

## USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN ENHANCING COUNSELLING SERVICE DELIVERY IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS: EVIDENCE FROM PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN EDO STATE, NIGERIA

<sup>1</sup>OMI-UJUANBI, G. O. Ph.D; & <sup>2</sup>ALUEDE, O. Ph.D

<sup>1</sup>Institute of Education; & <sup>2</sup>Department of Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education,  
Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma Edo State, Nigeria

**E-mail:** [gloriaujanbi@aauekpoma.edu.ng](mailto:gloriaujanbi@aauekpoma.edu.ng)

**Phone:** <sup>1</sup>+2348074560716; & <sup>2</sup>+2348033029783

### Abstract

*Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly transforming counselling practice by improving the accessibility, efficiency and responsiveness of student support services in higher education. Despite its growing adoption globally, empirical evidence on its application in university counselling services in Nigeria remains limited. This study investigated the role of artificial intelligence in enhancing counselling service delivery in selected private universities in Edo State, Nigeria using a descriptive survey research design. The study involved 240 respondents, comprising 25 professional counsellors, 15 student affairs personnel and 200 undergraduate students, selected through proportionate stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled Artificial Intelligence and Counselling Service Delivery Questionnaire (AICSDQ). The instrument was validated by experts in Guidance and Counselling, Educational Technology, and Measurement and Evaluation, while a pilot study yielded a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of .88. Data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, with a criterion mean of 2.50. The findings revealed that artificial intelligence had a moderately positive influence on counselling service delivery (Grand Mean = 3.01). Respondents agreed that AI improved students' access to counselling services, facilitated quicker responses to enquiries and strengthened career guidance and academic advising. The study further revealed that inadequate AI training for counsellors, ethical and confidentiality concerns, weak institutional policies and limited funding were the major barriers to effective AI integration (Grand Mean = 3.08). The study concluded that AI can significantly strengthen counselling service delivery when supported by adequate institutional policies, professional competence and ethical safeguards. It was recommended that private universities should invest in AI infrastructure, continuous capacity building and responsible AI governance to enhance counselling services.*

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence; Counselling Service Delivery; Digital Counselling;  
Educational Technology; Higher Education; Student Support Services

### Introduction

The demand for effective counselling services in higher education has increased considerably as universities continue to experience growing cases of academic stress, anxiety, depression, career uncertainty, social adjustment challenges and other psychosocial issues affecting students. University counselling units play a vital role in promoting students' academic success, emotional wellbeing, career development and personal adjustment through preventive, developmental and remedial interventions. However, the increasing students population in many universities has placed enormous pressure on counselling centres, resulting in high counsellor-to-student ratios, long waiting periods and limited access to timely counselling services. These challenges have stimulated interest in innovative technologies capable of improving counselling service delivery without compromising professional standards (UNESCO, 2024; OECD, 2023).

Artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most significant technological innovations reshaping education and student support services globally. Artificial intelligence refers to computer systems capable of performing cognitive tasks such as learning, reasoning, language processing,

prediction and decision-making that traditionally require human intelligence. Within educational institutions, AI supports teaching, learning, assessment, administration and student services through intelligent automation, predictive analytics, natural language processing and machine learning. Recent advances in generative AI have expanded these capabilities by enabling conversational systems that provide personalized responses, analyze large volumes of data and support informed decision-making in real time (Katsamakos et al., 2024; UNESCO, 2024).

The integration of AI into counselling practice has introduced new approaches to supporting students' academic, career and psychological needs. AI-powered counselling systems include intelligent chatbots, virtual counselling assistants, automated appointment scheduling systems, predictive analytics, mental health screening tools and career guidance platforms. These technologies enable students to access basic counselling information, receive immediate responses to routine enquiries, undertake preliminary self-assessments and obtain referrals to professional counsellors where necessary. Unlike traditional counselling services that are limited by office hours and counsellor availability, AI-supported platforms provide continuous access to information and support, thereby improving service accessibility and responsiveness (Ofem et al., 2024; Suleiman et al., 2024).

