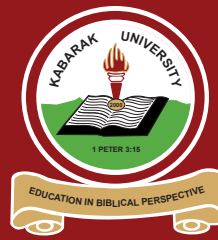




**KENYA UNIVERSITIES PROFESSIONAL  
COUNSELORS ASSOCIATION (KUPCA)**



**KABARAK  
UNIVERSITY**

**Education in Biblical Perspective**

**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL  
SCIENCES**

**15<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH  
CONFERENCE IN PSYCHOLOGY  
AND MENTAL HEALTH 2025**

**14<sup>TH</sup> - 16<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER**

**PROGRAM AND BOOK OF ABSTRACTS**



Kabarak University is ISO 9001:2015 certified.



# KABARAK UNIVERSITY | Education in Biblical Perspective

## About Us

Kabarak University is a Chartered institution of higher learning that provides holistic Christian-based quality education, training, research and outreach activities for the service of God and humanity. The University was established in the year 2000 by the 2<sup>nd</sup> President of Kenya, H.E. the Late Hon. Daniel T. Arap Moi, who was also the founding Chancellor. This was as a result of his visionary idea of setting up a Christian University that would meet the demand for higher education in Kenya and offer quality education based on strong moral principles.

## Location

Kabarak University Main Campus is located 20 kilometers north of Nakuru City, along the Nakuru-Eldama Ravine highway in a serene, spacious and beautiful environment that makes it ideal for learning. The University has state-of-the-art facilities for teaching, learning, research, accommodation, catering, and sports. The facilities are purpose-built to enhance intellectual, physical, and spiritual growth. Nakuru City Campus is located one kilometer from Nakuru CBD, along Prison Road, off Nakuru-Kabarnet Road.

## Vision

To become a centre of Academic Excellence founded on Biblical Christian values.

## Mission

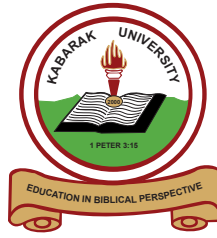
To provide holistic quality education, research and community outreach based on Biblical Christian values.

## Philosophy

To provide quality education in Biblical perspective that transforms lives.

## Core Values

- ✓ Integrity
- ✓ Professionalism
- ✓ Patriotism
- ✓ Innovativeness
- ✓ Being Mindful of Others



# KABARAK UNIVERSITY

## SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

### 15<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE IN PSYCHOLOGY AND MENTAL HEALTH 2025

#### Conference Theme:

Investing in Mental Health: Innovation and  
Digitalization for a Sustainable Future.

### PROGRAM AND BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

OCTOBER 2025

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Vice-Chancellor’s Speech.....3

Dean School of Education, Humanities and Social Studies Speech.....5

Keynote Speaker Bio .....6

Guest Speaker Bio .....7

Day One Program.....9

Day Two Program.....9

Day Three Program ( Breakout Room One).....11

Day Three Program ( Breakout Room Two).....13

**Abstracts for International Research Conference in Psychology and Mental Health 2025.....14**

    The Role Of Electrical Engineering In Addressing Insomnia Among Engineering University Students In Kenya: A Proposed Study.....14

    The Impact Of Cultural And Religious Diversity Era And Mental Health.....15

    Project Anonymous.....15

    Examining Mental Health And Wellbeing Among (Digital) Media-Makers In Kenya.....16

    AI-Powered Chatbots In Mental Healthcare: Effectiveness, Benefits, Limitations, And Ethical Considerations.....16

    The Intersection Of Culture, Faith, And The Mental Health Of Full-Time Spiritual Health Providers In Nakuru City, Kenya.....17

    Youth, Illicit Substance Misuse, And Mental Health: Insights From Informal Settlements In Nairobi, Kenya.....18

    Elevate Minds Network System (EMNS): Revolutionizing Mental Health Support Through Digital Innovation.....18

    Substance Abuse And Induced Psychotic Disorders Among Egerton University Students, Njoro Campus.....19

    Effect Of Undergraduate Examinations On Stress And Depression Among University Students From A Selected Public University In Kenya: A Case Of Kisii University.....20

    The Influence Of Cultural Beliefs On Religious Diversification On Mental Health A Case Study Of Ainamoi Sub-County Kericho County Kenya.....20

    Socio-Economic Constraints And Academic Pressure On Mental Health Among University Students In Kenya: A Case Study Of Pwani University.....21

    A Detailed Analysis Of Mental Health In Agribusiness.....22

    Elevate Minds Network System (EMNS): Revolutionizing Mental Health Support Through Digital Innovation.....22

    Disclosing The Negative Effects Of Social Media On Youth Depression And Low Self-Esteem.....23

    The Role Of Social Support Networks In Enhancing Emotional And Mental Health Resilience Among Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) In Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria.....24

    The Impact Of Social Media Uses On University Student’s Mental Health: A Case Of Chuka University.....25

    Substance Abuse And Induced Psychotic Disorders Among Egerton University Students, Njoro Campus.....26

    Intergration Of Cultural And Religious Resources In Psychotherapeutic Practice.....26

    The Invisible Wounds: Exploring The Climate - Induced Mental Health Challenges Through A Gender Lens.....27

    Exploring The Interplay Between Financial Resilience And Mental Health Among University Students In Kenya.....28

    Fostering Innovation And Use Of Technology In Mental Health.....29

    Climate Induced Migration And Mental Health: A Global Review.....30

    Policy To Praticte: Examining Mental Health Governance Approaches In Kenya And The United Kingdom.....31

    Perceptions Of Ai In Mental Wellness: A Qualitative Study Among Clinicians In Kisii, Kenya.....32

    Returning To Work: Teachers’ Lived Work Experiences Post-Mental Illness Relapse.....33

    Digitization Of Counselling Services In The 21st Century.....34

    Effect Of Communication Skills On Anxiety Levels Among Juvenile Delinquents In Manga Children’s Remand Home, Kenya.....35

    KUPCA Executive Committee Members.....36

    Conveners.....36



**Prof. Henry Kiplangat, PhD, MBS, OGW**  
**VICE CHANCELLOR,**  
**KABARAK UNIVERSITY**

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Kabarak University and to our **15<sup>th</sup> International Research Conference**. This part of the Conference is being hosted by the School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences to explore the theme: **Current Trends in Education Management, Policy, Curriculum Design and Pedagogy**. This theme resonates deeply with the transformations shaping education nationally and globally. The emerging technology, globalization and new challenges have brought a paradigm shift in how we teach, learn, and assess the students.

In Kenya, the implementation of the Competency-Based Education (CBE) is one of the most significant educational reforms in recent history. CBE represents a deliberate move from rote learning toward a learner-centered and skills-oriented approach that nurtures creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and problem-solving. It calls for a fundamental rethinking of pedagogy, assessment, and teacher preparation. I am glad that these issues have been identified for interrogation in this Conference.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, beyond CBE, we must reflect on broader trends in education management and policy, including digital transformation, Artificial Intelligence, mental health in learning environments, and ethical leadership in education. The future of learning demands that we integrate technology meaningfully while preserving human connection, compassion, and moral grounding — values that are integral to the vision and mission of Kabarak University.

At Kabarak University, we are proud to contribute to national conversations on curriculum reform and educational innovation through our teaching, research, and community engagement. To this end, our School of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences continues to play a pivotal role in preparing educators who not only master content but also model integrity, creativity, and service.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, alongside the Conference on **Current Trends in Education Management, Policy, Curriculum Design and Pedagogy**, we are also proud to host the **International Conference on Psychology and Mental Health**, exploring the theme: **Investing in Mental Health: Innovation and Digitalization for a Sustainable Future**. We are doing this because we are convinced that it is imperative for counselors, psychologists, researchers, and academicians to explore how we respond to one of humanity's most pressing challenges - the mental health crisis of our age. Globally, mental health conditions have reached alarming levels. The World Health Organization (2022) reports that one in every eight people - nearly one billion individuals - live with a mental disorder, depression and anxiety. According to the WHO Report, suicide claims over 700,000 lives annually, many of them young people. The COVID-19 pandemic worsened this crisis, leading to a 25% global increase in anxiety and depression. These figures remind us that mental health should be taken seriously as it is the foundation of individual productivity, community survival, and national development. The

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Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) recognize this truth. SDG 3 explicitly calls for the promotion of mental health and wellbeing, yet its influence extends far beyond health, it underpins education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), decent work (SDG 8), and reduced inequalities (SDG 10). In short, there can be no sustainable development without psychological wellbeing.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, in Africa, over 116 million people live with mental health conditions, yet governments often allocate less than one US dollar per capita to mental health services each year. The result is a staggering treatment gap, where up to 85% of those in need receive no care. Still, across the continent, professionals are innovating and integrating community approaches, using digital tools, and contextualizing therapy within African cultural realities.

