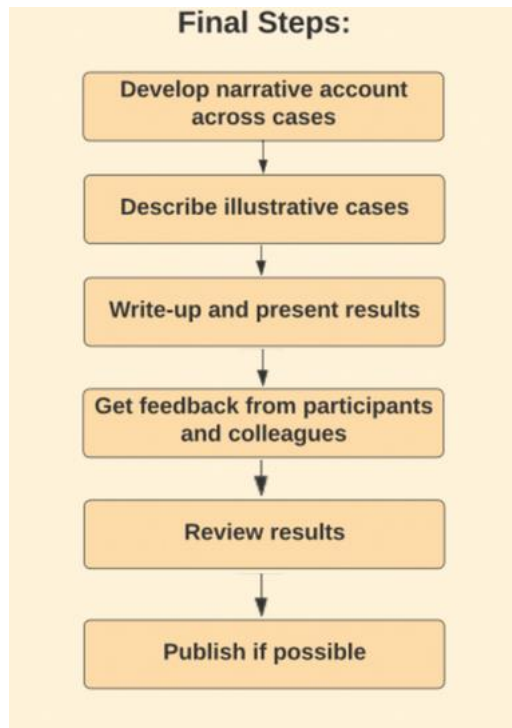
Initial Steps



Within Case Analysis







The development of CQR as a qualitative research method involves the influence of other well-known frameworks such as grounded theory, comprehensive process analysis (CPA), phenomenology, and feminist theories (Hill et al., 1997). While both CQR and grounded theory emphasize an iterative approach to coding data, there is a need for the consensus of a group to be reached regarding data analysis. CQR relies primarily on interview data whereas CPA requires multiple sources of data for evaluation (Hill et al., 1997).

Participants

CQR guidelines recommend recruiting 8-15 participants to effectively capture an adequate number of perspectives on a particular phenomenon. Participant criteria include:

1. Be at least 18 years of age.
2. Reside in the United States.
3. Have a graduate degree in counselor education or a counselor education-related field that was conferred before the Fall of 2019.
4. Have been working in counselor education since or before the Fall of 2019.

These criteria were implemented to properly address the confined period of time around the onset of the pandemic and before its onset.

Population of Interest

The population of interest for the current study is counselor educators. For the purposes of this research, the American Counseling Association's (ACA) definition of counselor educator will be used. A counselor educator can be defined as an individual engaged in the development, implementation, and supervision of the educational preparation of professional counselors (ACA, p. 20, 2014). A counselor educator can serve in several professional roles, including tenured faculty members, tenure-track faculty members, adjunct instructors, counselors, and supervisors.

Counselor educators are typically responsible for the welfare of counselors-in-training within graduate counseling programs, as the combined effort of assessment, evaluation, and the disbursement of results promotes the assurance of program effectiveness for graduate students that will eventually begin counseling work in their respective communities. Counselor educators help students develop their professional identities and are usually a gateway to developing their professional counseling network (Brott, 2006). Counseling students are tasked with doing their part to uphold ethical standards and counselor educators are responsible for these students and their professional ethics. Counseling ethical and accreditation standards mandate counselor educators to act as gatekeepers for the counseling profession (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2009). The American Counseling Association (ACA) Code of Ethics (2014) defines gatekeeping as “the initial and ongoing academic, skill, and dispositional assessment of students’ competency for professional practice, including remediation and termination as appropriate” (p. 20). Gatekeeping is complex and involves numerous phases and assessments that must be completed by counselor educators in order to safeguard the counseling profession (Teixeira, 2021).

Counselor educators who were working in counselor education during or before Fall 2019 were selected because this population of educators would provide pertinent information that directly relates to the primary research questions around how COVID-19 has impacted their technology use in counselor education. It is important that participants were at least employed as counselor educators during or before Fall 2019 because of the intent of this project to document recounts of how technology use was impacted by the onset of the pandemic.

Sample

Participants were 9 counselor educators (i.e., those meeting the definition set forth above), who met the following criteria: (a) be at least 18 years of age, (b) reside in the United States, (c) have a graduate degree in counselor education or a counselor education-related field that was conferred before the Fall of 2019 and (d) have been working in counselor education since or before the Fall of 2019.

Sampling Methods

Purposeful and convenient sampling methods were used to recruit participants for this research. After receiving approval from the institutional review board (IRB), the primary researcher sent a recruitment email and flyer to two contacts affiliated with counselor education programs at two southeastern graduate schools for distribution to their relative networks. These two contacts are listed on the CACREP website as program coordinators for counseling and counselor education programs. They were selected based on their experience in counselor education and for their direct connection to counselor education networks that were not limited to their graduate programs. The primary researcher requested gatekeeper approval from both schools to distribute the recruitment materials. To recruit counselor educators for participation in this study, the recruitment email and flyer specifically referenced relevant participant criteria for

potential participants to review. The recruitment email and flyer can be referenced in Appendix C and Appendix D.

Data Collection Methods

All research activities concerning participants were conducted completely virtually via email, Calendly, Zoom, and Qualtrics. The primary researcher decided to conduct all research activities virtually to minimize health and safety risks that could occur from meeting with participants in-person. While this may have deterred interested individuals who preferred to meet in-person from participating, this allowed for the primary researcher to reach counselor educators who resided in different locations. Participants were encouraged to complete research in a safe, secure environment that will minimize risks to their employment status. The researcher provided the participants of the study with an informed consent document (see Appendix E). Informed consent to participate in this research project was obtained by each participant at least one week prior to their scheduled interview. Informed consent included information on interview participation, participant rights, confidentiality, and permission to record the audio of the interviews. Consent for participation in this research was obtained from adults aged 18 years or older. Consent was sought online via Qualtrics and completed at a time and place of participants' choosing. Prior to full participation in this study, participants accessed the consent form through a link to Qualtrics in the recruitment email. An electronic signature from each participant was required before the demographic survey could be completed and the semi-structured interview could be scheduled with the primary researcher. The primary researcher stored all signed consent forms in a 2-factor authenticated, password-protected folder on their university-administered laptop until the conclusion of the research project. After the participants signed the informed consent, they completed a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix A). The purpose of the

questionnaire was to provide more background information on participants' experience in counseling and counselor education prior to and during 2020.

Semi-structured Interviews

After the signed informed consent forms were returned and following the completion of the demographic surveys, participants were asked to schedule an interview using the scheduling software, Calendly. Individual interviews were conducted after the informed consent was signed and the demographic questionnaire was completed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in March 2023. The interview protocol consisted of primarily open-ended questions for participants to freely answer in an unstructured manner (see Appendix B). Total interview times ranged from 60-90 minutes.

The interviews took place online through Zoom video conferencing and were audio-recorded through Zoom onto the primary researcher's password-protected, university-administered laptop. After the interview was conducted, the audio recordings were saved as a numerical code on the primary researcher's password-encrypted Zoom account. The audio recordings were transferred from the researcher's encrypted Zoom account to the transcription software, Otter.ai within 24 hours after the interview was completed. The primary researcher reviewed the audio collected from each interview and corrected any misinterpreted words in the transcripts. The primary researcher sent the completed transcripts to participants 1-2 weeks following their scheduled interview. Participants were given 2 weeks to review their transcripts to edit, redact, and de-identify any information they felt necessary. The audio recordings and transcription collected through Zoom were destroyed from the Zoom account after member-checking took place with the participants.

Research Team

The consensus process of CQR involves the formation of a research team consisting of 3-5 people. The primary researcher, along with two other researchers conducted the primary data analysis. Research team members examined the data independently to define domains and themes, then came together to discuss their ideas until a consensus was reached.

The primary researcher is a 26-year-old, cis-gender Black woman who has been embedded in the literature around the use of technology in counseling for the past 12 months. She is a doctoral candidate in the Counselor Education program at a Research 1, southeastern university. The second research team member is a 28-year-old, genderqueer, queer, neurodivergent multi-racial individual who is a doctoral student in the Counselor Education program at a Research 1, southeastern university. They were invited to participate in this research project because of their present interest in technology integration in the counseling field. The final member of the research team is a 31-year-old doctoral candidate in the Counselor Education program at a Research 1, southeastern university. He identifies as a cis-gender, African American male and is involved in research projects promoting usage of technology in counseling services for marginalized populations. The research team members were asked to be a part of the research team based on the primary researcher's knowledge that they were familiar with CQR and dissertation research practices.

Auditor

One auditor was tasked with providing feedback to the other researchers on the analyses. Serving as a check for the research team, the auditor was responsible for reviewing each domain that was decided upon by the research team. They examined how well the domains fit together, and if the established categories and subcategories chosen by the research team made sense.

Following the cross-analysis of data, the research team reviewed the auditor's feedback and adjusted accordingly (Hill & Knox, 2021).

The researcher's dissertation chair was the primary auditor for this project. The auditor "serves as a check for the team" (Hill et al., 1997, p. 548). The auditor was not involved in the process of collecting or coding the data. Despite being considered an outsider to the consensus process, the auditor was someone who was familiar with the research project that provided an objective perspective on the data.

Consensus Process/Data Analysis

Research team members discussed their biases and expectations related to the topic under investigation before the start of data analysis to ensure that they did not influence how the data was analyzed (Hill et al., 2005, Shipp, 2010). These biases and expectations were discussed and annotated by the primary researcher before data analysis began so they could be referenced as needed throughout the study. The purpose of recording biases was to note the types of information research team members might have been inclined to look for, which could have interfered with their objectivity when analyzing data.

Transcript Review

Once the interviews were completed, the systematic analysis of data began. Following the protocol for CQR, a reliable transcription software was used to transcribe audio recordings. Transcripts were sent to all interview participants for feedback and corrections as a validity check. Once accuracy was confirmed, all identifying information of participants were deleted and code names were assigned to each participant.

After all transcriptions were collected and reviewed, they were sent to research team members to begin data analysis. Research team members received a select number of de-

identified transcripts to review and develop domains, or topic areas based on the responses from participants. All research team members were asked to record notes on any insights they had as they proceeded through these steps. For analysis purposes, each individual was treated as a separate case. Hill et al., (1997) outlines the following steps for data analysis:

1. Within case analysis
2. Cross analysis
3. Examining patterns in the data

Within Case Analysis

Domains, or general themes that emerged from the data, were created using interview transcripts (Hill & Knox, 2021). Team members began with a list of domains that seemed relevant based on the information gathered from the Review of Literature in Chapter 2 and from the interview protocol. Each team member independently reviewed interview transcripts and assigned each block of data to a domain to develop their core ideas. The primary team met to discuss the coding for each transcript until consensus was reached on the applicable domains. Once domains were agreed upon, the same three research members coded the transcript data using these domains.

The primary researcher created a consensus version of the transcripts which included domain titles and all raw data that the research team members coded under the appropriate domain titles. All raw data was categorized under at least one of the domain titles. An original copy of each raw data transcript was preserved for later reference throughout the course of the research study, while the coded or consensus versions of the transcripts were used for the next steps of data analysis.

The consensus version of the transcripts was returned to each member of the research team who individually created lists of core ideas for each of the domains. The research team

members collectively created a list of categories and subcategories from the core ideas, which served as a more concise representation of the agreed-upon ideas. Once consensus was reached for the categories and subcategories represented under each domain, the primary researcher sent the domains and categories, along with the raw data transcripts to the external auditor. The auditor checked to ensure that the domains and categories fit for the raw data and that there were not significant domains or categories missing from the list.

Cross Analysis

The research team reconvened to engage in a cross analysis of the data. The purpose of this meeting was to determine any similarities among the cases in the sample and to determine how the final results of the project would be reported. Team members proposed ideas about themes or patterns that emerged from the data and continued to refine these ideas until they evolved into categories and subcategories. Category titles were derived from the data and team members came prepared with possible categories and subcategories to be analyzed.

Once the raw data were coded into the categories and subcategories, an additional audit was conducted by the external auditor to be certain the raw data was coded into the appropriate domains and categories. The auditor was tasked with identifying categories that could be merged or subdivided for a better fit of core ideas into categories. Once the auditor reviewed the domains and themes, the auditor's comments were returned to the team for review. These comments were considered by the team and accepted or rejected as the team deemed appropriate. All changes were made in consensus.