Beyond improving accessibility, AI contributes to the efficiency and effectiveness of counselling service delivery by reducing administrative workload and supporting evidence-based interventions. Through predictive analytics, AI systems can identify students who exhibit patterns associated with poor academic performance, emotional distress or potential withdrawal from academic programmes. Such information enables counsellors to initiate timely interventions and design targeted support programmes. AI also automates routine administrative tasks including appointment scheduling, record management and follow-up communication, thereby allowing counsellors to devote greater attention to complex counselling cases that require professional judgement and empathy (Lee & Moore, 2024; Ofem et al., 2024).

Globally, universities have increasingly adopted AI technologies to strengthen student support services. AI-enabled chatbots are now used for academic advising, career counselling, psychological support and student engagement in many higher education institutions. Recent studies have shown that AI improves students' access to counselling services, enhances response time, promotes personalized support and increases operational efficiency within student support units. Nevertheless, researchers continue to caution that AI should complement rather than replace professional counsellors because effective counselling depends on empathy, ethical judgement, confidentiality and human relationships that intelligent systems cannot fully replicate (Almasri, 2024; Katsamakos et al., 2024).

Within Africa, the adoption of artificial intelligence in higher education is still evolving. Although many universities recognize the benefits of AI for teaching, administration and student services, implementation remains constrained by inadequate digital infrastructure, limited funding, weak institutional policies and insufficient digital competence among university personnel. These constraints have slowed the integration of AI into counselling services despite increasing demand for technology-supported student support systems (Falebita & Kok, 2024).

Nigeria has equally witnessed growing interest in artificial intelligence following the emergence of generative AI platforms such as ChatGPT and other intelligent conversational systems. Universities are increasingly exploring AI applications for teaching, assessment, research and academic support services. However, AI integration within counselling units remains relatively limited. Existing counselling services in many Nigerian universities continue to rely predominantly on face-to-face interactions despite increasing student enrolment, growing mental health concerns and shortages of professional counsellors. Recent Nigerian studies have reported positive attitudes towards AI adoption among professional counsellors but also identified concerns relating to digital competence, ethical responsibility, confidentiality, institutional readiness and data security (Udoh et al., 2025; Suleiman et al., 2024; Ofem et al., 2024).

Private universities in Edo State present a unique setting for examining AI-enhanced counselling because they have continued to invest in digital infrastructure and student-centred

support services. Institutions such as Igbinedion University, Benson Idahosa University, Samuel Adegboyega University, Wellspring University and Mudiame University have strengthened digital learning environments and student support systems in recent years. Nevertheless, empirical evidence regarding the extent to which AI has enhanced counselling service delivery within these universities remains scarce. As students increasingly expect accessible, personalized and technology-driven support services, there is a need to determine whether AI is improving counselling effectiveness or whether institutional and ethical barriers continue to limit its adoption.

In the context of this study, artificial intelligence refers to intelligent computer technologies that employ machine learning, natural language processing, predictive analytics and conversational systems to support counselling activities, automate routine services and improve decision-making. Counselling service delivery refers to the systematic provision of academic, career, personal, social and psychological support services aimed at promoting students' wellbeing, adjustment and academic success. Effective counselling service delivery is characterized by accessibility, responsiveness, confidentiality, professionalism, timeliness and client satisfaction.

This study is anchored on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) developed by Davis, which posits that the successful adoption of technology depends primarily on users' perceptions of its usefulness and ease of use. Applied to university counselling, counsellors and students are more likely to adopt AI-enabled counselling platforms when they perceive that such technologies improve service quality, increase efficiency and are easy to operate. The model therefore provides an appropriate theoretical basis for explaining the adoption of AI-supported counselling systems within private universities in Edo State.

The increasing prevalence of academic pressure, emotional distress, career uncertainty and mental health challenges among university students has significantly increased the demand for accessible and effective counselling services. However, counselling units in many Nigerian universities continue to experience shortages of qualified counsellors, increasing student-to-counsellor ratios, inadequate technological resources and limited capacity to provide timely support for all students. While artificial intelligence has demonstrated considerable potential to improve counselling accessibility, automate routine services and support early identification of students requiring intervention, its integration into university counselling practice in Nigeria remains relatively limited and uneven.

Although recent studies have examined the application of AI in teaching, learning and academic support services, comparatively little empirical attention has been given to its role in enhancing counselling service delivery, particularly within private universities in Edo State. Furthermore, there is limited evidence regarding the extent to which AI has improved counselling accessibility, responsiveness and service quality in institutions such as Igbinedion University, Benson Idahosa University, Samuel Adegboyega University, Wellspring University and Mudiame University. This gap in knowledge makes it difficult for university administrators and counselling professionals to make evidence-based decisions regarding AI adoption. It is against this background that this study investigates the role of artificial intelligence in enhancing counselling service delivery in selected private universities in Edo State, Nigeria.

