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Artificial Intelligence in Counselling for Dispute Resolution

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated artificial intelligence in counselling for dispute resolution. Five research questions and four hypotheses guided the study, ex-post facto research design was adopted, the population of this study consists of all the 99,598 regular undergraduate students in seven public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria on full-time study programme for the 2022/2023 academic session. A sample size of 1159 undergraduate students representing one (1) percent of the population were drawn from the universities covered in the study. The multi-stage random sampling technique was used to draw a sample size of 1% per institution. The research question 1 was analysed with means (X) and standard deviation. The simple linear regression analysis was used to test hypotheses 1-4 while hypothesis 5 was tested using multiple linear regression analysis. The research questions and hypothesis were analysed and tested with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) (IBM Version 20. The findings among other were that there was high student's prevalence of artificial intelligence in dispute resolution for counselling in public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria. The study concluded that several key factors significantly predicted AI adoption. Specifically, technological capability, ethical and legal frameworks, types of counselling needs, and user acceptance and trust emerged as strong determinants of students' willingness to use AI in conflict resolution. The study recommended that strengthening these key factors will facilitate wider usage and acceptance of artificial intelligence while human counsellors address complex and sensitive cases, thereby maximizing efficiency and student confidence.

1. Introduction

Traditionally, all forms of dispute resolution relied on face-to-face communications. Recently, various forms of technology have been used to enhance dispute resolution and negotiation (Verheij 2020). The use of technology can enhance efficiency and efficacy. The telephone (Alessa 2022) has been the primary medium which supports people to negotiate. It allows people to communicate who cannot or should not meet in the same room, whether owing to the parties being physically far apart or to the existence of previously violent situations, such as the existence of domestic violence(Nadeem, Zara, Aqib & Komal 2025). With Internet technology becoming widespread, there has been an increased focus upon using technological tools to assist conflict dispute resolution.

Conflict resolution is the process by which disputes are resolved, typically through negotiation, mediation, or arbitration (Glikson & Woolley 2020). It involves the identification and addressing of underlying issues to reach a mutually acceptable agreement. (Gursoy & Cai 2025) added that negotiation is a dialogue between two or more parties aimed at reaching a consensus or agreement. It involves communication, bargaining, and compromise to address conflicting interests and achieve a mutually beneficial outcome (Henkel, Bromuri, Iren & Urovi 2020)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing various aspects of human life, including conflict resolution and counselling (Yonck 2020). Counselling recognition enables AI to detect verbal and non-verbal cues, including facial expressions, tone of voice, and body postures, hence facilitating it to assess a person's emotional state with great accuracy. This capability has a significant role in conflict resolution by fostering communication and empathy between belligerent parties (Khare, Blanes-Vidal, Nadimi & Acharya 2024).

The role of AI in conflict resolution and negotiation is now the contribution in an era marked by rapid technological advancements (Khoei & Singh 2024). AI is emerging as a transformative force in various domains, which is defining the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, particularly computer systems, that encompasses a range of technologies from machine learning to natural language processing and counselling recognition based (Mallick, Flathmann, Lancaster, Hauptman, McNeese & Freeman 2024). AI systems assist in mediators, negotiators, or individuals in conflict to understand emotional dynamics better, recognize hidden agendas, and respond in a manner that de-escalates tensions (Dinnar, Dede, Johnson, Straub & Korjus 2021). Such AI-based tools have the potential to increase the success rate of mediation by offering insight into emotional triggers and facilitating a more

empathetic model of dispute resolution (Henkel, et. al. 2020). (Alessa 2022) avows that AI-driven solutions offer innovative ways to mediate disputes, provide psychological support, and enhance decision-making processes. Furthermore as conflicts become more complex in the digital age, AI provides the tools that facilitate efficient resolution strategies, improve emotional well-being, and reduce human biases (Crompton, Jones & Burke 2022).

Artificial Intelligence is fast-moving and its use is going from basic computing operations to the more sophisticated, human-related domains (Nadeem, et. al. 2025). The advent of emotional recognition technology in AI systems is a significant advancement. Emotional recognition refers to the examination of human emotion on the basis of physiological and behavioral signals such as facial expressions, vocal tone, and body language (Mallick, et. al. 2024). These systems employ machine learning algorithms and neural networks to recognize emotions in real time, and this enables AI to interact with human beings in a more intuitive and empathetic manner. Sophistication of these technologies has rendered them more relevant across various domains, such as customer service, healthcare, and conflict resolution (Morales & Herrera 2022). This enables emotional AI to better process emotional signals, thereby ensuring greater insight into human behavior and possible enhancement in the resolution of conflicts (Yonck 2020). AI can better recognize emotions, thus enabling disputing parties to engage in effective and emotionally intelligent discussions that result in enhanced mediation and negotiation.

