

Institutional factors and mental health challenges among students in the University of Calabar, Nigeria.

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Abstract

This study adopted correlational design to established the relationship between school related factors (in term of lecturer student relationship and school counselling)and mental health of students in University of Calabar, Nigeria. Two research questions were posed which were translated into two null hypotheses. The population for the study consists of all the twenty-six thousand four hundred and thirty-four (26,434) undergraduate students across twenty-four (24) faculties and one hundred and sixteen (116) departments for the 2023/2024 academic session. In University of Calabar of which a sample of 228 were selected via stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The instruments titled “School Related Factors and Mental Health Challenges (SRFMHCQ).” was developed by the researcher and validated by experts and used for data collection. The reliability of the questionnaire using Alpha Cronbach Method gives an average index of .85. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment .Correlation Coefficient at .05 level of significance.. The findings of the study revealed that school related factors (in term of lecturer student relationship and school counselling) significantly relate with mental health of students in University of Calabar, Nigeria . It was therefore concluded that mental health of students in University of Calabar, Nigeria depends on lecturer student relationship and school counselling. Based on finding and conclusion of the study, it was recommended amongst others that the university should strengthen its counseling services

by increasing the number of qualified counselors, providing training on mental health issues, and promoting awareness of available resources among students.

Keywords: School related factors , lecturer student relationship , school counselling , mental health of students

Introduction

Mental health challenges among university students have become increasingly prevalent, particularly in Nigeria, where the pressures of academic life intersect with various socio-cultural factors. At the University of Calabar, students face unique challenges that can significantly impact their mental well-being. Mental health is a critical aspect of overall well-being, particularly for undergraduate students navigating the complexities of university life. The transition to higher education often presents numerous challenges, including academic pressures, social adjustments, and financial constraints. These factors can significantly impact students' mental health, leading to increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. As universities strive to create supportive learning environments, understanding the mental health needs of undergraduate students becomes essential for promoting academic success and personal development (Adeleke et al., 2023; Ibok et al., 2025).

Mental health refers to a state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It influences how individuals think, feel, and act, as well as how they handle stress, relate to others, and make decisions. Good mental health is characterized by the ability to cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively, and contribute to the community. Conversely, poor mental health can lead to various challenges, including impaired academic performance, social withdrawal, and, in severe cases, suicidal ideation. According to Ogunyemi, and Okeke (2022) a state of well-being in which an individual recognizes their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to their community. It encompasses emotional stability, psychological resilience, and social competence, all of which are essential for functioning effectively in various aspects of life.

The academic landscape in Nigeria, particularly at the University of Calabar, is characterized by a complex interplay of various school-related factors that significantly influence students' educational experiences, mental health and outcomes. These factors include academic workload, classroom conditions, lecturer-student relationships, school counselling and extracurricular activities. The high academic demands can lead to increased stress and anxiety, while supportive lecturer-student relationships and school counselling can foster a sense of belonging and resilience (Eze et al., 2023; Ibok et al., 2025).

School-related factors refer to the various elements within the educational environment that can influence students' academic performance, behavior, and overall well-being. These factors encompass a wide range of aspects related to the school setting, teaching practices, and student interactions (Nwogbo & Okeke, 2023; Ibok et al., 2025). School-related factors are critical components of the educational environment that affect students' learning experiences and mental health. By examining these factors, educators and researchers can identify areas for improvement and develop strategies to support student success. The school related factors examine in this study are lecturer student relationship and school counselling, The lecturer-student relationship is the dynamic interaction between educators and their students within the academic setting. This relationship can significantly influence students' academic experiences, motivation, and mental health. Positive lecturer-student relationships can enhance students' motivation and engagement, while negative or distant relationships may contribute to feelings of isolation and stress (Chukwuemeka & Okoye, 2019 ; Ibok, Ogar & Akpeke, 2025). This relationship is influenced by cultural, institutional, and interpersonal factors that can either mitigate or exacerbate mental health challenges. Recent studies have identified the quality of these interactions as significantly correlating with students' mental health outcomes, including stress, anxiety, depression, and self-esteem. In the Nigerian context, where students often have limited access to counseling services and peer support, lecturers become central figures in both academic and emotional development. A study by Okafor and Eze (2020) found that undergraduates who viewed their lecturers as approachable reported fewer anxiety symptoms and were more likely to seek academic help and engage in discussions which influence their mental health. Chukwuemeka and Okoye (2019) reported that students with at least one approachable lecturer had lower rates of depression and stress-related symptoms. These supportive relationships were linked to increased feelings of belonging, motivation, and academic persistence. Conversely, students lacking such support experienced academic burnout, disengagement and mental disorder.

