

The Therapeutic Relationship in AI-Mediated Psychological Counselling: Review of Therapeutic Alliance, Empathy, and Trust

Shalini Roychaudhary, Assistant Professor, Dibrugarh University, Centre for Studies in Applied Psychology, Assam, India.

Sumit Deodhar, Independent Researcher, Psychology, India

A B S T R A C T

The increasing integration of artificial intelligence (AI) in mental health interventions has raised questions regarding its impact on the therapeutic relationship, a core component of counselling psychology. This review examines the psychological constructs of therapeutic alliance, empathy, and trust in AI-mediated counselling. Drawing on recent empirical and theoretical literature, this paper synthesizes findings on how AI-based tools influence relational dynamics between clients and technology-assisted counselling systems. Implications for counselling practice, ethical considerations, and future research directions are discussed. Results suggest that while AI offers accessibility and consistency, challenges persist in replicating human-like empathy and establishing trust, highlighting the need for human-centered design grounded in psychological theory.

Keywords: AI-mediated counselling, therapeutic alliance, empathy, trust, counselling psychology, digital mental health.