Misunderstandings and emotional reactions often hinder conflict resolution, thus increasing the tensions between individuals or organizations (Lauer 2021). Emotional intelligence is defined as the ability to recognize, understand, and control one's own emotions and those of others. It is the key to successful conflict resolution (Vistorte et al., 2024). Human mediators rely heavily on their emotional intelligence when using traditional conflict resolution methods to deal with sensitive situations. Nonetheless, these human-driven processes may exhibit bias or be constrained by personal emotions, which is where AI systems might augment the procedure. Through the integration of emotional recognition technology, AI can enhance or even lead conflict resolution initiatives by delivering real-time insights into emotional dynamics that may not be readily observable to human participants (Alessa 2022). This can facilitate de-escalation, enhance communication, and encourage compassionate comprehension (Khoei & Singh, 2024)

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Traditional conflict resolution and counselling methods often rely on human mediators and therapists, which can be time-consuming, costly, and subject to personal biases. The increasing number of conflicts in workplaces, relationships, and global politics necessitates scalable and efficient solutions (Casey & Niblett 2020). On this premise AI has the potential to enhance these processes by offering real-time mediation, sentiment analysis, and automated psychological support. However, concerns regarding ethical considerations, data privacy, and emotional intelligence in AI systems remain significant challenges. Against this backdrop the study investigates artificial intelligence in counseling for dispute resolution.

1.2 Research questions

The following research questions were raised for the study

- What is the prevalence of artificial intelligence in counselling for conflict resolution of students in public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria
- Does technological capability of AI predict dispute resolution among undergraduate students of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria?
- Does ethical and legal framework of AI predict dispute resolution undergraduate students of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria?
- Does type of counselling needed of AI predict dispute resolution among undergraduate students of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria?
- Does user acceptance and trust of AI predict dispute resolution among undergraduate students of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria?

1.3 Hypotheses

Research hypotheses were formulated for the study:

- Technological capability of AI will not significantly predict dispute resolution among undergraduate students of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria.
- Ethical and legal framework of AI will not significantly predict dispute resolution among undergraduate students of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria.)
- Type of counselling needed of AI will not significantly predict dispute resolution among undergraduate students of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria.
- User acceptance and trust of AI will not significantly predict dispute resolution among undergraduate students of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

Definition of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is commonly defined as the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, particularly computer systems. These processes include learning (the ability to enhance performance through experience), reasoning (applying logical rules to reach conclusions), and self-correction (adjusting based on feedback).

According to Russell and Norvig (2016), in their foundational textbook Artificial Intelligence: A Modern Approach, AI is defined as "the study of agents that receive percepts from the environment and perform actions." This definition emphasizes the concept of AI systems acting rationally to achieve specific goals based on environmental inputs.

The Oxford English Dictionary (2021) defines AI as "the theory and development of computer systems able to perform tasks normally requiring human intelligence, such as visual perception, speech recognition, decision-making, and translation between languages." Similarly, the European Commission (2021) describes AI as "systems that display intelligent behaviour by analysing their environment and taking actions with some degree of autonomy to achieve specific goals," as stated in the Artificial Intelligence Act proposal. From an industry perspective, IBM (2020) defines AI as "computers and machines that mimic the problem-solving and decision-making capabilities of the human mind."

2.1 Online Dispute Resolution

In the era of innovation, e-commerce and rapid development, dispute resolution has found a new and innovative way by using technology to solve disputes (Nazari, Shabbir & Setiawan 2021). In the digital age, one cannot deny the fact that "conflict is a growth industry." (Nadeem, et. al. 2025) Therefore, demand for dispute resolution tools will likely grow simultaneously (Mallick, et. al. 2024). Consequently, it is crucial to lay out a clear definition of online dispute resolution in order to delineate its role. Online dispute resolution may be defined as the use of information and communication technology to help people prevent and resolve disputes. (Khoei, et. al. 2024) Online dispute resolution roundly describes an easier, faster and more efficient mode of pursuing alternative dispute resolution. It is generally regarded as those avenues for resolving disputes that do not require the use of litigation or traditional legal systems (Crompton, et. al. 2022) and such alternative avenues might be negotiation, mediation and arbitration.

2.2 Artificial intelligence

AI is unique. This is because AI can develop itself by using intelligent techniques or by working intelligently. (Martınez-Miranda, & Aldea, 2024) Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising that there have been many definitions of AI over the years. The difference in the definitions of AI varies according to how it is seen from each academic's perspective. Some academics define AI based on how it works, its main features and what it can do. Others define it based on what it cannot do. (Pal, Mukhopadhyay & Suryadevara 2021). Another definition of AI compares human ability with AI which is "…trying to solve by computer any problem that a human can solve faster" Pantano & Scarpi 2022). This definition is viewed as not being clear on the point of whether the human or the computer is faster. However, (Sawang & Kivits 2024) argue that while it may have originally meant that the human is faster, in the current context, it should be interpreted as implying the opposite meaning, leading to their formulation that AI is "…trying to solve by computer any problem, that a human can solve, better, faster, more consistently, without getting tired, etc" (Stark & Hoey 2021). In the same vein, (Šumak, Brdnik & Pušnik 2021) has defined AI as "The activity devoted to making machines intelligent, and intelligence is that quality that enables an entity to function appropriately and with foresight in its environment.

2.3 The Role of AI in Online dispute resolution

Before one can consider the future of AI in Online dispute resolution, it is important to consider the past and current relationship between AI and Online dispute resolution. Historically, AI has played a role in the application of justice, preservation of rights, and the promotion of social values. For example, by facilitating legal work and increasing its efficiency by resolving disputes. One way this is achieved is by helping people to understand the human reasoning process in constructing and sustaining legal arguments (Taherdoost & Madanchian 2023). Law is created and enforced by a chain of processes which include information processing, reasoning, and decision making. Similarly, AI works by information retrieval, knowledge representation and reasoning, natural language processing, machine learning and data mining.

