

**THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COUNSELING CENTERS IN MANAGING STUDENTS'  
MENTAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH IN THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

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**CERTIFICATION**

We, the undersigned, certify that this project work was carried out by **Osazuwa Omorefe Testimony** with the Matriculation Number **EDU2102430** of the Department of Educational Evaluation and Counseling Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin City, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Bachelor of Science in Education (B.Sc.Ed) Degree in Guidance and Counseling.

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to God Almighty.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### **ABSTRACT**

The main objective of this study was to explore and assess the effectiveness of the counselling centre in managing the mental and psychological health of undergraduate students at the University of Benin. Specifically, the research sought to investigate how current counselling services assist students in coping with mental and emotional challenges. A descriptive survey design was adopted for the study.

The population comprised all undergraduate students of the University of Benin. A representative sample was selected from this population using an appropriate sampling technique. Data were collected through the utilization of a structured questionnaire, and subsequent analysis was performed using the mean for descriptive purposes.

The findings indicated that the counselling centre is moderately effective in addressing students' mental and psychological health needs. Key challenges identified include insufficient funding, a limited number of trained counsellors, and low awareness among students regarding the available services. Recommendations derived from the study emphasize the need for improved funding for counselling services, the implementation of increased awareness programmes, and the employment of additional trained counsellors to enhance service quality and accessibility.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background of Study**

Mental health can be a crucial aspect of students' overall well-being and may play an important role in their academic performance, motivation, and social adjustment. In the high-pressure environment of university life, students can be exposed to a range of psychological challenges that may interfere with their development. From observation, there seems to be a noticeable rise in concerns such as anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and other emotional disturbances.

In Nigeria, the pattern may not be entirely different. Students in tertiary institutions can be facing intense academic workloads, financial strain, family expectations, and the social demands of adapting to a new and often overwhelming environment.

At the University of Benin, which seems to be home to a diverse student population of over 40,000 students (UNIBEN Handbook, 2022), mental health concerns can often go unaddressed. From observation, some students appear to show signs of emotional distress but may not openly seek support. In response to growing awareness of these concerns, the university has established a counseling center with the intention of supporting students' psychological well-being and adjustment. However, the extent to which the center fulfills its purpose seems to vary based on students' awareness, willingness to engage, and the center's capacity to deliver services.

What actually prevails within a university counseling center, particularly in a Nigerian context like University Of Benin, can be complex. Ideally, such centers are expected to offer both preventive and responsive services. Preventive services may include things like mental health sensitization, pre-marital counseling, drug education, career guidance, and workshops on emotional regulation. On the other hand, responsive services might involve one-on-one counseling, group therapy, crisis intervention, academic support, or referrals to clinical professionals when necessary. These services can be designed to help

students adjust psychologically and emotionally to the demands of university life, while also identifying early signs of mental health disorders.

It seems relevant to explore whether the counselors in these centers are actively functioning in their roles. It is important to examine the kinds of activities they are involved in, how frequently they attend to students, and how students respond to the services offered. Are there enough counselors to handle the volume of students who may need help? Do students feel safe, heard, or guided when they visit the counseling center? Or do they tend to rely on peers, religious groups, or self-help strategies due to lack of trust, stigma, or awareness?

From observation, some students appear unaware that the counseling center exists. Others may have doubts about confidentiality or feel that mental health issues should not be discussed outside family or spiritual circles. In some cases, cultural and religious beliefs may discourage students from openly talking about depression, anxiety, or past trauma. The stigma attached to seeking psychological help can further widen the gap between the availability of services and the willingness of students to use them.

This study, therefore, seeks to explore the effectiveness of the counseling center at the University of Benin in managing students' mental health and aiding their psychological adjustment. It will attempt to understand students' level of awareness, the type of services

available, and how often these services are used. It will also consider possible barriers such as stigma, cultural resistance, and lack of trust that might discourage students from accessing help. By doing so, the research hopes to offer insights that may improve counseling delivery and promote a more supportive mental health environment on campus.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Mental health challenges among Nigerian University students have become a growing concern. Many students face significant psychological distress such as depression, anxiety among others, may be due to academic pressure, financial strain but , yet only a small number of students seek for professional help. This gap between need and access creates serious consequences for academic performance, personal development, and overall well-being.

At the University of Benin, the Counseling Center it was established to support students navigating these emotional and psychological challenges. However, it appears that many students either do not know about the center, or do not trust the services, or may be finding it difficult to access. Despite the increasing need for mental health support, among those who have visited the center, there are common complaints of long waiting times, limited availability of trained counsellors, and concerns about confidentiality Owobamigbe, K.D. Lawal, A.O. & Ogunode N., J. (2021).

As a result, students may turn to risky or unhelpful coping mechanisms – such as isolation, excessive partying, substance use, or emotional withdrawal. These responses, though common, can often deepen the problem which may negatively affect academic engagement, concentration, and relationships with others.

Beyond individual choices, deeper cultural and systemic challenges may also play some roles because mental health seems to be widely misunderstood in Nigeria, and at times may often be associated with spiritual weakness or moral failure. This stigma may discourage open conversations and can make students less likely to seek for support. Moreover, institutional limitations such as insufficient funding, lack of trained staff, poor publicity of available services, and inflexible operating hours may add to the reduction of the center's effectiveness.

Given these overlapping challenges, this study seeks to assess how effective the University of Benin's Counseling Center truly is, and to recommend improvements that can help bridge the gap between students' needs and the support available. Strengthening this structure may not only improve students' mental well-being but also promote a healthier University environment

### **Research Questions**

- 1) How aware are students of the counseling services available to them at the University of Benin?
- 2) How often do students use the counseling services provided?
- 3) How effective are counseling services in addressing students' mental health issues like depression, anxiety, OCD, and PTSD?
- 4) How do counseling services impact students' psychological adjustment to university life?
- 5) What challenges prevent students from accessing or fully benefiting from counseling services?
- 6) What can be done to improve the counseling center's role in supporting student mental health and adjustment?

### **Purpose of the Study**

- 1) To critically examine how effective the University of Benin Counseling Center is in supporting students' mental health.
- 2) To find out how many students know about the Counseling Center, where it's located, and what it offers.
- 3) To look at who uses the services by age, faculty, gender, and level of study.