### **Empirical Literature Review**

Recent empirical evidence suggests that artificial intelligence is becoming an important tool for improving counselling and student support services in higher education. However, the findings remain mixed because, although AI has demonstrated considerable potential for improving accessibility and efficiency, concerns regarding ethics, confidentiality and the preservation of human interaction continue to influence its adoption. Consequently, current research increasingly advocates the use of AI as a complementary rather than a replacement tool for professional counselling.

Almasri (2024) conducted a systematic review of empirical studies on artificial intelligence in education and found that AI significantly improves personalized learning, learner engagement and

decision-making across educational settings. The review further showed that AI applications support student services through intelligent recommendations, automated communication and predictive analytics. Nevertheless, the study noted that institutional readiness, technological infrastructure and users' digital competence determine the success of AI implementation. While the review examined educational applications generally, it paid limited attention to AI-supported counselling services, particularly within higher education institutions in developing countries.

Similarly, Labadze et al., (2023) reviewed 67 empirical studies on AI chatbots in education and reported that intelligent conversational systems improve access to information, provide immediate responses to users' enquiries and enhance learners' satisfaction through personalized interactions. The authors observed that AI chatbots reduce the workload of educators and support administrative and advisory services by offering twenty-four-hour assistance. However, they also identified important concerns relating to privacy, algorithmic bias, inaccurate responses and excessive dependence on AI-generated recommendations. These findings imply that AI can strengthen counselling service delivery only when appropriate ethical safeguards and professional supervision are maintained.

Focusing specifically on student support services, Assayed et al. (2024) reviewed studies on conversational AI chatbots used for academic advising in universities. Their findings showed that AI-powered chatbots improve students' access to academic guidance, facilitate appointment scheduling, provide instant responses to frequently asked questions and increase service efficiency. Nevertheless, the review concluded that complex emotional, psychological and behavioural issues still require direct interaction with qualified counsellors because AI lacks the emotional intelligence, empathy and contextual judgement necessary for therapeutic counselling. This finding reinforces the view that AI should function as a decision-support tool rather than an independent counselling system.

Evidence from studies on students' perceptions also supports the complementary role of AI in counselling. A recent investigation by Human vs. AI Counselling: College Students' Perspectives (2024) found that many university students appreciated AI because it provides anonymous, flexible and immediate access to preliminary counselling support, particularly for issues associated with stress, anxiety and academic pressure. However, most participants still expressed greater confidence in human counsellors when discussing highly sensitive emotional, psychological and personal matters. The study concluded that students preferred a hybrid counselling model in which AI provides first-line support while professional counsellors manage complex counselling cases.

The growing body of evidence on generative AI further demonstrates its potential for enhancing student support. Copenhagen Business School researchers reviewed 49 empirical studies published between 2022 and 2024 and found that generative AI chatbots improve students' motivation, engagement, self-regulated learning and access to personalized academic support. Despite these benefits, the review cautioned that institutions should establish clear governance frameworks to minimize misinformation, protect students' privacy and prevent excessive reliance on AI technologies. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of AI depends not only on technological capability but also on institutional policies and responsible implementation.

Within the African context, empirical evidence remains relatively limited. Existing studies indicate that although universities increasingly recognize the benefits of AI for teaching and administrative functions, its application in counselling services remains underdeveloped because of inadequate ICT infrastructure, unstable internet connectivity, limited institutional investment and insufficient digital competence among counselling professionals. Consequently, AI adoption across African universities remains slower than in developed countries despite increasing student demand for technology-supported counselling services.

Evidence from Nigeria is equally emerging. Omigie et al. (2025) argued that AI chatbots possess considerable potential for strengthening guidance and counselling services in Nigerian universities by providing immediate responses, career guidance, information retrieval and preliminary psychosocial support. The authors also identified several implementation barriers, including inadequate technological infrastructure, digital inequality, confidentiality concerns,

ethical issues and insufficient professional training among counsellors. They therefore recommended that AI should complement, rather than replace, conventional counselling practice through an integrated service delivery model.