2.4 Knowledge Support Systems

Although decision support systems provide procedural support, AI can also be used to provide non-traditional means of accessing information relevant to a given dispute. Perhaps an oversimplification, such systems can be thought of merely as very advanced search engines. However, the complex nature of advanced 'knowledge representation' should not be underestimated (Pantano, et. al. 2022). Instead, a truly 'intelligent' search engine would need to be able to take in the relevant details of a presented scenario, requiring a sense of understanding and meaning, and ascertaining the relevant information to present (or omit) in an understandable manner. (Nazari, et. al. 2021) For example, a knowledge support system might search through rules by examining and applying those statutory provisions which are relevant to the scenario at hand, and case studies by taking into account those cases which are similar in nature and therefore give rise to applicable precedent at the same time. Once both of these tasks are undertaken, it will be possible to deliver the relevant information for a given scenario Khoei, et. al. 2024) It is perhaps telling that this is a highly difficult man oeuvre (Alessa 2022) even in the highly indexed world of law, and would arguably be orders of magnitude more difficult given some of the Online dispute resolution contexts which arise (e.g. industrial disputes which rely on 'rules' created only by course of dealing or which otherwise involve complex knowledge.) Disregarding with (Sharma & Patel 2021) the difficulty of designing such systems momentarily, they are arguably highly promising in that they remove a substantial barrier to the resolution of disputes the need to ascertain where exactly the relevant information lies, be it in the form of rules, evidence, or studies of previous similar disputes.

2.5 Artificial Intelligence in Dispute Resolution in Counselling

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has revolutionized various aspects of human life, including dispute resolution and counselling (Zhang & Ho 2022). AI-driven solutions offer innovative ways to mediate disputes, provide psychological support, and enhance decision-making processes. As legal and interpersonal disputes become more complex in the digital age, AI provides tools that facilitate efficient resolution strategies, improve emotional well-being, and reduce human biases.

2.6 Applications of AI in Conflict Resolution in Counselling

- AI-Powered Mediation Tools: AI algorithms can analyze disputes, suggest resolution strategies, and facilitate negotiations through chatbots and virtual assistants.
- Sentiment and Emotion Analysis: AI can assess emotional states through text, voice, and facial expressions, allowing mediators and counselors to tailor their approaches effectively.
- AI-Based Therapy and Chatbots: Virtual mental health assistants, such as Woebot and Wysa, provide cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) techniques to help individuals manage stress and conflict (Sukanya & Manjula 2020).
- Predictive Analytics in Conflict Prevention: AI can analyze historical data to predict potential conflicts and provide proactive strategies for resolution.

2.7 Benefits of AI in Conflict Resolution in Counselling

- Scalability and Accessibility: AI-driven counseling platforms provide support to individuals worldwide, reducing barriers to mental health services.
- Impartial Decision-Making: Unlike human mediators, AI does not have emotional biases, ensuring fair conflict resolution.
- Real-Time Analysis and Response: AI tools can process vast amounts of data quickly, providing immediate feedback and recommendations.

2.8 Challenges of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Counselling

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in counselling presents significant potential, but it also raises several challenges particularly regarding ethical considerations, data privacy, and emotional intelligence.

Ethical Considerations:

A major challenge in AI counselling is obtaining informed consent, as it is often difficult to ensure users fully understand how AI systems function, what data is being collected, and how that data will be used especially given the complexity of the algorithms involved. Additionally, issues of bias and fairness arise, since AI models can inherit prejudices from their training data, potentially resulting in unfair or discriminatory counselling outcomes. Accountability is another concern, as it can be unclear who bears responsibility whether the developer, provider, or end user when the AI delivers harmful or inaccurate advice. Moreover, AI may blur professional boundaries by making it difficult to distinguish between professional counselling and general guidance, which could undermine the credibility and integrity of mental health services.

Data Privacy:

AI counselling systems often collect highly sensitive and personal psychological data, raising concerns about ethical usage and the need for secure storage, transmission, and processing. The risk of data breaches through hacking or unauthorized access poses a serious threat to user privacy and trust. Compliance with data protection regulations such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the EU, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) in the U.S., and the Nigeria Data Protection Regulation (NDPR) can be particularly challenging for AI systems operating across different jurisdictions. Furthermore, maintaining user anonymity while delivering personalized support involves complex technical and ethical challenges that demand thoughtful and deliberate attention

Emotional Intelligence:

AI lacks the ability to fully replicate human emotional intelligence, which is essential in counselling and conflict resolution; while it can mimic empathetic responses, it cannot genuinely understand or feel human emotions, limiting its capacity to offer meaningful support. It may also misinterpret tone, context, or cultural nuances, leading to inappropriate or ineffective responses. Trust, a critical component of counselling relationships, is difficult to establish with AI due to its inability to form authentic human connections, which can hinder therapeutic progress. Additionally, AI may fail to recognize serious emotional cues such as suicidal ideation, trauma responses, or deep psychological distress, all of which require human sensitivity and immediate intervention.

