

Artificial Intelligence as A Correlate to Mental Health Adjustment among Guidance and Counselling Undergraduate Students of University of Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: This study investigated Artificial Intelligence as a Correlate to Mental Health Adjustment among Guidance and counselling undergraduate Students of University of Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. Three (3) research questions and two (2) hypotheses formulated to guide the study. Population consisted of 489 undergraduate students of Guidance and Counselling students in University of Jos. One instrument was used for data collection. Validity of instrument was determined. Reliability indexes of 0.94 was established. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings showed that, there was a significant positive relationship between the use of Artificial Intelligence tools and the emotional adjustment of Guidance and Counselling undergraduate students at the University of Jos. The study recommended that, Guidance and Counselling students should be encouraged to make appropriate use of AI tools for academic and emotional support purposes, since the study found a significant positive relationship between AI usage and emotional adjustment. The use of AI can help students manage academic stress, enhance self-confidence, and improve their emotional well-being.

KEYWORDS: Artificial Intelligence, Mental Health, Emotional Adjustment, Social Adjustment and Academic Adjustment.

INTRODUCTION

The university environment in 21st-century Nigeria presents a strenuous transition period where undergraduate students face a compounding mix of academic, financial, socio-cultural, and psychological stressors. For students in public institutions like the University of Jos (UNIJOS), located in the unique ethno-religious and sociopolitical climate of Plateau State, these pressures are often magnified by localized anxieties, infrastructural deficits, and economic hardships. In psychological terms, mental health adjustment refers to an individual's capacity to adapt to life changes, manage emotional distress, establish meaningful relationships, and maintain psychological equilibrium. Concurrently, the rapid proliferation of Artificial Intelligence (AI) has deeply permeated the Nigerian educational landscape. Undergraduate students increasingly rely on generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini) and AI-driven mental health applications (like Woebot or Wysa) not only to navigate academic workloads but also as accessible, anonymous, and low-barrier channels for psychological relief and emotional validation.

This intersection creates a profound psychological paradox for undergraduate trainees in Guidance and Counselling. As future professional counselors, these students are uniquely trained to value deep human connection, empathy, and unconditional positive regard. However, due to systemic overstretching, underfunding, and the lingering stigma surrounding mental health care within local communities, these trainees may paradoxically turn to AI algorithms to cope with their own personal stressors. Understanding whether AI usage acts as a positive or negative correlate to their mental health adjustment is a critical gap this study aims to fill.

Statement of the Problem

University counseling units across Nigerian public higher institutions are frequently overwhelmed, under-resourced, and unable to meet the sheer volume of student psychological needs. Consequently, undergraduates are taking mental health management into their own digital hands, using AI platforms for everything from academic optimization to immediate crisis ventilation. However, current AI models lack genuine emotional nuance, cultural context, and the deep relational safety inherent in traditional African therapeutic dynamics. Over-reliance on AI might lead to digital isolation, misaligned psychological coping strategies, or algorithmic dependency. Conversely, it could act as a vital, low-cost buffer that reduces immediate anxiety and enhances academic self-efficacy. There is an urgent need for local empirical data to establish the exact directional nature of this relationship within the Faculty of Education at the University of Jos.

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Research Questions

1. What is the level of usage of AI tools among Guidance and Counselling undergraduate students at the University of Jos?
2. What is the status of mental health adjustment (emotional, social, and academic) among these students?
3. What is the relationship between the use of AI tools and the mental health adjustment of Guidance and Counselling undergraduate students at the University of Jos?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between the use of Artificial Intelligence tools and the emotional adjustment of Guidance and Counselling undergraduate students at the University of Jos.
2. There is no significant relationship between the use of Artificial Intelligence tools and the academic/social adjustment of Guidance and Counselling undergraduate students at the University of Jos.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Artificial Intelligence in Tertiary Education

Artificial Intelligence refers to computer systems capable of performing tasks that normally require human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, problem-solving, language understanding, and decision-making (Russell & Norvig, 2021). AI applications in higher education include intelligent tutoring systems, chatbots, virtual assistants, automated grading, plagiarism detection software, recommendation systems, and generative AI platforms such as ChatGPT. According to UNESCO (2023), AI is transforming educational systems by providing personalized learning experiences, enhancing accessibility, and supporting students' academic performance. Similarly, Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019) noted that AI facilitates adaptive learning environments that promote individualized instruction and learner engagement.