Examining Patterns in the Data

When a subcategory consisted of data from all or most of the participants, that subcategory was labeled “general”. Subcategories with data from 4-6 participants were labeled “typical”. Subcategories that consisted of data from 2-3 participants were considered “variant”. Any core ideas that reflected experiences reported by only one participant were identified as a tangent and were placed in an “other” category. The research team decided that core ideas that were classified as “other” would not be included in the final representation of the data. These labels are preferred for the CQR method instead of percentages or raw frequencies because they allow for comparisons across studies and reduce the tendency to overinterpret a specific percentage or number as meaningful.

Authentic Data

Trustworthiness is an essential element of any qualitative research project. A qualitative researcher must establish trustworthiness to demonstrate the results are reflective of the data shared by participants. In the current study, trustworthiness was demonstrated through three elements: credibility, dependability, and transferability (Tracy & Hinrichs, 2017). This section reviews each of these components of trustworthiness, as well as confirmability and inter-coder reliability.

Credibility

The first element of trustworthiness, credibility, establishes the findings of a research study as believable or truthful. Within CQR, the aim is for readers to believe that the outlined findings will be decided upon using multiple perspectives. To demonstrate credibility in this study, the researcher used member checking, peer debriefing, external coders, and an external auditor. For member checking, participants were able to review their interview transcript to share

any additional information and clarify the meaning of their statements. Peer debriefing included seeking feedback from peers and fellow researchers. CQR requires the creation and use of a research team to conduct data analysis procedures and this dissertation project was reviewed and critiqued by both the dissertation chair as well as the committee members; therefore, peer debriefing was built into the research design. External coders and an auditor, as a part of the research team, were used to check the accuracy of the data coding and to provide feedback to identify any themes the primary researcher may have overlooked.

Dependability

Dependability demonstrates the rigor of the research process and the appropriateness of the methods that were selected (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To demonstrate dependability, the researcher carefully recorded the research procedures so that those who read and use the research can evaluate the methods. Memos were used to record all steps in the research process, beginning before the completion of the first interview and continuing until the data was analyzed by the research team. This procedure ensures that all steps in the research process were recorded, such that they could later be used to indicate any changes or deviations from the original research plan.

Transferability

Transferability is the degree to which the results can be applied to other related situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). While CQR emphasizes the integration of multiple perspectives to construct a shared understanding of a phenomenon, it is still important to share information about the primary researcher to determine the potential impacts of their positionality on the resulting data and implications. To enhance transferability, the researcher used two strategies: the

inclusion of a researcher positionality statement, and specific notation about the researcher's subjectivity in regard to interpretation of the data.

Boundaries & Ethics

Approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) was required for this research project. An initial IRB application was submitted on behalf of the primary researcher in October 2022 and a final application was approved in November 2022.

There was minimal risk associated with this research. Risks associated with semi-structured interviews include a lack of privacy and breaches of confidentiality due to the data being generated, the specificity and type of information that is shared with the primary researcher, how this information is recorded/reported, and possible discomfort of participants due to the type of topics being discussed (recounts of early COVID-19 experiences). There was a possibility of breaches in confidentiality due to security risks associated with the web-conferencing and transcription software that were used. To mitigate these risks, the primary researcher provided instructions prior to the start of each semi-structured interview on how to either remove names or rename account users on Zoom to reduce the existence of identifiable participant information. Risks associated with open-ended surveys include responses being directly or indirectly identifiable of participants and the security of the software being used to electronically obtain the information collected from the survey. The demographic survey was administered through Qualtrics, a software of which the primary researcher has a user-encrypted, university account. To further minimize social, psychological, and employability risks to participants, all identifiable information was de-identified by the primary researcher. Questions about the specific institutions where degrees are conferred and the institutions in which participants are currently employed were not asked. Any identifiable data collected from the

demographic surveys and/or the semi-structured data were redacted, de-identified, and/or renamed.

There was a risk of participants experiencing discomfort from potentially upsetting questions in the interview protocol. The study focused on how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the technology use of counselor educators, and recounting experiences of the early onset of the pandemic may have caused negative thoughts, feelings, and emotions from participants. Participation in this study at any point was voluntary. If participants refused to answer survey/interview questions or expressed discomfort with answering any questions, there was no further inquiry. As a part of the member-checking process, the primary researcher collaborated with participants on how they wanted their data to be reported to reduce risk and harm to them. No aspect of this study involved deception. At the conclusion of each interview, the primary researcher reviewed the purpose of the study with the participant, and the responses were made available to them before being evaluated by the research team.

There was an opportunity for participants to member-check their interview responses before they were analyzed by the primary researcher and the research team. Following the semi-structured interview, the primary researcher transcribed the audio recordings and sent each participant the transcription for their review. Each participant had up to two weeks to review and edit their responses before the primary researcher sent it to the research team for analysis. Any identifiable data collected from the demographic surveys and the semi-structured interviews were redacted, de-identified, and/or renamed. All survey data and interview responses that were shared with members of the research team about participants were de-identified. Pseudonyms were used for each participant and any specific names or places mentioned in their interviews were changed to minimize the risk of data triangulation and potential identification of

participants. Upholding confidentiality in this research was important in order to minimize any risk to the participants, and it allowed participants to speak freely and authentically about their experiences without having to concern themselves with how their responses may impact their personal relationships.

The primary researcher and members of the research team addressed biases and expectations before and during data analyses to minimize potential harm to participants and to prevent interference with the coding process. The primary researcher recorded any biases and expectations to be referenced as needed throughout the data analysis procedures. The purpose of recording biases was to note the types of information research team members might be inclined to look for, which could have interfered with their objectivity when analyzing data. Research team members were encouraged to record their personal experiences that may interfere with their ability to examine the data objectively.

Significance of the Study

This research is significant for counselors, counselor educators, graduate students, and clients who utilize therapeutic services because of the considerable amount of stress placed on the world during the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. There was prevalent reliance on technology to communicate and work effectively with others before February 2020, but that reliance became a necessity with the issuance of stay-at-home orders in March 2020. Since its inception, the counseling field has relied heavily on in-person interactions. Some counselor educators were tasked with adopting their clinical practice, while others needed to alter the way in which they administer instruction to counselors-in-training. There have been arguments regarding the effectiveness of conducting tele-health counseling sessions as well as online

instruction, and this paper will examine how these arguments have potentially evolved or dwindled with the pandemic (McBeath et al., 2020).

Role of the Researcher

Positionality statements aid in reducing bias by identifying researcher characteristics before the start of the study. While positionality is not always encouraged in CQR, it is seen as a best practice in qualitative research in general (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, the positionality statement of the researcher is included below.

Positionality Statement

To be transparent about my values and biases, I am choosing to acknowledge how my identity and personal experiences have informed my perspective on this area of research. I identify as a twenty-six-year-old, cisgender, Black woman.

I was in the last semester of my Clinical Mental Health Counseling master's program when the COVID-19 pandemic began spreading across the world in March of 2020, and I along with my colleagues had to adapt to complete our degree program. Classes transitioned online for the remainder of the semester, and I was not confident I would secure a job upon graduation. That Spring, I made the decision to pursue a doctorate degree in Counseling and Counselor Education, as I was interested in researching how the current state of the world was influencing the field of counseling. I wanted to know how other counselors and counseling professionals were and are continuing their work and growing their scope of practice within the constraints of the pandemic. I have had the unique experience of starting an on-campus clinical mental health counseling master's program that emphasized in-person interactions with clients, completing that program in a virtual learning environment, and continuing my education with an on-campus, doctoral program that was being held online. As a student who entered graduate school with an

understanding that my path as a professional would be geared towards in-person clinical practice, my decision to continue through graduate school in conjunction with a pandemic undoubtedly shifted my perspective.

As someone who has partially experienced the pandemic through the lens of a graduate student, I felt I would share similarities with the participants of this research. I am a doctoral candidate pursuing a degree in counseling and counselor education, and the target population of this research was counselor educators who have been in the field since before the onset of the pandemic. The shared classification of counselor education implied shared experiences and responsibilities that could have led to bias during the analyzation of the interview responses. In addition to relatability with participants, there was a potential for power differentials to become present due to age, professional experience, and years of enrollment in the program. To mitigate risks to participants, I reiterated to participants that participation was voluntary if they chose to schedule an interview following the completion of their consent form and the demographic survey. I allowed for time to discuss positionality, and how our backgrounds may have informed our perceptions of power differentials during the interview. Additionally, structural competency was mentioned during interviews, to acknowledge how power imbalances between faculty and students could affect how research is conducted.

Summary of Methods Section

Chapter three provides an overview of consensual qualitative research (CQR) and outlines the ways this theory is used in this study to examine how the COVID-19 pandemic affected counselor educators' use of technology. Specifically, the chapter presents the research questions, participant information, instrumentation, and procedures (including participant recruitment and selection, as well as data collection and analysis). The chapter concludes with an

explanation of the steps taken to ensure trustworthiness and validity within the qualitative research study, including the articulation of the researcher's positionality statement. The fourth chapter presents the research findings that emerged from this study.

CHAPTER IV: FINDINGS

This chapter reports results of 9 demographic surveys and 9 individual interviews with counselor educators who have experience using technology throughout their careers in counselor education. Participant demographics are presented as well. A review of 9 individual cases produced 7 domains with 1 to 2 categories within each domain.

Research Questions

Five research questions were established to investigate how the COVID-19 pandemic affected counselor educators' use of technology. Each research question was used to inform the creation of the interview questions. (See Appendix B for the full interview protocol). The research questions are as follows:

1. How was technology being used in counselor education prior to the 2020 global pandemic?
2. In what ways did the 2020 global pandemic impact counselor educators' use of technology?
3. In what ways did the 2020 global pandemic impact counselor educators' attitudes and beliefs about technology use in the counseling field?
4. How do counselor educators make adoption decisions about technology in clinical practice, research, and teaching?
5. In what ways has technology influenced counselor educators' attitudes and beliefs around social justice and multiculturalism since the onset of the 2020 pandemic?

Sample Characteristics

The current study consisted of 9 participants with doctorate and/or professional degrees in counselor education or a related field. Each participant completed an informed consent form and a demographic survey through Qualtrics. Participants scheduled a time to complete a semi-structured interview with the primary researcher through the scheduling software, Calendly. The primary researcher met with each participant via Zoom. Interview times ranged from 30 minutes to 70 minutes.

Below is a table highlighting several participant demographic variables relevant to their experience in counseling and counselor education-related fields.

Table 3
Participant Demographic Information

	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5	Participant 6	Participant 7	Participant 8	Participant 9
Age	25-34	35-44	25-34	65-74	35-44	35-44	35-44	25-34	45-54
Highest Degree Earned	Doctorate or Professional Degree (PhD, MD, DDS, etc.)	Doctorate or Professional Degree (PhD, MD, DDS, etc.)	Doctorate or Professional Degree (PhD, MD, DDS, etc.)	Doctorate or Professional Degree (PhD, MD, DDS, etc.)	Doctorate or Professional Degree (PhD, MD, DDS, etc.)	Doctorate or Professional Degree (PhD, MD, DDS, etc.)	Doctorate or Professional Degree (PhD, MD, DDS, etc.)	Doctorate or Professional Degree (PhD, MD, DDS, etc.)	Doctorate or Professional Degree (PhD, MD, DDS, etc.)
Master's Degree Discipline	Community Counseling	Counselor Education	Clinical Mental Health Counseling	Counseling	Counseling	Rehabilitation Counseling	Counseling	Clinical Mental Health and Marriage and Family Counseling	School Counseling and Clinical Mental Health Counseling
CACREP-accredited Master's Degree Program	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Master's Degree Conferral Year	2015	2011	2016	1984	2008	2010	2003	2015	2009
Doctoral Degree Discipline	Counselor Education	Counselor Education	Counseling & Counselor Education	Counselor Education & Supervision	Counselor Education & Supervision	Counseling & Counselor Education	Counselor Education & Supervision	Counselor Education & Supervision	Counselor Education & Supervision
CACREP-accredited Doctoral Degree Program	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Doctoral Degree Conferral Year	2019	2020	2021	1991	2018	2017	2006	2019	2013
Years of Counseling Experience	9	12	7	39	16	16	2	5	5
Years of Counselor Education Experience	3.5	2	2	33	7	5	17	4-5	11
Tasks Performed as a Counselor Educator	Research, teaching, supervision, clinical practice/counseling, grant writing, scholarly writing, conference presentations, professional service	Research, teaching, supervision, clinical practice/counseling	Research, teaching, supervision, clinical practice, scholarly writing, conference presentations, professional service	Research, teaching, supervision, grant writing, scholarly writing, conference presentations, professional service	Research, teaching, supervision, clinical practice/counseling, grant writing, scholarly writing, conference presentations, professional service	Teaching	Research, teaching, supervision, grant writing, scholarly writing, conference presentations, professional service	Research, teaching, supervision, counseling, grant writing, scholarly writing, conference presentations, professional service	Research, teaching, supervision, grant writing, scholarly writing, conference presentations, professional service
Licenses/Certifications Relevant to Counseling and Counselor Education	NCC, LPC	LCMHC	LCMHCA, NCC	NBCC	NCC	LCMHC, LCAS, CRCO	NCC	NCC	NCC, Certified School Counselor (VA, PA, MD)

Summary of Findings

Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR) was used to analyze the interview responses. CQR provides researchers the opportunity to investigate qualitative data as objectively as possible through the use of group consensus. CQR proposes that there is a truth that can be measured if there is present awareness of the dynamic effect researchers have on the data collection and analysis process. To address this, a research team of 3 individuals, including the primary researcher and 1 auditor was created to analyze the data.