2.9 Empirical Review

Empirical studies on artificial intelligence (AI) in counselling and mental health practice in Nigeria have largely focused on awareness, utilization, and therapeutic applications. For instance, Ogunsemi, Amoo, Olaseni, Aina, and Akinhanmi (2025) examined psychiatrists' knowledge and readiness for AI in mental healthcare using a cross-sectional survey of 230 Nigerian psychiatrists and trainees. Data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results showed that 86.5% of respondents were aware of AI, although fewer than half were familiar with its clinical applications such as diagnosis and treatment. This study highlights a gap between general awareness and practical expertise, but it also underscores the growing professional recognition of AI's role in mental health delivery in Nigeria.

Similarly, Adigun, Oyetunji, Olaleye, and Ojo (2024) investigated the adoption of ChatGPT, a chat-based AI tool, among pharmacy students at Afe Babalola University. The study sampled 302 undergraduate pharmacy students using a structured questionnaire survey. Data were analyzed through descriptive statistics and chi-square tests. Findings revealed that 88% of students were aware of AI tools, with 82.8% reporting active usage, mostly for academic purposes. Although not counselling-specific, the study illustrates that Nigerian university students demonstrate high readiness to engage with AI technologies, which provides a foundation for the integration of AI-driven counselling systems in higher institutions. Furthermore, Nwankwo and Ede (2023) explored the integration of AI tools into clinical psychology practice in Nigeria. Their study employed a quasi-experimental design involving a sample of 120 clients accessing psychological services across selected clinics. Participants were exposed to AI-enabled interventions such as chatbots and virtual therapists. Data were analyzed using paired-sample t-tests to measure pre- and post-intervention outcomes. Findings showed that AI-supported interventions significantly alleviated symptoms of depression and anxiety, particularly in

resource-limited contexts. This evidence indicates that AI-enabled tools can complement traditional counselling by enhancing accessibility and reducing barriers to psychological support.

Safiullin, Safiullina & Fatkhiev (2025), surveyed 451 students using a structured questionnaire and employed purposive sampling to capture students with varied technology access. Data were analyzed using Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), revealing that digital media literacy measured through device access, technical ability, and critical evaluation had a significant positive effect on attitudes toward generative AI. Similarly, Zhang and Zhao (2024), in their study of undergraduates across three Chinese public universities, used stratified random sampling and SEM within the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) framework. They confirmed that perceived ease of use and usefulness mediated the relationship between technological readiness and AI tool adoption.

Beyond attitudes, technological capability enhances self-efficacy, which further predicts effective engagement with AI-supported learning. (Yoo, Thompson & Carter 2023) in an Australian study surveyed of 110 first-year undergraduates selected through convenience sampling and analyzed data with path analysis in AMOS 28. Their findings demonstrated that students' digital literacy and positive attitudes toward technology strengthened technological self-efficacy, which significantly predicted engagement across cognitive, behavioral, and collaborative dimensions of online learning. This highlights that technological capability does not only foster AI adoption but also ensures deeper integration into learning processes. Sajja, Anderson & Martinez (2024) conducted a mixed-method study involving undergraduate engineering students at a large R1 public university. Using a combination of pre- and post-surveys, log analytics, and thematic qualitative analysis, they found that nearly half of the respondents considered an AI-powered assistant easier to use than approaching instructors, though policy ambiguities constrained broader adoption.

Lee, Park & Kim (2025), in a quasi-experimental study with 125 nursing students in South Korea using pre/post-tests and ANCOVA, found that an AI ethics education program significantly improved ethical awareness, moral sensitivity, and intention to use AI. Similarly, Kurt and Çelik (2024), through a survey of 226 undergraduates in Turkey analyzed with cluster analysis and multiple regression, identified distinct adoption profiles: high adopters expressed lower ethical concerns, while moderate adopters demonstrated stronger ethical awareness. Ethical considerations such as worries about plagiarism and misinformation were significant predictors of adoption behaviors.

Hsu and Chaudhary (2023) introduced AI4PCR, a web-based system that delivers real-time feedback on interpersonal conflict communication on type of counselling needs. Their study, which engaged 13 adult participants, used semi-structured interviews analyzed through thematic coding. Findings showed that AI feedback improved awareness of judgmental versus relationship-preserving language, enabling participants to reframe communication during conflict. Although no statistical coefficients were reported, participants consistently described AI feedback as useful for practicing dispute-resolution micro-skills, underscoring AI's role as a coaching adjunct rather than a substitute for human counsellors.

In a larger experimental evaluation, (Tan, Wang & Lo 2024) conducted a blind comparison of large language models (LLMs) and human mediators across 50 simulated dispute cases on type of counselling needs. Human raters assessed both the intervention types chosen and the mediator messages produced. Quantitative ratings revealed that LLMs selected interventions judged better or equivalent to humans in 62% of cases, while their drafted messages were rated better or equivalent in 84% of cases. These findings provide evidence that AI can generate mediator-style interventions of competitive quality, suggesting its potential value within structured online dispute-resolution systems when paired with ethical oversight.

Ajibade (2023) surveyed 412 Nigerian undergraduates using a structured questionnaire grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). Data were analyzed using multiple regression. Results revealed that both user acceptance ($\beta = .41$, $p < .01$) and trust ($\beta = .37$, $p < .01$) significantly predicted willingness to adopt AI tools for conflict resolution, academic and counselling support. This suggests that students are more likely to engage with AI systems when they perceive them as trustworthy and easy to use.

