

# Integrating Art Therapy into Counselling Education: Insights from Art Educators, Art Therapists, and Counsellors in Ghanaian Universities

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the integration of art therapy into counselling education in Ghanaian universities, focusing on the perspectives of art educators, art therapists, and counsellors with an art background. The objective was to gather insights on the relevance and potential benefits of incorporating art therapy into counselling education at the tertiary level in Ghana. Guided by interpretivist philosophy, a qualitative research approach with a descriptive design was employed. Expert purposive sampling was used to select 10 respondents who provided critical information essential for the study. The findings, based on positive perceptions from the respondents, suggest that art therapy has significant potential in enhancing counselling education. Its ability to transcend language and cultural barriers, improve diagnostic and therapeutic processes, and increase client engagement makes it a valuable tool for counsellors working with diverse populations. Based on these findings, the study recommends the active integration of art therapy to enhance the diagnostic and therapeutic processes in counselling, thereby improving the overall effectiveness of counselling services.

**Keywords:** Art therapy, Integration, Counselling, therapeutic, Clients, Mental health, Emotional healing.

## INTRODUCTION

Art therapy has gained recognition as a transformative approach to fostering emotional healing and psychological well-being by utilizing creative expression to address mental health challenges. As a hybrid discipline that merges elements of art and psychotherapy, it offers alternative avenues for emotional communication, particularly for individuals who face difficulties with verbal expression. Its broad applications in education, counselling, and healthcare settings worldwide underscore the importance of integrating art therapy into counselling practices (Rahman, Mahmud & Johari, 2024). Efland (2004) further emphasizes that the arts have long been integral to human emotional experience, highlighting their enduring relevance in therapeutic contexts.

In Ghana, there is an increasing demand for effective mental health interventions, particularly within educational settings. Although counselling education in Ghanaian universities has traditionally focused on talk-based approaches, integrating art therapy offers a valuable opportunity to enhance and diversify the training of counsellors (Suzanne & Nancy, 2017). This approach holds significant relevance in Ghana's culturally rich context, where art and creative expression are deeply rooted in societal traditions and practices.

Despite its potential, the integration of art therapy into counselling education in Ghana remains underexplored. To address this gap, the perspectives of key stakeholders, art educators, art therapists, and counsellors are critical. Their insights can shed light on the relevance, feasibility, and strategies for incorporating art therapy into counselling curricula, ensuring it aligns with local needs and practices.

Chibbaro (2011) investigated the role of the arts in school counselling, with a particular emphasis on visual arts, including painting and drawing techniques. The study examined various artistic strategies that school counsellors could adopt, revealing that skilled counsellors can use art integration as a valuable tool to enrich children's lives. This finding aligns with Gladding and Ivers, (2013) assertion that art enhances children's self-awareness and overall development, ultimately improving their quality of life. The research further suggested that incorporating

art therapy into classrooms could support student growth and development, offering flexible solutions to address individual challenges.

However, there is limited research on the role of arts in school counselling within the Ghanaian context. To address this gap, the present study explored practitioners' perspectives on the importance of integrating art therapy into counselling education in Ghanaian tertiary institutions. An example of such integration is the use of art therapy in schools to help students process trauma and adapt to various situations (Gonzalez-Dolginko, 2018).

This exploration seeks to underscore the significance of adopting a multidisciplinary approach to counselling education in Ghanaian universities. By leveraging the expertise of professionals from both the art and counselling disciplines, it aims to foster innovative and inclusive mental health solutions within the higher education system.

## Objective

To ascertain the views of art educators, art therapists and counsellors with art background on the relevance of incorporating art therapy into counselling education in Ghanaian tertiary institutions.

