

# The Influence Of Ai-Mediated Mental Health Communication On Emotional Well-Being Among Young Adults: A Study Of Lead City University, Ibadan

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the influence of AI-mediated mental health communication on emotional well-being among young adults: a study of Lead City University, Ibadan. The study seeks to examine the extent to which young adults use AI-based mental health application, the perceived usefulness of AI-based mental health applications in supporting the emotional well-being of young adults and the challenges associated with the use of AI-based mental health applications among young adults in Lead City University, Ibadan. The population of the study comprises students of the Lead City University, Ibadan. The study adopted a survey research design, and a sample of 150 respondents was selected for the study using Taro Yamane, a sample-size determination method, while the Technology Acceptance Model was adopted. The study used a research questionnaire for data collection and a purposive sampling method was used as sampling method. The data collected were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0. Findings of the study revealed that AI applications such as ChatGPT can be used by students to express personal concerns and receive conversational support, AI applications such as ChatGPT, mental health chatbots and AI wellness apps are useful for helping students reflect on their emotions and personal concerns. The results also showed that some of the challenges associated with the use of AI-based mental health applications among young adults include inaccurate or inappropriate information when using ChatGPT and other AI applications for mental health-related concerns, inability of AI applications to fully understand students' emotions and personal circumstances. The study recommended the need to develop strong regulatory structures to be in place to guarantee model validation and transparency, while ongoing research and development should be funded to enhance its use in mental health.

**Keywords:** Artificial Intelligence, Communication, Emotional wellbeing, Mental health, Technology

## Introduction

AI technologies, including machine learning algorithms and natural language processing, could revolutionize mental health interventions by enabling early detection, personalized treatment options, and continuous support. The increasing prevalence of mental health disorders among young adults necessitates a comprehensive approach to mental health care that integrates technology with traditional methods (Admin, 2024). Research indicates that mental health issues among adolescents have surged significantly in recent years, highlighting the urgent need for effective interventions tailored to this demographic. AI presents a promising avenue for addressing these challenges by enhancing accessibility and personalization in mental health care. For instance, AI-powered chatbots like Woebot have been shown to deliver cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) effectively, reducing symptoms of anxiety and depression among young users (Li et al., 2023). By leveraging AI for early detection and personalized interventions, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive solution to the growing mental health crisis among young people. The primary aim of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of AI-driven interventions in enhancing mental health outcomes for young adults. The increasing complexity of students social and emotional needs has raised worries about the inadequacy of mental health services. There are limited structured programs that help students develop emotional intelligence and become more self-aware in school. Traditional counseling methods may not always spot problems early and this can cause delays in getting necessary support. Students then become more at risk for health issues and such situation shows the need for easy-to-use ways to improve emotional support in schools. Using AI, for emotional intelligence development, self-awareness training and mental health monitoring is one possible way to resolve such problems and can help improve students overall learning experiences (Shidhaye et al., 2015).

AI aids mental health services in educational settings by implementing early-warning systems that detect signs of mental distress, depression, burnout, or social isolation. Machine-learning models analyze digital footprints such as learning behaviors, participation, language patterns, and attendance, enabling the prediction of potential mental health concerns and alerting counselors for timely intervention (Peycheva et al., 2023).

## Aim and Objectives of the Study

The primary aim of this study is to examine the influence of AI-based mental health applications on the emotional well-being of young adults at Lead City University, Ibadan. The secondary objectives are to:

- i. examine the extent to which young adults use AI-based mental health applications in Lead City University, Ibadan.
- ii. determine the perceived usefulness of AI-based mental health applications in supporting the emotional well-being of young adults in Lead City University, Ibadan.
- iii. examine the challenges associated with the use of AI-based mental health applications among young adults in Lead City University, Ibadan.

## Research Questions

- i. To what extent do young adults use AI-based mental health applications in Lead City University, Ibadan?
- ii. What is the perceived usefulness of AI-based mental health applications in supporting the emotional well-being of young adults in Lead City University, Ibadan?
- iii. What are the challenges associated with the use of AI-based mental health applications among young adults in Lead City University, Ibadan?