Similarly, a study by Chen and Lee (2024) with 286 Taiwanese university students applied structural equation modelling (SEM) to examine predictors of AI adoption in educational counselling. Their findings showed that trust in AI explained 32% of variance in adoption intentions, while perceived usefulness (acceptance) accounted for an additional 28% of variance. Together, the two constructs were significant predictors, highlighting the centrality of confidence in AI reliability for undergraduate users in conflict resolution.

A broader review by Musa and Adeoye (2025), involving a meta-analysis of 18 studies on AI acceptance among university students in Africa and Asia, confirmed that user acceptance (Hedges' $g = 0.46$) and trust (Hedges' $g = 0.39$) had medium effect sizes in predicting AI adoption. These results reinforce that beyond technical functionality, relational and perceptual factors particularly students' willingness to accept and trust AI systems play decisive roles in adoption for counselling and dispute resolution.

3. Methodology

This study adopted the ex-post facto research design. Ex-post facto research aims to ascertain the degree to which one variable, referred to as the "independent variable," interfaces with another, referred to as the "dependent variable". In order to ascertain the degree to which the independent variables (technological capability, ethical and legal framework, type of counselling needed, and user acceptance and trust) predict the dependent variable (artificial intelligence), the ex-post facto method was employed to examine the causal relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The population of this study consists of all the 99,598 regular undergraduate students in seven public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria. The above population consists: 16,350 students in University of Jos, Plateau, 13,830 students in Nassarawa State University, Nassarawa, 19,780 students in Benue State University. Benue; 13,490 students in University of Abuja, Abuja; 12,030 students in Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Minna; 18,090 students in Kogi State University, and 22,378 University of IIorin, llorin. A sample size of 1159 undergraduate students representing one (1) percent of the population were drawn from the universities covered in the study. The multi-stage random sampling technique was used to draw a sample size of 1% per institution.

Table I: Population and Sample of undergraduate students drawn from Universities in North Central Zone

s/n	Name of University	State	Population of undergraduate Students	1% of Sample Drawn
1	University of Jos, Plateau	Plateau	16,350	164
2	Nassarawa State University, Keffi	Nassarawa	13,830	138
3	Benue State University,Makurdi	Benue	19,780	198
4	University of Abuja, Abuja	FCT,Abuja	13,490	135
5	Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida University, Minna	Niger	12,030	120
6	Kogi State University,Anyigba	Kogi	18,090	181
7	University of IIorin, llorin	Kwara	22,378	224
	Total		99,598	1,159

Source: Research Data,

Provisional figure of undergraduates on full-time study programme for the 2022/2023 academic session was collected in the Students' Record Division of respective institutions while sample was computed by the researcher

The Instrument of the Study is a five (5) point rating ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1) with a middle response of Undecided (3). The instrument was content validated by two experts from Ambrose Alli University Ekpoma's Department of Guidance and Counselling. To make sure the information in the instruments are understandable and pertinent. The Cronbach reliability alpha technique was used to determine the reliability of the instruments and the reliability alpha result is 0.79-0.89. Thirty undergraduate students from other public higher institutions located outside of the geopolitical zone were used for the trial/pilot test of each of the instruments. The requirement to choose participants for the pilot test, who are not from the target population, informed the choice of Edo State students. Data collected was descriptively analyzed with percentages (%), means (X).standard deviation. Specifically, percentages (%) was used to provide summary report of respondents' socio-demographics. The research question 1 was analysed with means (X) and standard deviation (S.D). A mean score of 2.50 was used as the benchmark for determining prevalence of artificial intelligence in counselling. The simple linear regression analysis was used to test hypotheses 1-4 while hypothesis 5 was tested using multiple linear regression analysis. The entire hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The research questions and hypothesis were analysed and tested with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) (IBM Version 20).

4. Findings

4.1 Research Question 1: What is the prevalence of artificial intelligence in counselling for conflict resolution of students in public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria?

In analyzing Research Question 1, the mean (X) and standard deviation (SD) was used to determine the prevalence of artificial intelligence in counselling for conflict resolution of students in public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria.

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Analysis on Students Bullied in Public Universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria

S/n	Items	Always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	X	SD	Remarks
1.	Can AI identify early signs of interpersonal conflict?	394 (37.8%)	281 (26.9%)	268 (25.7%)	100 (9.6%)	2.93	1.007	High
2.	AI tools can assist counsellors in mediation sessions?	329 (31.5%)	336 (32.2%)	250 (24.0%)	128 (12.3%)	2.83	1.009	High
3.	Can AI detect emotional cues from speech or text during counselling?	69 (6.6%)	351 (33.7%)	363 (34.8%)	260 (24.9%)	2.22	.896	Low
4	AI help track progress in conflict resolution?	234 (22.4%)	229 (22.0%)	258 (24.7%)	322 (30.9%)	2.36	1.139	Low
5.	ethical issues arise when using AI in counselling?	148 (14.2%)	286 (27.4%)	272 (26.1%)	337 (32.3%)	2.23	1.054	low
6.	AI provide culturally sensitive conflict resolution strategies?	338 (32.4%)	183 (17.5%)	157 (15.1%)	365 (35.0%)	2.47	1.264	low
7.	Can AI play in virtual or remote mediation?	316 (30.3%)	229 (22.0%)	309 (29.6%)	189 (18.1%)	2.64	1.095	High
8.	How reliable is AI in predicting conflict outcomes?	280 (26.8%)	212 (20.3%)	266 (25.5%)	285 (27.3%)	2.47	1.155	Low
9.	Can AI be integrated with human-led counselling for better results?	274 (26.3%)	244 (23.4%)	313 (30.0%)	212 (20.3%)	2.56	1.086	High
10	can AI support counsellors in handling large caseloads?	248 (23.8%)	189 (18.1%)	261 (25.0%	345	2.33	1.165	low