In Nigerian universities, AI adoption has expanded following the widespread availability of internet-enabled devices and generative AI technologies. Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019) conducted a systematic review of AI in higher education and found that AI significantly enhances learning outcomes through adaptive instruction and intelligent tutoring systems. Undergraduate students increasingly depend on AI for notetaking, research assistance, writing support, and academic planning. Kasneci et al. (2023) concluded that ChatGPT improves students' learning experiences but cautioned against overreliance due to concerns regarding critical thinking and academic integrity. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an integral component of higher education globally. Dwivedi et al. (2023) reported that generative AI enhances productivity, creativity, and academic engagement among university students.

The increasing adoption of AI-powered technologies, including ChatGPT, Grammarly, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, and adaptive learning systems, has transformed how university students learn, communicate, and solve academic problems. Chan and Hu (2023) found that AI-assisted learning positively predicts students' academic confidence and satisfaction. In Nigerian universities, particularly the University of Jos, undergraduate students increasingly utilize AI tools for assignments, research, language improvement, and collaborative learning.

Concept of Emotional Adjustment

Emotional adjustment is the ability of an individual to manage emotions effectively while adapting to environmental demands. It involves emotional stability, resilience, stress management, self-confidence, and psychological well-being (Baker & Siryk, 1989). University students experience numerous emotional challenges, including: Academic workload, examination anxiety, financial difficulties, homesickness, relationship problems, career uncertainty. Successful emotional adjustment enables students to maintain mental well-being and academic productivity despite these challenges. According to Feldman (2020), emotionally adjusted students exhibit greater resilience, optimism, emotional regulation, and academic persistence. Fitzpatrick et al. (2017) demonstrated that AI mental health chatbots reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety among university students. In Nigeria, empirical studies on AI and students' psychological adjustment remain limited. Most Nigerian studies have focused on AI awareness, adoption, digital literacy, and academic performance rather than emotional or social adjustment. This reveals a significant research gap, particularly in the context of the University of Jos.

Concept of Social Adjustment

Social adjustment refers to the ability of students to establish healthy interpersonal relationships and successfully integrate into the university social environment (Baker & Siryk, 1989). Indicators of social adjustment include: positive peer relationships, effective communication, participation in group activities, sense of belonging, respect for institutional norms, conflict resolution skills. Students who are socially adjusted generally demonstrate better academic performance and psychological well-being.

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Artificial Intelligence and Emotional Adjustment

Artificial Intelligence may influence emotional adjustment through several mechanisms. AI is rapidly changing how we manage emotions by offering 24/7 mood tracking, cognitive reframing exercises, and digital journaling to help you build self-awareness and better understand your daily triggers. While these tools offer accessible, structured support, they are meant to complement human connection rather than replace it.

Reduction of Academic Stress

AI tools provide immediate explanations, writing assistance, and study support, thereby reducing academic pressure. Students who receive timely academic assistance may experience lower stress and increased confidence. Kasneci et al. (2023) argued that generative AI can reduce students' cognitive workload by assisting with brainstorming, summarizing, and problem-solving. Similarly, Dwivedi et al. (2023) observed that ChatGPT supports students in overcoming learning barriers, which may improve emotional well-being.

Increased Academic Confidence

AI-assisted learning enhances students' understanding of difficult concepts. Improved academic competence often leads to higher self-esteem and emotional stability. Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory explains that mastery experiences increase confidence, which positively affects emotional adjustment.