## Literature Review

### Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health

Emotional wellbeing is a vital aspect of a person's overall wellbeing that relates to how individuals perceive, comprehend, convey, and handle their feelings daily. It extends beyond merely experiencing happiness or lacking negative feelings. Instead, it encompasses the ability to sustain emotional equilibrium, handle difficulties, cultivate significant relationships, enjoy life satisfaction, and seek objectives that provide life with meaning and direction. Emotional wellbeing is thus focused on both affirmative emotional experiences and efficient psychological operation. Mental health encompasses an individual's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. AI techniques like chatbots and virtual therapists strive to recognise and address these difficulties at an early stage. Garcia et al. (2020) suggest that personalised and accessible support technologies can boost emotional resilience, reduce stigma, and improve mental health outcomes. AI, namely machine learning, is being used to improve mental health care through prediction, diagnosis, and therapy, driven by digital technologies. Artificial intelligence (AI) is being incorporated into digital treatments, such as online and smartphone apps, to enhance user experience and optimise customised mental health care (Torous et al., 2021). Because there is so much data available now, data-driven AI techniques can be leveraged to develop prediction/detection models for mental health concerns. In particular, an individual's "digital exhaust," or the data gathered from their numerous personal digital gadgets and social media engagements, can yield behavioural or mental health insights (Rehm et al., 2022). Language, which has long been thought of as a window into the human mind, may now be systematically used as data to offer a mechanism to deduce mental health thanks to advanced computer-based natural language processing (NLP). Furthermore, natural language processing can be used to create conversational bots for therapeutic purposes (Miner et al., 2022).

### Mental Health Communication

Mental health communication entails creating and sharing information about health and emotional wellness across diverse communication platforms like social media. It focuses on developing and receiving this information, laying emphasis on trust and how the audience understands it. Digital media supports young adults and is very important for health programs and public messages (Abiodun et al, 2025). A 2024 systematic review showed that mental health campaigns on media got more audience engagement thanks to content-related videos, live streams, and the credibility of the organization. The rise of AI, such as ChatGPT and other chatbots, makes mental health communication more complicated. Weingott and Parkinsons (2025) conducted a scoping review that looked at how AI-based tools are being used in health communication and how they fit with communication and behavior theories. The importance of AI-enhanced communication in health has grown a lot. Hua et al. (2025) examined 160 studies about AI mental-health chatbots from 2020 to 2024. Hua et al. Observed a rise in the use of large-language models. Many studies are still early and have not shown clear clinical results. **Application of AI in Mental Health**

AI enhances mental health services in educational settings by employing early warning systems that detect signs of mental distress, depression, burnout, or social isolation. Machine-learning models analyze digital footprints that encompass learning behaviors, engagement, language patterns, and attendance, which can help forecast potential mental health problems and alert counselors for timely intervention (Peycheva et al., 2023). Psychological support chatbots can provide round-the-clock assistance, offering coping strategies and connecting students with mental health professionals when necessary. AI-driven mental health systems improve

teachers' and administrators' capacity to create emotionally supportive learning environments by offering immediate insights that help them discern behavioral patterns, anticipate stress responses, and implement tailored interventions. Research on institutional governance and decision-making reveals enduring substantial deficiencies in monitoring systems that necessitate the implementation of data-driven tools to enhance human decision-making and responsiveness (Okonkwo & Idigo, 2022).

### **Technological Acceptance Model (TAM)**

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) describes how people develop attitudes and plans to use digital technologies (Davis, 1989). TAM claims that two primary reasons impact a person's choice to utilise digital technologies: perceived utility and perceived simplicity of use. According to this theory, people who view digital technologies as beneficial are more inclined to accept and utilise them if they are simple to use. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) is significant to the research as students' readiness to utilize AI-driven applications for mental health information, emotional assistance, and well-being may hinge on their perceptions of these applications' usefulness and ease of use. For instance, learners might be more inclined to utilize ChatGPT, AI chatbots, and various AI-driven applications when they think these tools can offer helpful information, coping strategies, emotional assistance, or chances for self-examination..