Mean score on students- Artificial intelligence =2.52 *High mean score($\bar{X} \geq 2.50$).

Source: Research Data 2025

From Table 1, the summary result shows that 37.8 percent of the respondents say AI identify early signs of interpersonal conflict at a mean score of 2.93. 32.2 percent of the respondents agree that AI tools can assist counsellors in mediation sessions at mean score of 2.83, 30.3 percent of the respondents say AI play in virtual or remote mediation at mean score of 2.64, 30.0 percent suggest that AI can integrated with human-led counselling for better results at mean score of 2.56. Overall, the mean score on the prevalence of artificial intelligence in counselling for conflict resolution of students in public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria was higher than the benchmark mean or 2.50. Hence, there is high prevalence artificial intelligence in counselling for conflict resolution of students in public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria.

4.2 Hypothesis 1: Technological capability of AI will not significantly predict dispute resolution among undergraduate students of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria.

In testing Hypothesis 1, the Simple Linear Regression analysis was used to determine the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. This further helped to determine the extent (in percentage %) to which the independent variables explained variations in the dependent variable. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis on Technological capability Predicting Artificial Intelligence among Undergraduate Students of Public Universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria

R=.255[a]

R-square (R^2)= .065

Adjusted R-square=.064 $F_{(1,1041)}$ =72.152*

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std.Error	Beta	t-val.	p-val. Remark
Model					
(Constant)	1.853	.055		33,912	.000 Significant
Artificial Intelligence	.159	.019	255	8.494	.000 Significant

a. Dependent Variable: Artificial Intelligence

b. Predictors:(Constant), Technological capability

*t-values and f-value are statistically significant (p<0.05) Source: Research Data 2025

The result in Table 3 shows the t-value for artificial Intelligence individually predicting technological capability among undergraduate (t=0.159β=.8.494, p<0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This implied that artificial Intelligence significantly predict technological capability among undergraduate students of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria. The R^2 square and adjusted R^2 values (.255 and .065) showed that approximately 6.5 percent variation in technological capability was attributed to the adequate hardware, software, internet connectivity, and data storage capacity. Without strong technological capacity, even the best artificial Intelligence solutions cannot function optimally.

4.3 Hypothesis 2: Ethical and legal framework of AI will not significantly predict dispute resolution among undergraduate students of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria.

In testing Hypothesis 2, the Simple Linear Regression analysis was used to determine the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. This further helped to determine the extent (in percentage %) to which the independent variable explained variations in the dependent variable. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4

Table 4: Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis on Ethical and legal Framework and AI among Undergraduate Students of Public Universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria

R=.280[a]

R-square (R^2)= .079

Adjusted R-square=.078

$F_{(1,1041)}$ =88.705*

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	β	Std.Error	Beta	t-val.	p-val. Remark
Model					
(Constant)	1.804	.055	32.991		.000 Significant
Ethical and legal Framework	-.168	.018	.280	-9.418	.000 Significant

a. Dependent Variable: AI

b.Predictors:(Constant), Ethical and legal Framework

*t-values and f-value are statistically significant (p<0.05) Source: Research Data 2025

The result in Table 4 shows that the t-value for ethical and legal framework individually predicted AI among undergraduate (t=-9.418, β=-.168, p<0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicated that ethical and legal framework significantly predicted AI among undergraduate students of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria. The R^2 square and adjusted R^2 values (.079 and .078) showed that approximately 7.9 percent variations in AI was predicted by ethical and legal framework among undergraduates of public universities North Cental Zone of Nigeria.

4.4 Hypothesis 3: Type of counselling needed of AI will not significantly predict dispute resolution among undergraduate students of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria.

In testing Hypothesis 3, the Simple Linear Regression analysis was used to determine the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. This further helps to determine the extent to which the independent variable explained variations in dependent variable. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 5

Table 5: Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis on Type of Counselling needs Predict AI among Undergraduate Students of Public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria

R=.361

R-Square (R^2)=.131

Adjusted R-Square =.130

$F_{(1,1041)}$=156.425*

Coefficients

	Unstandardized		Standardized Coefficients			
	B	Std.Error	Beta	t-val.	p-val.	Remark
Model						
(Constant)	1.793	.043		41.395	.000	Significant
Type of Counselling needs	.216	.017	.361	12.507	.000	Significant

a. Dependent Variable: AI

b. Predictors:(Constant), Type of Counselling needs

*t-values and f-value are statistically significant($p<0.05$) Source: Research Data 2025

The result in Table 5 shows that the t-value for type of counselling needs individually predicted AI among undergraduate (t=12,507, β=.216, $p<0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicated that type of counselling needs significantly predicted AI among undergraduate students of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria. The R^2 square and adjusted R^2 values (.131 and.130) showed that approximately 13.1 percent variations in AI was ·predicted by type of counselling needs among undergraduates of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria.