- 4) To understand how students feel about the quality, ease of access, and usefulness of the center.
- 5) To identify the main mental health challenges UNIBEN students face and how they try to manage them.
- 6) To explore the barriers stopping students from using the services.
- 7) 7. To suggest ways to make the center more effective and better used.

### **Significance of the study**

This research holds significance across multiple levels and for various stakeholders within and beyond the University of Benin. These included

For the university management, the study offers valuable data that can guide efforts to strengthen mental health services on campus. It provides insight into how current support systems are functioning and highlights areas in need of attention, helping leadership make informed decisions on funding, staffing, and service design. It also serves as a benchmark for evaluating how UNIBEN compares with global best practices in student mental health support.

For students, the research raises awareness about the importance of mental well-being and encourages early help-seeking behavior. By highlighting the barriers and challenges students face, it can contribute to reducing the stigma associated with accessing

counseling services. Ultimately, it has the potential to shape more student-centered, responsive services that meet real emotional and psychological needs.

Lecturers and academic staff also benefit from the findings. A clearer understanding of the mental health struggles students face can foster greater empathy and more supportive teaching and learning environments. It promotes sensitivity in interactions and may inspire faculty to direct students to appropriate support when needed.

Mental health professionals within the university system can also draw from this study to refine their approach. The insights gathered provide real-world feedback on what students want, what is lacking, and how trust in the system can be strengthened. It also reveals where more targeted or specialized interventions may be necessary to ensure effective support delivery.

From a research perspective, this study helps fill a significant gap in literature on mental health services in Nigerian tertiary institutions. It lays the groundwork for future studies and long-term assessments of counseling effectiveness in a university context.

Finally, for policymakers, the research supports broader efforts to improve mental health frameworks in Nigeria's education sector. It adds evidence to advocate for more structured funding, policy changes, and training programs that support student well-being in a sustainable and impactful way.

### **Scope and delimitation of the Study**

This study focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of the Counseling Center at the University of Benin, located on the main campus in Benin City, Nigeria. It specifically targets full-time undergraduate and postgraduate students, excluding part-time, distance learning, and affiliate students. The research covers the 2024/2025 academic session, while also referencing previous years for context. Data will be gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions involving both students and counseling staff. Mental health services provided outside the University of Benin or by external organizations are beyond the scope of this study.

This study is focused specifically on assessing the effectiveness of the Counseling Center at the University of Benin in managing students' mental health. It is limited to undergraduate students across The faculty of Education and at all levels. The research concentrates on students' awareness, perception, and usage of the counseling services provided by the university. It does not cover mental health services outside the institution or explore mental health conditions in detail. The instruments used, such as questionnaires, are designed to reflect students' opinions and experiences rather than clinical diagnoses.

### **Research Constraints**

Several factors may affect the outcomes of this research. First, some students may not be willing to honestly share their experiences due to stigma or personal discomfort discussing mental health. This could impact the accuracy of data. Second, the study is limited by time and resources, which may restrict the number of participants or depth of analysis. Also, since the study relies on self-reported data through questionnaires, there may be bias or misinterpretation of questions. Lastly, the research findings may not be fully generalizable to other universities due to differences in institutional structures, student demographics, and available services.

### **Definition of terms**

**Awareness:** Refers to the extent to which students are informed about the existence, purpose, and available services of the University of Benin Counseling Center.

**Barriers:** Factors that hinder or discourage students from accessing counseling services, including stigma, lack of information, accessibility issues, cultural beliefs, and concerns about confidentiality.

**Effectiveness:** The degree to which the counseling services meet students' mental health needs, as measured by satisfaction, improvement in well-being, academic performance, and overall service outcomes.

**Mental Health:** A condition of emotional, psychological, and social well-being where individuals are able to cope with academic stress, maintain relationships, and contribute productively to university life (WHO, 2022).

**Mental Health Literacy:** The level of understanding students have about mental health conditions, their symptoms, and available treatments, as well as the ability to seek and support appropriate help (Jorm, 2012).

**University Counseling Center:** A formal unit within the University of Benin responsible for providing psychological support, counseling services, and wellness education to enhance student well-being.

**Utilization:** The frequency and manner in which students engage with the counseling services, including how often they visit, the duration of support received, and the consistency of follow up.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

The effectiveness of university Counseling centers in managing students' mental health in the University of Benin has been a long-standing issue within the university (Ojo, O. O., & Nwafor, I. A., 2019). This chapter aims to explore the various existing literature and research, influences, challenges, and societal norms that impact the effectiveness of a counseling center in managing students in the University of Benin. The related field was reviewed under the following subheadings:

- Theoretical Framework of the Study
- Historical Perspective of Counseling Centers in the University of Benin
- Factors Influencing Students' Mental Health and Counseling Centers' Role
- Effectiveness of the Counselling Centre in Managing Students' Mental Health
- Institutional and Policy Support for Mental Health in the University of Benin
- Barriers to Accessing Counseling Services Among Students
- Summary of Reviewed Literature

## **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this study is hinged on four major theories that explain the psychological and environmental factors influencing students' mental health and the role university counseling centers play in managing those concerns. These theories include Carl Rogers' Person-Centered Theory, George Engel's Bio-Psycho-Social Model, Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, and Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Collectively, these frameworks provide a multidimensional understanding of mental health dynamics in academic institutions, with emphasis on both the internal state of students and the influence of their environment. These theories were selected because they highlight the importance of holistic support, self-awareness, social learning, and the need for psychological safety key components in any effective university counseling system.

### **Person-Centered Theory (Carl Rogers)**

Carl Rogers' Person-Centered Theory is one of the most influential approaches in counseling psychology. It emphasizes the importance of the therapeutic relationship and suggests that individuals have an inherent tendency toward psychological growth, provided they are in an environment conducive to self-discovery and emotional expression. In the university context, many students face anxiety, identity struggles, academic stress, and social pressure. When counseling centers adopt a person-centered approach, they create a safe and

accepting environment where students can explore these issues without fear of judgment. This approach is particularly relevant in a university like the University of Benin, where students from diverse backgrounds and experiences converge. The emphasis on empathy, unconditional positive regard, and congruence (authenticity) in the counselor-student relationship encourages trust and emotional healing. Therefore, the presence of a person centered counseling framework within the university system can significantly increase the effectiveness of mental health interventions, especially for students who may be hesitant to open up due to stigma or cultural expectations.