The reviewed literature demonstrates broad agreement that artificial intelligence enhances accessibility, responsiveness, efficiency and personalization of counselling services in higher education. Nevertheless, significant concerns remain regarding confidentiality, ethical responsibility, technological readiness and the inability of AI to replicate empathy, emotional understanding and professional judgement. Furthermore, most available studies are systematic reviews or investigations conducted in Europe, North America and Asia, with relatively few empirical studies focusing on university counselling within Nigeria. More importantly, there is little published evidence on AI-supported counselling services in private universities in Edo State, particularly in Igbinedion University, Benson Idahosa University, Samuel Adegboyega University, Wellspring University and Mudiame University. This empirical gap provides the justification for the present study, which seeks to examine the extent to which artificial intelligence enhances counselling service delivery and the challenges influencing its effective implementation within selected private universities in Edo State.

## Methods

This paper adopted a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey design allows researchers to describe existing opinions, practices and experiences of respondents within their natural setting. The study was conducted in selected private universities in Edo State, namely: Igbinedion University, Okada; Benson Idahosa University, Benin City; Samuel Adegboyega University, Ogwa; Wellspring University, Benin City; and Mudiame University, Irrua. They have established counselling units and have made considerable investments in digital technologies to support teaching, learning and student services.

The population of the study comprised professional counsellors, student affairs officers and undergraduate students from the selected private universities. These categories of respondents were considered suitable because they are the primary providers and beneficiaries of counselling services within the universities. A sample of 240 respondents, consisting of 25 professional counsellors, 15 student affairs personnel and 200 undergraduates, was selected using a proportionate stratified sampling technique followed by simple random sampling. The use of stratification ensured that all relevant groups were adequately represented, while simple random sampling provided every eligible respondent with an equal opportunity of participating in the study.

Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled Artificial Intelligence and Counselling Service Delivery Questionnaire (AICSDQ). A pilot study involving 20 respondents from a private university outside the study area produced a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of .78, indicating that the instrument possessed high internal consistency and was suitable for the study.

Of the 240 questionnaires distributed, all were properly completed and returned, representing a 100% retrieval rate. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. A criterion mean of 2.50 served as the basis for decision-making. Mean scores of 2.50 and above indicated agreement, while mean scores below 2.50 indicated disagreement. The study was focused on describing respondents' perceptions regarding the contribution of artificial intelligence to counselling service delivery.

## Results

**Research Question 1:** To what extent does artificial intelligence enhance counselling service delivery in private universities in Edo State, Nigeria?

**Table 1**

**Mean Ratings on the Extent to which Artificial Intelligence Enhances Counselling Service Delivery in Private Universities in Edo State**

| S/N | Item                                                                            | Mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) | SD         | Rank            | Decision     |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1   | AI improves students' access to counselling services through digital platforms. | 3.29               | .71        | 1 <sup>st</sup> | Agree        |
| 2   | AI enables quicker responses to students' counselling enquiries.                | 3.18               | .76        | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | Agree        |
| 3   | AI supports effective career guidance and academic advising.                    | 3.10               | .80        | 3 <sup>rd</sup> | Agree        |
| 4   | AI enhances communication between counsellors and students.                     | 2.96               | .84        | 4 <sup>th</sup> | Agree        |
| 5   | AI improves the overall quality of counselling service delivery.                | 2.83               | .88        | 5 <sup>th</sup> | Agree        |
| 6   | AI helps counsellors make better professional decisions through data analysis.  | 2.68               | .93        | 6 <sup>th</sup> | Agree        |
|     | <b>Grand Mean</b>                                                               | <b>3.01</b>        | <b>.82</b> |                 | <b>Agree</b> |

(N = 240)

The findings presented in Table 1 indicate that respondents generally agreed that artificial intelligence enhances counselling service delivery in private universities in Edo State, as reflected by the grand mean of 3.01, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. The highest-rated item was that AI improves students' access to counselling services through digital platforms ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.29), followed by its ability to provide quicker responses to counselling enquiries ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.18) and support career guidance and academic advising ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.10). These findings suggest that respondents perceived AI primarily as a tool for improving the accessibility, responsiveness and efficiency of counselling services. However, relatively moderate ratings were recorded for AI improving the quality of counselling service delivery ( $\bar{x}$  = 2.83) and supporting professional decision-making through data analysis ( $\bar{x}$  = 2.68). Although respondents acknowledged these benefits, the lower mean scores imply that confidence in AI's capacity to support complex counselling functions remains moderate. This finding may reflect the continued preference for human interaction, empathy and professional judgement in counselling practice despite the increasing adoption of digital technologies.