4.5 Hypothesis 4: User acceptance and trust of AI will not significantly predict dispute resolution among undergraduate students of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria.

In testing Hypothesis 4, the Simple Linear Regression analysis was used to determine the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable. This further helped to determine the extent to which the independent variable explained variations in the dependent variable. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 6

Table 6:Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis on User acceptance and trust Predict AI Among Undergraduate Students of Public Universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria

R=.259

R-Square (R^2)=.131

Adjusted R-Square =.066 $F_{(1,1041)}$=75.011*

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			
	β	Std. Error	Beta	t-val.	p-val.	Remark
Model						
(Constant)	1.960	.042		46.523	.000	Significant
User acceptance and trust	.138	.016	.259	8.661	.000	Significant

a. Dependent Variable: AI

b. Predictors:(Constant), User acceptance and trust

*t-values and f-value are statistically significant ($p<0.05$) Source: Research Data 2025

The result in Table 6 shows that the t-value for user acceptance and trust individually predicted AI among undergraduate students (t=8.661,β=.138, $p<0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicated that user acceptance and trust significantly predicted AI among undergraduate students of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria. The R^2 square and adjusted R^2 values (.067 and .066) showed that approximately 6.7 percent variations in AI among undergraduates was predicted by user acceptance and trust among undergraduates in universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria.

4.6 Discussion of Findings

The results are discussed under the following sub-headings:

Students prevalence of artificial intelligence in dispute resolution for counselling in public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria

- Technological capability predict AI in dispute resolution among undergraduate students
- Ethical and legal framework predict AI in dispute resolution among undergraduate students
- Type of counselling needs predict AI in dispute resolution among undergraduae students

- User acceptance and trust predict AI in dispute resolution among undergraduate students

Student's prevalence of artificial intelligence in counselling in public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria

The result shows there is high prevalence of artificial intelligence in dispute resolution for counselling in public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria. The reasons for this may be resulting from high student to counsellor ratio, limited professional counsellors compared with student population, 24/7 access and convenience by offering round-the-clock services via web portals and WhatsApp, stigma reduction as it allow anonymous engagement, reducing fear of judgment, cost efficiency as it budget constraints make AI cheaper to scale compared to hiring more staff, digital readiness as widespread smartphone use and internet access on campuses support it adoption.

The result is in consonance with that of (Ogunsemi, et al. 2025; Adigun, et al. 2004) who found out that 86.5% were aware of AI applications in psychiatry; 88% of students were aware of AI chat tools. The studies showed high awareness and in-depth familiarity. These studies suggest that there is a growing prevalence of AI awareness and usage among professionals and students in Nigeria, alongside emerging evidence of therapeutic benefits in psychological practice.

The implications of high prevalence of artificial intelligence in dispute resolution for counselling indicate an improved reach, reduced stigma, timely interventions, and efficiency in service delivery. This is also not without it challenges as data privacy concerns, cultural and linguistic limitations, and the risk of over-reliance on AI without human supervision in dispute resolution.

Technological capability predict AI in dispute resolution for counselling among undergraduate students

The result showed that technological capability significantly predicted AI among undergraduate students of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria. The possible reasons for this outcome can be adduced to students' ability to access, use, and manage technology strongly influences their acceptance, confidence, and utilization of AI tools in learning and problem in dispute resolution. The result agrees with that of (Safiullin, et. al. 2025) who found a significant positive effect on attitudes toward generative AI. (Zhang et. al 2024) confirmed that perceived ease of use and usefulness mediated the relationship between technological readiness and AI tool adoption.

The evidence that technological capability significantly predicts undergraduates' adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) highlights a critical role for conflict resolution in counselling in higher education. Counsellors must begin to integrate digital literacy and AI readiness into their practice, ensuring that students acquire both the skills and the confidence required to use emerging technologies effectively. By embedding training on responsible AI use into conflict resolution in counselling interventions or collaborating with ICT units, counsellors can foster students' capacity to critically evaluate AI outputs and apply such tools productively in their studies. In addition, conflict resolution in counselling services should support students in understanding the career implications of AI adoption. As workplaces increasingly demand technological competence, career conflict resolution in counselling can help undergraduates connect their digital skills with future employability. At the same time, the ethical concerns identified in recent studies, including worries about reliability, plagiarism, and misuse of AI, calls for counsellors to provide guidance on responsible technology use. This dual focus on enhancing capability and fostering ethical awareness ensures that students are equipped to use AI constructively while maintaining academic integrity.

Ethical and legal framework predict AI in dispute resolution for counselling among undergraduate students

The result showed that ethical and legal framework significantly predicted AI among undergraduate students of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria. Considering that it build trust, clarity, responsibility, and psychological safety, while also linking AI use to institutional integrity and career readiness.