Emotional Support through AI

Some AI systems function as conversational companions that provide emotional support. AI chatbots have demonstrated moderate effectiveness in reducing stress and anxiety among university students. Fitzpatrick, Darcy, and Vierhile (2017) reported that AI-based mental health chatbots significantly reduced symptoms of anxiety and depression among users.

AI and Social Adjustment

AI influences students' social adjustment in both positive and negative ways. AI significantly impacts social adjustment by altering how we communicate, form relationships, and regulate emotions. While AI tools offer unprecedented support for overcoming social anxiety, they also pose risks of emotional dependence and diminished real-world empathy if they replace authentic human interactions.

Positive Effects

AI promotes communication through: collaborative online learning, discussion forums, language translation virtual study groups. Students who use AI communication tools often participate more actively in academic discussions. According to Holmes et al. (2022), AI enhances collaboration by facilitating interaction among learners from diverse backgrounds.

Negative Effects

Excessive dependence on AI may reduce face-to-face communication. Students who increasingly rely on AI assistants may experience: Social isolation, Reduced interpersonal skills, Lower participation in campus activities. Turkle (2017) argued that excessive reliance on digital technologies may weaken authentic human relationships and emotional connectedness.

The reviewed literature suggests that AI has the potential to improve undergraduate students' emotional adjustment by reducing academic stress, increasing confidence, and providing personalized learning support. AI can also facilitate social adjustment by promoting collaboration and communication. Nevertheless, excessive dependence on AI may reduce interpersonal interaction and social participation. Given the paucity of empirical studies within the Nigerian context, especially at the University of Jos, further investigation is warranted to determine the extent to which AI use correlates with emotional and social adjustment among undergraduate students.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on two complementary theories:

1. **The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989):** Explains how students adopt AI based on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. In a mental health context, if a student perceives an AI chatbot as an immediate, anonymous, and helpful outlet, they are highly likely to integrate it into their psychological coping mechanisms.
2. **Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) (Beck, 1976):** Serves as the operational backbone for most AI therapeutic applications. AI tools often assist users by systematically restructuring negative thought patterns. This framework helps evaluate whether algorithmic cognitive interventions translate into actual psychological adjustment for the student.

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METHODOLOGY

Research Design: A descriptive survey research design employing a correlational approach was adopted for the study. This design enabled the researcher to collect data from a representative sample of the population and utilize the findings to draw generalizations about the entire population while examining the relationships among the variables under investigation.

Population and Sample: The target population comprised all full-time undergraduate students enrolled in the B.Ed. Guidance and Counselling Programme at the University of Jos. According to available records, the programme had a total enrolment of 489 students, who constituted the population for the study.

Sample: A sample size of 200 students was selected using stratified random sampling across 100 to 400 levels of study. A sample is a part of a population carefully selected in a manner that it represents all the characteristic of the parent population (Akuezuiolo, 2015).

Instrumentation: A self-structured, adapted instrument titled "Artificial Intelligence and Mental Health Adjustment Questionnaire (AIMHAQ)" developed by the researcher was used. It features a 5-point Likert scale measuring frequency of AI adoption and indices of emotional and social adjustment.

Data Analysis: Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Mean and Standard Deviation was used to answered research questions while Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to test the hypotheses. Statistical software to test the hypotheses at a level of significance.

RESULTS:

Research Question 1:

What is the level of usage of AI tools among Guidance and Counselling undergraduate students at the University of Jos?