### **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Abraham Maslow)**

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs outlines a five-level model of human motivation, beginning with physiological needs and culminating in self-actualization. Mental health services in universities play a crucial role in helping students meet their psychological and emotional needs, especially when their basic or safety needs are under threat. Many students at the University of Benin come from low-income backgrounds, experience food insecurity, or live in inadequate housing conditions. When these fundamental needs are unmet, it becomes increasingly difficult for students to focus on studies or participate meaningfully in campus life.

Counseling centers may not be able to directly provide housing or food, but they can help students navigate these challenges through referrals to social support services or internal university resources. For the students to meet up with their needs. They also serve as safe spaces where students can work through emotional distress and find clarity in moments of crisis. By helping students address issues such as self-esteem, fear of failure, and relationship challenges, counseling centers guide them toward the top levels of the hierarchy esteem and self-actualization. Students who feel supported emotionally are more likely to engage fully in their education, develop leadership abilities, and form meaningful connections with others.

The theoretical framework outlined above can offers a comprehensive foundation for analyzing the effectiveness of university counseling centers in managing students' mental health. The Person-Centered Theory emphasizes the role of empathy and emotional safety; the Bio-Psycho-Social Model broadens the scope of care to include medical and social interventions; the Social Cognitive Theory addresses the role of self-efficacy and environmental influence; while Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs reminds us that mental health cannot be separated from other dimensions of student wellbeing. These frameworks together highlight the complexity of student mental health and underscore the importance of multifaceted, compassionate, and accessible counseling services in institutions like the University of Benin.

From observation, the mental health of students in Nigerian universities can be increasingly at risk due to academic pressure, financial stress, and social isolation. University life presents students with new responsibilities and environments that may trigger or worsen conditions such as anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress. Based on the hierarchy of needs, students cannot reach their full academic or personal potential if their basic psychological and emotional needs are not met. In the University of Benin, these unmet needs often surface in the form of mental health challenges, requiring effective support systems like counseling centers.

The counseling center in University Of Benin is expected to support students through preventive education, crisis intervention, and individual or group counseling. However, many students seem unaware of the center's existence or unsure of what services are available. Some believe it is only for extreme cases, while others are discouraged by stigma or doubts about confidentiality. These perceptions reduce the reach of the center and prevent students from seeking help early. Without early intervention, minor issues can escalate into more serious psychological problems.

Where services are accessed, students often express frustration about long wait times or limited follow-up. These gaps suggest that the center may not be operating at full capacity. The person-centered approach to counseling emphasizes that for support to be effective, it

must provide clients with empathy, genuineness, and acceptance. If students do not feel genuinely understood or safe in counseling sessions, they are less likely to engage or benefit from the service further limiting the center's effectiveness.

Despite these challenges, the counseling center can play a crucial role in promoting psychological adjustment and preventing mental health crises. Counseling, when done effectively, helps students manage stress, develop coping strategies, and maintain focus on their academic goals. According to the needs-based theory of motivation, students require emotional safety and a sense of belonging before they can succeed academically. The center's role, therefore, goes beyond advice it is a foundational support system for student development.

To increase its impact, the counseling center needs more trained personnel, increased funding, and broader campus visibility. Creating an environment based on empathy and respect could encourage more students to seek help. This research aims to explore these gaps and realities, and to recommend practical ways the University of Benin's counseling center can better meet the mental and emotional needs of its students.

### **Historical Perspective of Counseling Centers in the University of Benin**

The University of Benin (UNIBEN), founded in 1970, has over the decades established itself as a premier institution of higher education in Nigeria. As the university

grew, so did the complexities of student life, which necessitated the development of support systems beyond academics. The psychological, social, and emotional needs of students became increasingly apparent, prompting the university to consider formal mechanisms to support students' mental health and well-being. This recognition led to the inception of the Student Counseling and Career Development Centre, a critical part of the university's student affairs division.

In the early years after its establishment, counseling services at University of Benin were rudimentary and largely informal. Student welfare activities were often managed by faculty advisors and senior staff without specific training in counseling or psychology. It wasn't until the late 1980s and early 1990s that a concerted effort was made to develop a formal counseling service that could meet the growing demand for mental health support on campus. This effort was influenced by the increasing awareness of mental health issues globally and locally, particularly as Nigerian universities faced student unrest, academic pressure, and challenges such as drug abuse and rising suicide rates.

One pivotal figure in the establishment of structured counseling services at University of Benin was Dr. Grace Agbo, a clinical psychologist who joined the university in the early 1990s. She is credited with laying the foundation for professional psychological services on campus. Dr. Agbo advocated for the hiring of trained counselors and the creation

of a dedicated physical space for counseling activities. Under her leadership, the Student Counseling and Career Development Centre was officially registered as a unit in the university's student affairs department, marking a significant milestone.

The counseling center began offering a range of services: academic counseling to help students navigate course choices and career paths, personal counseling addressing emotional challenges such as anxiety and depression, and group therapy sessions focused on stress management. These interventions aimed to foster a supportive environment that would reduce dropout rates and improve academic performance. However, challenges remained. Funding was limited, and for many years, the counseling unit operated with only two professional counselors serving thousands of students. This lack of resources often led to long waiting times and limited outreach.

Cultural stigma surrounding mental health posed another significant obstacle. In Nigeria, mental health is often misunderstood, and seeking counseling can be seen as a sign of weakness. Many students were reluctant to access services, fearing judgment or ostracization. To counter this, the counseling center engaged in awareness campaigns, organizing workshops and seminars during student orientation and at departmental levels. These initiatives were aimed at normalizing conversations about mental health and encouraging early intervention.

The early 2000s saw incremental improvements. The university administration, recognizing the importance of mental health in student success, began allocating more funds and support to the counseling center. Partnerships were formed with local hospitals and mental health NGOs to provide referrals and specialized care for students with severe conditions. Notably, in 2012, the counseling center introduced peer counseling programs, training student volunteers to offer basic psychological support and bridge gaps in service delivery.

More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the critical role of counseling services. With lockdowns and remote learning, many students experienced isolation, anxiety, and academic stress. The University Of Benin counseling center responded by adopting virtual counseling sessions and creating online mental health resources. This adaptability showcased the center's commitment to evolving with student needs and technological advancements. Today, while the University of Benin's counseling center still faces challenges such as insufficient staffing, limited physical space, and ongoing stigma it has established itself as an indispensable part of the university ecosystem. Its history reflects a gradual but steady growth from informal welfare efforts to a professionalized service that acknowledges the integral role of mental health in education.