12 initial domains were identified before the coding of any interviews. 7 domains were finalized after reaching consensus with the research team. As research team members read the interview transcripts, the domains were assigned to specific research questions. Categories and subcategories were subsequently created in alignment with each relevant domain. Core ideas are defined as summaries of the interviewee's statements that capture their conveyed narrative. Core ideas were determined by the research team during the cross-analysis process and were used in the formation of the categories and subcategories. The frequency reflects the number of participants whose core ideas fit within each category. Tables 3 through 8 detail the frequency of responses aligned with each research question, their domain(s), their categories, and their subcategories derived from the interview data. In this study, the frequency label general (G) was applied when the subcategory was evident in 7-9 cases. Typical (T) was applied when the subcategory was evident in 4-6 cases. Variant (V) was applied when the subcategory was evident in 2-3 cases.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked: How was technology being used in counselor education prior to the 2020 global pandemic? To answer this research question, the following domain was assigned: efforts to integrate technology before the pandemic.

Efforts to Integrate Technology Before the Pandemic

Researchers identified the efforts of counselor educators to integrate technology prior to the onset of the pandemic as a domain based on the interview data. Participant 4 reflected on their experience with technology in counselor education prior to the onset of the pandemic: “Pre pandemic, there was minimal interaction with technology, and maximum effort on my part as program director to offset administrative calls for more online teaching.”

From this domain, two categories were created outlining how participants reported their attempts to use technology within counselor education. The categories are: a) types of technology used before the COVID-19 pandemic and b) how technology was being used before the pandemic.

Types of Technology Used Before the COVID-19 Pandemic. Within this category, researchers found several forms of technology that were being utilized by counselor educators before the onset of the pandemic. Participant 7 mentioned:

During [my] graduate education, postdoc, but right before my career, I still had, we faculty used PowerPoint, but it was, I'm not going to say it was new. But it was newer, kind of newly being integrated everywhere. But there was still, folks who were using, the overheads, overhead projectors, and that kind of stuff. We had teaching stations as part of my doc education. And they were used, but it wasn't as, it wasn't used necessarily consistently, but PowerPoint was—there was a fairly strong presence.

Subcategories were established by distinguishing between the primary purpose and use of the types of technology being referenced throughout the interviews. The following subcategories

were defined: a) video conferencing technology and b) education and learning management technology.

Video Conferencing Technology. Skype, FaceTime, and Zoom were examples of video conferencing technologies that were referenced by participants. Participant 9 reflected on their use of a room on their campus that was used to conduct video calls internationally:

So, long before there was Zoom that everybody could have loaded onto their own computers, I would go to this particular room on campus, and there would be cameras all over that room. And I would have this big setup in front of me to be able to show different documents to students and be able to channel videos through all the reception points that they were at, because some of the students were actually deployed out in the Persian Gulf, or, you know, in the desert somewhere.

9 participants mentioned using at least one type of conferencing technology, classifying this subcategory as general (G).

Education and Learning Management Technology. Education and learning management technology includes technology used by counselor educators to aid in curriculum development. Participants mentioned Blackboard, Microsoft Office, Google Drive, Canvas, Time 2 Track, and Qualtrics. Participant 3 spoke about their experiences using learning management systems before the onset of the pandemic:

Early on, we never did any online video software like you might in undergrad or even in my master's. That was not a thing. Even when I started working as a TA, we used, Blackboard Collaborate was the system. And you couldn't even have your camera on because it bogged the system down, so it was audio only. Which is hard to think that we actually taught like that and this is pre pandemic, so that was, it was a newer, cool technology back then. It wasn't great. They switched to Zoom about a year before the pandemic. So luckily, we had some experience. But it was my first time using Zoom. I didn't understand how it would work, which ended up being better because we could see everybody and have a little more functionality than the old system did. So that worked out really well. And I was able to actually adapt some of those systems that we could use in my own teaching today, which was helpful.

Education and learning management technologies were mentioned by 6 participants, classifying this subcategory as typical (T).

How Technology Was Being Used Before the Pandemic. Researchers determined how technology was being used by counselor educators before the pandemic qualified as an important component and category under the efforts to integrate technology before the pandemic.

Participant 9 stated:

I wasn't at that time, really using games or interactive things with technology with the students. It was more just being able to use those visual cues and also provide opportunities for them to have laughter and humor in the class. So sometimes the visual cues could've been, you know, whatever the current meme was at the time and things like that. So that was kind of from 2013 to 2016.

Participant 1 also recalled minimally using technology before the pandemic:

So, postdoc, I was just using basic PowerPoint, no fancy or interactive templates pre-pandemic. There's really not too big of a change. I think I was just inheriting whatever I learned from my education. And so, there were lots of words on PowerPoints. There were pictures, but to be honest, I put pictures there just to fill in space.

From this category, three subcategories emerged: a) class materials and b) technology and professional development.

Class Materials. Researchers identified technology used for audio/video recording and file storage technologies as class materials within counselor education training settings.

Participants recalled using cassette tapes, flash drives, and CDs as methods for file storage before the onset of the pandemic. Participant 1 stated:

So, pre-doc, we would—I would ask my students to bring the videos using flash drives. Or I remember when I was in school I had to use a CD. And just give it to the professor and never get it back. I don't know what happened to those things. Did they destroy them? Maybe they did. but I never got back. And then, when I recorded my session, I had to use a handheld camera.

One participant mentioned Titanium as an electronic medical record software they used before 2020. Flipgrid and Poll-E were also mentioned as technology used by counselor educators within the classroom before the pandemic. Participant 5 recalled during their first semester of teaching wanting to use more functions in their learning management system for online workshops:

And my first semester, I just kind of did the status quo: I went to my classes and followed what everyone had said. And then by like, three weeks in, I was like, they have this new feature in this LMS, where you can post videos, and I was like, I'm gonna do that. But they had a three-minute time limit. And so, I would type up what I wanted to say for the workshop. And would try to get to that in three minutes. And I had students who gave me feedback and said, "I love this! I love this!" So that was 2017.

Participant 6 reflected on technology and how it was effectively being used to promote learning:

Yeah, then pre-pandemic, pre-2020, I started being able to do—it was already starting to be hybrid classes where I would teach one on campus and then one off, which for me was great, because this was more at [university] and I didn't have to drive that far. But then starting to use, they also used Blackboard—use their system and having to think more about what sort of activities are going to translate when you're not in the class. And you know, if this is what I would have preferred to do in class, how can they still get that experience and that understanding on their own or whatnot... But also some of it was just effort, whatever is the easiest honestly, whatever kind of makes sense but so it would be not very creative, I would say still very much more like "old school" you know, like "here's a project with the outlines and then submit this paper" you know, or "submit this whatever." So still not super creative. "Reread the chapter and submit it to me with some questions that you had for follow up or whatever."

This subcategory is considered to be general (G), as 8 participants mentioned content related to what the research team determined were class materials.

Technology and Professional Development. This subcategory encompasses specific actions counselor educators took to integrate technology into their profession before the onset of the pandemic. These actions include attending training(s) on online course development,

conducting classroom lectures via Zoom, and implementing flipped classroom instruction.

Participant 1 mentioned their prior interest in technology and how it has contributed to their professional development:

I am interested in using technology. So I go to trainings whenever I have the chance. When I went to a training for online teaching and course design, I was told that students have different learning styles. Some students really prefer visual learning, so if you don't have slides, if you don't have something they can see, it's really hard for them to follow or take notes.

4 participants mentioned experiences using technology for professional development, qualifying this subcategory as typical (T).

Table 4 shows the domain and categories aligned with the first research question.

Table 4

Research Question 1–Domain, Categories, Subcategories, and Frequencies

Research Question 1		
How was technology being used in counselor education prior to the 2020 global pandemic?		
Domain: Efforts to Integrate Technology Before the Pandemic		
Category	Subcategories	Frequency
Types of Technology Being Used Before the COVID-19 Pandemic	Video Conferencing Technology	(G)
	Education/Learning Management Technology	(T)
How Technology Was Being Used Before the COVID-19 Pandemic	Class Materials	(G)
	Technology and Professional Development	(T)

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked: In what ways did the 2020 global pandemic impact counselor educators' use of technology? To answer this research question, the following domain was assigned: the cultural shift around technology use in counselor education during 2020.

The Cultural Shift Around Technology Use in Counselor Education During 2020

The shift in the way technology was used and acknowledged in counselor education during the year 2020 was identified as another domain for this study. Participant 7 reflected on their experiences in 2020:

During the pandemic, all hell broke loose. And so, I work in a full time, face-to-face program. And so we were given, you know, the world gave us like, zero time to think of how to transition that well. But I think it was very much an all hands-on deck, and we knew the technology that was available to us. And it was a matter of: How do we maintain rigor? While also recognizing that there are lots of challenges that people are facing. And so how do we make things easier, where we can make sure that students are getting what they need, as far as the curriculum, but also getting what they need as far as support.

From this domain, two categories were defined: a) responsibilities of counselor educators and b) discussions on accessibility.

Responsibilities of Counselor Educators. Counselor educators are considered the gatekeepers of the counseling profession, often serving as professors, supervisors, researchers, and/or practicing counselors. When the stay-at-home orders were first issued, participants cited concerns with learning content being properly conveyed to students virtually. The inability to predict when classes would return to in-person formats pushed counselor educators to improvise and adapt their courses online. Participant 4 expressed their concerns:

As you probably know, counselor ed programs, they had huge decisions to make moving forward, because nobody could quite accurately predict when do we go back to face-to-face. So, it became kind of a semester-by-semester decision making. And then as you

probably can appreciate, there was no guarantee that the technology you used last semester, it's the same one. So, we went from Blackboard and Teams to, now I'm on something called Canvas. None of these of course have manuals. All of them have got IT folk who are supposed to help.

Within this category are the following three subcategories: a) increased attention on student engagement, b) familiarization with more forms of technology, and c) accessibility discussions.

Increased Attention on Student Engagement. Participants reported paying closer attention to how students were engaging with course material and class discussions being presented in online formats. Incorporating more guest speakers online and virtual movie assignments were mentioned as creative ways to keep students engaged. A total of 8 participants mentioned focusing their attention on student engagement, classifying this subcategory as general (G).

Familiarization with More Forms of Technology. Counselor educators were also expected to become acquainted with or proficient in using different technologies such as Moodle and Canvas to continue providing resources and course content to students. Participant 2 stated:

There was a kind of like a game. It's called Kahoot that we utilize... With various platforms with regards to grading, like Blackboard, Moodle, Canvas—just really familiarizing myself with those different platforms. And trying to make sure that I'm abreast with kind of the information and the lingo, and how to troubleshoot certain things that happen. Also, I think being open to suggestions and feedback that students and also staff provided in terms of implementing new forms of technology to kind of teach new lessons not trying to continue teaching things the same way that they were taught before. So certainly being open to their feedback as well.

8 participants referenced having to become familiar with other forms of technology during 2020, deeming this subcategory general (G).