### **Empirical Reviews**

Oladunmoye et al. (2025) investigated the transformative function of artificial intelligence (AI) in mental health counselling, focusing on the worldwide mental health crisis that affects over 970 million people. The study examines AI technologies like chatbots and prediction models, which improve access, personalise treatments, and improve treatment outcomes. While AI solutions like Woebot and Wysa show potential for treating anxiety and depression, there are worries about data privacy, algorithmic bias, and cultural inclusion. In Africa, AI helps address restrictions such as inadequate infrastructure and expert shortages, yet issues persist in localised data and community participation. The review emphasises the significance of culturally appropriate AI tools, transparent algorithms, and strong ethical frameworks for responsible integration, with the goal of creating a more accessible and ethical mental health care system. Sinha et al. (2025) explored how young adults' mental health, quality of life, and social identity are impacted by social systems powered by artificial intelligence (AI). The use of AI technologies such as chatbots, virtual therapists, and machine learning algorithms presents exciting opportunities for early detection, individualised therapies, and ongoing emotional support, given the increasing frequency of mental health issues in this population. Based on theoretical frameworks including the Positive Psychology Framework, Analytical Psychology, Social Identity Theory, and Self-Determination Theory, the study uses a correlational research methodology with 300 participants between the ages of 18 and 26. Standardised measures such as the Digital Wellbeing Scale, WHOQOL-BREF, and an identification questionnaire were used to gather data. The findings revealed that quality of life was significantly predicted by both self-identity and digital wellbeing, with digital wellbeing having a greater impact. The findings highlight the dual significance of psychological (self-concept) and behavioural (technology use) elements in improving well-being. By emphasising AI's ability to enhance emotional resilience, lessen stigma, and promote identity development, this study adds to the body of research on mental health interventions. Additionally, it highlights the necessity of moral, user-focused AI solutions that give equal weight to emotional intelligence and accessibility. Gu (2026) explored the influence of Artificial Intelligence Application in Mental Health on People's Help-Seeking Behaviour and Mental Health Awareness. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is being used in the mental health field to develop generative AI chatbots and digital phenotyping; thus, the traditional psychological model has been challenged. Examine all kinds of changes in people's help-seeking behaviour and awareness of mental health due to AI applications. Although there are many mental illnesses around the world, most people are still unaware of them due to social stigma, high costs, and a lack of health education. AI-led interventions provide users with an easy-to-access and private space for conversation with artificial intelligence to offer new kinds of mental health support. How interaction with AI affects the cognition of psychological problem recognition. Explainable AI (XAI) can help boost people's mental health literacy and provide a foundation for seeking professional mental health services, but there is also a risk of developing emotional dependence on Generative AI technology. Based on the latest empirical evidence for user self-disclosure, anticipated stigma, and the construction of a 'digital therapeutic alliance', this study presents the dual-edged nature of AI. To maximise the health benefits for the public, AI should be used to construct an auxiliary triage system that supports human clinicians and enables appropriate referrals when needed.

### **Research Methodology**

The study used the survey research method and this research paradigm makes it easier to analyse numerical data in order to identify a variable or group of variables (Samoilenko & Osei, 2021). This kind of research relies on gathering data using organised techniques, like questionnaires, surveys, or experiments, in order to examine the correlation between variables and identify trends and patterns. The population of the study comprises students of the Lead City University, Ibadan. The population of the study comprises 12,972 undergraduate students registered at Lead City University, Ibadan, during the 2023/2024 academic session. The figure was obtained from the Office of the Senior Assistant Registrar, Central Registration, Lead City University.