## Research Question

What are the views of Art educators, Art therapist and Counsellors with art background on the integration of art therapy into counselling education at the tertiary level?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

This study is grounded in the sublimation theory in art, which suggests that individuals can transform negative emotions and socially unacceptable impulses into positive, constructive activities, particularly through creative expression. Rooted in psychoanalytic theory, sublimation was first articulated by Sigmund Freud, who proposed that creative processes provide a means of redirecting instinctual drives into socially acceptable and culturally enriching endeavors (Freud, as cited in Gay, 1995). Within art therapy, sublimation plays a crucial role by enabling emotional release, self-exploration, and psychological healing through non-verbal expression (Kramer & Gerity, 2000).

The theoretical foundation of this study draws heavily on the pioneering contributions of Margaret Naumburg and Edith Kramer, two seminal figures in art therapy who expanded upon Freud's sublimation theory. Naumburg, often regarded as the mother of art therapy in the United States, emphasized symbolic communication and used spontaneous art-making to help clients improve verbal expression and transference. She viewed art as a pathway to uncover unconscious thoughts and feelings, aiding in therapeutic dialogue. Kramer, on the other hand, underscored the importance of creative effort in achieving sublimation. She maintained that the very act of making art rather than interpreting it was therapeutic, as it enabled individuals to channel their inner conflicts into productive and socially valuable forms.

Historically, the connection between creative expression and healing spans many cultures and centuries. Degges-White (2011) points out that the integration of the arts into therapeutic practices is not a modern phenomenon. In ancient civilizations such as Greece and Rome, theater and comedy were prescribed to alleviate symptoms of mental distress, including depression and anxiety. Likewise, tribal societies have long used ritualistic forms of dance and music for emotional healing and environmental harmony. These traditions underscore the universality and timelessness of creative practices as vehicles for psychological well-being.

The evolution of art therapy was significantly influenced by the emergence of psychodynamic theories in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The introduction of the unconscious mind as a psychological construct by Freud and Carl Jung provided a foundational framework for understanding the therapeutic potential of art (Hogan, 2001). Art became recognized not just as an expressive outlet, but as a tool for revealing and working through unconscious conflicts and emotional trauma.

Artists such as Viktor Lowenfeld, Maria Petrie, and Florence Cane played pivotal roles in the early use of art as therapy. Although they did not initially identify themselves as "art therapists," their work in education and

psychology acknowledged the healing potential of artistic expression. Their contributions helped shape the emerging identity of art therapy as a distinct professional field (Rubin, 1999).

In modern clinical practice, art therapy is widely employed in contexts ranging from psychotherapy and Counselling to rehabilitation and trauma recovery. Numerous studies affirm its effectiveness in helping individuals process grief, manage anxiety and depression, and recover from various forms of psychological distress (Barath, 2003; Morin, 2020).

The integration of art therapy into educational and Counselling settings mirrors the broader evolution of school Counselling as a profession. Initially perceived as a supportive service, school Counselling gained formal recognition as an essential part of the educational system by the mid-20th century. A transformative figure in this shift was Carl Rogers, whose 1940s publication, *Counselling and Psychotherapy: Newer Concepts in Practice*, introduced the person-centered approach. Rogers emphasized the importance of the counselor's empathy, authenticity, and unconditional positive regard in fostering self-actualization and personal growth (Lambie & Williamson, 2004). His philosophy profoundly influenced educational Counselling and remains integral to art therapy's humanistic underpinnings.

The cross-cultural relevance of art therapy continues to be evident in contemporary research. Zhou and Zhang (2021) note that the ancient use of music and theater for therapeutic purposes laid the groundwork for today's structured art therapy practices. The formal institutionalization of art therapy began in the mid-20th century through the work of figures like Adrian Hill and Edward Adamson in the United Kingdom, and Margaret Naumburg in the United States (Kramer & Naumburg, 2022). These pioneers associated art-making with the expression of the unconscious, solidifying its place within psychotherapy.