Here in Kenya, progress is visible. The Mental Health Policy 2015–2030 aligns with Vision 2030 and our constitutional right to health. Recent legal reforms decriminalizing attempted suicide are landmark steps toward compassion and justice. Yet, we must admit, policy must be backed by real investment, workforce strengthening, and the decentralization of services if we are to meet growing needs.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the urgency of this conversation has been amplified by recent Gen-Z-led civil unrest in Kenya. Young people, burdened by economic hardship, unemployment, and political frustration took to the streets in search of justice and voice. A GeoPoll (2024) survey showed that over 50% of youth reported heightened anxiety or fear during the protests, while 35% were unable to attend work or school. Many now experience symptoms of collective trauma, chronic stress, fear, and hopelessness.

This is not unique to Kenya. Globally, UNICEF's 2023 study revealed that 60% of Gen-Z youth feel overwhelmed by current events, and over 40% report stigma in seeking help. The digital world that empowers them also exposes them to constant distress. These realities call for urgent intervention and renewed dialogue on how mental health professionals, educators, and policy makers can support a generation in emotional crisis.

This conference is therefore more than an academic exchange - it is a call to action. Together, we must do the following:

- 1) Invest in evidence-based, community-rooted services, integrating mental health into schools, workplaces, and primary care.
- 2) Harness digital innovation - from teletherapy to AI-driven support systems while safeguarding ethics, equity, and data privacy.
- 3) Address emerging threats such as climate anxiety, economic precarity, and social unrest that drive psychological distress.
- 4) Strengthen partnerships between universities, governments, civil society, and faith communities for sustainable impact.
- 5) Empower young people through education, mentorship, and platforms for meaningful participation and healing.

Therefore, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, mental health is not merely a medical issue; it is intertwined with governance, justice, economics, and identity. The Gen-Z movement has reminded us that unresolved social pain manifests psychologically. When left unaddressed, it becomes a societal wound.

With those few remarks, it is my distinct honor to declare the **International Conference on Psychology and Mental Health** and **the International Conference on Current Trends in Education Management, Policy, Curriculum Design and Pedagogy** officially opened.

## Prof. Gladys Jerobon Kiptiony

### DEAN, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES



It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to Kabarak University for this important International Research Conference in Psychology and Mental Health. This year's theme — *Investing in Mental Health: Innovation and Digitalization for a Sustainable Future*— could not be more timely or relevant. As the landscape of education rapidly evolves worldwide, driven by technological advancements, shifting societal needs, and global challenges, is incumbent upon us as educators, administrators, and policymakers to remain proactive and innovative. The future of education depends on how well we adapt our management strategies, policies, curricula, and teaching methodologies to these new realities.

This conference offers a valuable platform for us to share research, exchange ideas, and collaborate on best practices that can shape the education systems of tomorrow. It is an opportunity to engage critically with contemporary challenges — from inclusivity and equity to digital transformation and sustainability in education.

At Kabarak University, we are committed to advancing education through holistic, evidence-based approaches that empower learners and educators alike. We recognize that effective education management and policy must be rooted in sound research and contextual understanding. Similarly, curriculum design and pedagogy must be dynamic, responsive, and learner-centered to prepare individuals for the demands of a rapidly changing world.

I encourage all participants to actively engage in the discussions, workshops, and presentations over the coming days. Let us harness our collective expertise to contribute meaningfully to the development of education that is innovative, equitable, and impactful.

Thank you for being part of this significant gathering. I look forward to the fruitful outcomes that will emerge from our shared commitment to advancing education.

God bless you all..

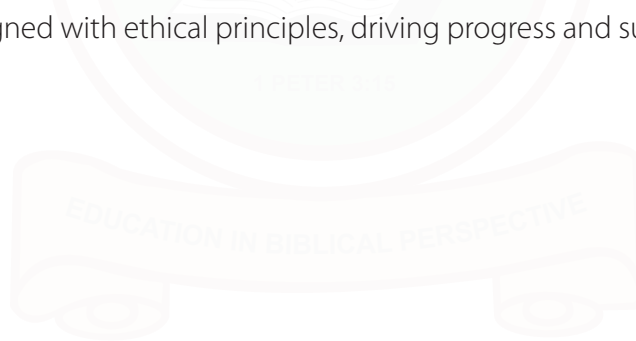


## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

**Prof. F. Mzee Awuor, PhD, PhD**

Ag. Deputy Vice Chancellor (AP&F),  
Kisii University

**P**rof. **Fredrick Mzee Awuor** is an accomplished academic and Associate Professor of Computer Science at Kisii University, Kenya. His research focuses on Artificial Intelligence, Responsible and Human-Centered Computing, Wireless Network Economics, and Agriculture Informatics, with a strong emphasis on bridging technology and sustainable development in Africa. Holding two Ph.Ds., an M.Sc., an M.Tech., and a B.Sc., Prof. Awuor is a prolific scholar with numerous publications in high-impact journals and presentations at international conferences. His work advances academic knowledge while addressing global challenges such as food security, ethical AI, and inclusive technology adoption. A co-author of *Digital Solutions and the Case for Africa's Sustainable Development*, he is a thought leader advocating for ethical and inclusive digital practices. Prof. Awuor is also an active mentor, inspiring future innovators and researchers. His contributions exemplify the transformative power of technology aligned with ethical principles, driving progress and sustainable growth in Africa and beyond.





## GUEST SPEAKER

### Paul Solomon

CEO and Founder of Solomons International

**P**aul Solomon is the CEO and Founder of Solomons International, a multinational software company operating in the U.S., Canada, India, and Kenya. With over two decades of experience in technology and innovation, he specializes in artificial intelligence and natural language processing (NLP), with a growing focus on healthcare and mental health applications.

Paul holds Master's degrees in Computer Integrated Manufacturing (Massey University, New Zealand) and Production Engineering (Osmania University, India), where he also served as faculty. He is a published researcher in AI and expert systems and a member of several professional organizations including the Association for Natural Language Processing and Institute of Supply Management.

Under his leadership, Solomons International has developed advanced AI platforms for recruitment automation, proposal generation, and digital assistants. Paul is particularly passionate about applying these technologies to mental health — including chatbots for therapeutic use, automated mental health screenings, and AI-based support systems for underserved communities.

At the upcoming conference, Paul will contribute to the important conversation on mental health by sharing insights from his personal research interests. As someone passionate about purposeful technology, he sees mental health as one of the most critical areas for responsible innovation.

## GUEST SPEAKER

### Dr. Catherine Amulundu, PhD

Chair – Kenya Universities Professional  
Counsellors Association (KUPCA)



**D**r Catherine Amulundu is a clinical psychologist and a lecturer at the Department of Psychiatry, faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Nairobi. She holds a PhD in Clinical Psychology among other academic achievements in the field of Addiction Science and Mental Health. Dr Amulundu is a German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Consortium for Advanced Research Training in Africa (CARTA) and FORGATY Scholar. Dr. Amulundu's research interest lies in interventions for mental health challenges of children, adolescents and young adults. She has particular interest in implementation science research using mHealth technologies. She had developed tailored interventions to break the cycle of health and social challenges of addiction disorders. She has focused on prevention and management of alcohol and drug abuse, mental health literacy and HIV/AIDS prevention among adolescents and young adults. Beyond her academic credentials, her over 25 years' experience in clinical areas and lecture theatres have provided her with invaluable insights into the specific challenges faced by people in addiction and their families. Her expertise is particularly relevant in today's world where evidence-driven approaches are essential for developing effective and sustainable solutions to complex health and social challenges, leading to healthier and improved mental wellbeing for all. Dr Amulundu is the chairperson of the Kenya Universities Professional Counsellors Association (KUPCA). She is served at the KUPCA executive committee for the last 7 years. She is a member of the Prevention Science Society, the International Society of Substance Use Professionals, and the World Federation Against Drugs among others.