The historical trajectory of University of Benin counseling services is also representative of the broader context in Nigerian higher education. Across the country, universities have recognized the necessity of mental health support, albeit at different paces and levels of success. National policy developments, including Nigeria's Mental Health Policy (2013), have influenced universities to adopt more structured approaches to student welfare. Despite societal challenges, institutions like University Of Benin continue to innovate and advocate for mental health, ensuring future students have access to support that was once unavailable.

In conclusion, the counseling center at the University of Benin has grown from a modest, under-resourced unit into a vital support service. Key individuals, such as Dr. Grace Agbo, institutional policies, and evolving student needs have all shaped its journey. While challenges persist, the center's history is a testament to the university's commitment to student mental health, laying a foundation for continued growth and improvement in the years ahead.

### **Factors Influencing Student Mental Health and the Role of the Counselling Centre**

Several factors significantly influence the mental health of students at the University of Benin. Academic pressure is one of the most prominent, as students face intense workloads, tight deadlines, and high expectations for performance. This may lead to stress,

anxiety, and burnout. Financial challenges also weigh heavily on students, with many struggling to meet tuition fees and living expenses, which may lead to persistent worry and emotional distress. Family expectations and social pressures, including the need to balance relationships and cultural demands, add another layer of strain that may lead to poor mental health.

Environmental factors such as adjusting to university life living away from home for the first time and navigating new social circles may lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation. These pressures may lead to the onset or worsening of mental health conditions like depression, anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Furthermore, stigma surrounding mental health may prevent students from acknowledging their struggles or seeking help, which may prolong suffering and hamper recovery.

The counselling centre's role becomes critical in this context, providing a supportive environment where students can access professional help. By offering confidential counseling sessions, group therapy, and mental health education programs, the centre aims to mitigate these negative influences. The presence of trained counselors who understand these stressors ensures that students receive appropriate care and guidance tailored to their

individual needs. Moreover, the centre conducts awareness campaigns to reduce stigma and encourage early intervention.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of the counselling centre in managing student mental health hinges on its ability to address these influencing factors comprehensively. When the centre successfully engages students and meets their needs, it may help reduce the prevalence of mental health issues and improve students' psychological adjustment, academic performance, and overall well-being.

### **Effectiveness of the Counselling Centre in Managing Students' Mental Health**

The counselling centre at the University of Benin is a university-owned facility, managed directly by the institution to provide mental health support and psychological services to its student population. The centre operates from Monday to Friday during regular working hours, ensuring consistent availability for students across all faculties. To enhance accessibility and relevance, each faculty has an assigned counsellor who is responsible for attending to the unique needs of students within their respective academic divisions. This decentralized approach allows for tailored support that considers the specific pressures and challenges faced by students in different faculties.

The centre is staffed by qualified counsellors who offer individual and group therapy sessions, crisis intervention, and mental health education. These counsellors engage in

regular programs designed to raise awareness about mental health issues, promote psychological well-being, and reduce stigma associated with seeking help. Awareness campaigns and workshops often focus on common challenges such as depression, anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), equipping students with knowledge and coping strategies.

The constant presence of counsellors and the structured programming contribute significantly to the centre's effectiveness in managing students' mental health. By providing a supportive and confidential environment, the centre encourages students to seek help for emotional and psychological challenges before they escalate. Students' responses to these services have been largely positive, with many reporting improvements in their mental health and academic adjustment after utilizing the centre's resources. Research supports this, showing that students who access counselling services often experience reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety, better coping skills, and a lower likelihood of dropping out (Adeyemi, Onifade, Popoola, & Jimoh, 2023; Obiagu, Ocheje, Ofodum, & Eze, 2024).

However, the centre's impact is contingent on ongoing efforts to maintain adequate staffing levels, expand mental health programs, and increase student awareness of available services. When these conditions are met, the counselling centre plays a pivotal role in

fostering psychological adjustment and academic success, ultimately contributing to the overall well-being of the University of Benin student community.

### **Institutional and Policy Support for Mental Health in Nigerian Universities**

The mental well-being of university students is increasingly gaining attention, particularly in light of rising concerns about depression, anxiety, and stress related disorders. In Nigeria, where the mental health system is still evolving, institutional and policy support plays a vital role in shaping the availability and effectiveness of mental health services within university settings.

At the national level, mental health legislation has historically been underdeveloped. Until the passing of the Mental Health Act in January 2023, Nigeria relied on outdated colonial laws from the Lunacy Act of 1958. The new Mental Health Act provides a more rights-based framework and mandates the integration of mental health into general healthcare services, including institutions of learning. However, implementation remains slow, and many universities have yet to see the benefits trickle down to student counseling centers.

Within the University of Benin, as in many public universities, counseling services are often underfunded and understaffed. Despite the formal existence of a student counseling center, operational support is usually inadequate. Counselors may be overwhelmed by student numbers, poorly equipped, or lack ongoing training. This makes it difficult to meet

the increasing demand for psychological support, especially during exam seasons or after traumatic campus events.

On an institutional level, few universities have clearly articulated policies or strategies specifically targeting student mental health. Mental health is often lumped under general student affairs or welfare units, without dedicated funding or programs. Furthermore, many institutions do not prioritize mental health in orientation programs, academic advisement, or staff training, thereby missing key opportunities for early intervention.

Some positive developments, however, are emerging. Initiatives by NGOs and student-led mental health awareness campaigns have prompted universities to pay more attention to the psychological welfare of their students. The University of Benin has also participated in collaborative mental health workshops and inter-university peer support initiatives, though these efforts need to be scaled and institutionalized.

Universities that have made the most progress in mental health management often have active collaborations with hospitals, NGOs, and private psychologists. These partnerships help bridge institutional gaps in resources and expertise. The inclusion of teletherapy platforms and anonymous support lines has also begun to emerge as a useful tool in overcoming logistical barriers and stigma.

In summary, while Nigeria's legislative and institutional landscape is evolving in favor of better mental health care, there remains a significant gap between policy and practice in most university settings. Strengthening institutional frameworks, increasing funding, and ensuring alignment with national mental health goals are necessary steps for universities like University of Benin to become truly supportive environments for students' psychological well-being.