Modern art therapists, often trained in both psychology and the arts, facilitate creative sessions that allow clients to explore deep emotions and communicate in ways that transcend language barriers. According to Roden (2020), the collaboration between therapist and client in the art-making process can produce profound emotional insight and behavioral transformation. Pitt (2024) argues that the effectiveness of art and by extension, art therapy extends well beyond the act of creation, centering instead on the therapeutic relationship it cultivates. This relationship is grounded in mutual trust and the shared construction of meaning between the therapist and the client. The sensory and visual dimensions of art-making serve as vital tools in this process, offering a tangible means for clients to explore and communicate complex emotions. Through this non-verbal medium, individuals can foster deeper self-awareness and engage in therapeutic dialogue, making art therapy especially beneficial for those who find verbal expression challenging.

Although art therapy has deep historical roots, its formal recognition within mainstream psychology is still expanding. Contemporary studies affirm art therapy's efficacy as a complementary or alternative approach to traditional talk therapy, particularly for populations that experience difficulty with verbal communication, such as children, trauma survivors, and individuals with disabilities (Lu et al., 2022). As a result, art therapy continues to gain traction as a holistic and culturally adaptive intervention that supports emotional and psychological well-being across diverse contexts.

### **Art Therapy in Africa**

Art therapy practices in Africa have been adapted to suit diverse cultural and social contexts. Chu (2010) explored the use of culturally sensitive art therapy in post-genocide Rwanda, employing box-making to help young survivors express trauma. Chu's approach emphasized cultural appropriateness, ethical conduct, and community collaboration.

In South Africa, Field and Kruger (2008) used a psycho-cybernetic model of art psychotherapy with HIV-positive Black women. Their doll-making therapy aimed to foster self-expression and emotional control, successfully reducing depression and increasing internal locus of control.

Solomon (2006) highlighted challenges faced by art therapy practitioners in South Africa, including unclear government certification processes and lack of formal training. Despite this, both British-trained art therapists and indigenous healers have been working to meet community needs, often without official recognition.

Tekulu (2023) emphasized the critical need to integrate indigenous knowledge systems with Western therapeutic models, particularly within multicultural and postcolonial contexts. He argued that conventional Western approaches to therapy often overlook the lived realities, spiritual worldviews, and communal healing traditions of non-Western societies. By advocating for a culturally respectful and inclusive framework, Tekulu called for the development of hybrid models of therapy that recognize the value of ancestral wisdom, oral traditions, rituals, and community-based practices. This integrative approach not only enhances therapeutic relevance and effectiveness but also fosters empowerment and cultural validation among clients. According to Tekulu, such integration ensures that therapeutic interventions resonate with the social, historical, and spiritual contexts of the populations they aim to serve, thereby bridging the gap between culturally imposed models and indigenous healing practices

Responding to a shortage of mental health professionals, Berman (2011) established the Lefika La Phodiso Art Therapy Centre in Johannesburg. The center trains “community art counsellors” who, while not licensed therapists, are equipped to provide supportive art-based interventions, especially in communities affected by chronic trauma.

## METHODOLOGY

Guided by the interpretivist philosophy, the researcher adopted a qualitative research approach with a descriptive design for the study. Interpretivists argue that reality is a complex social construct shaped by values, meanings, and lived experiences (Grix, 2004). Unlike the positivist perspective, which emphasizes sensory observation and objective experience, interpretivists focus on the meaning individuals assign to their experiences, asserting that reality is better understood through these subjective interpretations (Bryman, 2004). Consequently, in interpretivist research, people's interpretations of situations and their lived experiences serve as the primary data source (Grix, 2004; Bryman, 2004). Using expert purposive sampling, the researcher selected 10 respondents who provided critical information for the study that could not be obtained from other potential participants. The goal was to assemble a group of respondents deemed most appropriate for the study based on the researcher's assessment (Henn, Weinstein, & Foard, 2009). Counselling lecturers and academic counsellors from the Counselling Department at the University of Education, Winneba, were chosen through purposive sampling. Similarly, art therapy lecturers and licensed art therapists in Ghana were selected using the same method. These participants, chosen as key informants due to their extensive knowledge, were interviewed individually for the study with a semi structured interview guide, the researcher subjected each respondent to an interview that lasted for not less than 30 minutes. Before participating, all respondents were asked to sign consent forms and were assured that their responses would remain anonymous and confidential. This reassured them, allowing them to freely share their views for the study. The collected data were initially reviewed for accuracy and completeness. Following this, thematic analysis was conducted, and the results were presented using descriptive charts.