## PLENARY PROGRAM

### DAY ONE:

### TUESDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2025 PRECONFERENCE

COORDINATOR; DR. JAMES KAY

Time	Activity	Facilitator
2.00 - 2.30 pm	Registration	Pastor Esther
2.30 – 2.45 pm	Devotion	Chaplain Kabarak University
2.45 – 3.00 pm	Introduction /Welcome Remarks	Dr. Catherine Amulundu
3.00 – 4.00 pm	Grant Writing	Dr Michael Walekhwa
4.00 – 4.30 pm	Tea Break	Catering Dept

### DAY TWO

### WEDNESDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2025

COORDINATOR; DR. ROSE

Time	Activity	Facilitator
8.00- 8.30 AM	Registration	Dr Francis Gacheru
8.30 – 8.45 am	Kenya National Anthem, East Africa Community Anthem, Kabarak University Anthem	School of Music and Media
8.45 – 9.00 am	Meditation and Opening Prayer	Rev Justus Mutuku, Ag. University Provost
9.00 – 9.05 am	Dean's Welcome Remarks	Prof Gladys Kiptiony, Dean SEHSS
9.05 – 9.15 am	KUPCA Chair Remarks	Dr. Catherine Amulundu
9.15 - 9.20 am	Remarks from DVC (A&R)	Prof John Ochola

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Time	Activity	Facilitator
9.20 – 9.40 am	<b>Welcome Remarks by the Vice-Chancellor</b>	<b>Prof. Henry Kiplangat, PhD, MBS, OGW</b>
9.40 – 10.10 am	<b>Keynote Address:</b>	<b>Prof. Fred Mzee Awuor</b>
10.10 -10.20 am	Question & Answer Session	Conference Participants
10.20 – 10.30 am	Awards to Guests and Vote of Thanks	Dr Phillip Nyawere
10.30 – 11.00 am	Tea break	Catering Department
11.30 – 1.00 pm	Chapel Service	
2.00 – 2.20 pm	Returning to work: teachers lived work experiences post mental illness relapse	Thembi Nkomo University of Limpopo
2.20-2.40 PM	E-Counseling solution COSEKE Kenya Limited	Timothy Koome
2.40.-3.00pm	Fostering innovation and use of perception of AI in mental wellness: a case of qualitative study among clinicians in Kisii, Kenya	Rose Atieno Kisii University
3.00-3.20 pm	policy practice: examining mental health governance approaches in kenya and United Kingdom	Emmanuel Munala Kabarak University
3.20-3.40 pm	Climate migration and health: climate induced migration mental health; a global review	Samuel Mongare Kisii University
3.40-4.00 pm	Exploring interplay between financial resilience and mental health among university students in kenya,	David Nyamosi Jomo Kenyatta University Of Agriculture and Technology
4.00-4.20PM	Digital approaches to menopausal transition support: a case study of health blog content analysis.	Ekaterina Santanna Shangai Jiao Tong University
4.20-4.50PM	Interactive session	Timothy, Thembi, Emanuel, Samuel,& David
4.50.-5.20 PM	Health break	Kabarak Catering

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**DAY THREE****THURSDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2025****COORDINATOR: ESTHER KAPSIR (BREAKOUT ROOM 1)**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Facilitator</b>
8.30-9.30 am	Devotion	Kabarak Chaplain
8.30-9.30	Key note address	C.E.O Solomon International
9.30-10.30 am	Legal, ethical and professional requirements for counselors & psychologists	C.E.O Kenya Board of Counselors and Psychologists
10.30-11.00 AM	Tea break	Kabarak Catering
11.00-11.15 am	Artificial intelligence (AI)-powered chatbots in mental health-care	Esther Makori Kisii University
11:15-11.30 am	The role of electrical engineering in addressing insomnia among engineering university students in kenya: a proposed study	Betsy Lucile Otieno Kisii University
11.30-11.45 am	The impact of cultural and religious diversity era on mental health: literature review	Esther Kapsir Kabarak University
11.45-12.00 noon	Project anonymous	Jakes Mogambi
12.00-12.15 pm	Exploring the interplay between financial resilience and mental health among university students in Kenya	David Nyamosi,
12.15-12.30 pm	Perceptions of AI in mental wellness: a qualitative study among clinicians in kisii, kenya	Rose Atieno Kisii University
12.30pm-12.45 pm	Effect of communication skills on anxiety levels among juvenile delinquents in Manga children's remand home, Kenya	Michael Mbiriri Mama Ngina University
12.45-1.00pm	The invisible wounds: exploring the climate-induced mental health challenges through a gender lens	Billiah Gisore Kisii University
1.00-1.15 pm	Psychotherapeutic practice: cultural and religious diversity in mental health.	Michael Mbiriri Mama Ngina University College

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Time	Activity	Facilitator
1.15pm -1.30m pm	Substance abuse and induced psychotic disorders among Egerton University students, Njoro Campus.	Ann Kamau Egerton University
	Interactive session	Esther, Billiah, Michael & Ann
1.30 pm -2.00pm	Lunch break	Kabarak Catering
2.00-2.20. PM	The role of social support network in enhancing emotional and mental health resilience among internationally displaced persons(IDPs) in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria	Umar Mustapha Borno State University
2.20-.2.40 PM	Discosing negative effects of social media on youth depression and low self esteem	Faith Mumbi Riungu Kisii University
2.40-2.40.PM	The impact of social media use on university student's mental health; acase study of Chuka University	Francis Gacheru Chuka University
2.40-3.00 PM	The elevate minds network system (em-ns): revolutionizing mental health support through digital innovation owour Kabarak University	Francline Owour Kabarak University
3.20-3.40 PM	The social economic constraints and academic pressure on mental health among university students in kenya: a case study of pwani university	Meshek Otieno Pwani University
3.40-4.00 PM	A detail analysis of mental health in agribusiness	Audrey Atieno Dedan Kimathi University Of Science and Technology
4.00-4.420 PM	The influence of cultural beliefs on religious diversification on mental health: a case study of Ainamoi subcounty, Kericho County, Kenya	Kennedy kipkemoi & Dr. Julius Langat Kabarak University
4.20-5.00 PM	Interactive session	Umar, Faith, Francis, Francline, Meshek, Audrey & Julius
5.00-5.20PM	Tea Break	Kabarak Catering

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**DAY THREE**  
**THURSDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2025**  
**COORDINATOR DR. JULIUS LANGAT (BREAKOUT ROOM 2)**

Time	Activity	Facilitator
8.00-8.830 am	Devotion	Kabarak Chaplain
<b>8.30-8.9.30 am</b>	<b>COSEK Kenya Limited Solomons International Access Bank</b>	<b>Timothy Koome Representative Evans Langat</b>
9.30-10.30am	Interactive session	Dr. Julius Langat –Kabarak University
10.30-11.00 am	Effects of undergraduate examinations on stress and depression among university students from a selected public university in kenya a case study of kisii university	Hellen Atandi Kisii University
1100-1120 am	Digitization of counselling services in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century	Chepkwony Peter Eldoret National Polytechnic
11.20-1140 am	Youth illicit substance misuse and mental health: insight from informal settlements in Nairobi, Kenya: youth, illicit substance misuse and mental health in Kenya	Dr. Catherine University of Nairobi
11.40 -12.00 noon	Intersection of culture, faith and mental health of full time spiritual health provider in Nakuru city, Kenya,	Dr. James Kay Kabarak University
12.00-12.20 pm	Miss AI-powered chatbots in mental health care: effectiveness, benefits, limitations and ethical considerations	Esther Makori Kisii University
12.20-12.40 pm	Fostering innovation and use of examining mental health and well being among (digital) media makers in Kenya	Dr. Rose Otieno Kisii University
12.40-1.10 pm	Interactive Session	Hellen, Michael, Catherine, James, Esther & Rose
1.1o-2.10 pm	Lunch Break	Kabarak Catering
2.1o.-3.30 pm	Closing ceremony	Dr Nyawere Phillip
3.30.-3.50pm	Benediction	Kabarak Chaplain

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## BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

### THE ROLE OF ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING IN ADDRESSING INSOMNIA AMONG ENGINEERING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN KENYA: A PROPOSED STUDY

**Betsy Lucile Otieno**

Email; [betsy.lucile@strathmore.edu](mailto:betsy.lucile@strathmore.edu)

**Shadrack Mutungi Maingi**

Email; [shadrack.mutungi@strathmore.edu](mailto:shadrack.mutungi@strathmore.edu)

#### ABSTRACT

Sleep disorders such as insomnia are becoming more common among engineering students, posing a major threat to both their academic and quality of life. The systematic review discusses the role of electrical engineering in treating insomnia through novel technology-driven therapies. The review brings together contemporary innovations in sleep monitoring and therapy devices, such as wearable sensors, home automation systems and neurofeedback devices, all based on electrical engineering principles and technology with the goal of improving sleep quality and alleviating insomnia symptoms. The systematic study highlights electrical engineering's primary contribution to the management of insomnia, a prevalent sleep problem with far-reaching consequences for students' mental health. With developing electrical engineering technologies, the review discusses Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS) and Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS) as emerging insomnia remedies. DBS is the application of electric stimulation to specific areas of the brain to improve sleep initiation and maintenance, whereas TMS is the application of magnetic fields to modulate neuronal activity in order to activate sleep cycle-related regions of the brain. Both treatments not only allow the patient to enjoy rejuvenating sleep, but also trigger neuroplasticity, which refers to long-term changes in sleeping patterns that are achieved without medication, combining the results of previous clinical research and technological advancement with the goal of proving the efficacy and value of DBS and TMS in treating insomnia. Therefore, the study will look at insomnia's complex interconnection with other psychiatric disorders which exacerbate these disorders through chronic sleep loss and lead to crippling cognitive functioning impairment, leading to poor academic outcome among the engineering students in Kenya.