The nature of lecturer-student interactions profoundly impacts students' mental health. A positive relationship characterized by openness, respect, and empathy can buffer against anxiety and low self-esteem. Adewale and Ogunlade (2017) found that students' comfortable discussing challenges with lecturers exhibited lower stress levels, and greater academic resilience. Conversely, students who perceived their lecturers as harsh or indifferent often felt alienated and inadequate, leading to increased anxiety and depression (Nwankwo & Adebisi, 2018; Ibok, Ogar, Bessong, Bessong, Agwanyang, & Olofu, 2026) s. Usman and Adeyemi (2021) found that over 60% of students avoided seeking clarification from lecturers due to fear of negative repercussions, fostering a culture of silence that leads to accumulated stress and burnout. Additionally, Akintunde and Okoro (2019) revealed that students perceiving

unfair grading experienced feelings of worthlessness and demotivation. The absence of institutional checks on lecturer behavior and the lack of anonymous reporting mechanisms exacerbate students' vulnerability and reduce their sense of academic autonomy and mental health. Eze and Chinonso (2020) found that lecturer-student relationship significantly influence mental health of students.

In the same vein, Uche and Adesina (2022) found positive lecturer-student relationships act as protective factors for mental health and academic motivation. Ifeanyi and Alabi (2023) found that students with supportive lecturers reported lower stress levels and higher life satisfaction. Structured mentorship programmes were linked to increased self-confidence and emotional resilience, helping students identify early signs of burnout and take proactive steps.. Olawale and Makinde (2021) noted that most institutions do not require lecturers to undergo training in pedagogy or emotional intelligence, leading to poor communication and insensitivity to student concerns and lower mental health.. Okoli, Nwachukwu, & Daramola (2022) suggested establishing anonymous feedback systems and regular lecturer evaluations to improve accountability, classroom climate and promote mental health. In the same vein, Ibrahim and Udo (2023) examine the relationship between lecturer-student relationships and the mental health of students in tertiary institutions across Nigeria. A total of 400 students from four universities participated in the research, responding to questionnaires that assessed their perceptions of lecturer support and their mental health status. The analysis revealed a significant positive correlation, indicating that supportive lecturer-student relationships are associated with better mental health outcomes, including lower levels of stress and anxiety. The study underscores the importance of fostering positive academic relationships to enhance student mental health. Eze and Ogunyemi (2023) examine the relationship between lecturer-student relationships and the mental health of students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. A total of 500 students from four universities participated in the study, responding to surveys that assessed their perceptions of lecturer support and their mental health status. The analysis revealed a significant positive correlation, indicating that strong, supportive lecturer-student relationships are associated with improved mental health outcomes, including lower levels of stress and anxiety. The study emphasizes the importance of fostering positive academic relationships to enhance student mental health.

School counseling refers to a supportive service provided within educational institutions aimed at addressing students' academic, emotional, and social needs. School counselors play a crucial role in promoting mental health, providing guidance, and helping students navigate challenges. According to Okonkwo and Ekwe (2018), school counseling as a professional service that assists students in developing academic skills, coping strategies, and personal