Table 1 Sample distribution for participants

Respondents	Number of Respondents	Number Selected
Counselling Lecturers	17	4
Academic Counsellors	4	2
Art Therapist	2	2
Art therapy Lecturers	4	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>10</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2022

## Result and Analysis

What are the views of Art educators, Art therapist and Counsellors with art background on the integration of art therapy into counselling education at the tertiary level?

This objective was set to find out the views of practitioners (academic counsellors and art therapists) on the relevance of incorporating Art therapy into counselling education at the tertiary level.



The data analysis followed a structured three-stage coding process. First, relevant text segments were highlighted using a coding framework informed by the study's theory and research questions. Next, these codes were grouped into sub-themes and broader categories, revealing patterns in the data. Finally, key themes were developed and refined to reflect participants' perspectives and address the research questions. A meticulous line-by-line review ensured accuracy, with descriptive labels assigned to support systematic organization and interpretation.

Table 2 Summary of coding

<b>Codes:</b>	Roles, problems, misconception, confidentiality, ready to speak, open-up, reticent client, restoration, diagnose, psychodynamics, /heard, animation, learn about the use of art therapy, inner feeling, art work, drawing, unconscious thought, creative arts, aid clients, distinct profession, /better results, enjoyable, analyses feelings, additional tool, need art therapy, good suggestion, nonthreatening, simple, common goal, therapeutic use of art, helpful, use all senses, remember, appreciate.
<b>Categories:</b>	Therapeutic measures, knowledge on art therapy, practitioners' views, integration relevance.
<b>Themes:</b>	Practitioners' Perspectives, Efficacy of Art Therapy as a Therapeutic Measure

### Practitioners' perspectives:

Practitioners in the field of counselling, such as academic counsellors at the University of Education, Winneba, share their perspectives on the integration of art therapy into counselling education. These practitioners emphasize the importance of practical orientation in counselling, moving beyond a purely theoretical approach. They acknowledge the challenges encountered in diagnosing and restoring clients, particularly with the use of psychometric tests that may be difficult for students to understand and interpret effectively. The practitioners highlight the significance of creating a comfortable and jovial environment for students to open up about their issues. **Counsellor 1 stated**, "Integrating art therapy into counselling training would be beneficial because, as the saying goes, all work and no play makes Jack a numb boy" (verbatim). He suggested that incorporating various art forms such as dancing, music, painting, and drawing can make counselling sessions more engaging and enjoyable. The counsellor emphasized the importance of building rapport with clients, as it facilitates effective communication and problem-solving. Although they acknowledged having limited knowledge or expertise in art therapy, they recognized its potential to create a relaxed and open atmosphere through activities like playing music or dancing with clients.

According to the practitioners, integrating art therapy into counselling training would enhance both the efficiency and effectiveness of counsellors. They believe that incorporating creative activities such as dancing, music, painting, and drawing into counselling sessions can make the process more engaging and appealing for clients. From an economic perspective, they also suggest that art therapy could play a role in addressing the widespread issue of mental instability in society. As Counsellor 2 noted, "While retaining the anonymity required by ethics for interventions or therapies, art might offer a different dimension in which a session can be held outside. Increased accessibility and cost savings are two benefits of incorporating art therapy" (verbatim). However, the practitioners acknowledge the need for training, retraining, and orientations to ensure the successful integration of art therapy into counselling. They emphasise the importance of specialised training to develop expertise in using art therapy as a complementary approach to talk therapy. They also stress the need for individual differences to be considered, as not all counsellors may initially embrace the idea of art therapy integration.