**Keywords:** sleep disorders (insomnia), electrical engineering, innovative technology, mental health, academic outcome

## THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY ERA AND MENTAL HEALTH

**Pr. Esther Mwende Kapsir**

Kabarak University

Email: [ekapsir@kabarak.ac.ke](mailto:ekapsir@kabarak.ac.ke)

### ABSTRACT

Mental health has been discussed in several accounts, especially from the western worldview. It has always existed even before civilization. The main objective of this paper is to assess the impact of Cultural and Religious Diversity Era and Mental Health among selected communities in Kenya. This paper was guided by the social psychology theory which posits that social influences, perception and interaction are vital in understanding social behaviour (Krech & Crutchfield, 1948). The paper adopted the descriptive survey design to present data thus studying the situation as it is in an attempt to explain it (Hancock, Ockleford & Windridge, 2001). The sampling techniques were Purposive which was used to select the specialists. The study instruments were the interview schedule, Focus Group Discussion and Document review. The validity of the instruments was established through content validity by experts from Kabarak University. This paper established that cultural and religious beliefs have both a negative and positive impact on mental health in the sense that anxiety and trauma from broken taboos and norms led to mental illness whereas the performance of rituals brought about peace and psychological contentment, hence, mental health. This paper recommends that cultural beliefs which lead to mental health should be preserved for the particular purpose. This paper sheds more information to the existing pool of knowledge.

**Key words:** Stigma, Trauma cultural beliefs, Religious beliefs.

### PROJECT ANONYMOUS

**Jakes Mogambi**

Head

### ABSTRACT

Mental health disorders, including depression, anxiety, and trauma, affect over 970 million people worldwide, yet stigma, financial barriers, and privacy concerns prevent many from seeking professional help. In Kenya, where fewer than 500 psychiatrists serve a population exceeding 50 million, the shortage of mental health resources is particularly acute. Existing digital mental health platforms offer partial solutions but often require identity verification, paid subscriptions, or the disclosure of sensitive personal information - factors that deter those most in need. This project proposes an anonymous, free online counseling platform designed to eliminate financial, administrative, and psychological barriers to care. Leveraging end-to-end encryption and WebRTC technology, the system ensures complete confidentiality, retains no personal data, and provides 24/7 access to licensed therapists and trained peer supporters. Services will be culturally relevant, stigma-free, and scalable to regions with limited mental health infrastructure, with an initial focus on Kenya. By prioritizing anonymity, accessibility, and security, the platform aligns with WHO guidelines and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, aiming to normalize mental health support, empower vulnerable populations, and reduce the societal burden of untreated mental illness. This initiative harnesses digital innovation to make mental health care universally available - regardless of status, location, or income—while fostering a culture of openness and support.

## EXAMINING MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING AMONG (DIGITAL) MEDIA-MAKERS IN KENYA

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### ABSTRACT

The relationship between media creative industry and mental health has drawn more attention worldwide in recent years. A vibrant community of media-makers who work in a variety of content creation fields, such as journalism, filmmaking and social media production has defined Kenya's rapidly developing digital media landscape. These people's mental health and wellness, are still not widely recognized and studied. The purpose of this study was to investigate the current mental health experiences of Kenyan digital media creators, examining the ways in which social narratives about mental health affect their well-being and identifying critical support systems. The study used mixed-methods research methodology, combined qualitative and quantitative techniques that were conducted virtually. The study's target group consisted of Kenyan digital media-makers from two of the major media platforms, Facebook and Tik-tok. Purposive sampling method was used to select 129 participants who were given Semi-structured questionnaires and interviews to collect data. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis, while quantitative data was compiled using descriptive statistics in support of inferential statistics. The study found that Kenyan digital media creators suffer serious mental health problems with a high prevalence of anxiety 4.6%, depression 3.7% and stress 6.3%% mostly due to social stigma, social media pressures, and job insecurity. Social media has the highest mean score of 4.6%, indicating considerable effect, and a very high positive connection ( $r = 0.73$ ) with anxiety and sadness. The study concluded that mental wellbeing is key to content creators and recommended availability of professional mental health services and promotion of open discussion of mental health issues promoted among the media content creators in Kenya.

**Key words:** *Mental health, Content creation, Social media and Creative industry*

## AI-POWERED CHATBOTS IN MENTAL HEALTHCARE: EFFECTIVENESS, BENEFITS, LIMITATIONS, AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

**Makori, E. N**

### ABSTRACT

Mental health disorders are a leading cause of disability worldwide, and there is a global shortage of mental health professionals. AI-powered Chatbots present a promising avenue to bridge this gap. The objective of this study was to review clinical effectiveness, feasibility, benefits, limitations, and ethical considerations of AI Chatbots in mental healthcare. A comprehensive literature search was conducted across multiple databases, including PubMed, MEDLINE, Scopus, IEEE Xplore, PsycNet, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar. Papers published in peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, or reputable online databases on the use and application of AI-powered Chatbots in mental healthcare were purposively selected. The key findings from the literature indicate that AI-powered Chatbots offer several potential advantages for mental health support, including accessibility, 24/7 availability, cost-

effectiveness, stigma reduction, the ability to handle a large number of users simultaneously, triage cases, serve as an early risk detection tool, and provide personalized care plans. AI-powered Chatbots have several limitations in mental health support, such as Efficacy concerns, lack of empathy, privacy and data security concerns, Implementation challenges, trust issues, and limited ability to manage severe mental health crises, among others. In conclusion, AI-powered Chatbots are not meant to replace mental health professionals but augment their capabilities and extend the reach of mental health services to those in need. Ethical considerations and limitations regarding the use of AI-powered Chatbots in counseling must be carefully considered for successful implementation.

**Keywords:** AI-Powered Chatbots, Mental healthcare

## THE INTERSECTION OF CULTURE, FAITH, AND THE MENTAL HEALTH OF FULL-TIME SPIRITUAL HEALTH PROVIDERS IN NAKURU CITY, KENYA

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### ABSTRACT

Mental health among religious leaders remains an underexplored area of research, despite the critical role they play in shaping community perceptions of well-being and providing spiritual care. This study examines the intersection of culture, faith, and mental health among full-time clerics serving in religious institutions in Nakuru City, Kenya. Using a mixed-methods design, data were collected from 100 clerics through structured surveys and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative analysis revealed that 60% of respondents reported moderate to severe symptoms of depression, anxiety, or stress, with 15% experiencing severe to extremely severe symptoms. Religious coping strategies such as prayer (85%) and scripture reading (70%) were widely used, while professional mental health services were rarely utilized (10%). Stigma within religious communities (60%), fear of loss of authority (50%), and limited access to services (40%) were identified as significant barriers to seeking professional care. Qualitative findings highlighted the tension between cultural expectations of spiritual strength and personal struggles with mental distress. The study underscores the urgent need for culturally sensitive mental health interventions, stigma reduction initiatives, and the integration of mental health education into seminary training. By addressing these gaps, both religious and public health institutions can better support the well-being of clerics, thereby strengthening their capacity to serve their communities.

**Keywords:** Mental health, culture, faith, religious leaders, clerics, Nakuru City, Kenya

## YOUTH, ILLICIT SUBSTANCE MISUSE, AND MENTAL HEALTH: INSIGHTS FROM INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS IN NAIROBI, KENYA

Catherine Musyoka, Byansi William, & Muthoni Mathai

### ABSTRACT

Young people in low-resource settings face multiple challenges, including poverty, limited education, and unstable social environments. These conditions heighten vulnerability to alcohol and substance use, which can trigger or exacerbate mental health problems commonly emerging during adolescence. This study examined patterns of alcohol and illicit substance use and their association with mental health symptoms among youth in two informal settlements in Nairobi, Kenya. Cross-sectional data were collected between September and December 2024 as part of a pilot longitudinal mixed-methods study. The sample included 94 youth aged 15–24 years, recruited through snowball sampling. Eligible participants reported alcohol or drug use within the past 30 days. Exclusion criteria were severe conditions requiring inpatient care. Trained assistants administered 30-minute surveys in English or Swahili using standardized tools: Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9), Generalized Anxiety Disorder scale (GAD-7), 10-item stress scale, and the Alcohol, Smoking, and Substance Involvement Screening Test (ASSIST). Of the participants, 54% were male. Alcohol use was reported by 87% ( $n = 81$ ), with users significantly older than non-users ( $p = 0.01$ ). Non-alcohol substance use was reported by 80% ( $n = 75$ ), with education level significantly associated ( $p < 0.001$ ). Participants recorded moderate mean scores for stress (19.08/36), depression (7.01/22), and anxiety (6.15/20). Females reported significantly higher depressive and anxiety symptoms than males. Non-alcohol substance use was strongly associated with elevated depressive symptoms. High rates of substance use and related mental health symptoms were observed among youth in informal settlements. Older age, lower education, and unemployment were identified as risk factors. Interventions that promote education retention, job creation, and community-based mental health services are essential for reducing substance use risks and improving outcomes in low-resource settings.