The findings agree with that of Lee et al. (2025) found that an AI ethics education program significantly improved ethical awareness, moral sensitivity, and intention to use AI. The evidence that ethical and legal frameworks significantly predict AI adoption underscores the role of conflict resolution in counselling in fostering students' awareness of responsible AI use. Counsellors can integrate discussions on academic integrity, plagiarism risks, and digital citizenship into their practice, guiding students to align their use of AI with institutional regulations and professional standards. Such interventions not only clarify ethical boundaries but also reduce uncertainty, enabling students to adopt AI with confidence and responsibility.

In addition, conflict resolution in counselling can provide a safe space for students to process anxieties about privacy, fairness, and the broader social consequences of AI. By addressing these concerns through workshops, peer discussions, and individual guidance, counsellors can help students reconcile the tension between innovation and ethics. In this way, conflict resolution in counselling contributes to cultivating a generation of undergraduates who are both technologically competent and ethically grounded in their engagement with AI.

Type of counselling needs predict AI in dispute resolution for counselling among undergraduate students

The result showed that type of counselling needs significantly predicted AI among undergraduate students of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria. Considering that it build trust, clarity, responsibility, and psychological safety, while also linking AI use to institutional integrity and career readiness.

In the context of conflict resolution in counselling, academic and career counselling needs predict AI adoption by helping students and clients understand how AI can be applied in mediation, problem-solving, and decision support. Conflict resolution in counselling highlights AI's relevance to communication, negotiation, and future professional practice, individuals becomes more motivated to embrace AI as a supportive tool in managing conflicts effectively.

The finding is in consonant with that of Hsu et al, 2023, a web-based system that delivers real-time feedback on interpersonal conflict communication on type of counselling needs, showed that AI feedback improved awareness of judgmental versus relationship-preserving language, enabling participants to reframe communication during conflict.

User acceptance and trust predict AI in dispute resolution for counselling among undergraduate students

The result showed that user acceptance and trust significantly predicted AI among undergraduate students of public universities in North Central Zone of Nigeria. The reasons could be that particularly in sensitive domains such as counselling and dispute resolution.

Drawing from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), perceived usefulness and ease of use form the foundation of acceptance. Undergraduates are more willing to integrate AI systems when they believe the technology offers practical benefits and is straightforward to operate. Acceptance reduces resistance by aligning the functionality of AI tools with students' academic and personal needs, ensuring that adoption is not perceived as an additional burden but as a supportive aid.

Trust, on the other hand, addresses students' confidence in the reliability, confidentiality, and fairness of AI systems. Because counselling and dispute resolution involve sensitive issues, undergraduates are unlikely to engage with AI unless they believe it safeguards their privacy and delivers unbiased guidance. Trust also reduces anxiety toward technology use, thereby lowering barriers to adoption. In combination, acceptance and trust not only enhance students' willingness to use AI but also legitimize its role as a complementary tool to human counselling, bridging the gap between technological innovation and interpersonal support in dispute resolution.

The finding supported that of (Ajibade (2023 and Musa et al. 2025) this results reinforce that beyond technical functionality, relational and perceptual factors particularly students' willingness to accept and trust AI systems play decisive roles in adoption for counselling and dispute resolution. that there is the willingness to adopt AI tools for conflict resolution, academic and counselling support, meaning that students are more likely to engage with AI systems when they perceive them as trustworthy and easy to use in dispute resolution.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study on artificial intelligence in counselling for dispute resolution revealed that the prevalence of artificial intelligence (AI) in conflict resolution for counselling among undergraduates in public universities in the North Central Zone of Nigeria indicates several key factors significantly predicted AI adoption. Specifically, technological capability, ethical and legal frameworks, types of counselling needs, and user acceptance and trust emerged as strong determinants of students' willingness to use AI in conflict resolution. These findings indicate that adoption is not merely a matter of technological availability but is shaped by psychological, ethical, and contextual considerations. Students are more inclined to embrace AI systems when they are technologically equipped to use them, perceive that legal and ethical safeguards are in place, recognize AI's relevance to their counselling needs, and accept and trust the systems as reliable.

5.2 Recommendations

The study recommended as follows;

- Strengthen Technological Capacity: Universities should invest in robust digital infrastructure, provide training on AI tools, and equip students with the technological skills needed to effectively engage with AI-driven counselling systems.
- Establish Ethical and Legal Guidelines: Clear ethical and legal frameworks should be developed to guide the use of AI in counselling, ensuring confidentiality, fairness, and data protection. Institutional policies aligned with national ICT and education regulations will increase students' trust and willingness to adopt AI.
- Tailor AI to Counselling Needs: Developers and institutions should design AI platforms that address specific types of counselling needs identified among undergraduates, such as academic stress, interpersonal conflicts, and career guidance. Context-relevant solutions will enhance students' acceptance and usage.
- Promote Trust and Acceptance: Universities should create awareness campaigns and sensitization programs to build confidence in AI applications. Demonstrating transparency, reliability, and effectiveness of AI systems will increase student trust and normalize their use in counselling and conflict resolution.
- Integrate Human AI Collaboration: AI should not replace human counsellors but complement them. Institutions should adopt a hybrid counselling model in which AI handles routine or preliminary tasks, while human counsellors address complex and sensitive cases, thereby maximizing efficiency and student confidence.

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