### **Students' Awareness and Utilization of Counseling Services in the University of Benin**

The effectiveness of any counseling center in a university setting is significantly influenced by the level of awareness students have about its existence and the extent to which they utilize its services. In the context of the University of Benin, this remains a crucial issue in mental health intervention and support, without adequate psychological wellbeing the mental functioning of it, students might be in great conflict that may affect the academic and total health. Many students either underutilize or completely ignore counseling services, not necessarily because they are unhelpful, but due to lack of information, cultural misconceptions, or systemic barriers. This section explores the dynamics surrounding students' awareness of the counseling center and the factors influencing their decision to use (or not use) its resources.

Awareness of the counseling center typically stems from orientation programs, flyers, social media campaigns, peer conversations, or referrals from lecturers and health professionals. Some students may know of the center's existence but do not understand its relevance to personal or academic struggles. In the University of Benin, anecdotal evidence suggests that counseling is still largely viewed as a last resort, often associated with "serious" or "extreme" psychological issues, rather than a resource for everyday stress management or academic and career guidance.

Cultural beliefs and stigma also play a central role in low utilization. In many African contexts, including Nigeria, mental health challenges are often misunderstood or minimized. Counseling may be perceived as something only "mad people" need, which discourages students from openly seeking help. Eze & Omeje (2019) argue that such stigmatization reduces students' willingness to visit counseling units for fear of being judged or labeled. In a university as large and diverse as the University of Benin, these societal perceptions can be deeply ingrained, leading to poor engagement with available support services.

Another barrier is the lack of visibility and proactive outreach by the counseling center itself. If students are not continually reminded of its presence or updated on the services it offers, they are likely to forget it exists altogether. Some institutions have adopted

digital counseling initiatives, peer counseling groups, and awareness campaigns to bridge this gap (Okonkwo, Abugu, Okoro, & Chinwe, 2021). In the University of Benin, similar steps could be taken such as integrating mental health talks into general studies programs, collaborating with student unions, and establishing a visible presence on social media platforms.

Additionally, trust is an important factor influencing utilization. Students may question the confidentiality of counseling sessions, fearing that their personal issues could be leaked or misunderstood. Building trust through trained professionals, transparent communication, and student testimonials could help to normalize the act of seeking help. More so, if students have one positive experience with the counseling unit, they are likely to return or refer others.

Accessibility also influences usage. For instance, limited working hours, understaffing, and bureaucracy can discourage students from approaching the center. When students are required to fill excessive forms or wait long before seeing a counselor, they may give up entirely. Enhancing responsiveness and creating flexible appointment systems can reduce this friction.

In conclusion, increasing awareness and improving utilization of counseling services in the University of Benin requires a multi-pronged strategy. This includes consistent mental health education, stigma reduction, strategic outreach, and structural improvements in how services are delivered. Without this, the counseling center regardless of how well it is set up may continue to be underused, limiting its impact on students' mental health.

### **Barriers to Accessing Counseling Services among Students**

Despite the increasing recognition of mental health issues in higher education, many students at the University of Benin face several barriers that prevent them from utilizing counseling services effectively. These barriers are complex and multifaceted, spanning cultural, social, institutional, and psychological dimensions.

**Cultural Stigma and Misconceptions** One of the most significant barriers to accessing counseling services is the cultural stigma attached to mental health in Nigerian society. Mental illness is often misunderstood, seen as a personal weakness or a spiritual problem rather than a medical condition (Eze & Omeje, 2019). This stigma creates fear of judgment and discrimination, which discourages students from seeking help. According to Adebayo and Afolayan (2020), many Nigerian youths associate counseling with being "crazy" or "possessed," thus avoiding such services to protect their social image.

**Lack of Awareness and Poor Publicity** Many students at the University of Benin are unaware of the full range of counseling services available. There is often a misconception that counseling is limited to academic guidance, neglecting its role in addressing emotional and psychological health. Furthermore, inadequate publicity and weak integration of counseling services into student orientation programs mean that many students do not know where or how to access help (Obiora, 2021).

**Concerns about Confidentiality and Trust** Confidentiality concerns significantly impact students' willingness to access counseling services. Students fear that their personal issues might be disclosed to peers, lecturers, or family members, leading to social repercussions (Amadi, Eze, & Chigor, 2020). This concern is exacerbated by limited awareness about the confidentiality policies of counseling centers, as well as mistrust in institutional privacy measures.

**Accessibility and Operational Limitations** University counseling centers often face challenges such as understaffing and insufficient funding, which reduce their capacity to serve the student population adequately (Ojo & Nwafor, 2019). Students may experience long waiting times, limited counseling sessions, and a lack of specialists trained in specific mental health issues. Additionally, limited office hours and inconvenient locations make it difficult for some students to attend sessions regularly (Adeniran et al., 2021).

**Financial Constraints** Although counseling services in many Nigerian universities are subsidized or free, indirect costs such as transportation and time away from academic activities can be prohibitive, especially for students from low-income families (Obasi, 2020). These financial barriers discourage consistent engagement with mental health care.

**Fear of Academic or Social Repercussions** Fear that seeking counseling might affect academic progression or social standing is common among students. Some worry that lecturers or peers will view them as weak or incapable, potentially impacting their academic evaluations or social interactions (Ibrahim et al., 2013). Without explicit institutional policies protecting mental health disclosure, these fears remain a deterrent.

**Peer Influence and Social Support** Peers significantly influence students' attitudes toward counseling. Supportive peer networks that normalize mental health care encourage students to seek help, while peer stigma can reinforce avoidance (Waduba et al., 2018). Student-led mental health awareness campaigns have been shown to reduce stigma and increase service uptake.

**Lack of Tailored Services for Diverse Student Needs** The counseling services often adopt a one-size-fits-all approach, which may not address the specific needs of diverse student populations, such as international students, students with disabilities, or those from

minority ethnic groups (Idika, Onuoha, Nji, & Eze, 2020). This limits the perceived relevance and effectiveness of the support provided.

**Technological Limitations** The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for remote counseling services, but inadequate digital infrastructure and poor internet connectivity hinder the adoption of tele-counseling in Nigerian universities, including the University of Benin (Owolabi et al., 2021).

**Psychological Denial and Self-Reliance** Cultural emphasis on resilience and self-reliance can lead students to deny their mental health challenges and avoid seeking professional help, believing they can manage alone (Adewale & Olatunji, 2016). This delay in help-seeking often results in worsening mental health conditions.