development through individual and group counseling, educational programs, and crisis intervention. School counseling involves professional guidance provided to students to help them navigate academic, personal, and social challenges. School counselors offer support through counseling sessions, workshops, and resources aimed at improving students' mental health and well-being. Effective school counseling can provide students with coping strategies, emotional support, and a safe space to discuss their concerns, thereby promoting better mental health outcomes (Okobiah & Okorodudu, 2018; Nwankwo & Out, 2019) . However, its implementation in tertiary institutions remains inconsistent and under-resourced. Mental health concerns among Nigerian students, such as stress, anxiety, and depression, have become increasingly prevalent due to academic pressure and inadequate support systems (Ibrahim, Mohammed & Dogo, 2020). Counseling offers emotional support and coping strategies, enhancing students' psychological resilience and academic performance. Nwogbo, Ugochukwu, and Okeke (2023) found that students engaging with counseling services reported better emotional regulation and stress management. Akpa, Anam, and Akah (2024) noted that students who underwent counseling developed problem-solving skills and sought help early during difficult periods, preventing severe mental health outcomes. Empirical studies demonstrate that counseling interventions significantly enhance students' psychological well-being. For instance, Okonkwo and Ekwe (2018) showed that students receiving counseling reported lower levels of depressive symptoms and improved time management. Similarly, Adegboyega and Olatunji (2022) found that structured counseling sessions led to improvements in emotional clarity, class engagement and mental health. At Lagos State University, Adebisi and Oladokun (2020) found group counseling effective in reducing loneliness and social anxiety, fostering peer connections.. Ezenwaji, Okoye, and Nwankwo (2022) reported that most centers are underfunded and lack trained professionals. Stigmas surrounding counseling further hinder student engagement, with many associating it with weakness and associated health issues.

How ever, despite the increasing recognition of mental health issues among university students in Nigeria, there remains a limited understanding of the specific school-related factors that contribute to these challenges at the University of Calabar. Existing research has primarily focused on general mental health trends without delving deeply into the unique dynamics of the university environment. This gap in knowledge hinders the development of targeted interventions that could effectively address the mental health needs of students. Therefore, this study aims to examine the school-related factors contributing to mental health challenges among students at the University of Calabar, providing insights that can inform policy and practice in supporting student well-being. Further more, Chukwu and Akintunde (2023) investigates the relationship between school counseling services and the mental health

of students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. A sample of 350 students from five universities provided data through surveys assessing their engagement with counseling services and mental health indicators. The results indicate a significant positive relationship, suggesting that students who utilize counseling services report better mental health outcomes, including lower levels of anxiety and improved coping strategies. The study highlights the critical role of accessible counseling services in supporting student mental health and recommends enhancing awareness of these resources. In the same vein, Nwachukwu and Ugochukwu (2023) investigates the relationship between school counseling services and the mental health of students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. A sample of 400 students from six universities provided data through surveys assessing their engagement with counseling services and mental health indicators. The results indicate a significant positive relationship, suggesting that students who utilize counseling services report better mental health outcomes, including lower levels of anxiety and enhanced coping strategies. The study highlights the importance of accessible counseling services in supporting student mental health and recommends increasing awareness of these resources on campus. This study is supported by Social Support Theory, articulated by Cohen and Wills (1985), and Ecological Systems Theory, developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979),

Social Support Theory, articulated by Cohen and Wills (1985), posits that social support can buffer individuals against stress and improve mental health outcomes. It emphasizes the importance of relationships that provide emotional, informational, and instrumental assistance, which can enhance coping mechanisms and overall well-being.. Positive interactions with lecturers and access to supportive resources enhance students' ability to cope with academic stress. When students receive emotional and instrumental support from their lecturers, it can mitigate feelings of anxiety and depression, thereby improving their mental health outcomes.

Ecological Systems Theory, developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), emphasizes the multiple layers of environmental influence on an individual's development. It posits that individuals are affected by various systems, including the microsystem (immediate environment), mesosystem (interconnections between microsystems), exosystem (indirect influences), and macrosystem (broader societal factors). School-related factors, such as classroom conditions and academic pressures, are part of the microsystem that directly influences students' mental health. The interplay between these factors and the broader educational environment shapes students' experiences and well-being. In summary, both Social Support Theory and Ecological Systems Theory provide valuable frameworks for understanding the significant relationships between school-related factors, lecturer-student relationships, school

counseling, and mental health challenges among students at the University of Calabar. These theories highlight the importance of supportive relationships and the multifaceted nature of the environments in which students operate, underscoring the need for educational institutions to foster positive interactions and provide adequate support systems to enhance student well-being.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between school related factors and mental health challenges among students in the University of Calabar, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seek to established

1. The relationship between the lecturer-student relationship and mental health of students in the University of Calabar.
2. The relationship between the school counseling and mental health of students in the University of Calabar.