**Keywords:** youth, substance use, alcohol, mental health, informal settlements, depression

## ELEVATE MINDS NETWORK SYSTEM (EMNS): REVOLUTIONIZING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT THROUGH DIGITAL INNOVATION

Francis Owuor  
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### ABSTRACT

The global rise in mental health challenges, especially among university students, calls for scalable, inclusive, and innovative solutions. The Elevate Minds Network System (EMNS) is a transformative digital platform developed to bridge critical gaps in mental health access and support. Targeting symptoms of depression, anxiety, and psychosis, EMNS integrates AI-powered chatbots for instant engagement, therapist scheduling tools, and a repository of evidence-based self-help resources. Grounded in the Health Belief Model and Technology Acceptance Model, EMNS prioritizes usability, data security, and cultural inclusivity, ensuring accessibility even for underserved populations. Using agile development and a user-centered design, the system will undergo pilot testing at Kabarak University, yielding

high usability and user satisfaction scores. Initial findings demonstrate a 60% improvement in help-seeking behavior and reduced stigma among students using the platform. EMNS's success stems from collaborative development with individuals with lived experience and mental health professionals. As digital mental health becomes vital for sustainable well-being, EMNS exemplifies how innovation and technology can enhance resilience, promote early intervention, and democratize mental health care across diverse settings.

Keywords: Mental Health, Digital Innovation, AI Chatbot, University Students, Elevateminds Network System.

## **SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND INDUCED PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS AMONG EGERTON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, NJORO CAMPUS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Substance abuse has become prevalent in Kenya among young people with increasing evidence linking it to development of substance-induced psychotic disorder. The purpose of the study was to determine whether use of substances caused substance induced psychotic disorders among university students. The study had 100 respondents male 72 and female 28 selected through purposive and snowball sampling for students known to abuse substances from a population of 6,417. The findings revealed that disorders that came with drug use included severe withdrawals, delirium, delusions, auditory/visual hallucinations, anxiety, depression and personality disorders. The onset of psychotic symptoms occurred during intoxication, withdrawal, intake or cessation. There were mild to severe symptoms of substance induced psychotic disorders. The most commonly preferred substances associated with psychotic episodes were alcohol, cannabis, khat and over the counter medication. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse data with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17 for windows where percentages and frequencies were obtained. In conclusion, the study was to bring awareness to counselors to refer cases accordingly since psychiatric cases were associated to only primary psychosis and not to substance use too. The recommendation made was to introduce a compulsory common core course in the university for awareness of substance induced psychotic disorders brought by use of different substances and help curb its use among university students.

## EFFECT OF UNDERGRADUATE EXAMINATIONS ON STRESS AND DEPRESSION AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS FROM A SELECTED PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN KENYA: A CASE OF KISII UNIVERSITY

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### ABSTRACT

Undergraduate students tend to experience mental health related problems, among them stress and depression in the course of their academic journey while in the university. A number of factors contribute to stress and depression among the students including examinations. This study aimed at looking at the prevalence of two psychological problems due to undergraduate examinations among students at Kisii University in Kenya. The study was anchored on Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping Theory and Beck's Cognitive Theory of Depression. A cross-sectional survey was used to find out the effect of examinations on stress and depression. The study also adopted a qualitative approach through interview schedule and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The target population was all the 29,661 registered undergraduate students at Kisii University-main Campus during the 2024/2025 academic year. One Dean of Students and one counselor were purposively sampled to participate in the study. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 380 drawn from the eight schools in the university. Data was collected using interviews, FGDs and questionnaires. Ethical considerations included confidentiality, anonymity, responsibility, respect, competence, consent, security, and understanding will guide the data collection process. Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and regression analysis with a significant level of  $p < 0.05$ . Recommendations based on the findings were provided to stakeholders, aiming to inform evidence-based interventions and policies addressing mental health challenges associated with examinations in this context.

**KEY WORDS:** Depression, Stress, Examinations and undergraduate students

## THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURAL BELIEFS ON RELIGIOUS DIVERSIFICATION ON MENTAL HEALTH A CASE STUDY OF AINAMOI SUB-COUNTY KERICHO COUNTY KENYA.

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### ABSTRACT

The paper will explore the intricate relationship between cultural and religious diversity and mental health outcomes, motivated by the increasing globalization and intermixing of diverse populations. The objectives will be examining the impact of cultural beliefs and practices on mental health stigma and help-seeking behaviors, investigate the influence of religious affiliation and spirituality on mental well-being and coping mechanisms, assess the effectiveness of culturally and religiously sensitive mental health interventions, and identify specific cultural and religious factors that contribute to mental health disparities among diverse populations. A mixed-methods approach will be employed, combining

quantitative surveys to measure mental health indicators across distinct cultural and religious groups, with qualitative interviews to explore personal experiences and perceptions. The results will indicate that cultural and religious diversity significantly influence mental health perceptions and help-seeking behaviors, with some groups experiencing barriers to accessing mental health support due to stigma or differing cultural norms. The study will conclude that culturally sensitive mental health interventions are essential to address these disparities, promoting inclusivity and effective support across diverse populations.

**Keywords:** *Cultural and religious factors, Cultural beliefs and practices, culturally and religiously sensitivity, Religious affiliation and spirituality & Mental Health*

## **SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSTRAINTS AND ACADEMIC PRESSURE ON MENTAL HEALTH AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF PWANI UNIVERSITY.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

University students in Kenya increasingly face mental health challenges stemming from the dual burden of socio-economic constraints and academic pressure. While previous research has explored either financial hardship or academic stress in isolation, limited attention has been given to their combined impact on student mental well-being within public universities. Despite growing awareness, many interventions remain fragmented and fail to address the root causes that intersect economic vulnerability and academic overload. This study aimed to investigate how socio-economic constraints and academic pressure influence the mental health of university students at Pwani University. These objectives guided the study: to examine the impact of socio-economic constraints on students' mental health; to analyze the effects of academic pressure on their mental well-being; and to explore how both factors jointly affect students' psychological health. A descriptive survey design was used, guided by Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), and Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (1997). The target population consisted of 370 students, with a final sample of 354 selected through stratified random sampling. Data were collected using structured questionnaires, including standardized tools like the DASS-21 scale. The data were analyzed with SPSS Version 20, using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and thematic interpretation. Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the study by obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and respecting participants' anonymity. The results showed a significant correlation between financial difficulties and increased stress ( $r = 0.49$ ), anxiety ( $r = 0.44$ ), and depression ( $r = 0.37$ ). Academic pressure was also found to increase these mental health risks. The combined impact of socio-economic and academic stressors led to poor coping strategies, reduced motivation, and high levels of burnout. It is hoped that this study will contribute to mental health reforms at the institutional level, inform policy development, and strengthen holistic support systems for university students in Kenya.

**Keyword:** Socio-Economic Constraint, Academic Pressure, Mental Health, University students, Pwani university, Kenya.

## A DETAILED ANALYSIS OF MENTAL HEALTH IN AGRIBUSINESS

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### ABSTRACT

Mental health is a crucial aspect of well-being, which is commonly disregarded in the framework of agribusiness an industry with increased stress, financial insecurity, and heavy workloads. This paper examines the link between mental health and agribusiness by looking at the targeted problems encountered by the people who engage in the farming industry and other related businesses. Agribusiness relates to a high physical activity rate, the unpredictability of the environment, financial instability, and social isolation. Such aspects pose high risk of mental illnesses like anxiety, depression and drug abuse among the agribusiness employees and households. This paper will summarize some of the recent literature on what has been described as the major stressors impacting mental health in agribusiness, economic pressures, environmental issues such as climate change and the effect of social isolation in rural sectors. It also brings out the impacts of such low mental health on productivity, community support, and sustainability of the businesses financially in the long run in the agribusiness. In conclusion, it assesses current interventions, and presents guidelines on how to enhance the mental health outcomes of agribusiness. This review has shown the importance of adopting a multidimensional approach to managing the mental well-being of the agribusiness stakeholders to guarantee the sustainability and perseverance of the sector.