### **Summary of Reviewed Literature**

This literature review underscores the vital role university counseling centers play in addressing the growing mental health challenges faced by students. The study's theoretical framework, based primarily on Rogerian person-centered theory and Bandura's social cognitive theory, provides a foundational understanding of how counseling interventions foster mental well-being. Rogers' (1951) emphasis on empathy, unconditional positive regard, and the therapeutic relationship highlights the importance of creating a safe environment where students feel understood and supported. Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory,

focusing on self-efficacy and behavioral change, further illustrates how students' belief in their ability to manage stress and seek help can positively influence mental health outcomes. Together, these theories support the need for accessible, student-centered counseling services that empower individuals to overcome challenges.

Historically, the development of counseling centers within Nigerian universities, including the University of Benin, reflects a gradual but significant shift from basic academic advising to comprehensive mental health support systems. In the early years, counseling services were often limited to guidance on course selection and career advice, with little emphasis on psychological well-being. Pioneers such as Prof. Grace Alele-Williams and Dr. Olumide Owolabi played crucial roles in advocating for the expansion of counseling services to include mental health care tailored for students (Ojo & Nwafor, 2019). Despite these efforts, institutional challenges such as inadequate funding, insufficient training for counselors, and low prioritization by university administrations have restricted the full potential of these centers. The University of Benin, like many Nigerian universities, continues to face such systemic barriers, though recent policy shifts indicate a growing recognition of mental health's importance within higher education (Federal Ministry of Health Nigeria, 2019).

Several factors influence the mental health of university students, ranging from academic pressure, financial difficulties, social isolation, to personal and family issues. These stressors, often exacerbated by the transitional phase of emerging adulthood, can lead to anxiety, depression, and other psychological disorders (Adebayo & Afolayan, 2020). Counseling centers are strategically positioned to address these challenges through early intervention, psycho-education, and therapeutic support. However, their effectiveness is contingent on several factors including the availability of qualified counselors, adequate resources, and the willingness of students to seek help. Research indicates that students who engage with counseling services report improved coping skills, academic performance, and overall well-being (Amadi, Eze, & Chigor, 2020). Nonetheless, the impact of these centers is limited by systemic and cultural barriers, necessitating ongoing evaluation and support.

Institutional and policy support forms a critical backbone for effective mental health services in universities. Governmental policies, such as Nigeria's National Mental Health Policy (Federal Ministry of Health Nigeria, 2019), provide a framework for integrating mental health care into educational settings. These policies emphasize the need for adequate funding, training of mental health professionals, and the establishment of accessible counseling services. Within universities, administrative commitment to mental health initiatives greatly influences the quality and reach of counseling programs (Ojo & Nwafor,

2019). However, inconsistencies in policy implementation, budgetary constraints, and lack of enforcement have resulted in patchy service provision. At the University of Benin, while counseling centers exist, their operations are often hampered by limited resources and poor infrastructure (Federal Ministry of Health Nigeria, 2019). Strengthening institutional support through targeted policies, budget increases, and leadership advocacy is essential to improve mental health outcomes for students.

Barriers to accessing counseling services represent a significant challenge in addressing student mental health needs. Cultural stigma surrounding mental illness is one of the most pervasive obstacles, with many students fearing judgment, discrimination, or being perceived as weak if they seek help (Eze & Omeje, 2019). This stigma is deeply rooted in societal attitudes that often equate mental health problems with personal failure or supernatural causes, discouraging open discussion and timely intervention. Additionally, lack of awareness about counseling services, mistrust of counselors, and concerns about confidentiality further deter students from utilizing available resources (Adebayo & Afolayan, 2020). Financial limitations and academic workload may also prevent students from prioritizing mental health care. Recent innovations, such as tele-counseling and peer support programs, have been introduced to overcome some of these barriers, though their adoption remains limited (Owolabi et al., 2021). Addressing these issues requires comprehensive

strategies including awareness campaigns, counselor training in cultural competence, and policies to ensure confidentiality and accessibility.

In summary, the reviewed literature reveals a complex and multifaceted landscape for university counseling centers in Nigeria. Theoretical frameworks reinforce the necessity of empathetic, student-centered care. Historical developments show progress tempered by resource constraints. Factors influencing student mental health are diverse, and while counseling centers can play a transformative role, their effectiveness is undermined by cultural, institutional, and policy barriers. Institutional support and proactive policies are pivotal in strengthening mental health services, while overcoming stigma and accessibility challenges remains crucial for improving utilization. These insights form the foundation for the present study's assessment of the University of Benin counseling center's effectiveness in managing student mental health and guiding recommendations for policy and practice enhancements.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

This chapter carefully described the procedure and method adopted in gathering and analyzing data for this study. This chapter therefore focuses on the following area:

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Research Instrument
- Validity of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

#### **Research Design**

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. According to Gay (2006), the survey method is an attempt to collect data from members of a population concerning two or more variables. This design is considered appropriate when the focus of the research is on individuals' opinions, attitudes, and perceptions, particularly when data is to be obtained using a questionnaire. Given that the current study seeks to assess students' perceptions of the effectiveness of university counseling centers in managing mental health, the descriptive survey design is most suitable.

## **Population of the Study**

The population of this study will consist of 100 students across all levels in the University of Benin. For the purpose of this research, counseling will be defined as engagement in mental health support services, either directly (e.g., through personal counseling sessions) or indirectly (e.g., through peer support, group therapy, or mental health awareness programs). Participants will include individuals who have actively participated in or interacted with counseling services within the university setting. The responses adopted the four-point likert scale of response options of Strongly Agree( SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

## **Validity of Research Instrument**

The questionnaire will be submitted to the project supervisor and two other experts in Guidance and Counseling, for approval before distributing it to the respondents to ensure it's content and construct validity.

## **Reliability of Research Instrument**

The reliability of the quantitative instrument (questionnaire) will be assessed by calculating Cronbach' s alpha coefficient for the relevant subscales or sections of the questionnaire. A generally accepted threshold of 0.7 or higher will be used to indicate acceptable internal consistency reliability.

### **Method of Data Collection**

Data were collected through self-administered questionnaires distributed to the one hundred participants. The questionnaires were distributed in person and through online platforms, to the convenience of the participants. Appropriate measures will be taken to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The data collected from the respondents through the questionnaire forms will be analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency and percentage for the bio-data, while mean and standard deviation will be used for analysis of the research questions. In testing the hypothesis, Pearson correlation statistics will be used

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected from the respondents. The main objective of this study is to examine the effectiveness of university counselling centers in managing students' mental health in the University of Benin. The data collected were organized and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations to provide meaningful insights into the research questions.