In terms of logistics, the practitioners recognize potential hindrances to the smooth integration of art therapy into counselling education, particularly within the university setting. They highlight the need for proper planning, resources, and support to ensure the successful implementation of art therapy programmes. Experienced counsellors with several years of practice emphasise the challenges they face in diagnosing clients, particularly in cultures where counselling is not widely emphasised or perceived as necessary. Clients may resist or question the need for diagnoses, leading to hesitancy in sharing personal information. To overcome this, counsellors employ various techniques such as engaging clients in casual conversations about their interests and strong character traits to build rapport and encourage dialogue.

## **Efficacy of Art Therapy as a Therapeutic Measure:**

This theme explores how art therapy is viewed as an effective therapeutic intervention. It delves into the specific ways in which art therapy is used to address various psychological and emotional issues, particularly in cases where traditional talk therapy may fall short. The theme also highlights the unique benefits of art therapy, such as its ability to access deep-seated emotions and memories, provide non-verbal outlets for expression, and cater to the needs of diverse client populations. Practitioners in counselling education acknowledge the potential benefits of integrating art therapy into their practice. They believe that art therapy can enhance diagnostic and restoration processes, foster client engagement, and provide an additional tool for counsellors. However, they also emphasise the importance of training, retraining, and individualised approaches to ensure the effective integration of art therapy into counselling education. Practitioners recognize the potential benefits of incorporating art therapy into counselling education. They highlight the importance of creating counselling spaces that are conducive to clients' comfort and privacy. They believe that incorporating art therapy can provide a different dimension to counselling sessions, allowing for sessions to be held outside formal settings while maintaining ethical standards and anonymity. This increased accessibility and cost savings are seen as advantages of integrating art therapy into counselling.

Furthermore, practitioners envision the possible impact of art therapy in educational settings, particularly primary schools. They believe that incorporating art therapy into the curriculum would enhance the effectiveness of counselling services and improve accessibility. By analysing students' writings, drawings, and paintings, counsellors can gain insights into their emotional well-being and home environments, leading to more effective diagnostic procedures. This integration of art therapy would equip counsellors with additional skills to better understand and support students. Art therapy is an invaluable resource in the field of counselling because it enables clients to actively involve their senses and delve into their unconscious thoughts and emotions. It is seen as an expressive subject that allows for the diagnosis of clients by analysing their artistic creations and engaging in questioning. The therapist acknowledges the use of specific theoretical orientations, particularly those aligned with psychoanalysis, but with a practical expression through art.

### **An extract from Art therapist 1:**

"I have worked for eight years—two as an art therapist in the USA and six at a university counselling centre in Ghana. Art is an expressive medium that reflects a person's inner feelings. Therefore, if you want to understand or diagnose someone, you need to engage with their artwork or observe them through their creative process. Art therapy serves as a window into a person's life.

When working with clients, the approach varies depending on whether the individual is an artist or a non-artist. For non-artists, the therapist might guide them in creating a picture. Depending on the situation, the client may or may not be encouraged to draw further. The artwork is then analyzed, often revealing a story or emotional insight about the client.

Art therapy functions by uncovering a client's unconscious thoughts. For example, through their drawings and the therapist's guided questioning, it is possible to infer the client's emotions and psychological state. Art therapy is a counselling modality that either substitutes for or complements verbal counselling with creative expression. The specific therapeutic approach depends largely on the client's needs and unique circumstances." (verbatim)

Integrating art therapy into counselling practices would be highly beneficial and lead to better outcomes. It makes the counselling process easier and more enjoyable, especially for children who naturally gravitate towards activities like drawing, dancing, drama, and singing. By engaging in these activities, children can express their emotions, allowing counsellors to analyse their feelings more effectively. The inclusion of art therapy is essential because it provides counsellors with an additional tool to use when traditional methods might not succeed. To implement art therapy effectively, counsellors need to receive training, including courses, workshops, and seminars, to fully understand and apply these techniques. A course on art therapy could be incorporated into the counselling program, taught over a semester or two, giving students a non-threatening and enjoyable way to access and express their memories and experiences without feeling overwhelmed. Collaboration between art therapists and counsellors in schools would be particularly useful, as seen in the US, where both professionals

work together in educational settings. In situations where an art therapist is unavailable, workshops and seminars can fill the gap, helping to integrate art therapy into the counselling process. Art therapy helps clients address their issues in a less intimidating way than traditional verbal therapy, allowing for deeper exploration and a better understanding of their concerns, ultimately leading to behavioral changes.