**Key Words:** Mental health; Agribusiness; Interventions; Multidimensional Approach;

## ELEVATE MINDS NETWORK SYSTEM (EMNS): REVOLUTIONIZING MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT THROUGH DIGITAL INNOVATION.

**Francline Owuor & Godwin Kiprop**

Kabarak University

### ABSTRACT

The global rise in mental health challenges, especially among university students, calls for scalable, inclusive, and innovative solutions. The Elevate Minds Network System (EMNS) is a transformative digital platform developed to bridge critical gaps in mental health access and support. Targeting symptoms of depression, anxiety, and psychosis, EMNS integrates AI-powered chatbots for instant engagement, therapist scheduling tools, and a repository of evidence-based self-help resources. Grounded in the Health Belief Model and Technology Acceptance Model, EMNS prioritizes usability, data security, and cultural inclusivity, ensuring accessibility even for underserved populations. Using agile development and a user-centered design, the system will undergo pilot testing at Kabarak University, yielding high usability and user satisfaction scores. Initial findings demonstrate a 60% improvement in help-seeking behavior and reduced stigma among students using the platform. EMNS's success stems from collaborative development with individuals with lived experience and mental health professionals. As digital mental health becomes vital for sustainable well-being, EMNS exemplifies how innovation and technology can enhance resilience, promote early intervention, and democratize mental health care across diverse settings.

**Keywords:** Mental Health, Digital Innovation, AI Chatbot, University Students, Elevate Minds Network System, Accessibility, Early Intervention, Stigma Reduction, Online Counseling, Technology for Mental Health.

## DISCLOSING THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON YOUTH DEPRESSION AND LOW SELF-ESTEEM

**Mumbi, F., Barasa, J., Muhalave, A., et al**  
Kisii University

### ABSTRACT

This study explores the hidden pervasive impacts of social media such Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat on young people's self-esteem and depression which has been deteriorating their mental health. The purpose of the study was to establish digital connection and interaction to mental health of young adult. The participants of the study were 250 young adults aged 14-25 years from both secondary schools and colleges. Using integration model, qualitative research design was employed and interviews were used to collect data on the influence of social media while structured questionnaires based on Beck Depression and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale gave details on the deterioration of psychological health and emotional responses to social media experience. To contextualize and analyze self-reported data, a comprehensive data collection integration model was used to enable thorough understanding of the relationships among online platform designs, user perceptions and emotional vulnerabilities and digital ethnography detailed the analysis of online behavior patterns and its effects. The findings indicate that regular social media use is significantly linked to greater levels of depression and low self-esteem, particularly among female users and who consume a lot of information that emphasizes on looks. This study highlights the pressing need for platform rules, digital literacy initiatives informed by mental health and proactive interventions aimed at supporting vulnerable youth. It adds to the ongoing conversation about digital wellness and provides lawmakers, educators, and medical experts with helpful recommendations.

**Keywords:** social media, self-esteem, depression, mental health, emotional responses, psychological health,

## THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT NETWORKS IN ENHANCING EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH RESILIENCE AMONG INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS) IN MAIDUGURI METROPOLIS, BORNO STATE, NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

The displacement of individuals due to insurgency and conflict has significantly impacted the emotional and mental well-being of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria. This study examined the role of social support networks in enhancing emotional and mental health resilience among IDPs. A cross-sectional survey design was employed, with data collected from 400 IDPs using structured questionnaires, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions. The study explored the types and sources of social support available to IDPs, the impact of social support on their psychological well-being, and the challenges associated with accessing adequate support. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, regression analysis, and one-way ANOVA were used to analyze the data. Findings revealed that NGOs and humanitarian organizations (65%), family members (62.5%), and religious groups (55%) were the primary sources of social support. A significant positive correlation was found between social support and emotional resilience ( $r = 0.62$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) as well as mental health well-being ( $r = 0.58$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The results of the one-way ANOVA indicated a significant difference in emotional resilience based on the type of social support received ( $F = 7.89$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), with IDPs who received support from family and NGOs exhibiting higher resilience. Despite the benefits of social support, the study identified key challenges, including limited financial resources, the breakdown of traditional family structures, mental health stigma, and overstretched humanitarian organizations. The study recommends strengthening community-based mental health programs, increasing government and NGO support, promoting mental health awareness campaigns, and enhancing peer support networks to improve the resilience of IDPs. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature on conflict-induced displacement and underscore the need for targeted interventions to enhance social support systems for IDPs.

**Keywords:** Social Support Networks, Emotional Resilience, Mental Health, Internally Displaced Persons, Maiduguri, Nigeria.

## THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USES ON UNIVERSITY STUDENT'S MENTAL HEALTH: A CASE OF CHUKA UNIVERSITY.

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### ABSTRACT

Social media is a form of digital communication that allows users to form online networks and communities for socializing, sharing information, and posting user-created content. Social media refers to online platforms where users can share information and connect with virtual communities through text, video, photos, and other content. Social media undoubtedly plays a significant role in the lives of university students, offering both positive connections and detrimental influences on their mental health. The study explored the impact of social media uses on student's mental health in Chuka University. A purposive sample of 128 students was engaged: 52 males and 76 females. A questionnaire was administered and data collected was analyzed descriptively in percentages. The study found that there were six ways that affect student's mental health that include: FOMO: The fear of missing out (FOMO) on exciting events or opportunities that led to a sense of inadequacy and loneliness and created pressure to feel like the student must attend every event, Comparison: Social media use led university students to comparing oneself to others causing anxiety and lack of self-confidence. Students compared themselves to what they see on social media, Cyberbullying and Harassment: Social media platforms has exposed students to cyberbullying, harassment, or negative comments that severely impact on self-esteem leading to anxiety and depression, Sleep Disruptions: Excessive use of social media, especially before bedtime, disrupted sleep patterns among students, Addiction and Time Management: excess use of social media led to mismanagement of time or even addiction, Filtered Reality: The selective and curated nature of social media posts often creates a filtered and idealized reality. This discrepancy between online and offline lives contributed to feelings of inadequacy, anxiety and depression. The study benefits students and mental health providers in our universities.

**Key words:** Impact, Social-media, University students, mental health.

## SUBSTANCE ABUSE AND INDUCED PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS AMONG EGERTON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS, NJORO CAMPUS

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### ABSTRACT

Substance abuse has become prevalent in Kenya among young people with increasing evidence linking it to development of substance-induced psychotic disorder. The purpose of the study is to determine whether use of substances causes substance induced psychotic disorders among university students. The study had 100 respondents male 72 and female 28 selected through purposive and snowball sampling for students known to abuse substances from a population of 6,417. The findings revealed that disorders that came with drug use included severe withdrawals, delirium, delusions, auditory/visual hallucinations, anxiety, depression and personality disorders. The onset of psychotic symptoms occurred during intoxication, withdrawal, intake or cessation. There were mild to severe symptoms of substance induced psychotic disorders. The most commonly preferred substances associated with psychotic episodes were alcohol, cannabis, khat and over the counter medication. Descriptive statistics was used to analyse data with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17 for windows where percentages and frequencies were obtained. In conclusion, the study was to bring awareness to counselors to refer cases accordingly since psychiatric cases are associated to only primary psychosis and not to substance use too. The recommendation made was to introduce a compulsory common core course in the university for awareness of substance induced psychotic disorders brought by use of different substances and help curb its use among university students.

KEY WORDS: Substance Abuse, Substance Induced Psychotic Disorder

## INTERGRATION OF CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS RESOURCES IN PSYCHOTHERAPEUTIC PRACTICE

**Michael Mbiriri**

### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the integration of cultural and religious resources into psychotherapeutic practice using secondary data. This analysis stems from growing recognition that culturally and spiritually informed therapy enhances client engagement, trust, and therapeutic outcomes, particularly among diverse populations. The objective of this is to explore existing literature and data to identify effective strategies, benefits, and challenges in incorporating cultural and religious dimensions into therapy. A qualitative content analysis of peer-reviewed articles, meta-analyses, and institutional reports from the past two decades was conducted. The data were categorized by therapeutic models, cultural-religious frameworks, and client outcomes. Key findings show that culturally and religiously responsive interventions significantly enhance emotional resilience in clients. These approaches, including narrative therapy, spiritually integrated cognitive behavioral therapy, and culturally adapted psychoeducation, also help reduce mental health stigma. Additionally, they foster a stronger therapeutic

alliance between clients and practitioners. Results also highlight barriers, including practitioner bias, lack of training, and institutional constraints. The study concludes that integrating cultural and religious elements into psychotherapy is both feasible and beneficial when grounded in ethical, client-centered approaches. Clinicians are encouraged to receive cultural competence training and collaborate with community spiritual leaders where appropriate. This review underscores the importance of systemic support in embedding these practices into mainstream therapeutic settings for more inclusive mental health care.