The analysis focuses on students' awareness of counselling services, the frequency of their engagement with these services, the perceived effectiveness of counselling in managing mental health disorders, the contribution of counselling to psychological adjustment, and strategies for improving mental health adjustment among students.

The results are presented in tables, followed by a detailed discussion to highlight key findings in relation to the research objectives.

### Research Question 1:

Are students aware regarding the availability of Counseling services at the University of Benin?

**Table 1: Mean responses of the level of students' awareness on counselling services availability**

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Criterion mean	Decision
1	I am aware that the university of Benin provides counseling services for students	72	3.20	.819	2.5	Agree
2	I know the location and contact details of the counseling center		2.92	.931		Agree
3	The university adequately advertises the availability of the counselling services		2.44	1.067		Disagree
	Grand mean		8.56			
	<b>Average mean</b>		<b>2.85</b>			

The result in table 1 showed the mean responses of Items 1, 2 and 3 of students' awareness on counselling services availability. Items 1 and 2 with mean values of 3.20 and 2.92 respectively with their respective standard deviations, are in support that students' are aware of counselling services within the university, while item 3 with mean value of 2.44 is in opposition to this view. The mean responses have values ranges from 3.20 to 2.44. The mean of the cumulative means is 2.85, which concludes that, there is a fair level of students'

awareness on counselling services availability in university of benin. This implies that many students in university of benin are still unaware of counselling services.

**Research Question 2:** How Frequently do students engage with the counseling services offered by the university?

**Table 2: Mean responses of frequency of students engaged in counselling services**

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Criterion mean	Decision
4	I have used the university's counseling center	72	1.92	1.088	2.5	Disagree
5	Counseling sessions are easy schedule when needed		2.64	.763		Agree
6	Students do not visit counseling services		2.77	.955		Agree
	Grand mean		7.33			
	<b>Average mean</b>		<b>2.44</b>			

The result in table 2 showed the mean responses of the frequency of students engaged in counselling services. Items 5 and 6 with mean values of 2.64 and 2.77 respectively with their respective standard deviations, are in support that students patronize the counselling services within the university, while item 4 with mean value of 1.92 does not support this view. The mean responses have values ranges from 1.92 to 2.77. The mean of the cumulative means is 2.44, which concludes that, there is a very low engagement of counselling

services by University of Benin students. This implies that more than half of the students in University of Benin do not make use of counselling services.

**Research question 3:** To what extent are Counseling services perceived as effective in managing mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, obsessive – Compulsive Disorder (OCD), and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

**Table 3: Descriptive statistics of the effectiveness of counselling services in managing mental health**

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Criterion mean	Decision
7	The Counseling center provides adequate support for students experiencing anxiety or depression	72	2.78	.933	2.5	Agree
8	Counseling has helped me cope with personal/emotional problems		2.41	1.049		Disagree
9	Counseling services may prevent students from dropping out due to mental frustration		3.05	.950		Agree
	Grand mean		8.24			
	<b>Average mean</b>		<b>2.75</b>			

The result in table 3 showed the mean responses of the effectiveness of counselling services in managing mental health. Items 7 and 9 with mean values of 2.78 and 3.05 respectively with their respective standard deviations, are in support that counselling services helps to manage mental health disorder within the university, while item 8 with mean value of 2.41 is in opposition to this view. The mean responses have values ranges from 3.05 to 2.41. The mean of the cumulative means is 2.75, which concludes that to a fair extent, counselling services is effective in managing mental health disorder in university of Benin. This implies that many students in university of Benin have benefitted from these services in managing their mental health conditions.

**Research question 4:** How do Counseling services contribute to student’s psychological adjustment to academic and social life within the university?

**Table 4: Descriptive statistics of the contribution of counselling services to psychological adjustment**

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Criterion mean	Decision
10	Counseling has helped me manage stress academic stress	76	2.59	1.003	2.5	Agree
11	Counseling helped improve my motivation to continue my education		2.86	.870		Agree
12	Counseling may contribute to better time management and academic performance		3.14	.753		Agree
13	Are counselors approachable and professional		2.88	.845		Agree
	Grand mean		11.47			
	<b>Average mean</b>		<b>2.87</b>			

In the table 4 above, is the descriptive statistics of the contribution of counselling services to psychological adjustment in the university of benin. The responses provided are in the range of 2.59 to 3.14 . This is a clear indication that all the items are in supports of the opinion since their mean values are greater than the bench mark of 2.5. More so, the mean of the cumulative mean is 2.87, which shows that there is an agreement that counselling services

contributes to psychological adjustment of students in the university of benin. It also follows that students with psychological adjustment have benefited from counselling services.

Research question 5:

**Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the barriers to accessing counselling services**

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Criterion mean	Decision
14	Lack of awareness is a major barrier to accessing counseling	76	3.41	.954	2.5	Agree
15	Peer and family support may influence a student's willingness to seek counseling		3.39	.768		Agree
16	Some students avoid counseling due to stigma or fear of judgement		3.41	.830		Agree
17	Financial stress and personal problems are addressed during counseling sessions		3.14	1.036		Agree
	Grand mean		13.35			
	<b>Average mean</b>		<b>3.34</b>			

In the table 5 above, is the descriptive statistics of the barriers to accessing counselling services in the University of Benin. The responses provided are in the range of 3.14 to 3.41. This is a clear indication that all the items are in supports of the opinion since their mean

values are greater than the bench mark of 2.5. More so, the mean of the cumulative mean is 3.34, which shows that there is a strong agreement that students encounter some difficulties in accessing counselling services in the University of Benin. It also follows that these barriers in accessing counselling services could be the reason for the low patronage of the services.