The sample size was determined using Slovin's Formular:

$$n = \frac{N}{(1+Ne^2)}$$

where:

n = number of samples

N = total population

e = error margin / margin of error

e = 0.05

For the study, a sample of 150 respondents was chosen using purposive and systematic selection approaches. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are selected because of the unique characteristics they possess that are related to the subject matter. The research instrument used was a structured questionnaire, and data analysis was carried out using SPSS version 23.0 software. On a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, there were five possible answers for each question. "Strongly disagree" (lowest score 1) and "strongly agree" (highest score 4). The study made use of descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, percentages, mean, and standard deviation.

### Data Analysis

**Research Question One: To what extent do young adults use AI-based mental health applications in Lead City University, Ibadan?**

**Table 1: The extent to which young adults use AI-based mental health applications in Lead City University, Ibadan**

| S/N | Statement                                                                                                                            | SA            | A             | U             | D            | SD | $\bar{x}$ | Std Dev |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|----|-----------|---------|
| 1   | ChatGPT is used by students to obtain suggestions for coping with academic and personal pressures                                    | 59<br>(39.3%) | 52<br>(34.7%) | 39<br>(26.0%) | -            | -  | 3.89      | 1.16    |
| 2   | AI-based mental health applications can be used to monitor mood and emotional changes among young adults                             | 80<br>(53.3%) | 47<br>(33.3%) | 23<br>(15.3%) | -            | -  | 3.60      | 1.14    |
| 3   | AI-based mental health applications can be a source of emotional support alongside assistance from friends, family, or professionals | 53<br>(35.3%) | 50<br>(33.3%) | 47<br>(31.4%) | -            | -  | 3.41      | 1.24    |
| 4   | ChatGPT can be used by students to express personal concerns and receive conversational support                                      | 61<br>(40.7%) | 53<br>(35.3%) | 22<br>(14.7%) | 14<br>(9.3%) | -  | 3.39      | 1.14    |
| 5   | ChatGPT is used by students to seek information about mental health and emotional well-being                                         | 64<br>(42.7%) | 41<br>(27.3%) | 34<br>(22.7%) | 11<br>(7.3%) | -  | 3.77      | 1.34    |

Table 1 shows that 59 (39.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that ChatGPT is used by students to obtain suggestions for coping with academic and personal pressures, 52 (34.7%) of the respondents agree with the statement, while 39 (26.0%) of the respondents were undecided on the statement. Also, 80 (53.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that AI-based mental health applications can be used to monitor mood and emotional changes among young adults, 47 (33.3%) of the respondents agree with the statement, while 23 (15.3%) were undecided on the statement. In addition, 53 (35.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that AI-based mental health applications can be used as a source of emotional support alongside assistance from friends, family, or professionals; 50 (33.3%) of

the respondents agree with the statement, while 47 (31.4%) were undecided. Similarly, 61 (40.7%) of the respondents agree that ChatGPT can be used by students to express personal concerns and receive conversational support; 53 (35.3%) of the respondents agree with the statement, 22 (14.7%) of the respondents were undecided, while 14 (9.3%) of the respondents disagree with the statement. Furthermore, 64 (42.7%) of the respondents strongly agree that ChatGPT is used by students to seek information about mental health and emotional well-being, 41 (27.3%) of the respondents agree with the statement, 34 (22.7%) of the respondents were undecided, while 11 (7.3%) of the respondents disagree with the statement.

**Research Question Two: What is the perceived usefulness of AI-based mental health applications in supporting the emotional well-being of young adults in Lead City University, Ibadan?**