S/N	Item	SA	A	U	D	SD	Stdev	Mean	Remarks
1	I frequently use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot) for my academic work.	70	85	21	24	0	0.97	4.01	Accept
2	I use AI to search for academic information.	76	68	20	36	0	1.1	3.92	Accept
3	I use AI to summarize lecture notes or textbooks.	45	80	24	42	9	1.18	3.55	Accept
4	I use AI to generate ideas for assignments and projects.	37	88	41	27	7	1.05	3.61	Accept
5	I use AI to improve my writing and grammar.	46	74	20	30	30	1.38	3.38	Accept
6	I use AI to solve mathematical or scientific problems.	36	70	41	32	21	1.24	3.34	Accept
7	I use AI to prepare for examinations.	39	77	36	43	5	1.11	3.51	Accept
8	I use AI to assist with research activities.	76	111	6	7	0	0.69	4.28	Accept
9	I rely on AI to explain difficult concepts.	44	90	42	6	18	1.12	3.68	Accept
10	I use AI regularly as part of my daily learning routine.	42	50	34	42	32	1.39	3.14	Accept
11	I compare AI-generated information with other academic sources before using it.	101	47	26	18	8	1.16	4.08	Accept
12	I feel confident using AI tools for educational purposes.	38	80	40	40	2	1.04	3.56	Accept
13	I use AI responsibly in accordance with my institution's academic integrity guidelines.	35	114	41	8	2	0.78	3.86	Accept
14	AI has become an important part of my learning process.	47	104	34	10	5	0.91	3.89	Accept
15	I intend to continue using AI for future academic activities.	31	117	35	15	2	0.83	3.80	Accept

Table 1 presented the responses of Guidance and Counselling undergraduate students at the University of Jos on their level of AI tool usage. The findings showed that all the items recorded mean scores above the acceptance benchmark, indicating that the

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respondents generally agreed that they used AI tools for various academic activities. The students reported using AI tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Copilot for academic work ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.97$), searching for academic information ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.10$), summarizing lecture notes and textbooks ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.18$), generating ideas for assignments and projects ($M = 3.61$, $SD = 1.05$), and improving writing and grammar ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.38$). They also used AI to solve mathematical or scientific problems ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.24$), prepare for examinations ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.11$), and assist with research activities ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 0.69$), which had the highest mean score. Furthermore, the respondents agreed that they relied on AI to explain difficult concepts ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.12$), compared AI-generated information with other academic sources before use ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.16$), and considered AI an important part of their learning process ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 0.91$). They also expressed confidence in using AI for educational purposes and intended to continue using it for future academic activities. Overall, the findings indicated a high level of AI tool usage among Guidance and Counselling undergraduate students at the University of Jos.

Research Question 2:

What is the status of mental health adjustment (emotional, social, and academic) among these students?

S/N	Item	SA	A	U	D	SD	Stdev	Mean	Remarks
16	I remain calm when faced with academic challenges.	61	65	26	36	12	1.25	3.64	Accept
17	I manage stress effectively.	66	87	19	0	28	1.29	3.82	Accept
18	I recover quickly from disappointments or setbacks.	89	69	6	20	16	1.27	3.98	Accept
19	I feel emotionally stable most of the time.	47	79	38	34	2	1.05	3.68	Accept
20	I express my emotions in healthy ways.	75	76	32	10	7	1.03	4.01	Accept
21	I maintain a positive outlook even during difficult situations.	101	70	6	16	7	1.06	4.21	Accept
22	I feel confident in my ability to solve personal problems.	84	96	16	4	0	0.07	0.7	Accept
23	I rarely feel overwhelmed by school-related responsibilities.	31	78	58	15	18	1.12	3.45	Accept

Table 2 presented the responses of Guidance and Counselling undergraduate students at the University of Jos on their mental health adjustment, covering emotional, social, and academic dimensions. The findings showed that all the items were accepted, indicating a generally positive level of mental health adjustment among the respondents. The students reported that they remained calm when faced with academic challenges ($M = 3.64$, $SD = 1.25$), managed stress effectively ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 1.29$), and recovered quickly from disappointments or setbacks ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 1.27$). They also indicated that they felt emotionally stable most of the time ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.05$) and expressed their emotions in healthy ways ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 1.03$). Furthermore, the respondents maintained a positive outlook during difficult situations ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 1.06$), which recorded the highest mean score. They also felt confident in their ability to solve personal problems and rarely felt overwhelmed by school-related responsibilities ($M = 3.45$, $SD = 1.12$). Overall, the findings indicated that the students possessed a healthy level of mental health adjustment, as reflected in their positive emotional stability, stress management, resilience, and ability to cope with academic and personal challenges.