Discussions on Accessibility. Discussions on accessibility emerged as a prominent category within the cultural shift in counselor education during 2020. Participant 1 mentioned

using QR codes to encourage students to quickly and conveniently complete class evaluations as a new form of technology they learned could help with reaching more students. Participant 1 cites accessibility as one of the main reasons they use different forms of technology to reach as many students as they can:

I would tell them, “Okay, you can find this piece of information on...” I used to use Canvas, Blackboard, and now I use Moodle. So, I’ll tell them any location they can find it. But will they find it? I don’t know. So right now, I’m just if I can, I always use some kind of QR code. If I want them to do a teaching evaluation. I get the QR code, and then they can just get it. Another thing I like to do is use Poll-E software. I think my favorite website is Poll-E, but I also use a number of others as well. In that way, students are able to engage in class. So, they don’t have to feel embarrassed.

This category produced one subcategory: learning with students.

Learning with Students. Participants recalled the stress of having to learn and use new technology systems through their universities with minimal-to-no training. One participant described, “learning a new job, institution, while also learning how to navigate COVID-19 guidelines” as a parallel learning process for both students and faculty. Participant 9 stated:

And then yeah, during the pandemic, it was very interesting, because I really had to learn how to use the, I would say, the under the hood stuff with Zoom, so that I’d be able to do breakout rooms and make sure that they were sometimes randomly assigned, and sometimes intentionally assigned breakout rooms and all the different things you can do on Zoom.

Participant 6 discussed their experience facing the learning curve of incorporating new technology into the classroom:

So first, it was the whole, “Oh my God, how do we handle this?” And trying to catch up to speed. So, all like connectivity issues, we have to be on Blackboard all the time. We’re meeting via virtual, whatever platform it was. “Can you hear me? Is everyone’s camera on?” Do I really care if their cameras are on? Then also, it was just kind of that, learning curve of are there online tech, things that I could use that could improve our time together? I want a whiteboard to use, I want this, but like, drawing it out, or writing things down wasn’t, it wasn’t always there. Or like, if it was, then you have to figure out

how to use your mouse to do it. And it was a huge learning curve in that sort of way. Trying to, especially since it started, during a semester, trying to make group projects that were already what we were going to do. Trying to make them now able or available or whatever. Online or, you know, so learning how to record yourself and upload it and all of that sort of stuff. It was a huge slap in the face. Even then, as it kind of, that first semester stopped, then like, okay, I know for sure it's all going to be online, but I still want them to know me. So, when they sign on, I'm going to have a welcome message where I'm actually talking to them instead of typing, but then trying to see like, okay, do I want to do an audio recording or a video, and then I got more comfortable with just audio. So, trying to create some sort of, that they still got to know me, you know, versus just reading a document, like the syllabus that I had created. Something that was super annoying.

Data pertaining to learning with students were collected from 8 participants, making this subcategory general (G).

Table 5 shows the domain and categories aligned with the second research question.

Table 5

Research Question 2–Domain, Categories, Subcategories, and Frequencies

Research Question 2: In what ways did the 2020 global pandemic impact counselor educators' use of technology?		
Domain: The Cultural Shift Around Technology Use in Counselor Education during 2020		
Category	Subcategories	Frequency
Responsibilities of Counselor Educators	Increased Attention on Student Engagement	(G)
	Familiarization with More Forms of Technology	(G)
Discussions on Accessibility	Learning with Students	(G)

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked: In what ways did the 2020 global pandemic impact counselor educators' attitudes and beliefs about technology use in the counseling field? To answer this research question, the following domains were assigned: a) attitudes and beliefs about

technology before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and b) attitudes and beliefs about technology following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Attitudes and Beliefs About Technology Before the Onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic

As the third domain listed, attitudes and beliefs about using technology in counselor education prior to the pandemic were determined by the research team based on the information provided by the interview data. One category was identified within this domain: pre-pandemic sentiments.

Pre-Pandemic Sentiments. The pre-pandemic category accounts for how counselor educators thought about technology before March 2020. Participant 3 recalled some of their experiences while they were a doctoral student:

And in the doc program itself, there were no online classes before the pandemic. That was 100% in person, we didn't even meet on Zoom before the pandemic or anything. We had to do all of our meetings in person.

Before March 2020, other participants were not adamant about online counselor education programs. Participant 1 admitted to feeling negatively about online programs previously: "I had a big stigma or I had judgments towards online programs. I thought like you know, just like everyone else."

This category contains the following subcategories: a) interest in collaboration and learning, b) resistance and/or apprehension towards learning and integration, and c) disruption of student learning and engagement.

Interest in Collaboration and Learning. 2 participants reported having an interest in learning about technology and collaborating with others to determine the best methods of integrating technology qualifying this subcategory as variant (V). Participant 7 mentioned a growing interest in how technology could be used for innovation in counselor education:

At the beginning of my counselor career, and definitely pre-pandemic, it [technology] was available, we used it some, to kind of organize, but it wasn't fully integrated. I did get involved in technology and innovation work early on in my career, and I continue to kind of dabble with it. So, in that way. I've looked more at, you know, how can we use technology? How can we use gaming, how can we use things like that to teach? But it's been really hard to access some of those things without specific training and knowledge on how to do it. Like there's not, I noticed that there were lots of obstacles between, hey, I've got this great idea. Or at least I think it's a great idea. And like how to put things into practice. They're just lots of, there are lots of gaps in knowledge.

Despite challenges to full integration, this participant's interest persisted as they moved forward in their career.

Resistance and/or Apprehension towards Learning and Integration. 3 participants recalled conducting classes face-to-face and openly preferred that method of instruction to online teaching. Participant 6 spoke to the culture of counselor education as well as the existence of telehealth:

And I think like, possibly other degrees and programs, wouldn't, you know, maybe wouldn't have been that negatively impacted. But counseling and counselor ed is just so like, in person that, you know, I know, even before the pandemic, I had strong feelings about telehealth, where I was like, No, I don't like it.

One participant acknowledged that using more technology before the pandemic may have been helpful but there were observable gaps in learning how to use and implement it. This subcategory is considered variant (V).

Disruption of Student Learning and Engagement. 2 participants implied that increased technology integration would be a disruption of student learning and that they would be unable to properly assess for engagement with course material. Participant 4 stated:

I'd like to have students sitting in front of me, as compared to being on screen. I have found it easier. One of the things I was taught when I was taught to teach is to not sit in a chair and talk. I can't do that on a computer, I'm not good enough at standing up and carrying my computer around. Because I'm really afraid I'm going to drop that, then we're

really in big trouble. But I can do that in a classroom. I can move around the room, I can engage people, if I'm sitting looking, and I've got 30 students and half of them have their mics turned off, and half of them have their technology turned off. I don't know who's engaged.

This subcategory qualifies as variant (V).

Attitudes and Beliefs About Technology Following the Onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Following the onset of the pandemic, attitudes and beliefs of counselor educators about technology use in counselor education were specified as the fourth domain. The following category was identified from this domain: post-pandemic sentiments.

Post-Pandemic Sentiments. Post-pandemic or “post-pandemic transition” can be defined as the progressive decrease of pandemic surveillance following a decrease in pandemic outbreaks (World Health Organization, 2023). Two subcategories were identified from this category: a) increased reception of technology integration and b) acknowledgement of challenges and barriers.

Increased Reception of Technology Integration. Following the onset of the pandemic, participants reported being more open and receptive to technology integration in counselor education. Participant 1 reached out to other colleagues for guidance on online teaching:

I remember asking so many questions. I even scheduled individual meetings with those people who teach, who taught, or who were teaching online programs. And I just felt so, I don't know. I felt bad for thinking about them in a certain way. That their students are not getting as good a training as other traditional programs in counseling. But just after knowing the things that they're using, the technology they're using—And then there are so many different things that they can do with technology. I just had to humble myself. I'm thinking like, “Oh, these are experts.” I'm really appreciative that I do have friends who teach in distance counseling programs or are doing distance education, so that I can borrow so many good ideas from them. And I think those ideas are easily transferable to any kind of teaching; it doesn't matter if you're teaching in person or virtual.

Participant 2 mentioned:

I certainly believe I'm more open and certainly more accepting of telehealth in general, and also just teaching a lot in general. I think at one point, I thought it was maybe a new wave or just temporary but it certainly feels like, I think it's here to stay. And it kind of helped me to get to where I am now. I currently have my own private practice and it's virtual. So, I think one of the apprehensions I had, are individuals still going to want to see people virtually? How's that going to work out? And that hasn't been a problem at all. I think more people, more and more people are preferring to see individuals virtually. In terms of teaching, I was wondering if I would still have that same connection, you know, teaching virtually, rather than teaching face-to-face. It hasn't been a problem at all. Um, I would certainly say it's kind of shifted and changed my mindset. It's made me more hopeful, more open to implementing different areas of technology into my teaching, in some of my practice, as well.

8 participants mentioned being more accepting of technology integration, classifying this subcategory as general (G).

Acknowledgement of Challenges and Barriers. Despite being more open to using technology following the onset of the pandemic, 8 participants recognized a few challenges and barriers to increased technology integration in counselor education, making this subcategory general (G). Participant 4 noted that their capacity to incorporate technology into their instruction may be limiting for students:

One of the groups of students with whom I'm working are all returning students. The demand that they do the program or the courses online, adds another level of stress to them. Because it's not only about another graduate program, but it's both their graduate program at present and navigating through whatever the technology system is. And I think if you're going to attract, and this may, in 30 years be wholly irrelevant, career changers, you know, adult graduate students, they come with differing levels of technological savvy. And I don't have the knowledge to teach them what they need to know, to use the technology. And therefore, they use it to the extent that I'm comfortable with it.

Participant 8 discussed how a newer software is helpful and harmful for learners:

Then you have things like ChatGPT, and things coming up, which is an amazing tool I use all the time. I'm constantly googling things and figuring out how accurate they are and asking it because I found it, and I'm intrigued by it. But I have no doubt that students are potentially using it.

Table 6 shows the domains and categories aligned with the third research question.

Table 6*Research Question 3–Domains, Categories, Subcategories, and Frequencies*

Research Question 3: In what ways did the 2020 global pandemic impact counselor educators' attitudes and beliefs about technology use in the counseling field?		
Domain: Attitudes and Beliefs About Technology Before the Pandemic		
Category	Subcategories	Frequency
Pre-Pandemic Sentiments	Interest in Collaboration and Learning	(V)
	Resistance and/or Apprehension towards Learning and Integration	(V)
	Disruption of Student Learning and Engagement	(V)
Domain: Attitudes and Beliefs About Technology Following the Onset of the Pandemic		
Post-Pandemic Sentiments	Increased Reception of Technology Integration	(G)
	Acknowledgement of Challenges and Barriers	(G)

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 asked: How do counselor educators make adoption decisions about technology in clinical practice, research, and teaching? To answer this research question, the following domains were assigned: a) efforts to integrate technology following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and b) the future of technology use in counselor education.

Efforts to Integrate Technology Following the Onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Participants were asked how they decide to use technology in their work as counselor educators during their interviews, and the research team chose to evaluate their responses as

indicative of their adoption decisions regarding clinical practice, research, and teaching.

Following the onset of the pandemic, efforts by counselor educators to integrate technology were recorded as a domain. The following categories were identified by the research team: a) types of technology used following the onset of the pandemic and b) how technology was being used following the onset of the pandemic.

Types of Technology Used Following the Onset of the Pandemic. Similar to the first domain listed, the types of technology used by counselor educators following the onset of the pandemic were established as a category. The following two subcategories emerged within this category: a) video conferencing technology and b) education and learning management technology.

Video Conferencing Technology. Microsoft Teams, Cisco Webex, and Zoom were examples of video conferencing technologies that were referenced by participants. Participant 5 reflected on their experience being a part of a research group and how WebEx was able to aid in and facilitate their community:

And then research, I happened to join a research group for ACES. And it's the secondary school counselor group. Someone said, "Hey, can you attend?" and I said, "Sure." That was in December of 2019. So, we were using WebEx. We met, we would decide things. And it was great. And we're from all over the country. And then obviously, everybody moved, we became more of a support group for each other. We did research that was geared towards COVID at the time. And now we're doing other research, but the group went from probably like six members to now 24 or so professors who get together and research which is awesome. It has still been more of a support group. So, we have like, half the time spent on research. The other half the time is having conversations like this, like, you know, "oh, did you hear about this new thing with Zoom?" Or "did you hear about this", things like that, or CACREP, you know, conversations like that.