Statement of hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between lecturer-student relationship and mental health of students in the University of Calabar.
2. There is no significant relationship between school counseling and mental health of students in the University of Calabar.

Methodology

The study area was the University of Calabar. The research design used for this study was a correlational survey design. The researchers employed this design to establish the relationship between school-related factors (in terms of lecturer-student relationships and school counseling) and the mental health of students at the University of Calabar. The population for the study consisted of all undergraduate students at the University of Calabar. Records from the Students' Affairs Division indicate that there are twenty-six thousand four hundred and thirty-four (26,434) undergraduate students across twenty-four (24) faculties and one hundred and sixteen (116) departments for the 2023/2024 academic session. Third and fourth years (300/400 level) were used in this study because they have more academic experience and maturity compared to first- and second-year students. They are likely to have encountered various academic pressures and social challenges, providing richer insights into mental health issues.

The researcher utilized a multi-stage sampling method. First, the names of all twenty-four (24) faculties at the University of Calabar were written on pieces of paper, folded into small balls, and placed in a bowl. After thoroughly mixing them, the researcher randomly selected six paper balls with replacement. These six faculties represent approximately thirty percent of all faculties. From each of the selected faculties, twenty percent of the departments were then chosen to participate in the study. The departments selected for the study included Crop Science, Radiography, Sociology, Computer Science, Theatre Arts, and Chemistry.

To choose the respondents for the study, the researcher applied the systematic random sampling method. In each of the selected departments, the researcher collected the list of students and selected twenty percent of those in their third and fourth years. From these lists, every fifth student's name was chosen. The individuals selected through this process formed the sample for the study. A total of two hundred and twenty-eight (228) undergraduates were randomly selected from six departments across six faculties at the University of Calabar for the 2023/2024 academic session. A sample size of 228 undergraduates were used because is large enough to detect significant effects and relationships while allowing for a manageable data collection process.

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "School-Related Factors and Mental Health Challenges" (SRFMHCQ). The questionnaire comprised 22 items, with 6 items measuring each sub-level in terms of lecturer-student relationships and 10 items measuring the mental health of students at the University of Calabar. Mental health is a multifaceted construct that encompasses emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Mental health dimensions help in identifying various factors that contribute to mental well-being and challenges. The questionnaire utilized a four-point scale: strongly agree -4 points, agree-3 points, disagree -2 points, and strongly disagree-1 point.

The questionnaire was based on a four-point scale: strongly agree scored 4 points, agree scored 3 points, disagree scored 2 points, and strongly disagree scored 1 point. The instrument was face and content validated by four experts—two from Measurement and Evaluation and two from Human Kinetics and Health Education, all from the University of Calabar. Corrections suggested by the experts were implemented by the researchers, and the document was deemed valid. Face validation is primarily based on the opinions of experts regarding the relevance and appropriateness of the test items. Construct validation ensuring that a test or measurement accurately represents the theoretical construct it is intended to measure. Content validity ensure that the measurement items adequately cover the construct. This can involve expert reviews or focus groups to evaluate whether the items reflect the domain of

interest. Criterion-related Validity Assess the extent to which the measure correlates with other established measures of the same construct.

The reliability of the questionnaire, assessed using the Cronbach Alpha method, yielded an average index of 0.85. Since the reliability index is above 0.50, it was considered sufficiently high for the study. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program was used to analyze the data collected. The hypotheses were tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for the three hypotheses. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of results

The result of the analysis is presented in Tables 1 and 2. The hypotheses were tested at .05 significant level.

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between lecturer-student relationship and mental health of students in the University of Calabar. The independent variable is lecturer-student relationship while the dependent variable is mental health of students in the University of Calabar. To test this hypothesis, the mean, standard deviation of lecturer-student relationship and mental health of students in the University of Calabar were computed and correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation for the relationship between lecturer-student relationship and mental health of students in the University of Calabar (N=228)

Variables	Mean	SD	r-value	Pvalue
Lecturer-student relationship	16.765	2.765	.812*	.000
Mental health of students	30.672	4.213		