The integration of art therapy into counselling is presented as a highly effective approach, particularly for children, due to its alignment with their natural interests and abilities. Children often express themselves more freely through creative activities, which can make the therapeutic process both more enjoyable and insightful. By tapping into these natural inclinations, counsellors can gain a deeper understanding of the children's emotions and experiences, making art therapy a powerful tool in the therapeutic process. The suggestion to include art therapy as part of counsellor training is crucial. It underscores the importance of equipping future counsellors with a diverse set of tools to handle a wide range of client needs. Traditional counselling methods might not always be effective, and having an alternative like art therapy can enhance the overall efficacy of the counselling process. Training through courses, workshops, and seminars ensures that counsellors are not only aware of art therapy but are also skilled in its application. The idea of collaboration between art therapists and counsellors within school settings highlights the importance of a multidisciplinary approach to student well-being. While this collaboration is common in some regions, such as the US, it is noted that in places where art therapists may not be available, workshops and seminars can help bridge the gap, ensuring that counsellors can still incorporate art therapy into their practice.

Art therapy is a specialised profession with postgraduate training in various psychological domains, making it essential to recognize its specialised expertise and foster collaboration between art therapists and counsellors.

**Art therapist 2** stated that;

“I would like to clarify something before I give an answer. When we talk about art therapy, it goes beyond simply using art in a counselling context. There are individuals referred to as skilled helpers who have acquired some training in counselling to support clients, as well as mental health first aiders who, as the name suggests, provide initial support but are not professional counsellors.” (verbatim)

This approach allows for a more comprehensive and tailored treatment plan, addressing clients' multifaceted needs. Holistic client-centred care is crucial, as each client's needs are unique and multifaceted. By integrating art therapy into counselling training programmes, counsellors can appreciate the potential of art as a therapeutic tool while maintaining a clear distinction between the two practices. Strengthening the mental health support network and recognizing the roles of different professionals can provide a more comprehensive range of interventions tailored to clients' specific needs. Emphasising client outcomes is essential, and integrating art therapy into the broader mental health support system can lead to a more personalised, creative, and expressive approach that can yield transformative results for individuals seeking healing and restoration.

**Art therapist 1:** I think basic diagnostic tools should form the core content of the art therapy course for integration purposes..... Because to be able to identify what is happening with the client is the first thing the counsellors need. The idea is not to make counsellors become art therapists but to know how to use basic art diagnostic tools to diagnose and augment their restoration processes. That is how they can identify challenges through art products of their clients. Basic tools like house-tree-person and the likes.

Imagine a counsellor working with a child who has difficulty expressing their emotions verbally. Instead of relying solely on conversation, the counsellor introduces the **House-Tree-Person** drawing task. The child is asked to draw a house, a tree, and a person. Each element of the drawing can provide clues to the child's internal world:

**House:** Represents the child's perception of their home life and relationships with family members.

**Tree:** Symbolises the child's growth, stability, and sense of self.

**Person:** Reflects how the child views themselves and their interactions with others.

For example, if the house is drawn with closed windows and doors, it might indicate feelings of isolation or insecurity. If the tree is depicted with broken branches or no leaves, it could suggest a sense of vulnerability or loss. A person drawn very small or with exaggerated features might indicate self-esteem issues or anxiety. By interpreting these drawings, the counsellor can identify areas of concern that may not have been revealed through traditional verbal methods. These insights allow the counsellor to tailor their approach, addressing specific issues more effectively.