Video conferencing has been referenced as something that aids in bringing people together to accomplish goals despite not being in the same physical space as one another. 9

participants mentioned using at least one type of conferencing technology following the onset of the pandemic, classifying this subcategory as general (G).

Education and Learning Management Technology. Education and learning management technology includes technology used by counselor educators to aid in curriculum development. Participants mentioned Blackboard, Microsoft Office, and Google Drive in addition to newer software like A-Ha slides and Canva for presentations. Education and learning management technologies were mentioned by 5 participants, classifying this subcategory as typical (T).

How Technology Was Being Used Following the Onset of the Pandemic. Researchers identified how counselor educators were using technology following the pandemic as a category aligned with the fourth research question because of its relation to how participants were choosing to incorporate technology into their counselor education professions. Participant 1 reflected on how their use of videos in class has changed since the onset of the pandemic and why they feel videos can aid in learning and practice:

I also use lots of YouTube videos now, whereas in the past I didn't think YouTube had—I mean it's not academic. But when I used to, when I assigned videos for people to watch, I didn't really go through the whole thing; whereas right now I'm very mindful about selecting what videos I want to show to the students. And in the past, when I showed a video, I didn't really care too much about it. I just wanted them to see it, because I remembered from previous learning experiences, like, okay, faculty will include some kind of video to make it fun. And now I realize, no, the process after the video watching is important as well. I think that's actually more important than just showing them a video. So, I would really make my class as engaging definitely, not just a boring lecturing class.

Three subcategories were identified within this category: a) student engagement and learning, b) compliance awareness, c) alleviation of former stressors, and d) continued integration of video conferencing technology.

Student Engagement and Learning. Continued discussions on student engagement and learning prompted participants to observe how technology could be used to effectively enrich graduate school curricula for counseling students in training. Participants referenced trying to create more interactive lecture presentations involving polls and videos for students to be more active in their own learning processes. Participant 3 recalled:

I'll find activities—we play Jeopardy and I do like an online version with paper and pen. And we do a lot of TED Talks and videos that spawn discussion which has been helpful. Which is something I had not done pre pandemic when I was a full-time counselor.

Participant 1 is able to use a virtual reality lab through their university, and mentioned planning a class session involving its use:

I'm also aware of the technology impact in students' lives. So, I would come up with examples that include, or maybe I don't know just when we're talking. We used to never talk about games in class, and now I can use that as the icebreaker...I'm actually, right now thinking about—we do have a VR lab on campus. I'm actually thinking if I were to teach a mindfulness class, maybe I could use the VR Lab so that everyone can do immersive mindfulness.

Participant 6 discussed plans to integrate more technology into their upcoming assignments for students:

I'm going to be teaching this summer. And I know that one of the things I'm going to have them do is an Instagram ad or a TikTok based on the content that we're going to be creating, or the materials that we're going to be consuming. Because that is where they are getting their information, or like the mass public is getting their information. So having to also bring in not just how, not just using technology as a form to teach, like as a method of teaching, but also including it in.

8 participants reasoned that student engagement and learning was a primary concern when choosing how to use technology in the classroom. This subcategory is classified as general (G).

Compliance Awareness. 2 participants mentioned concerns with curriculum changes due to increased reliance on technology in counselor education. Counselors and counselor educators are familiar with and are often required to record sessions with clients and supervisees to fulfill education requirements. There were present concerns with university and program guidelines on HIPAA compliance and confidentiality. This subcategory is considered variant (V) based on the interview data.

Alleviation of Former Stressors. Transitioning from primarily in-person interactions to remote work noticeably reduced transportation costs for participants and their students who needed to factor daily commutes to campus into their schedules. Participants appreciated not having to physically rush from one meeting to another and found that scheduling meetings online has provided them with the opportunity to plan out their schedules with more flexibility.

Participant 3 spoke about how this played a part in their overall wellness:

I know for my wellness, I think that's changed a lot too. So, it's one of those things where I don't have to worry about driving in somewhere for a meeting. I can just kind of schedule things as I need to. It is actually really nice sometimes to be at the end of my day if I'm done later at like six or seven with a meeting with students or even with counseling. I'm at home already, like I'm done. Like I don't have to worry about driving back in again. I know when I was a full-time counselor, the worst thing was like, I had almost a half hour commute home and I just wanted to be home at the end of the day, I didn't mind driving in, but at the end of the day, it was like, I just want to be done. Some people like that time to process I think, but for me, just having my own space is that processing time and being able to feel comfortable in my own environment. Especially if you're having some of these harder conversations, whether it be with counseling, or with students advising, some conflict issues that come up, it's easier, I think, to be in your own space and kind of feel comfortable that way as well, too.

4 participants discussed how technology has been used to alleviate former stressors, classifying this subcategory as typical (T).

Continued Integration of Video Conferencing Technology. In conjunction with the previous subcategory, video conferencing technology was cited by all 9 participants as

something that they would continue to use within and outside of counselor education. Participant 7 stated:

Zoom is still really integrated. So, things that I would have come to campus for if there's nothing like, if I have a meeting, and it's the only thing that I'm coming to campus for, a lot of times, we'll touch base with each other and be like, "Hey, I'm just coming in for our meeting. Can we just Zoom and do that?" So, I think that, you know, the teleconferencing is way more integrated than it would have been. Had we not had such a dependence on it during the pandemic, because it really shifted, I think the way that we think about using it.

This subcategory qualifies as general (G).

The Future of Technology Use in Counselor Education

The research team determined that a domain focused on the projected future of technology use in counselor education should be created based on the information gathered from the interviews. The following two categories emerged within this domain: a) technology integration in counselor education programs and b) technology integration in counseling practice.

Technology Integration in Counselor Education Programs. The continued use of technology within counselor education and the role of counselor educators in the implementation of technology was regarded as something that is still evolving by the participants of this study. Participant 3 offered their thoughts on the growth of technology in counseling and counselor education:

Yes, it's growing. And I think maybe that's another plus to have. Especially even with counselor and counselor education programs across the nation are on the rise more and more. People want to do this. So, there's more competition for these programs. And I think technology is helping us as we kind of deal with that growth. And the influx of counselors, I mean, all I need to do is turn on the news and realize there's not enough people to help everybody that's out there right now. We need more of us.

Within this category, two subcategories emerged: a) continued use of telework and hybrid models, b) counseling skills being taught in-person vs. virtually, and c) technology integration in counselor education programs.

Continued Use of Telework and Hybrid Models. 5 participants discussed how working from home and/or hybrid models are anticipated to continue within counselor education programs. Participant 7 stated:

I think that our staff should be allowed to telework, when it makes sense. And I think that there are some policies that make that flexible for some people...if there's someone who is, you know, processing paperwork, they don't need to do that in the office, you know, because processing paperwork isn't about paper anymore. It's about electronic stuff. So, let them do that from home, if that's going to make them happier and more efficient. So, I think that we're still trying to figure out—and this isn't about counselor ed, this is higher ed in general. I think we're still trying to figure out policies and things that are going to make things better without losing, you know, key components of what's important.

5 participants shared their thoughts on how telework and hybrid models would be represented in counselor education, classifying this subcategory as typical (T).

Counseling Skills Being Taught In-person vs. Virtually. More attention to how instruction is being structured and knowledge is being imparted on counseling students was a concern for participants worried about how to properly communicate counseling skills through technology. 4 participants commented on how counseling skills would continue to be taught following these various transitions in learning settings, classifying this subcategory as typical (T).

Technology Integration in Counseling Practice. For participants who continue to see clients and/or are clients to other mental health professionals, there are growing concerns and opinions about how technology has been incorporated into counseling practice. Participant 2 shared their thoughts on the matter:

I would think in terms of how counselors adjusted—going back to kind of seeing clients face-to-face, seeing students face to face. How was that adjustment for them? I know, there's a lot of researching on, you know, children and emerging adults and how that—not necessarily stunted their kind of social and emotional growth. Yeah, I think maybe exploring if there was any apprehension of certainly going back to seeing individuals face to face and how maybe technology, maybe did it hinder some of their counseling skills?

The research team determined one emergent subcategory: apprehension.

Apprehension. 2 participants expressed reservations around technology integration in counselor education moving forward, classifying this subcategory as variant (V). Participant 4 expressed concern for future counselors: “I don't know that counseling as a profession could ever be taught wholly through technology. And if it did, I would have real nervousness about sending counselors in training to sit with people face to face.”

Table 7 shows the domain and categories aligned with the fourth research question.

Table 7*Research Question 4–Domains, Categories, Subcategories, and Frequencies*

Research Question 4: How do counselor educators make adoption decisions about technology in clinical practice, research, and teaching?		
Domain: Efforts to Integrate Technology Following the Onset of the Pandemic		
Category	Subcategories	Frequency
Types of Technology Used Following the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic	Video Conferencing Tech	(G)
	Education/Learning Management	(T)
How Technology Was Being Used Following the Onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic	Student Engagement and Learning	(G)
	Compliance Awareness	(V)
	Alleviation of Former Stressors	(T)
	Continued Integration of Video Conferencing Tech	(G)
Domain: The Future of Technology Use in Counselor Education		
Category	Subcategories	Frequency
Technology Integration in Counselor Education Programs	Continued Use of Telework and Hybrid Models	(T)
	Counseling Skills Being Taught In-person vs. Virtually	(T)
Technology Integration in Counseling Practice	Apprehension	(V)

Research Question 5

Research Question 5 asked: In what ways has technology influenced counselor educators' attitudes and beliefs around social justice and multiculturalism since the onset of the 2020 pandemic? To answer this research question, the following domain was assigned: perceptions of social justice and multiculturalism following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Perceptions of Social Justice and Multiculturalism Following the Onset of COVID-19

In alignment with the fifth research question for this study, the final domain details the perceptions of counselor educators regarding social justice and multiculturalism following the onset of the pandemic. Participant 3 reflected on their experiences during 2020:

I think we are always seeing things but like being at home and with everything happening in 2020, we were more focused on technology. And I think we saw more of what was happening in the world around us. With my background, I've seen some of that firsthand already and was aware. But I think this is more of, kind of like a slap in the face of like, this is literally happening around you, you just didn't see it because of your life happening. But it caused us to pause, take inventory, I think in different ways and realize that we all don't have the same things. I think back to the idea of like in 2020, that energy. Everybody's like we're all in the same boat, maybe to a degree, but the boat looks different for different people. And that's what was the big factor to me. I was saying I had a place I could go, I had family supports. But not everybody has those supports. Not everybody was able to feel safe. Not everybody had to work from home anymore and continue. Some people had to go to work and continue those jobs. I think technology was good to remind us how to relax and take care of ourselves, but also opened our eyes to some of the terrible things that were happening around us too.

Two categories were established under this domain: a) awareness of social issues and b) accessibility.

Awareness of Social Issues. General awareness about the world was referenced throughout the interview data, allowing researchers to develop its own category. Participant 5 recalled university-run dialogue sessions for students that were created to address students' needs:

And so, we started offering just open dialogue with our students. We offered one in June, and one in July of 2020, and then another in August, where students could come in and a faculty member would be present on Zoom. And we could just openly talk about our feelings and what was going on with Black Lives Matter at that time, but then also what was going on in all other areas too. And so I guess technology was a tool in that respect, that we could then bring people together who were from all over the world, to have conversations and still have these heart to heart conversations that needed to happen. And hopefully, they felt comfortable in having them.

Two subcategories were created under awareness: a) news and media and b) intersectionality.

News and Media. Participants recalled feeling more pressure to stay informed through news and media outlets, specifically during 2020. Participant 2 felt that news and media, specifically through technology, affected their views:

And I will say that it influenced my views. Especially, I think, after and during the pandemic, because there was a highlight on the social injustices that were happening. There was no ignoring it now. There was no distraction. It was there you know, through technology, through social media, through news platforms, through articles, research, there was no kind of escaping it in a sense. And there was no ignoring it in a sense. So, I certainly think that, you know, technology impacted and highlighted certainly some of the social injustices that were happening during the pandemic.

6 participants reflected on their experiences using technology to access information through news reports and media, qualifying this subcategory as typical (T).