**Key Words:** Cultural integration, Religious resources, Psychotherapy, Therapeutic outcomes

## THE INVISIBLE WOUNDS: EXPLORING THE CLIMATE - INDUCED MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES THROUGH A GENDER LENS

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### ABSTRACT

Climate change is a global threat with invisible mental health impacts that have remained largely unaddressed in climate discourse. Drawing on lived experiences, the paper highlights through a gendered lens how pre-existing gender inequalities intersect with environmental stressors to deepen mental health vulnerabilities especially in the rural areas of Kajiado. It also examines the systemic barriers that limit access to mental health care for the residents. The study objectives were to examine using a gender lens how climate change impacts on mental health; explore how gender shapes vulnerability and identify strategies to integrate mental health into resilience efforts. Using an exploratory design, data were collected using interview guides and focus group discussions. Analysis was thematically done using an intersectional lens. It was realized that gender roles increase emotional burden, increasing the mental health impacts. The study argues that there is an urgent need to integrate gender-sensitive mental health strategies into climate adaptation policies. There is also need for community-based mental health programs with gender-responsive mental health frameworks. By making visible the hidden emotional toll, this paper aims to generate dialogue on equity-driven approaches that prioritize both mental well-being and climate resilience as well as show the need for gender-sensitive climate financing to address the glaring gaps especially in the rural regions.

*Key Words: Climate Change, Mental Health, Gendered Lens, Resilience Efforts*

## EXPLORING THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN FINANCIAL RESILIENCE AND MENTAL HEALTH AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN KENYA

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### ABSTRACT

The number of students joining Kenyan public universities has been rising steadily. Most of the students come from lower and middle-income families, and therefore heavily rely on Higher Education Loans Board funding, which often delays and is inadequate. Financial stressors may affect the psychological well-being of the students and their academic outcomes. The purpose of this paper is to examine the interplay between financial resilience and mental health among Kenyan public university students. The paper draws from various studies and reports to highlight student financial stressors, their impact on student mental health and institutional responses. The study employed a desktop research methodology which systematically identified, evaluated and synthesized existing literature, reports and data on financial resilience and mental health in higher education institutions, from various publications and credible news articles. The study used a qualitative exploratory design to map existing knowledge and identify thematic patterns. Data was collected from academic databases, government and public agency reports, media reports and articles, university websites, non-governmental organization reports and development partner reports, published from 2015 to 2025. Data was analysed thematically using key themes and recurring patterns. The study found a significant correlation between student financial resilience and their mental health. Students with higher financial resilience demonstrated lower levels of stress, anxiety and depression. Those that were financially insecure exhibited higher levels of stress, anxiety and depression. The study is of significance to policy makers and adds to the growing evidence of the link between socioeconomic stressors and mental health. The study recommends various integrated strategies and interventions to build student financial resilience.

**Key words:** Financial resilience, mental health, socioeconomic stressors, financial literacy.

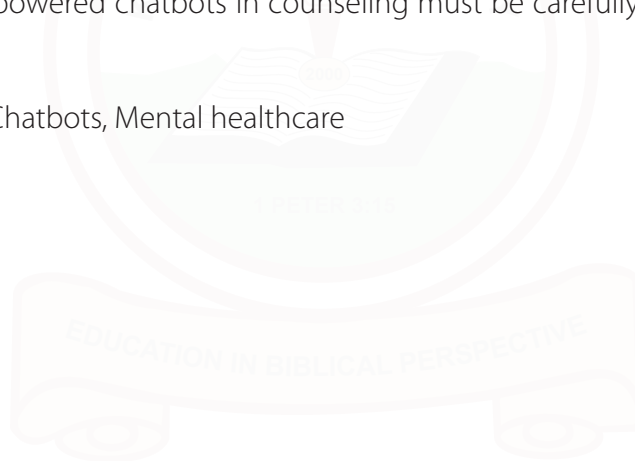
## FOSTERING INNOVATION AND USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN MENTAL HEALTH

**Makori E.N., & Mony V.**

### ABSTRACT

Mental health disorders are a leading cause of disability worldwide, and there is a global shortage of mental health professionals. AI-powered chatbots present a promising avenue to bridge this gap. The objective of this study was to evaluate the benefits and limitations of AI chatbots in mental healthcare. A comprehensive literature search was conducted across multiple databases, including PubMed, MEDLINE, Scopus, IEEE Xplore, PsycNet, PsycINFO, and Google Scholar. Papers published in peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, or reputable online databases on the use and application of AI-powered chatbots in mental healthcare were purposively selected. The key findings from the literature indicate that AI-powered chatbots offer several potential advantages for mental health support, including accessibility, 24/7 availability, cost-effectiveness, stigma reduction, can handle a large number of users simultaneously, triage cases, serve as an early risk detection tool, and provide personalized care plans. AI-powered chatbots have several limitations in mental health support, such as Efficacy concerns, lack of empathy, privacy and data security concerns, Implementation challenges, trust issues, and limited ability to manage severe mental health crises, among others. In conclusion, AI-powered chatbots are not meant to replace mental health professionals but augment their capabilities and extend the reach of mental health services to those in need. Ethical considerations and limitations regarding the use of AI-powered chatbots in counseling must be carefully considered for successful implementation.

**Keywords:** AI-Powered Chatbots, Mental healthcare



## CLIMATE INDUCED MIGRATION AND MENTAL HEALTH: A GLOBAL REVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

Climate change is an increasingly significant driver of human migration, with profound and multifaceted mental health implications that remain insufficiently addressed. This global review synthesizes empirical evidence on the mental health impacts of climate-induced migration, drawing from diverse regions including Kenya, South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Pacific Islands, and Latin America. Key psychological stressors such as displacement trauma, cultural dislocation, and uncertainty disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, including women, children, indigenous peoples, and the elderly. Employing theoretical frameworks like environmental stress theory and trauma-resilience models, the review integrates findings from 68 peer-reviewed studies published between 2015 and 2025. Common mental health outcomes include depression, anxiety, PTSD, and psychosocial stress, often exacerbated by social determinants like poverty, inadequate housing, and limited healthcare access. The paper highlights regional case studies illustrating varied migration patterns and mental health challenges, with a focus on Kenya's pastoralist communities and Pacific Island nations facing existential threats. Despite some promising community-based interventions and policy advances, significant gaps persist in longitudinal research and integration of mental health into climate and migration policies. The review calls for interdisciplinary research, multisectoral collaboration, and global solidarity to develop culturally sensitive, trauma-informed, and equitable mental health responses for climate migrants worldwide.

**Key words:** Climate-induced migration, climate justice, Mental health impacts, Displacement trauma, Psychosocial stress

## POLICY TO PRATICE: EXAMINING MENTAL HEALTH GOVERNANCE APPROACHES IN KENYA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM.

**Emmanuel Munala**

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### ABSTRACT

Mental health governance plays a crucial role in the accessibility of equitable mental health services to populations globally, most mental health policies are structured on the World Health Organization (WHO) Mental Health Action Plan (2013-2030). However existing economic and political disparities between high- income and low-income nations shape the approaches taken by states in coming up with mental health policies. This study carries out a comparative analysis of policies in Kenya and the United Kingdom with a specific emphasis on the legislative frameworks, funding mechanisms and administrative frameworks on mental health. The study examines the effectiveness and ineffectiveness of financing and policy enforcement of mental health in the context of centralized and decentralized governance structures, while the UK enjoys mental health policies that are integrated into the larger national healthcare system, Kenya has to navigate the complexities of policy fragmentation, resource constraints and cultural differences in the different decentralized units. This study relies on legal documents, scholarly articles and international health benchmarks to examine the effectiveness of policies and their adaptability underscoring the gaps in accessibility resource allocation and framework implementation of mental health services. The study also points out the best practices from both states that can inform future reforms in mental health governance. In conclusion this study recommends strengthening of legal frameworks, increased budgetary allocation for mental health services, collaboration and incorporation of technology to improve and strengthen mental health services.