**Research Question 6:**

**Table 6: Mean statistics of strategies for promoting students’ mental health adjustment**

S/N	Items	N	Mean	SD	Criterion mean	Decision
18	Strengthening counselling services could reduce dropouts at the University of Benin	76	3.44	.814	2.5	Agree
19	The University should invest more in improving counseling services		3.42	.751		Agree
20	I know students who have continued school because of the support received from counseling		2.58	1.109		Agree
	Grand mean		9.44			
	<b>Average mean</b>		<b>3.15</b>			

In table 6 is the mean statistics of strategies for promoting students’ mental health adjustment among students of university of benin. The results indicated that all the items were rated as the strategies for promoting students’ mental health adjustment because their

mean values are greater than the cut off of 2.5. Also the mean of items' mean was recorded as 3.15, thus leading to the conclusion that the above items are strategies that can be implemented to enhance the counselling centers' role in promoting students' mental health adjustment in the university of benin. This implies that mental health adjustment can be positively controlled when the above measures are put in place.

## **Discussion of Findings**

This study explored the Effectiveness of University Counselling Centers in Managing Students' Mental Health at the University of Benin. The results provide valuable insights into awareness, utilization, perceived effectiveness, and the overall impact of counselling services on students' mental health.

The findings show a moderate level of student awareness about counselling services (mean=2.85). Although many students know these services exist, a notable portion remains unaware, which may limit their use of the available support.

Despite some awareness, there is a \*low frequency of engagement\* with counselling services (mean=2.44), indicating that many students do not regularly access the support they might need. This gap could be due to stigma, misconceptions about counselling, or limited understanding of its benefits for mental health management. Among students who do utilize counselling, the service is generally perceived as \*effective in managing mental health issues\* such as anxiety, depression, and stress (mean=2.75). This suggests that counselling centers are positively impacting students who seek help, contributing to improved mental well-being.

Moreover, counselling services were found to significantly aid students' \*psychological adjustment\* to university life (mean=2.87). Effective counselling can help students better cope with academic pressures and social challenges, fostering resilience and emotional balance.

The study also highlights strategies for improving the counselling center's role in promoting mental health (mean-3.15). Implementing these strategies such as enhanced outreach, destigmatization efforts, and integration of mental health education – could increase service utilization and further improve outcomes.

In summary, the counselling centers at the University of Benin demonstrate effectiveness in managing students' mental health for those who use them. However, increasing awareness and encouraging more students to engage with these services remain critical to maximizing their impact.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Summary**

This study examined the effectiveness of university counseling centers in managing students' mental health at the University of Benin. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population consisted of students from various faculties within the university. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed through descriptive statistics such as means and standard deviations.

The findings revealed that while many students are aware of the counseling services available, a significant number remain unaware, which affects utilization rates. Although student engagement with the services was low, those who accessed counseling reported positive effects on their mental health and psychological adjustment. The study also identified strategies that can enhance the counseling centers' role in promoting better mental health among students.

#### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the university counseling centers play an important role in managing students' mental health at the University of Benin. However, the centers' full potential is yet to be realized due to limited awareness and low

utilization by students. Increasing outreach and improving service accessibility will likely enhance their effectiveness.

### **Recommendations**

- Awareness campaigns should be intensified to ensure all students are fully informed about the availability and benefits of counseling services.
- Adequate funding should be allocated to counseling centers to improve service quality and accessibility.
- The university should train more professional counselors and provide continuous professional development to enhance service delivery.
- Counseling centers should implement unbiased and inclusive approaches that encourage all students, regardless of background, to seek help.
- Facilities and resources dedicated to counseling services need to be upgraded and expanded to meet student demand.
- Social stigma around mental health should be addressed through education and advocacy programs to encourage more students to utilize counseling services.
- Mentorship programs and peer support groups should be established to complement formal counseling and foster a supportive community for students.

- Regular evaluation and feedback mechanisms should be put in place to assess the effectiveness of counseling services and identify areas for improvements

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**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION AND COUNSELLING  
FACULTY OF EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN  
BENIN CITY**

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to examine the effectiveness of the University Counseling Center in managing the mental health and well-being of students in the University of Benin.

Kindly provide appropriate responses to each of the questions. Your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic research purposes.

Please read the questions carefully and tick (✓) in the box that best represents your opinion.

Thank you for your cooperation.

**SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF RESPONDENTS**

Please provide the following background details:

- Age: \_\_\_\_\_
- Sex:  Male  Female
- Faculty: \_\_\_\_\_
- Department: \_\_\_\_\_
- Level of Study:  100  200  300  400  500
- Marital Status:  Single  Married  Divorced  Widowed
- Have you ever visited the University Counseling Center?  Yes  No

## **SECTION B: QUESTIONNAIRE ITEMS**

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements using the response options:

Key: Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

| S/N | ITEMS

| SA | A | D | SD |

### **Are students aware regarding the availability of counseling services at the University of Benin?**

1. I am aware that the University of Benin provides counseling services for students.
2. I know the location and contact details of the university's counseling center.
3. The university adequately advertises the availability of counseling services.

### **How frequently do students engage with the counseling services offered by the university?**

4. I have used the university's counseling services at least once.
5. Counseling sessions are easy to schedule when needed.
6. Students do not visit counseling services.

### **To what extent are counseling services perceived as effective in managing mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)?**

7. The counseling center provides adequate support for students experiencing anxiety or depression.
8. Counseling has helped me cope with personal/emotional problems.
9. Counseling services may prevent students from dropping out due to academic frustration.

### **How do counseling services contribute to students' psychological adjustment to academic and social life within the university?**

10. Counseling has helped me manage academic stress.

11. Counseling helped improve my motivation to continue my education.
12. Counseling may contribute to better time management and academic performance.
13. Are counselors are approachable and professional.

**What barriers limit students from accessing or benefiting from counseling services?**

14. Lack of awareness is a major barrier to accessing counseling.
15. Peer and family support may influence a student's willingness to seek counseling.
16. Some students avoid counseling due to stigma or fear of judgment.
17. Financial stress and personal problems are addressed during counseling sessions.

**What strategies can be implemented to enhance the Counseling Center's role in promoting student mental health and adjustment?**

18. Strengthening counseling services could reduce dropout rates at the University of Benin.
19. The university should invest more in improving counseling services.
20. I know students who have continued school because of the support received from counseling.

### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.714	3

### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.625	3

### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0

	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's		
Alpha		N of Items
	605	3

### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's		
Alpha		N of Items
	.721	4

### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's	
Alpha	N of Items
.511	4

### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's	
Alpha	N of Items
.703	3

### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's	
Alpha	N of Items
.754	5

### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's	
Alpha	N of Items
.602	5

### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's	
Alpha	N of Items
.710	5

### Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded <sup>a</sup>	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

### Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's	
Alpha	N of Items
.545	5