Intersectionality. There was a greater focus on the intersecting identities of students and their lives outside of school. Technology was being used as a way to explore dynamics between instructors and students that may have been unfamiliar to them before the onset of the pandemic.

Participant 8 discussed intersectionality and access:

So, challenging that false dichotomy of either/or but both/and, while I think it's allowed for more access, more insight, like using things like TikTok, and at least I refer them to use TikTok in class, because there's some great professional speaking. And making things accessible, using videos, use of Twitter and other platforms to really address and

bring in current issues, whether that be COVID, or Black Lives Matter, or anti-queer and drag bills that are happening and things that are happening in more technological or like virtual spaces and bringing them into our various roles and responsibilities...I think disability was present for me because it was—in undergrad, I took a course. In my doc program, I took a course related to critically understanding disability, and access and opportunity. But I think COVID also has really made it like we've relied so much on certain infrastructures that aren't, that don't adhere to maybe best practices or universal design. But I think it's really allowed for more access and opportunity in some ways, which I think is important for social justice, anti-oppression, anti-racism. I think it allows for easier access to come together collectively.

Participant 9 spoke to neurodivergence as another aspect of intersectionality:

I guess I would say the one thing that I still should probably mention is there is an impact on neurodivergent students. Some neurodivergent students are experiencing these technologies being very positive, and other neurodivergent students are experiencing it as not being positive at all. So one of the things that I love about counseling, and as like a field of graduate study is that students, one of the things that I love about us is that, particularly at [university] we're about trying to invite students to really fully embody their intersectional identities and not be turning down the volume on those identities when they enter into higher education environments, and that includes neurodivergent students. So, we have a number of neurodivergent students who are very out I would say, are open about their experiences as neurodivergent students. And so, some of them have, you know, expressed that when we are using remote delivery, it's much more challenging for them to pay attention to the class and that having things be two dimensional and not being part of the classroom.

This subcategory is considered typical (T).

Accessibility. There was noticeably more of a focus on competencies in using technology from both faculty and students. Participant 1 noted how they were tasked with assessing the ability of their students to use technology in conjunction with learning course content:

But when it comes to technology I explored, or I discovered there's so many other dimensions that I need to pay attention to because they are still like—There are people who are not technology-savvy and it's very intimidating for them. People like non-traditional students or maybe it has nothing to do with age. Maybe it just has something to do with their prior knowledge or the comfort level of using technology. Something as simple as formatting. A table can be intimidating for some of those students and they don't want to talk about this. Usually, that's at least what I found. Because usually I'm younger than a lot of the non-traditional students. I'm not that young but they usually would assume that I'm a lot younger than what I look like. So, they don't feel, they just don't feel comfortable telling me the things that they're struggling with. So, when I ask

them, “Do you have any questions? No, we're good.” Well, “we're good” doesn't mean they actually understand everything it means. They have a plan that they were going to ask help from another person or from their children. But I'm there to help. So, I think I had to even change my teaching philosophy to just really find a way to let them know it's okay.

Participant 5 recalled some of their experiences during the initial transition to online learning, and how their perceptions of accessibility were affected:

I think, where I was going with social justice and multiculturalism, impacting what I did, I feel like Zoom, like we've been talking about, makes it more equitable for everyone across the board. And so, I think that that was kind of my purview walking into it is, you know, we've got to keep people healthy. So, we're gonna move everything online. And that's the fair thing to do. Except how do we then make it equitable for everybody to get online? That was kind of that part, where it was eye opening, working with students all over the world, or all over the country who maybe didn't have access to Wi-Fi. I had students, maybe my students had access, but their K-12 students were sitting, they were sitting in the parking lot at the McDonald's next to the library so that they could get access even though McDonald's was closed. Things like that, and then are they really safe then when they're doing that? And they're kids? So, conversations like that had to happen. And I feel like I know more now. But I wish I had known so much more back then to make it better.

Two subcategories stemmed from accessibility: a) needs for students and b) needs for faculty.

Needs for Students. Participants mentioned wanting to continue mediating the distance created by the pandemic and increased reliance on technology to address student needs.

Participant 3 stated:

But like all the meetings on Zoom have been helpful, I will open up when I meet with students, whether it be for advising or for just general meetings. I've worked with mainly graduate students, but I see a few undergrads. It's one of those, if I'm here, I welcome them to come into my office, we'll chat. But most of them, especially graduate students, prefer the online options. Unless they're coming to campus for a class or want to stay late, many of them don't live quite right here in town, some of them live up to an hour away, and will drive in. And life is busy. They're working adults, many of them have families, they have kids, they're married, they're still working full time. So being able to meet via Zoom for a 10, 20, 30-minute conversation about advising or concerns that we have has

been helpful, especially with even practicum and internship, I have to do some meetings with them at the end of the semester.

5 participants discussed student needs, making this subcategory typical (T).

Needs for Faculty. Counselor education faculty were also tasked with following guidelines passed down from administrations and relaying them to students as people who were being drastically affected by the pandemic as well. Participant 8 recalled feelings of isolation brought on by increased technology use in addition to access and equity:

Also thinking about social justice and thinking about access and equity and how that plays out into teaching. And so, I think those are some of the biggest impacts that it had on, like teaching and my various roles. And just, I think overall the lack of support, there's a lot of expectations from every stakeholder from students, from my department, faculty, from administration, my professional roles, but it was like, no one helping or assisting, or even like checking in on things, so it was a lot of additional like isolation. And just increased those expectations.

Needs for faculty were mentioned by 5 participants, qualifying this subcategory as typical (T).

Table 8 shows the domain and categories aligned with the fifth research question.

Table 8*Research Question 5–Domain, Categories, Subcategories, and Frequencies*

Research Question 5: In what ways has technology influenced counselor educators' attitudes and beliefs around social justice and multiculturalism since the onset of the 2020 pandemic?		
Domain: Perceptions of Social Justice and Multiculturalism following the Onset of the Pandemic		
Category	Subcategories	Frequency
Awareness of Social Issues	News and Media	(T)
	Intersectionality	(T)
Accessibility	Needs for Students	(T)
	Needs for Faculty	(T)

Summary of Chapter

This chapter reports results of 9 demographic surveys and 9 individual interviews with counselor educators who have experience using technology throughout their careers in counselor education. The next chapter will discuss the findings of this research, implications of technology use in counselor education, and limitations of this study.

CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore technology use in counselor education and how it has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. One theoretical framework was introduced to inform the formation of the research questions and the subsequent data analysis conducted by the research team. Findings will be reported in this chapter that coincide with the selected theory as well as the research questions. Furthermore, implications for technology use in counselor education will also be discussed in relation to findings.

Theoretical Approach

The primary theoretical approach used to inform this study is diffusion of innovations theory. Diffusion of innovations has been applied to other areas of research involving technology integration and/or counselor education. This framework was selected for its relevance to the current investigation and for its ability to represent the data collected from the interviews. Diffusion of innovations directly inspired the creation of the fourth research question for this project, which will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

Diffusion of Innovations

A diffusion can be defined as the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system (Rogers, 2003). Throughout diffusion of innovations contexts, *innovation* is often used interchangeably with *technology*. While an innovation is defined as “an idea, practice, or object perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption” (Rogers, 2003, p.11), technology is considered “a design for instrumental action that reduces the uncertainty in the cause-effect relationships involved in achieving a desired outcome” (Rogers, 2003, p.13).

Technology as an Innovation

A technology is often perceived as having a hardware component, consisting of the material or physical object that contains the technology, and a software component that serves as the information base for the tool. Throughout this research study, technology refers to different hardware and software that has been used in different capacities within counselor education. The types of technology being used by counselor educators before and after the onset of the pandemic, and how these technologies were being used provided insight into how counselor educators make decisions to adopt technology as innovations within their profession.

In alignment with the interview data, how education and learning management systems were being used by counselor educators before the onset of the pandemic and how they have been used since then serves as an example of a kind of diffusion across the COVID-19 pandemic. As an innovation, a learning management system like Blackboard, had its use communicated through counselor education in different ways throughout several participants' time in counselor education. Participants recalled using Blackboard in a limited capacity prior to the onset of the pandemic. As the needs of students and faculty changed and evolved over the course of 2020, participants began to explore the functionality of Blackboard to address these needs.

Technology as Communication Channels

Communication channels within counselor education have shifted significantly since the onset of the pandemic. Video conferencing technologies such as Zoom or WebEx are designed in a way that allows individuals to communicate with each other regardless of their physical location. The findings of this study show that participants used different kinds of video conferencing systems to not only continue lines of communication that were disrupted by the

COVID-19 pandemic but to also mimic the former culture of having conversations with one another face-to-face. Video conferencing was reported by participants as a way to continue communication with students, faculty, clients, and family members throughout 2020, and has since become a heavily integrated form of communication following the onset of the pandemic.

Summary of Findings

Nine individual interviews were conducted to collect data about counselor educators' experience using technology following the onset of the pandemic. Seven domains surfaced as a result of these interviews, each with 1-2 categories. There are three potential labels for the subcategories according to consensual qualitative research (CQR) guidelines: 1) general, 2) typical, and 3) variant. If a subcategory applied to all participants, or all but one, the category was labeled general (G). Subcategories that applied to 4-6 participants were labeled typical (T). Subcategories reported by 2-3 participants were labeled variant (V). Detailed findings are reported below.

Findings by Research Question

Five research questions were addressed through nine individual interviews with counselor educators. Results of this study are discussed in the context of each research question below.

Research Question 1

The first research question asked: How was technology being used in counselor education prior to the 2020 global pandemic? The aim of this question was to evaluate the ways in which technology was being used by counselor educators, under the assumption that technology was being used in some capacity prior to the onset of the pandemic. One domain was created for this research question to explore the efforts counselor educators took towards integrating technology

before the onset of the pandemic. Two categories, focused on the types of technology being used and how technology was being used by counselor educators, were established under this domain.

Use of video conferencing technology before the onset of the pandemic was mentioned by all participants. Two participants recalled using rooms designed for video conferencing and distance education, providing the research team with an idea of what earlier forms of video conferencing looked like. These rooms were described as having cameras and screens that would allow for visual and audio communication across distances. Teaching and counseling could be conducted through this type of technology but mentions of other forms of video conferencing systems or applications like FaceTime, were primarily discussed as being used outside of counselor education settings. Participants reported using education and learning management systems like Blackboard before the onset of the pandemic, but with limited functionality. Different forms of technology were being used as supplemental class materials within counselor education that have since evolved, such as cassette tapes, flash drives, and CDs for digital file storage.

While technology was present in counselor education prior to the onset of the pandemic, the research team deduced that participants' use of technology often coincided with what was offered through their place of employment. These technologies also appeared to be used as necessary by participants, as there were only a few mentions of independently choosing to integrate technology into their professions.

Research Question 2

The second research question was: In what ways did the 2020 global pandemic impact counselor educators' use of technology? This question sought to directly address how the pandemic affected counselor educators and how they perceived any changes in their technology

use within counselor education. Counseling and counselor education as a field, relies heavily on community with others and learning by doing. Whereas technology integration may have been viewed as more of an option before 2020, the pandemic created a sense of urgency to learn, use, and integrate technology, as reflected in participant responses.

The domain established for this research question intended to explore how counselor educators experienced a shift in counselor education following the onset of the pandemic, and how their views on their identities and responsibilities as counselor educators shifted as well. After experiencing the initial shock of transitioning from in-person to online learning, counselor educators began to intensely focus on student learning and engagement. How students were learning and how learning could be ensured across distances and through screens encouraged counselor educators to familiarize themselves with more forms of technology as it became more available. Participants were more attentive to the functionality of the learning management systems affiliated with their universities, and referenced using more interactive software during class times to get a better understanding of student engagement. Counselor educators felt a huge responsibility for their students, clients, and supervisees during 2020, and several participants exhibited enthusiasm to continue learning alongside them.

Research Question 3

The third research question was: In what ways did the 2020 global pandemic impact counselor educators' attitudes and beliefs about technology use in the counseling field? The intent behind this question was to identify and explore any thoughts counselor educators had on technology use in counselor education before the pandemic and how they may have differed or evolved since the onset of the pandemic.