**Table 2: The perceived usefulness of AI-based mental health applications in supporting the emotional well-being of young adults in Lead City University, Ibadan**

| S/N | Statement                                                                                                                                                     | SA          | A           | U          | D        | SD | $\bar{x}$ | Std Dev |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|------------|----------|----|-----------|---------|
| 1   | AI applications such as ChatGPT, mental health chatbots, and AI wellness apps are useful for helping students reflect on their emotions and personal concerns | 105 (70.0%) | 22 (14.7%)  | 15 (10.0%) | 8 (5.3%) | -  | 3.72      | 1.07    |
| 2   | AI-based mental health applications can provide useful coping suggestions for students dealing with emotional difficulties                                    | 22 (14.7%)  | 124 (82.7%) | 4 (2.7%)   | -        | -  | 3.27      | 1.23    |
| 3   | ChatGPT and other AI applications can be used as useful sources of information about emotional well-being and mental health                                   | 77 (51.3%)  | 51 (34.0%)  | 22 (14.7%) | -        | -  | 3.17      | 1.08    |
| 4   | AI-based mental health applications, including ChatGPT and other AI-powered tools, can complement existing sources of emotional support available to students | 89 (59.3%)  | 39 (26.0%)  | 22 (14.7%) | -        | -  | 3.43      | 1.13    |
| 5   | ChatGPT and other AI applications can assist students in understanding factors that may affect their emotional well-being                                     | 111 (74.0%) | 32 (21.3%)  | 7 (4.7%)   | -        | -  | 3.83      | 1.23    |

Table 2 shows that 105 (70.0%) of the respondents agree that AI applications such as ChatGPT, mental health chatbots, and AI wellness apps are useful for helping students reflect on their emotions and personal concerns; 22 (14.7%) of the respondents agree with the statement, 15 (10.0%) of the respondents were undecided on the statement, while 8 (5.3%) of the respondents disagree with the statement. Also, 124 (82.7%) of the respondents agree that AI-based mental health applications can provide useful coping suggestions for students dealing with emotional difficulties; 22 (14.7%) of the respondents strongly agree with the statement, while 4 (2.7%) of the respondents were undecided on the statement. In addition, 77 (51.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that ChatGPT and other AI applications can be used as useful sources of information about emotional well-being and mental health, 51 (34.0%) of the respondents agree with the statement, while 22 (14.7%) were undecided on the statement. Similarly, 89 (59.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that AI-based mental health applications, including ChatGPT and other AI-powered tools, can complement existing sources of emotional support available to students; 39 (26.0%) of the respondents agree with the statement, while 22 (14.7%) of the respondents were undecided. Furthermore, 111 (74.0%) of the respondents strongly agree that ChatGPT and other AI applications can assist students in understanding factors that may affect their emotional well-being; 32 (21.3%) of the respondents agree with the statement, while 7 (4.7%) of the respondents were undecided.

**Research Question Three: What are the challenges associated with the use of AI-based mental health applications among young adults in Lead City University, Ibadan?**

**Table 3: The challenges associated with the use of AI-based mental health applications among young adults in Lead City University, Ibadan**

| S/N | Statement                                                                                                                                                    | SA         | A          | U          | D         | SD | $\bar{x}$ | Std Dev |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|----|-----------|---------|
| 1   | Students may receive inaccurate or inappropriate information when using ChatGPT and other AI applications for mental health-related concerns                 | 80 (53.3%) | 61 (40.7%) | 9 (6.0%)   | -         | -  | 3.17      | 1.03    |
| 2   | The inability of AI applications to fully understand students' emotions and personal circumstances limits their usefulness for mental health support         | 34 (22.7%) | 90 (60.0%) | 26 (17.3%) | -         | -  | 3.41      | 1.09    |
| 3   | Concerns about the confidentiality of conversations with ChatGPT and other AI applications may affect their use for discussing personal or emotional issues  | 75 (50.0%) | 42 (28.0%) | 33 (22.0%) | -         | -  | 3.56      | 1.11    |
| 4   | The absence of direct human interaction in AI-based mental health applications can make them less effective for addressing some emotional challenges         | 65 (43.3%) | 56 (37.3%) | 20 (13.3%) | 9 (6.0%)  | -  | 3.83      | 1.21    |
| 5   | Students may find it difficult to determine whether information provided by ChatGPT and other AI applications is reliable for mental health-related concerns | 86 (57.3%) | 35 (23.3%) | 18 (12.0%) | 11 (7.3%) | -  | 3.33      | 1.19    |