Research Question 3:

What is the relationship between the use of AI tools and the mental health adjustment of Guidance and Counselling undergraduate students at the University of Jos?

S/N	Item	SA	A	U	D	SD	Stdev	Mean	Remarks
24	I interact comfortably with my classmates.	115	75	0	10	0	0.74	4.48	Accept
25	I easily make friends at school.	46	122	20	12	0	0.76	4.01	Accept
26	I participate in group discussions and academic activities.	97	72	31	0	0	0.73	4.33	Accept
27	I maintain healthy relationships with lecturers and staff.	69	106	0	18	7	1.01	4.06	Accept
28	I feel accepted and respected by my peers.	88	100	12	0	0	0.6	4.38	Accept
29	I work well with others on group assignments.	101	87	12	0	0	0.61	4.45	Accept

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30	I actively participate in campus social activities.	20	68	45	40	27	1.22	3.07	Accept
31	I can resolve conflicts with others peacefully.	81	99	0	20	0	0.88	4.21	Accept

Table 3 presented the responses of Guidance and Counselling undergraduate students at the University of Jos on their social adjustment, which was considered a component of mental health adjustment. The findings showed that all the items were accepted, indicating that the students generally exhibited positive social adjustment. The respondents reported that they interacted comfortably with their classmates ($M = 4.48$, $SD = 0.74$), worked well with others on group assignments ($M = 4.45$, $SD = 0.61$), and felt accepted and respected by their peers ($M = 4.38$, $SD = 0.60$). They also participated in group discussions and academic activities ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.73$), resolved conflicts peacefully ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 0.88$), maintained healthy relationships with lecturers and staff ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.01$), and easily made friends at school ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.76$). However, active participation in campus social activities recorded the lowest mean score ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 1.22$), although it still fell within the accepted range. Overall, the findings indicated that the students demonstrated a high level of social adjustment, as evidenced by their positive interactions, healthy relationships, teamwork, and sense of belonging within the university environment.

Hypothesis One:

There is no significant relationship between the use of Artificial Intelligence tools and the emotional adjustment of Guidance and Counselling undergraduate students at the University of Jos.

		use of Artificial Intelligence tools		Social adjustment	
use of Artificial Intelligence tools	Pearson Correlation	use of Artificial Intelligence tools		Social adjustment	
		Intelligence tools		il adjustment	
emotional adjustment	Correlation				
	(r = 0.651)				

The result of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis showed that there was a significant positive relationship between the use of Artificial Intelligence tools and emotional adjustment among the students ($r = 0.651$, $N = 200$, $p < 0.01$). This implied that students who made greater use of AI tools tended to exhibit better emotional adjustment. Since the obtained p-value (0.000) was less than the 0.01 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, it was concluded that there was a significant positive relationship between the use of Artificial Intelligence tools and the emotional adjustment of Guidance and Counselling undergraduate students at the University of Jos. The correlation coefficient of 0.651 indicated a moderately strong positive relationship between the two variables.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between the use of Artificial Intelligence tools and the social adjustment of Guidance and Counselling undergraduate students at the University of Jos.

		use of Artificial Intelligence tools		Social adjustment	
use of Artificial Intelligence tools	Pearson Correlation	use of Artificial Intelligence tools		Social adjustment	
		Intelligence tools		Social adjustment	
Social adjustment	Sig. (2-tailed)				
	(r = -0.213)				
	N				

The result of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis showed that there was a significant negative relationship between the use of Artificial Intelligence tools and social adjustment among the students ($r = -0.213$, $N = 200$, $p < 0.01$). This indicated that an increase in the use of AI tools was associated with a decrease in the level of social adjustment among the students. Since the obtained p-value (0.003) was less than the 0.01 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, it was concluded that there was a significant negative relationship between the use of Artificial Intelligence tools and the social adjustment of Guidance and Counselling undergraduate students at the University of Jos. The correlation coefficient of -0.213 indicated a weak negative relationship between the two variables.