**Research Question 2:** What challenges influence the effective integration of artificial intelligence into counselling service delivery in private universities in Edo State, Nigeria?

**Table 2**

**Mean Ratings on the Challenges Affecting the Integration of Artificial Intelligence into Counselling Service Delivery**

| S/N | Item                                                                   | Mean ( $\bar{x}$ ) | SD         | Rank | Decision     |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------|------|--------------|
| 1   | Many counsellors require additional training on AI applications.       | 3.36               | .69        | 1st  | Agree        |
| 2   | Ethical and confidentiality concerns discourage AI adoption.           | 3.28               | .74        | 2nd  | Agree        |
| 3   | Inadequate institutional policies limit AI implementation.             | 3.12               | .81        | 3rd  | Agree        |
| 4   | Limited funding affects the acquisition of AI technologies.            | 3.05               | .84        | 4th  | Agree        |
| 5   | Poor ICT infrastructure limits the effective use of AI in counselling. | 2.91               | .88        | 5th  | Agree        |
| 6   | Some counsellors are reluctant to adopt AI technologies.               | 2.73               | .95        | 6th  | Agree        |
|     | <b>Grand Mean</b>                                                      | <b>3.08</b>        | <b>.82</b> |      | <b>Agree</b> |

N = 240

The results in Table 2 reveal that respondents agreed that several organizational and professional factors constrain the effective integration of artificial intelligence into counselling

services in private universities. The grand mean of 3.08 indicates that the identified challenges remain prevalent despite the growing recognition of AI in educational support services. The highest-ranked challenge was the need for additional training among counsellors in AI applications ( $\bar{x} = 3.36$ ), followed by ethical and confidentiality concerns ( $\bar{x} = 3.28$ ) and inadequate institutional policies ( $\bar{x} = 3.12$ ). These findings suggest that successful AI integration depends not only on technology but also on professional competence and clear governance frameworks. The comparatively lower mean scores for limited funding ( $\bar{x} = 3.05$ ), poor ICT infrastructure ( $\bar{x} = 2.91$ ) and counsellors' reluctance to adopt AI technologies ( $\bar{x} = 2.73$ ) indicate that these issues are recognized but perceived as relatively less influential than training and ethical concerns. Therefore, the findings imply that strengthening counsellors' digital competencies, developing institutional AI policies and establishing ethical guidelines are essential for the sustainable integration of artificial intelligence into counselling service delivery in private universities in Edo State.

### Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that artificial intelligence moderately enhances counselling service delivery in private universities in Edo State. Respondents agreed that AI improves students' access to counselling services, provides quicker responses to counselling enquiries, supports career guidance and strengthens communication between counsellors and students. These findings suggest that AI is increasingly becoming a valuable complementary tool for improving the efficiency and accessibility of counselling services rather than replacing professional counsellors. The moderate grand mean further indicates that although AI has gained acceptance within university counselling practice, its application is still evolving and has not yet reached its full potential within the selected institutions.

The finding supports the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), which explains that users are more likely to adopt technological innovations when they perceive them as useful and easy to use (Davis, 1989). The positive perceptions expressed by respondents indicate that both students and counselling personnel recognize the practical benefits of AI in expanding access to counselling services and improving service responsiveness. This finding is also consistent with UNESCO (2024), which reported that AI technologies are transforming student support services by facilitating personalized guidance, improving communication and increasing access to educational support systems. Similarly, Almasri (2024) concluded that AI applications improve educational service delivery through intelligent automation, personalized support and data-driven decision-making.

The findings also agree with Labadze et al. (2023), whose systematic review found that AI chatbots improve communication between educational institutions and students by providing immediate responses to routine enquiries and reducing administrative workload. Likewise, Assayed et al. (2024) reported that AI-powered conversational systems enhance academic advising and counselling by increasing service availability and supporting preliminary student guidance before referral to professional counsellors. Within the Nigerian context, the findings suggest that AI could help address the growing demand for counselling services in private universities where student enrolment continues to increase while the number of professional counsellors remains relatively limited. Universities such as Igbinedion University, Benson Idahosa University, Samuel Adegboyega University, Wellspring University and Mudiame University can therefore utilize AI to complement existing counselling structures, improve response time and extend counselling support beyond the traditional office environment.