* Significant at .05, df = 226

The result of the analysis as presented in Table 1 revealed that the calculated ($r=.812$; $p=.000$) is significant at .05 level of significance with 226 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between lecturer-student relationship and mental health of students in the University of Calabar was rejected while alternative hypothesis was retained. The finding indicates that there is a significant relationship between the lecturer-student relationship and the mental health of students at the University of Calabar. A positive relationship suggests that as the quality of the lecturer-student relationship improves (e.g., increased support, communication, and rapport), students' mental health outcomes also tend to improve. This could manifest as lower levels of anxiety, depression, and stress among students who feel supported and valued by their lecturers. On the other hand, more negative lecturer-student relationship, the more mental health disorder of the students tend to be. Pearson correlation is sensitive to outliers, which can distort the correlation coefficient. An extreme value in either variable can significantly affect the interpretation of the relationship.

HO₂: There is no significant relationship between school counselling and mental health of students in the University of Calabar. The independent variable is academic workload while the dependent variable is mental health of students in the University of Calabar. To test this hypothesis, the mean, standard deviation of school counselling and mental health of students in the University of Calabar were computed and correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation for the relationship between school counselling and mental health of students in the University of Calabar (N=228)

Variables	Mean	SD	r-value	Pvalue
School counselling	16.876	3.126		
			.884*	.000
Mental health of students	30.672	4.213		

* Significant at .05, df = 226

The result of the analysis as presented in Table 2 revealed that the calculated ($r=.884$; $p=.000$) is significant at .05 level of significance with 226 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between school counselling and mental health of students in the University of Calabar was rejected while alternative hypothesis was retained which implied that there is a significant relationship between school counselling and mental health of students in the University of Calabar. The finding suggests a significant relationship between school counseling services and the mental health of students at the University of Calabar. A positive correlation implies that as access to and utilization of school counseling services increase, students' mental health outcomes improve. This may indicate that students who engage with counseling services experience reduced levels of anxiety, depression, and stress, benefiting from the support provided. Pearson correlation assumes that the relationship between school counseling and mental health is linear. If the relationship is more complex (e.g., curvilinear), the correlation may not capture the true nature of the association. The significant correlation does not imply that school counseling causes improvements in mental health. Other factors, such as individual differences in coping mechanisms or external support systems, may contribute to both the utilization of counseling and mental health outcomes.

Discussion of findings

This section is devoted to the discussion of findings of the hypotheses formulated to direct the study. This discussion is done hypothesis by hypothesis.

The results of hypothesis one revealed a significant relationship between the lecturer-student relationship and the mental health of students at the University of Calabar. Positive relationships with lecturers foster a sense of belonging and support, which are crucial for students' emotional health. Students who feel valued are more likely to engage in their studies and seek help when needed. Supportive lecturers can motivate students, helping them overcome academic challenges and reducing feelings of isolation and anxiety. A strong lecturer-student relationship facilitates open communication, allowing students to express concerns and seek guidance. This finding aligns with Okafor and Eze (2020), who noted that lecturers providing timely feedback and showing concern for students' personal challenges create an inclusive classroom atmosphere that serves as a vital source of emotional support. Chukwuemeka and Okoye (2019) also found that supportive relationships increased feelings of belonging, motivation, and academic persistence. Conversely, students lacking supportive figures within their departments were more likely to experience academic burnout, self-doubt, and disengagement.