Counsellors can be trained to teach and use basic art diagnostic tools, even if they do not fully understand the entire art therapy process. By learning these fundamental techniques, such as asking clients to draw a person, tree, or house, counsellors can interpret the drawings to gain insights into their clients' emotions and psychological states. This approach allows counsellors to effectively apply art therapy techniques within the counselling process, enhancing their ability to identify and address clients' challenges.

In education counselling, practitioners believe that integrating art therapy would be beneficial and yield better results. Children are naturally drawn to creative arts, and by incorporating art therapy, counsellors can analyse their feelings and experiences in an enjoyable and non-threatening manner. They propose that art therapy courses should be included in counselling programmes, teaching over one or two semesters. Collaboration between art therapists and counsellors in school settings is also seen as beneficial, aligning with practices observed in the United States where both professionals work together. In cases where art therapists may not be readily available, organising seminars and workshops can help introduce art therapy to the counselling community. Art treatment is a valuable tool for counselling, as it enables clients to engage their senses and provides a deeper level of exploration compared to verbal therapy alone. It is essential to differentiate between therapeutic use of art within counselling and the application of art therapy as a therapeutic practice. Collaboration between art therapists and counsellors can lead to a more comprehensive approach to client care, while providing an introductory understanding of art therapy to counsellors can foster appreciation for its potential benefits.

The findings are in line with Malchiodi (2007), who highlights that art therapy allows for the conscious or unconscious sharing of life events, emotions, feelings, and ideas through nonverbal communication. This aspect proves particularly advantageous for individuals who struggle with verbal expression. By engaging in art-making, clients can externalise their thoughts and emotions, giving therapists valuable insights into their experiences. Moreover, art therapy can promote emotional discharge and catharsis, as noted by Malchiodi (2007). Through the process of creating art, clients can release and process difficult emotions, providing a sense of relief and healing. This aspect of art therapy can be transformative for individuals who struggle with emotional suffering, allowing them to find new ways of coping and understanding themselves.

Rubin (2005) emphasises that, which is also in line with the result that art therapy helps individuals gain a better understanding of themselves. Integrating art into counselling education allows students to explore their own creative processes and develop insights into their inner worlds. By experiencing the benefits of art therapy firsthand, counsellors-in-training can deepen their empathy and enhance their ability to facilitate self-exploration and self-discovery in their clients. Additionally, art therapy can support ego development and self-esteem growth, as noted by Rubin (2005). Through artistic expression, individuals can tap into their inner resources, enhance their problem-solving skills, and build confidence in their abilities. By integrating art therapy into counselling education, students can learn how to foster a supportive and empowering environment that encourages clients to explore their creativity and build a positive sense of self.

Art therapy is a valuable modality that can enrich counselling education. By integrating art therapy into counselling programmes, educators can equip students with a powerful tool for facilitating nonverbal communication, promoting self-expression, and supporting emotional well-being. Art therapy can enhance students' therapeutic skills and enable them to better serve clients who struggle with verbal expression, emotional suffering, and self-understanding.

## CONCLUSION

The Practitioners recognize the potential benefits of integrating art therapy into counselling, including enhanced diagnostic and restoration processes, increased client engagement, and additional tools for counsellors. Art



therapy is recognised as a valuable approach that can add a unique dimension to counselling sessions, enabling them to take place in non-traditional settings while upholding ethical standards and ensuring anonymity. It is believed to promote emotional discharge, catharsis, and self-expression, leading to relief and healing for clients. Based on the research findings and the positive perceptions of respondents, it is evident that incorporating art therapy into counselling education at the tertiary level in Ghana holds significant potential. Art therapy's ability to transcend language and cultural barriers, enhance diagnostic and therapeutic processes, and improve client engagement makes it a valuable tool for counsellors working with diverse populations.

## RECOMMENDATION

Art therapy should be actively utilised to enhance diagnostic and therapeutic processes in counselling by counsellors. Its ability to facilitate emotional expression and healing makes it a valuable tool in improving the effectiveness of counselling services. Collaboration between art therapists and counsellors should be encouraged to enhance performance.

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