Despite these positive outcomes, the moderate ratings obtained for AI's contribution to professional decision-making and overall counselling quality indicate that respondents remain cautious about relying extensively on intelligent systems for counselling practice. This finding reflects the unique nature of counselling, which depends heavily on empathy, trust, emotional intelligence and ethical judgement. Although AI can analyze information and provide recommendations, it cannot adequately interpret human emotions, non-verbal communication or complex psychological experiences in the same manner as trained counsellors. This observation

supports Lee and Moore (2024), who argued that AI performs best when used as a decision-support tool rather than a substitute for human-centred counselling. Similarly, Holmes et al. (2022) emphasized that educational AI should augment professional practice while preserving the human relationships that remain central to effective counselling.

The study further revealed that inadequate AI training among counsellors, ethical and confidentiality concerns, weak institutional policies, limited funding and inadequate ICT facilities constitute the major barriers to AI integration in counselling service delivery. The highest-ranked challenge was the need for continuous professional training, indicating that successful AI implementation depends largely on the digital competence of counselling professionals. This finding corroborates UNESCO (2024), which identified digital literacy and professional capacity building as critical requirements for the responsible adoption of artificial intelligence in education. Likewise, Falebita and Kok (2024) observed that limited digital competence remains one of the major constraints affecting AI adoption across African higher education institutions.

The prominence of ethical and confidentiality concerns further demonstrates that respondents remain sensitive to issues relating to students' privacy, data protection and professional ethics. Counselling relationships are built on trust and confidentiality; therefore, concerns about data misuse, cyber security and algorithmic bias may discourage both counsellors and students from fully embracing AI-supported counselling systems. This finding aligns with Labadze et al. (2023), who argued that although AI improves service efficiency, institutions must establish robust governance frameworks to safeguard confidentiality and ensure responsible AI use. Similarly, UNESCO (2024) emphasized that transparency, accountability and ethical regulation should guide the deployment of AI in educational environments.

Interestingly, infrastructural challenges such as inadequate ICT facilities and limited funding received comparatively lower mean ratings than training and ethical issues. This finding may reflect the relatively stronger technological capacity of private universities compared with many public institutions in Nigeria. Nevertheless, respondents still acknowledged that continuous investment in digital infrastructure remains essential for sustaining AI-enabled counselling services. In Edo State, many private universities have made significant progress in digital transformation; however, the level of AI integration into counselling practice remains relatively modest. This suggests that institutional readiness extends beyond the availability of technology to include strategic leadership, organizational policies, financial commitment and continuous professional development.

The findings indicate that artificial intelligence has considerable potential to improve counselling service delivery in private universities in Edo State by increasing accessibility, efficiency and responsiveness. However, the study also demonstrates that AI should not be viewed as a replacement for professional counsellors. Rather, its greatest value lies in complementing human expertise by automating routine tasks, supporting early intervention and improving service accessibility while allowing counsellors to focus on complex psychological, emotional and behavioural issues that require empathy, ethical judgement and professional competence. The successful integration of AI into university counselling services will therefore depend on achieving an appropriate balance between technological innovation and the human-centred values that define effective counselling practice.

## Conclusion

The study concluded that artificial intelligence is gradually transforming counselling service delivery in private universities in Edo State by improving students' access to counselling services, enhancing communication, supporting career guidance and increasing the efficiency of counselling operations. Although the influence of AI was found to be moderately positive, its effectiveness is largely dependent on institutional readiness, counsellors' digital competence, ethical safeguards and supportive organizational policies. Consequently, AI should be regarded as a complementary

professional tool that strengthens, rather than replaces, the role of trained counsellors in providing quality counselling services.

## Recommendations

1. Counselling units should adopt a hybrid service delivery model in which AI supports routine counselling activities while professional counsellors handle complex psychological and emotional issues requiring human judgement and empathy.
2. Government agencies, university management and professional counselling associations should collaborate to provide sustainable digital infrastructure that will facilitate the responsible integration of artificial intelligence into counselling services within Nigerian higher education institutions.

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