Participant data revealed minimal interest in using technology in counselor education prior to the pandemic. Counselor educators who mentioned having experience in using technology within counselor education settings before 2020, often expressed they only used different software affiliated with their place of employment as necessary. Participants often did not feel the need to independently integrate technology into their profession if it was not required of them. The first domain for this research question reflects a slight interest in learning about technology, but there was a present belief that technology integration may disrupt the way counseling students learn and engage with material. Teaching, supervising, and counseling all involve the creation and maintenance of connections with people, and the thought of consistently using video conferencing technology or including several online polls and games would be a hindrance to learning.

The data sorted under the second domain for this research question reveals a more positive outlook on technology use in counselor education following the onset of the pandemic. Participant 2 reported being able to open their own counseling practice that is completely virtual despite having previous concerns with telehealth. Participant 1 addressed the stigma they held about online programs and reached out to their colleagues who had experience teaching online before the pandemic to further their development as an instructor. 8 out of 9 participants held more positive and proactive attitudes towards technology integration in counselor education, and 8 out of 9 participants acknowledged some challenges associated with their increased use of technology in counselor education. Participant 8 briefly mentioned the benefit of having access to ChatGPT, a popular artificial intelligence software that generates text based on prompts or topics provided by users. Unfortunately, the existence of these types of technologies makes it

difficult to evaluate student learning and engagement, as students may use them to complete assignments without retaining knowledge.

Research Question 4

The fourth research question was: How do counselor educators make adoption decisions about technology in clinical practice, research, and teaching? As the primary theoretical framework used to inform this study, Diffusion of Innovations directly inspired the creation of this research question. The primary researcher wanted to investigate the ways in which counselor educators were choosing to incorporate technology into different aspects of their profession since the onset of the pandemic, if they did at all. The word, “adoption” was included in this question as a reference to terminology that is often used throughout Diffusion of Innovations literature. The *rate of adoption* is defined as the speed in which an innovation is adopted by members of a social system and is typically what is explored by diffusion scholars. Within this context, the choices that counselor educators were and are making regarding adoption of technology into clinical practice, research, and teaching were intended to be explored.

The research team created two domains from the interview data that they decided would best address the fourth research question. The first domain explored the efforts counselor educators took towards integrating technology into their profession following the pandemic. Two categories, focused on the types of technology being used and how technology was being used by counselor educators, were established. The subcategory dedicated to video conferencing technology was labeled as general (G), meaning all 9 participants mentioned using video conferencing following the onset of the pandemic.

Several participants discussed using video conferencing more often than they were prior to the onset of the pandemic, and some participants commented on why they made certain

choices with the technology they used. While video conferencing allows for visual and audible communication with others regardless of location, two participants briefly mentioned their thoughts on keeping cameras on or off during virtual meetings. These participants understood the expectation of trying to create an atmosphere reminiscent of in-person classes despite being physically distanced from everyone. They recognized that students attending virtual class meetings may not be able to settle in a location that's conducive to learning and would not feel comfortable having their cameras turned on. Other students reported to the participants that they felt having their cameras on would end up being more distracting for other members of the class. These counselor educators felt that despite wanting to visibly ensure that everyone in their class was engaged, they did not want their students to feel the pressure of having to prove that they were engaging with the class material. Participants instead mentioned using other forms of technology to address and assess student engagement. The adoption and integration of video conferencing technology into teaching and learning was an important component of this study, and counselor educators' reasoning for incorporating technology into virtual settings for example, is an area of future research.

The second domain encompassed how participants indicated they would continue to use technology in counselor education and their thoughts on how counselor education is evolving with technological advances following the onset pandemic. The growth of online counseling and counselor education programs to meet the demands of the mental healthcare field was discussed in addition to the future of on-campus programs. There were comments made throughout the interviews regarding the existence of graduate school programs that are often affiliated with large universities. These large universities have physical campuses that are tailored primarily for undergraduate students, and for participants who were working in graduate school settings before

the onset of the pandemic, there was already a lack of support being felt from university administrations. With most counseling and counselor education programs being master's and doctoral degree programs that have historically been focused on in-person counseling, participants had to consider these factors in their decisions to further integrate technology into their work moving forward.

Research Question 5

The final research question was: In what ways has technology influenced counselor educators' attitudes and beliefs around social justice and multiculturalism since the onset of the 2020 pandemic? As gatekeepers of the counseling profession, counselor educators are responsible for upholding the tenets of social justice and multiculturalism in their profession. The MSJCC provide guidelines for developing multicultural and social justice competency for counseling professionals as it relates to education, training, teaching, and counseling practice (Ratts et al., 2016). The Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC) as it relates to the events of 2020, were the inspiration for this research question and the subsequent interview question asked of participants.

2020 was a year unlike any other for a number of reasons. On January 9, the World Health Organization announced an alarming number of cases of a then-unknown illness in Wuhan, China. By the end of March 2020, the United States led the world in the total known cases of COVID-19. The spread of the virus triggered a global recession, and April saw the highest unemployment rate in the United States since the Great Depression (History, 2020). When stay-at-home orders were issued in March, people everywhere were focused on news outlets and any updates regarding outbreaks. The murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor,

and George Floyd sparked protests and political controversy across the nation, as America's original sin of racism was broadcasted with the inability to be ignored.

Participants spoke to their personal experiences dealing with the chaos of 2020, but also touched on how their increased use of technology allowed them to address the needs of students. The ability to reach people across the world through the use of technology such as Zoom was said to make things more equitable for people across the board. The distribution of a brief, online survey at the start of the semester informed one participant of accommodations and considerations that would need to be made for students that she would have had no knowledge of if they were not inclined to send out the survey. Another participant was able to create a safe enough space for their students to disclose their experiences as neurodivergent learners, and how that has assisted in or worsened their experiences with online learning. Counselor educators' embodiment of social justice and multiculturalism during a time of civil unrest and uncertainty was explored through this question, as well as any thoughts they had on the role of technology during that time.

Recommendations for Future Research

Steps for future research include the need to test other theories and models to better understand how counselor educators use technology. The purpose of this research study was not to test theories, but to explore how the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic affected how counselor educators use technology. Since diffusion of innovations was not tested as a part of this research study, rather it was used to inform the study, conclusions cannot be drawn as to the extent to which it can explain how technology use in counselor education has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Components of the theory, however, seem to be worthy of further exploration. Other models or theories specific to counselor education and technology could serve

as a foundation for building interventions or best practices as the world continues to move farther away from the initial onset of the pandemic as well.

Outcome research examining the effectiveness of technology integration in counselor education since the onset of the pandemic could provide additional insight into benefits of these practices. Participants of the current study often cited student engagement in the classroom as a primary reason for integrating new forms of technology into their work and recalled receiving positive feedback from students for their efforts. Collaboration and transparency between graduate faculty and students could be assessed to ultimately contribute to best practices in counselor education graduate programs. A deeper understanding of how beneficial technology integration in counselor education from the perspective of graduate students in counseling programs is worthy of further research exploration.

As time moves forward and away from the initial onset of the pandemic, the lasting effects on education systems in general need to be researched. COVID-19 incited change in many aspects of education, research should continue to investigate how those changes have been maintained, reversed, or improved.

Limitations

As with all research studies, this one has limitations that must be considered when reviewing its findings. Attention has been paid to each of these and intentional decisions about how to proceed were made before continuing with the current study. Limitations that were considered include the research team assembly and limitations related to sampling.

Each member of the research team experienced a portion of their time as a counseling and counselor education student before and after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Research team members often spoke of their shared experiences with participants and were knowledgeable

about most of the technology mentioned as well as the different facets of counselor education. Their personal experiences in graduate school as well as their shared experiences with the rest of the world may have affected the ways in which the findings were reported in this study.

Another limitation of this study is the effect the sampling procedures may have had on the findings. Participants were recruited by way of two counselor educators serving as program coordinators of counseling and counselor education graduate programs. The program coordinators were asked to distribute the recruitment materials of this study to their respective networks, classifying this sampling method as purposive, convenience sampling. While these two counselor educators did not participate in the current study, the participants who chose to complete the study were within the scope of the program coordinators' networks. This means that despite having a relatively diverse sample of nine participants, the study may have been able to obtain more participants if the sampling procedures were designed to reach a larger population of counselor educators.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore how the COVID-19 pandemic affected how counselor educators use technology. The consensual qualitative research (CQR) approach was used to provide detailed perspectives of counselor educators and their experiences in counselor education before the pandemic and following its initial onset. The findings suggest that the pandemic did change how counselor educators think about and use technology within counselor education. The implications of this research can be applied to counselor educators as they continue to propel the field following the onset of the pandemic.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire

1. Race/Ethnicity
2. Age
3. Please indicate the highest level of degree you have earned.
 1. Master's Degree
 2. Doctoral Degree
 3. Other
4. What discipline is your master's degree?
5. Was the program where you completed your master's degree accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) at the time of your graduation?
6. What year was your master's degree conferred?
7. What discipline is your doctoral degree?
8. Was the program where you completed your doctorate degree accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) at the time of your graduation?
9. What year was your doctoral degree conferred?
10. Select your counseling specialization area:
 1. School Counseling
 2. Clinical Mental Health/ Community Counseling
 3. Student Affairs/ College Counseling
 4. Addictions Counseling
 5. Marriage, Couple, and/or Family Counseling
 6. Clinical Rehabilitation Counseling
 7. Career Counseling
 8. Gerontological Counseling
 9. Other
11. Are you currently employed by an institution where you earned a degree?
 1. If Yes, please include the type of degree earned at the institution where you are currently employed.
12. Please indicate the type of institution you currently work for: Public or Private
13. Are you currently employed by an institution accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)?
14. The counselor education program I work in trains:
 1. Master's level students
 2. Doctoral level students
 3. Both master's and doctoral level students
 4. Other
15. How many years of counseling experience have you had?
16. How many years of counselor education experience have you had?
17. Please describe any professional job roles you have held following the completion of your doctorate degree.

18. Please select the tasks you perform within your role as a counselor educator:
1. Research
 2. Scholarly Writing
 3. Grant Writing
 4. Conference Presentations
 5. Teaching
 6. Counseling
 7. Supervision
 8. Professional Service
 9. Clinical practice (serving clients as a practicing counselor)
 10. Other
19. Please select the category below that best describes your current counselor educator position.
1. Tenured counselor educator
 1. Professor Emeritus
 2. Professor
 3. Associate Professor
 4. Other _____
 2. Tenure-track counselor educator
 1. Assistant Professor
 2. Other _____
 3. Full-time non-tenure track counselor educator
 1. Teaching Assistant Professor
 2. Visiting Professor
 3. Clinical Professor
 4. Other _____
 4. Adjunct Instructor
20. Please list any relevant licenses/certifications to counseling and/or counselor education.
21. Please list any relevant professional memberships to counseling and/or counselor education organizations.

Please enter your email below so I can provide you with a copy of the interview after it has been transcribed.

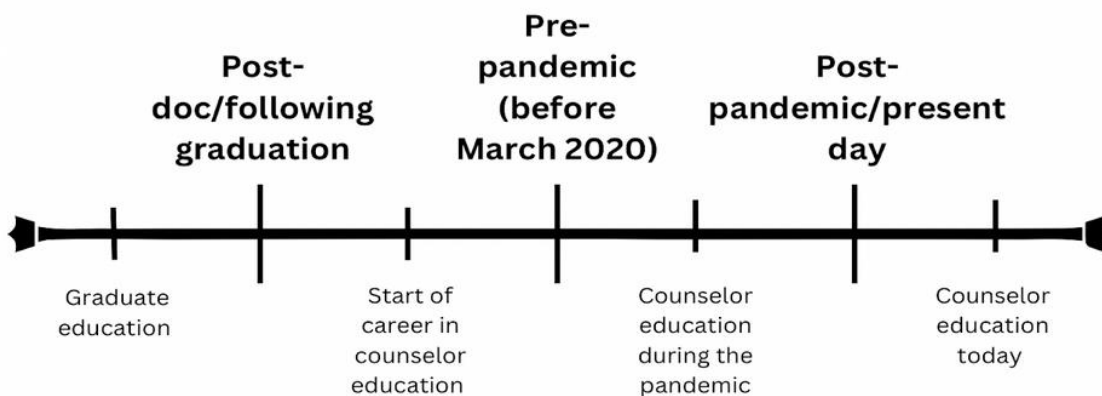
Email: _____

Appendix B

Interview Protocol

1. Tell me a little bit about yourself and about what drew you to counselor education?
2. **Priming activity:** Next we're going to do a short activity to get you thinking more about technology. You can use a paper and pencil, or jot down some notes on your computer or your phone, but what I will ask you to do is complete a timeline of your time using technology throughout your education. We can think of this in 3 zones or time periods which are: 1) post doc or immediately following your graduation from your program or wherever you were in your career immediately following graduation, 2) pre-pandemic, and 3) post-pandemic. I will provide a definition of technology and an example of what a timeline can look like on the screen. We'll just take 3-4 minutes for this activity and then we'll come back to the interview.