Table 3 shows that 80 (53.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that students may receive inaccurate or inappropriate information when using ChatGPT and other AI applications for mental health-related concerns, 61 (40.7%) of the respondents agree with the statement, while 9 (6.0%) were undecided on the statement. Also, 90 (60.0%) of the respondents agree that the inability of AI applications to fully understand students' emotions and personal circumstances limits their usefulness for mental health support; 34 (22.7%) of the respondents strongly agree with the statement, while 26 (17.3%) of the respondents were undecided on the statement. In addition, 75 (50.0%) of the respondents strongly agree that concerns about the confidentiality of conversations with ChatGPT and other AI applications may affect their use for discussing personal or emotional issues; 42 (28.0%) of the respondents agree with the statement, while 33 (22.0%) of the respondents were undecided on the statement.

Similarly, 65 (43.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that the absence of direct human interaction in AI-based mental health applications can make them less effective for addressing some emotional challenges; 56 (37.3%) of the respondents agree with the statement, 20 (13.3%) of the respondents were undecided, while 9 (6.0%) of the respondents disagree with the statement. Furthermore, 86 (57.3%) of the respondents strongly agree that students may find it difficult to determine whether information provided by ChatGPT and other AI applications is reliable for mental health-related concerns, 35 (23.3%) of the respondents agree with the statement, 18 (12.0%) of the respondents were undecided, while 11 (7.3%) of the respondents disagree with the statement.

### Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study showed that the majority of the respondents agree that ChatGPT can be used by students to obtain suggestions for coping with academic and personal pressures; AI-based mental health applications can be a source of emotional support alongside assistance from friends, family, or professionals; and ChatGPT can be used by students to express personal concerns and receive conversational support.

Also, the majority of the respondents agree that AI applications such as ChatGPT, mental health chatbots, and AI wellness apps are useful for helping students reflect on their emotions and personal concerns; AI-based mental health applications can provide useful coping suggestions for students dealing with emotional difficulties; ChatGPT and other AI applications can be used as useful sources of information about emotional well-being and mental health; and ChatGPT and other AI applications can assist students in

understanding factors that may affect their emotional well-being. Likewise, some of the challenges associated with the use of AI-based mental health applications among young adults include inaccurate or inappropriate information when using ChatGPT and other AI applications for mental health-related concerns, the inability of AI applications to fully understand students' emotions and personal circumstances, concerns about the confidentiality of conversations with ChatGPT and other AI applications, which may affect their use for discussing personal or emotional issues, and the absence of direct human interaction in AI-based mental health applications, which can make them less effective for addressing some emotional challenges. These findings are in line with the study of Oladunmoye et al. (2025), who investigated the transformative function of artificial intelligence (AI) in mental health counselling and reported that AI tools have potential for handling anxiety and depression.

## Conclusion

The findings of this study showed that AI applications such as ChatGPT can be used by students to express personal concerns and receive conversational support. AI applications such as ChatGPT, mental health chatbots, and AI wellness apps are useful for helping students reflect on their emotions and personal concerns and can assist students in understanding factors that may affect their emotional well-being. Furthermore, some of the challenges associated with the use of AI-based mental health applications among young adults include inaccurate or inappropriate information when using ChatGPT and other AI applications for mental health-related concerns, inability of AI applications to fully understand students' emotions and personal circumstances

Integrating AI in mental health applications can improve effectiveness, equity, and sustainability. Creating culturally sensitive tools will make AI more accessible and applicable to diverse populations. Expanding algorithmic transparency and ethical governance will establish confidence and preserve user rights, whereas rigorous evaluations of long-term efficiency will offer the evidence basis needed for intelligent decision-making.

## Recommendations

- i. Interdisciplinary cooperation among computer scientists, psychologists, ethicists, and policymakers is crucial to utilizing its full capabilities ethically and addressing some of its issues.
- ii. There should be strong regulatory structures must be put in place to guarantee model validation and transparency, while ongoing research and development should be funded to enhance its use in mental health.

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