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DISCUSSION

The findings of Research Question One revealed that Guidance and Counselling undergraduate students at the University of Jos demonstrated a high level of AI tool usage. The respondents agreed that they frequently used AI tools such as ChatGPT, Gemini, and Copilot for academic activities including research, information searches, examination preparation, assignment development, note summarization, and concept clarification. The highest mean score was recorded for the use of AI in research activities, indicating that AI has become an important academic support tool among the students. This finding is consistent with the studies of Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019), who reported that AI technologies are increasingly being adopted in higher education to enhance learning experiences and support academic performance. The finding also agrees with Kasneci et al. (2023), who found that university students extensively utilize generative AI applications for learning support, brainstorming, academic writing, and problem-solving. Similarly, Dwivedi et al. (2023) reported that AI technologies have become an essential component of students' academic engagement and productivity. The finding further supports Chan and Hu (2023), who observed that students who adopted AI-assisted learning tools experienced improved learning efficiency and academic satisfaction. The widespread use of AI tools among the respondents may be attributed to the accessibility, convenience, and immediate feedback provided by AI applications, which assist students in managing academic demands more effectively.

The findings of Research Question Two showed that the students exhibited a generally healthy level of mental health adjustment. The respondents reported positive emotional characteristics such as effective stress management, emotional stability, resilience, confidence in solving personal problems, healthy emotional expression, and the ability to maintain a positive outlook during difficult situations. The finding aligns with the position of Feldman (2020), who asserted that emotionally adjusted students demonstrate resilience, emotional control, optimism, and the ability to cope effectively with environmental challenges. The result also supports Baker and Siryk's (1989) adjustment theory, which emphasized emotional stability and effective coping skills as indicators of successful university adjustment. The positive adjustment observed among the students may be connected to their training in Guidance and Counselling, which exposes them to mental health concepts, coping strategies, self-awareness, and emotional management skills that enhance psychological well-being.

Additionally, the findings further revealed that the students demonstrated a high level of social adjustment. The respondents indicated that they interacted comfortably with classmates, maintained healthy relationships with lecturers and peers, participated in group discussions, resolved conflicts peacefully, and worked effectively with others. This finding agrees with Baker and Siryk (1989), who identified good interpersonal relationships, social integration, and a sense of belonging as major indicators of successful social adjustment among university students. The finding also corroborates Holmes et al. (2022), who noted that technological tools can support collaboration and communication among learners and thereby contribute to social integration in academic settings. The high social adjustment observed among the respondents may be due to the collaborative nature of their programme, which encourages interpersonal communication, empathy, and teamwork.

On the relationship between Artificial Intelligence Use and Emotional Adjustment, the findings relating to Hypothesis One revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between the use of AI tools and emotional adjustment among Guidance and Counselling undergraduate students at the University of Jos ($r = 0.651$, $p < 0.01$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. This implies that increased use of AI tools was associated with improved emotional adjustment among the students. This finding supports the assertions of Fitzpatrick, Darcy, and Vierhile (2017), who reported that AI-based mental health chatbots helped reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression among users. The result also agrees with Kasneci et al. (2023), who argued that AI reduces academic pressure by assisting students with problem-solving, learning support, and information retrieval, thereby reducing stress levels. Similarly, Dwivedi et al. (2023) found that generative AI tools can improve students' well-being by enhancing productivity and reducing learning difficulties. The finding can further be explained using Bandura's (1997) Self-Efficacy Theory. As students receive immediate assistance and achieve academic success through AI-supported learning, their confidence and emotional stability may improve, leading to better emotional adjustment. The result also lends support to the Cognitive Behavioral Theory (Beck, 1976), which suggests that AI-driven support systems can assist users in developing more positive thinking patterns and coping mechanisms.