Technology can be defined as the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes. This can be through the development of machinery, equipment, and software to further the application of scientific knowledge.



3. What are some of the things you highlighted on your timeline?
4. Tell me about how you decided to use these technology solutions in your work as a counselor educator.
 1. After looking at your timeline, would you mind speaking to the ways in which you've used technology for teaching, research, and service throughout your career as a Counselor Educator?

5. A lot changed abruptly for Counselor Educators in 2020 due to the pandemic, and I'm wondering how you would describe the impact of COVID-19 on your use of technology?
 1. How have your attitudes and beliefs about technology changed since the pandemic?
 2. Did you find that technology was influencing your views on social justice and multiculturalism following the onset pandemic?
 1. Or vice versa?
6. What haven't I asked you that you think is important for me to understand about technology use in counselor education since the onset of the pandemic?

Appendix C

Recruitment Email

Hello,

My name is Briana Barrett and I am a doctoral candidate at North Carolina State University. I am writing to request your participation in my dissertation research project. The purpose of this research project is to determine how technology use of counselor educators has been affected since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. More specifically, this study seeks to investigate your professional experiences with and perceptions of technology use and how these may have changed over the last three to four years. To be a participant in this research study, you must have been working in counselor education or a counselor education-related field before Fall 2019.

In this study, you will be asked to complete an electronic, demographic survey that assesses your previous and current experience in counseling and counselor education. The total estimated time of the entire investigation is two hours, with up to thirty minutes allotted for you to complete the demographic form, and up to one hour and thirty minutes to complete the interview with me.

The interview will be scheduled using the web-conferencing software, Zoom. I will request your consent for the interview to be audio-recorded. I will limit access to the survey and audio recording by keeping them stored in a password-protected folder on my university-administered laptop following its upload to my NCSU Zoom account. After the interview is completed and within two weeks, I will contact you and provide you with a written transcript of your responses for your review and approval. I will then destroy the digital audio files of the interview from my NCSU Zoom account. Informed consent documentation will be stored in a password-protected folder on my laptop.

Please note that your participation in this research project is voluntary. The North Carolina State University's Institutional Review Board has approved this study. An IRB office ensures that studies with human participants follow federal rules and helps participants if they have any issues regarding research activities. Should you have any concerns about your rights and how you are being treated, you may contact the NC State IRB (Institutional Review Board) office. You can contact the NC State University IRB office at IRB-Director@ncsu.edu, 919-515-8754, or [fill out a confidential form online](https://research.ncsu.edu/administration/participant-concern-and-complaint-form/) at <https://research.ncsu.edu/administration/participant-concern-and-complaint-form/>.

Questions, concerns or complaints about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this study can be answered by Dr. Adria Dunbar who may be contacted at [email address]. If you have questions, want more information, or would like to be a part of this investigation, please contact me, Briana Barrett, at [email address] and/or by phone at xxx-xxx-xxxx.

I thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

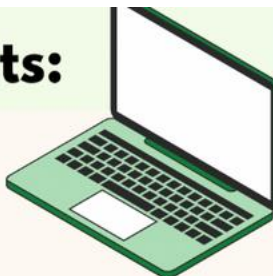
[Briana Barrett](#), LCMHCA, NCC

Appendix D

Recruitment Image


Looking for participants:

COUNSELOR EDUCATORS



This is a research study:

The purpose of this research study is to explore how the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced counselor educators' use of technology.




Participants must:

- ✓ Reside in the United States
- ✓ Be at least 18 years of age
- ✓ Have a graduate degree in counselor education or counselor education-related discipline
- ✓ Have been working in counselor education since or before 2019

Follow this [link](#) or scan the QR Code to complete the Informed Consent form and a Demographic Survey.

Questions? Please contact Briana Barrett.



Email: bjbarre2@ncsu.edu
Phone: 757-651-6904
NCSU IRB: 25277

Appendix E

Informed Consent Form

Project Title: Technology Use in Counselor Education Since the Onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic

eIRB #: 25277

Primary Researcher: Briana Barrett

Funding Source:

NCSU Faculty Point of Contact:

Collaborating Researchers:

What are some general things you should know about research studies?

You are invited to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate, and to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of this qualitative research study is to gain a better understanding of how the COVID-19 pandemic affected counselor educators' use of technology. We will do this through a brief survey and a semi-structured interview.

You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in this study. Research studies may pose risks to those who participate. You may want to participate in this research because you identify as a counselor educator and have been working in counselor education since or before the Fall of 2019. You may not want to participate in this research if you are not considered a counselor educator or if you have not been working in counselor education since or before the Fall of 2019.

Specific details about the research in which you are invited to participate are contained below. If you do not understand something in this form, please ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If, at any time, you have questions about your participation in this research, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above or the NC State IRB office. The IRB office's contact information is listed in the *What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?* section of this form.

What is the purpose of this study?

This is a dissertation research project. The purpose of this research project is to determine how the COVID-19 pandemic affected counselor educators' technology use. More specifically, this study seeks to investigate professional experiences with the pandemic and perceptions of technology use in counselor education over the past three to four years.

How many people will be a part of this study?

There will be approximately 8-15 participants in this study.

Am I eligible to be a participant in this study?

In order to be a participant in this study, you must agree to be in the study and:

1. Be at least 18 years of age.
2. Have a graduate degree in counselor education or a counselor education-related field that was conferred before the Fall of 2019.
3. Have been working in counselor education since or before the Fall of 2019.

You cannot participate in this study if:

1. You do not have a graduate degree in counselor education or a counselor education-related discipline.
2. Your graduate degree in counselor education or a counselor education-related discipline was conferred in the Spring of 2020 or after.
3. You have not been working in counselor education since or before the Fall of 2019.

What will happen if you take part in the study?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to do all of the following:

1. Complete a brief survey on your education and professional background in counselor education or a related field.
2. Following the completion of the survey, the primary researcher will send a follow-up email if participant criteria is met.
3. Schedule an interview with the primary researcher using the scheduling software, Calendly.
4. Participate in a virtual interview on Zoom for approximately 1.5 hours.
5. Receive and review transcription of responses 1 - 2 weeks following the interview.

No aspect of this study involves deception. Deception in research can be related to your being unaware of the specific methods being used by the researcher, the researcher giving you misleading information, or the researcher not fully disclosing some aspect of the study. An example of this could be that you are unaware of the true goal of the project or that you are unaware of every type of information that is collected. At the conclusion of the interview, the primary researcher will review the purpose of the study, and your responses will be made available to you before being evaluated by the research team.

The total amount of time that you will be participating in this study will be 1.5 - 2 hours.

Recording and images

Semi-structured interviews will take place on the video conferencing platform, Zoom. If you want to participate in this research, you must agree to be audio recorded on Zoom. If you do not agree to be audio recorded, you cannot participate in this research.

_____I consent to be audio recorded.

_____I do not consent to be audio recorded.

Risks and benefits

There are minimal risks associated with participation in this research, but anxiety or discomfort may occur during or after an interview. To avoid any risk from discussing personal or sensitive information, the researcher will take specific measures to protect information shared by participants. The measures that will be taken to protect confidentiality are explained below. The researcher has been trained and is a professional capable of handling emotional distress during the research process.

There are benefits to your participation in the research. Your participation in this research is an opportunity for you to confidentially disclose your experiences in counselor education and how your use of technology has been affected by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The information gained in this study can potentially impact how counselor educators evaluate, perceive, and implement technology into counselor education curricula.

Right to withdraw your participation

You can stop participating in this study at any time for any reason. To do so, just stop any research activity that you are doing or contact the primary researcher, Briana Barrett, at [email address] and xxx-xxx-xxxx. You can also contact the faculty advisor for this research, Dr. Adria Dunbar, at [email address] and xxx-xxx-xxxx. If you choose to withdraw your consent and to stop participating in this research, you can expect that the researcher(s) will remove your data from their data set, securely destroy your data, and prevent future uses of your data for research purposes wherever possible.

Confidentiality, personal privacy, and data management

Trust is the foundation of the participant/researcher relationship. Much of that principle of trust is tied to keeping your information private and in the manner that I have described to you in this form. The information that you share with me will be held in confidence to the fullest extent allowed by law.

Protecting your privacy as related to this research is of utmost importance to me. There are very rare circumstances related to confidentiality where I may have to share information about you.

Your information collected in this research study could be reviewed by representatives of the University, research sponsors, or government agencies (for example, the FDA) for purposes such as quality control or safety. In other cases, I must report instances in which imminent harm could come to you or others.

How I manage, protect, and share your data are the principal ways that I protect your personal privacy. Data that will be shared with others about you will be de-identified.

De-identified. De-identified data is information that at one time can directly identify you, but that I will record this data so that your identity will be separated from the data. I will have a master list with your code and real name and email address that I can use to link to your data. When the research concludes, there will be no way your real identity will be linked to the data I publish.

Future use of your research data

To help maximize the benefits of your participation in this project, by further contributing to science and our community, your de-identified information will be stored for future research and may be shared with other people without additional consent from you.

Emergency medical treatment

If you are hurt or injured during the study session(s), the researcher will call 911 for necessary care. There is no provision for compensation or free medical care for you if you are injured as a result of this study.

What if you are a student?

Your participation in this study is not a course requirement and your participation, or lack thereof, will not affect your class standing or grades.

What if you are an employee?

Your participation in this study is not a requirement of your employment, and your participation or lack thereof, will not affect your job.

What if you have questions about this study?

If you have questions at any time about the study itself or the procedures implemented in this study, you may contact the primary researcher, Briana Barrett, at [email address] and xxx-xxx-xxxx. You can also contact the faculty advisor for this research, Dr. Adria Dunbar, at [email address] and xxx-xxx-xxxx.

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact the NC State IRB (Institutional Review Board) office. An IRB office helps participants if they have any issues regarding research activities. You can contact the NC State University IRB office at IRB-Director@ncsu.edu, 919-515-8754, or fill out a confidential form online at <https://research.ncsu.edu/administration/participant-concern-and-complaint-form/>

Consent to participate

By signing this electronically consent form, I am affirming that I have read and understand the above information. All of the questions that I had about this research have been answered. I have chosen to participate in this study with the understanding that I may stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled. I am aware that I may revoke my consent at any time.

Yes, I want to be in this research study.

Printed Name _____

Signature _____

Your email address _____

Today's Date _____

No, I do not want to be in this research study.

Thank you for your consideration.

**Primary Researcher's
Signature** _____

Today's Date _____

Appendix F

Member Checking Email

Hello,

I hope this email finds you well. I am contacting you to request that you review the interview transcript from our interview scheduled _____. This process is referred to as “member checking” and will involve the following steps:

1. I will share your interview transcript via my private North Carolina State University Google Drive folder.
2. You are asked to gain access to the document(s) using your personal computer and a secure network. Both of us will be the only ones to be able to access this private folder. I suggest completing this activity in a private location, on a private internet connection, and accessing this folder using a web browser that is in private/incognito mode.
3. You will read through the document(s) in the private folder and comment in the document if you agree, disagree, or would like to clarify or change the content in each document and how you would like to do so. I expect this will take about 30 minutes to 1 hour of your time.
4. You will email me to inform me that you have completed reading through your document(s) and commenting on them as appropriate. I am requesting that you do this within two weeks of this email. ***Please do not provide information or feedback in the email you send to me regarding your completion of the task.***
5. Once the verification process by you is completed, I will remove your access to the private NC State University Google Drive folder with your document(s) in it.

I expect that the member-checking activities will take about 30 minutes to 1 hour of your time. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you!

Sincerely,
Briana Barrett