## PERCEPTIONS OF AI IN MENTAL WELLNESS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY AMONG CLINICIANS IN KISII, KENYA

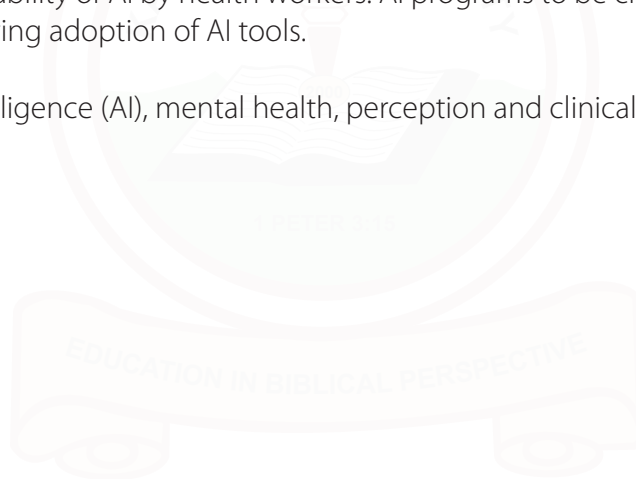
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### ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI) has seemingly limitless potential in the medical field. The confusion around early AI adoption is significantly more dramatic than the reality, which ranges from the hopes of curing every sickness in the world to the hyper-accelerated treatment of the most serious mental health issues. The purpose of the study was to Examine the factors that encourage and hinder the adoption of AI, benefits, cultural and medical factors in mental healthcare. The study used descriptive research design and target population was mental health workers and licensed hospitals in Kisii. 75 clinicians (22 doctors and 53 nurses) were sampled to participate and focused group interviews from TAM2 model which was used in the study. Qualitative data was analysed using preliminary codebook on TAM2 themes, also managed and queried using Max QDA24 program. The results revealed that 67.7% had positive attitudes and 32.3% negative attitudes towards AI in mental health. Though, perceived efficiency had 42%, perceived comfort 14.4%, perceived usability 21.1% and personal creativeness 22.4%. The study recommended that regulation on AI in mental health to be put to ensure the efficiency and proper usability of AI by health workers. AI programs to be created to suit patients' data and to protect safety during adoption of AI tools.

**Keywords:** Artificial intelligence (AI), mental health, perception and clinical attitude



## RETURNING TO WORK: TEACHERS' LIVED WORK EXPERIENCES POST-MENTAL ILLNESS RELAPSE

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### ABSTRACT

Workers living with mental illness often face challenges related to job retention, workplace discrimination, and reduced quality of life. These difficulties are more prominent in high-stress professions such as teaching, where the emotional and cognitive demands are substantial and ongoing. Among teachers, the experience of returning to work after a mental illness relapse is a critical yet under-explored public health concern. Using a qualitative phenomenological study design and guided by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, this empirical study explored teachers' lived work experiences of reintegration post mental illness relapse, focusing on barriers, their resilience, and the coping strategies they use. Semi-structured in-depth face-to-face interviews were conducted with 14 participants, determined by data saturation. Data were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed using Tesch's open coding method. Findings highlight unimplemented healthcare recommendations, which increase the risk for mental illness relapse due to prolonged distress, workplace stigma, which affects teachers' confidence and self-esteem, lack of support from colleagues and the school management team, affecting teachers' productivity and quality of teaching, and withdrawal from additional responsibilities as a coping mechanism. The study advocates for multi-stakeholder collaborations between the education system, policy makers, and mental health professionals to transform post-mental illness relapse recovery into a sustainable return to work experience. This is essential to ensure that teachers stay at work longer, minimize mental illness relapse, as frequent mental illness relapse leads to medication resistance, poor teaching outcomes, absenteeism, and long-term cognitive decline due to progressive structural brain damage.



## DIGITIZATION OF COUNSELLING SERVICES IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

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### ABSTRACT

The digitization of counselling services represents a transformative shift in the delivery, accessibility, and experience of mental health care. Driven by advances in digital technologies and the integration of internet-based platforms into healthcare, traditional face-to-face counselling is increasingly supplemented or replaced by online, mobile, and telehealth alternatives. This study investigates the scope, benefits, challenges, and future prospects of digitized counselling through a mixed-methods approach. Data were collected via a comprehensive literature review, qualitative interviews with licensed counsellors and mental health professionals, and surveys administered to clients utilizing online counselling services. Findings indicate that digital counselling significantly improves access to care, particularly for individuals in remote or underserved areas, those with mobility constraints, and clients reluctant to pursue in-person therapy due to stigma. Participants reported high levels of satisfaction, with digital platforms offering greater flexibility in scheduling and reduced costs for both clients and providers. Emerging innovations, including AI-powered chatbots, mental health applications, and video conferencing tools, further extend the scope of available services and enable continuous engagement and monitoring. Nevertheless, the study identifies critical challenges. Concerns regarding data privacy, confidentiality, and the absence of standardized regulation across platforms pose risks to users and practitioners. Additional limitations include difficulties in building therapeutic rapport, constraints in crisis intervention, disparities in digital literacy, and inequitable internet access. Counsellors also reported challenges in maintaining professional boundaries and managing screen-related fatigue. The study concludes that digitization holds considerable promise for expanding and modernizing mental health care. However, sustainable implementation requires attention to ethical, legal, and human-centered considerations. Hybrid models that integrate digital tools with traditional methods are recommended to balance accessibility with personalized care. Furthermore, training in digital competencies, robust data protection measures, and inclusive platform design are essential for ensuring effective, equitable, and ethical counselling practices.

**Key Words:** Digital counselling, Teletherapy, Online mental health services, e-Counselling, Telepsychology

## EFFECT OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS ON ANXIETY LEVELS AMONG JUVENILE DELINQUENTS IN MANGA CHILDREN'S REMAND HOME, KENYA

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### ABSTRACT

Juvenile delinquency is a global health concern. Anxiety is common among juvenile delinquents in remand homes, which is often associated with dysfunctional family relationships and poor communication patterns. Ineffective communication impedes emotional expression and conflict resolution, exacerbating emotions of isolation and anxiety. This study investigated the impact of communication skills on anxiety levels among juvenile delinquents at Manga Children's Remand Home in Nyamira County, Kenya. The study used a quasi-experimental design in which 136 adolescents were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups, as well as purposively recruited counsellors and administrators. Data was gathered via surveys, interviews, and observations, with quantitative data analysed using paired sample t-tests and qualitative responses subjected to thematic analysis. Pre-intervention data showed that poor communication skills were substantially associated with anxiety, withdrawal, and regular confrontations. Juveniles who received communication-focused Functional Family Therapy (FFT) experienced significantly lower anxiety levels ( $p < 0.05$ ) after the intervention. Participants showed a greater ability to communicate emotions, discuss their own experiences, and resolve problems constructively. Counsellors and administrators confirmed the impact of FFT in these gains, citing improved peer relationships, lower tension, and greater trust in authority officials. The findings indicate communication training as an essential therapeutic component within FFT, which is capable of reducing anxiety and increasing psychological resilience. Structured communication interventions should be incorporated into rehabilitation programs to improve long-term well-being and reintegration outcomes.

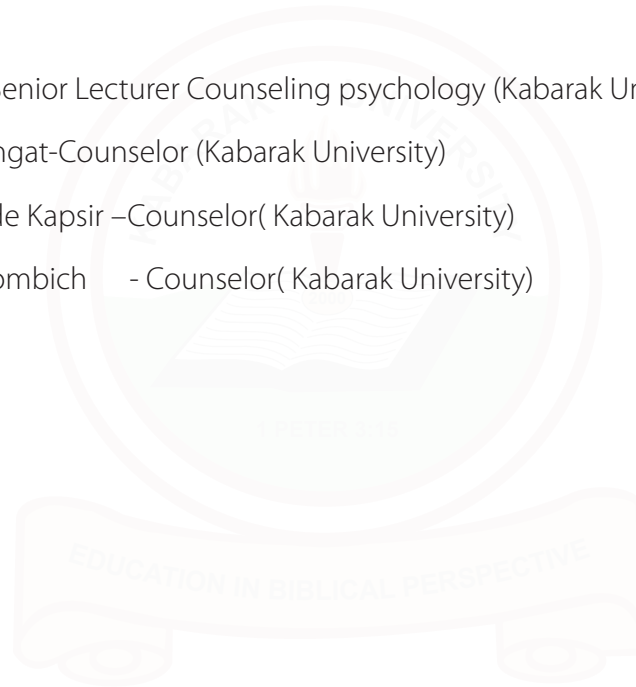
**Keywords:** Communication skills, anxiety, juvenile delinquents, Functional Family Therapy, rehabilitation

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