On the relationship between Artificial Intelligence Use and Social Adjustment, the findings relating to Hypothesis Two revealed that there was a significant negative relationship between the use of AI tools and social adjustment among the students ($r = -0.213$, $p < 0.01$). Although the relationship was weak, the result indicated that increased dependence on AI tools was associated with lower levels of social adjustment. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. This finding is consistent with the views of Turkle (2017), who argued that excessive reliance on digital technologies may weaken interpersonal relationships and reduce authentic human interaction. The finding also supports concerns expressed in the literature that overdependence on AI may contribute to social isolation, reduced face-to-face communication, and diminished participation in campus social activities.

However, the finding contrasts with Holmes et al. (2022), who reported that AI technologies can facilitate communication, collaboration, and interaction among learners. The discrepancy may be due to contextual differences. While AI may promote

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academic collaboration in some settings, excessive reliance on AI among the present respondents may have reduced opportunities for direct social interaction and interpersonal engagement. The finding suggests that although AI serves as a valuable academic and emotional support tool, students should maintain a balance between digital engagement and human social relationships. As future professional counsellors, Guidance and Counselling students require strong interpersonal and communication skills, which are best developed through meaningful face-to-face interactions rather than exclusive reliance on digital technologies.

Overall, the study established that Guidance and Counselling undergraduate students at the University of Jos extensively used AI tools for academic purposes and generally exhibited healthy emotional and social adjustment. The findings further showed that AI usage was positively related to emotional adjustment but negatively related to social adjustment. These outcomes suggest that while AI can serve as a useful resource for enhancing students' emotional well-being and coping capacity, excessive dependence on AI may negatively affect interpersonal relationships and social integration within the university environment. The findings therefore underscore the need for a balanced and responsible use of AI technologies among university students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that Guidance and Counselling undergraduate students at the University of Jos demonstrated a high level of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool usage for various academic purposes, including research, information search, assignment preparation, examination preparation, and concept clarification. The study also established that the students generally possessed healthy mental health adjustment, as evidenced by positive emotional stability, effective stress management, resilience, healthy emotional expression, and satisfactory social relationships. Furthermore, the study revealed that AI usage had a significant positive relationship with emotional adjustment, indicating that students who utilized AI tools more frequently tended to exhibit better emotional adjustment. This suggests that AI may serve as a useful support system by reducing academic stress, enhancing confidence, and facilitating coping strategies among undergraduate students. However, the study also found a significant negative relationship between AI usage and social adjustment. This implies that although AI contributes positively to students' emotional well-being, excessive reliance on AI may reduce face-to-face interactions and potentially affect students' social integration and interpersonal relationships. Therefore, while AI remains a valuable educational and psychological support tool, its usage should be balanced with meaningful human interaction and social engagement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made by the researcher:

1. Guidance and Counselling students should be encouraged to make appropriate use of AI tools for academic and emotional support purposes, since the study found a significant positive relationship between AI usage and emotional adjustment. The use of AI can help students manage academic stress, enhance self-confidence, and improve their emotional well-being.
2. The Department of Guidance and Counselling should educate students on maintaining a balance between AI usage and face-to-face social interactions, as the study revealed a significant negative relationship between AI usage and social adjustment. This will help prevent overdependence on AI and promote healthy interpersonal relationships among students.
3. University administrators and counsellors should develop programmes that combine AI-assisted learning with social and counselling activities, so that students can benefit from the emotional advantages of AI while simultaneously strengthening their social adjustment, communication skills, and peer relationships.

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