Adewale and Ogunlade (2017) found that students comfortable discussing academic challenges with their lecturers exhibited lower stress levels and greater academic resilience, demonstrating higher self-efficacy and motivation. The perception of being heard and understood by academic staff enhances psychological stability. In contrast, Akintunde and Okoro (2019) revealed that students perceiving their lecturers as biased in grading were more likely to feel worthless and demotivated. This psychological impact is severe when students believe their efforts do not result in fair assessments. Uche and Adesina (2022) reported that positive lecturer-student relationships serve as a protective factor for mental health and a strong predictor of academic motivation and engagement. When lecturers take on mentorship roles, they foster a sense of belonging that enhances emotional and academic development. Ifeanyi and Alabi (2023) emphasized that institutional support for lecturer mentorship initiatives can significantly impact academic and mental health outcomes. However, Olawale and Makinde (2021) noted that many institutions do not require lecturers to undergo training in pedagogy or emotional intelligence, leading to poor communication and insensitivity to student concerns. This finding aligns with Okoli, Nwachukwu, and Daramola (2022), who identified the lecturer-student relationship as a strategic investment in the academic and mental health outcomes of Nigerian university students. The finding agreed with Social Support Theory, articulated by Cohen and Wills (1985), who posits that social support can buffer individuals against stress and improve mental health outcomes. It emphasizes the importance of relationships that provide emotional, informational, and instrumental assistance, which can enhance coping mechanisms and overall well-being. According to the theory, a supportive lecturer-student dynamic fosters an environment where students feel valued and understood, which can enhance their emotional well-being and resilience against stressors. The finding also aligns with Ecological Systems Theory, developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), emphasizes the multiple layers of environmental influence on an individual's development. It posits that individuals are affected by various systems, including the microsystem (immediate environment), mesosystem (interconnections between microsystems), exosystem (indirect influences), and macrosystem (broader societal factors). The lecturer-student relationship exemplifies the microsystem component of Ecological Systems Theory. Positive relationships within this microsystem can lead to better mental health outcomes, as supportive interactions contribute to a nurturing academic environment. The quality of these interactions can significantly affect students' perceptions of their educational experience and their mental health.

The results of hypothesis two indicated a significant relationship between school counseling and the mental health of students at the University of Calabar. Effective counseling services provide access to mental health resources, helping students address issues before they escalate

and reducing feelings of isolation and helplessness. Counseling often includes educational components that inform students about mental health, reduce stigma, and encourage help-seeking behaviors. It equips students with coping strategies to manage stress, anxiety, and other challenges effectively. According to Nwogbo, Ugochukwu, and Okeke (2023), students who actively engaged with university counseling services reported enhanced emotional regulation, better stress management, and improved academic performance. These benefits arise from counseling's ability to help students reframe their responses to academic setbacks and peer pressure. Akpa, Anam, and Akah (2024) found that students who underwent counseling developed problem-solving skills, practiced mindfulness, and sought help early during emotionally challenging periods, which are crucial in preventing severe mental health outcomes like depression. Okonkwo and Ekwe (2018) reported that students receiving counseling experienced lower levels of depressive symptoms, better time management, and reduced academic anxiety. Counseling helped students identify the root causes of their stress and provided individualized coping strategies. Ogunleye and Arowolo (2016) found that counseling interventions assist students in bouncing back from failure, managing fear of failure, and maintaining motivation in difficult academic environments. Uche and Opara (2023) noted a strong positive correlation between the frequency of student-counselor interactions and students' ability to persist in the face of financial hardship, academic difficulty, or social alienation. The finding agreed with Social Support Theory, articulated by Cohen and Wills (1985), who posits that access to school counseling services reflects the principles of Social Support Theory. Counseling provides students with emotional support and coping strategies, helping them navigate mental health challenges. The significant relationship between school counseling and mental health underscores how structured support systems can improve students' psychological well-being. The finding also aligns with Ecological Systems Theory, developed by Bronfenbrenner (1979), emphasizes the multiple layers of environmental influence on an individual's development. According to the theory, school counseling services represent a crucial element of the educational microsystem. The availability and effectiveness of counseling can impact students' mental health by providing necessary support. Additionally, the interaction between counseling services and other systems (such as family support and peer relationships) can further influence students' mental health outcomes, reflecting the interconnectedness emphasized in Ecological Systems Theory.

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the significant relationships between the lecturer-student relationship, school counseling, and the mental health of students at the University of Calabar. The findings indicate robust associations that underscore the critical role of interpersonal and

institutional support in promoting student well-being. This suggests that positive interactions, support, and effective communication between lecturers and students can enhance students' mental health outcomes. A supportive educational environment fosters emotional well-being, which is essential for academic success and personal development. Additionally, the findings indicate that students who engage with counseling services are likely to experience improved mental health outcomes. This underscores the necessity for universities to provide robust counseling programs that address the diverse mental health needs of students.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, the following recommendation were made.

1. Training programs for lecturers on effective communication and relationship-building strategies should be implemented to foster supportive interactions with students.
2. The university should strengthen its counseling services by increasing the number of qualified counselors, providing training on mental health issues, and promoting awareness of available resources among students.

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