INVESTIGATING THE KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE OF LECTURERS IN ADVANCING MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS AMONG UNDERGRADUATES

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Abstract

This study investigated lecturers' knowledge, attitudes, and perceived challenges regarding mental health issues among undergraduates. This study utilized a quantitative research design to investigate university lecturers' perspectives on mental health. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select 90 participants, with 30 lecturers from each of the faculties of education, science, and technology. Data were collected from 90 lecturers across the university using a structured questionnaire. The demographic analysis revealed a diverse sample of gender, age, academic rank, and teaching experience. The findings indicate a moderate level of knowledge about mental health disorders, with high awareness of depression (83.3%) and anxiety (66.7%) but significant gaps in understanding bipolar disorder (55.6%), schizophrenia (61.1%), and PTSD (44.4%). While attitudes toward mental health were generally positive, 16.7% of lecturers held opposing views. Significant challenges included lack of training (70%), insufficient resources (60%), high student-to-teacher ratios (50%), limited time (44.4%), and stigma/cultural barriers (38.9%). ANOVA results showed significant differences in knowledge based on academic rank, with senior lecturers scoring the highest. Correlation analysis indicated that improved knowledge and positive attitudes could mitigate perceived challenges. The study underscores the need for targeted professional development and resource allocation to enhance mental health literacy among lecturers. Addressing these gaps is crucial for fostering a supportive educational environment that promotes student well-being and academic success. These findings provide a foundation for policy and practice reforms to integrate comprehensive mental health training and support mechanisms within the university framework.

Keywords: Attitudes, Awareness, Knowledge, Perceptions, Stigma,

Introduction

Mental health issues among university students are an escalating concern globally, and the prevalence of anxiety, depression, and other mental health disorders in this demographic is alarmingly high. Approximately one-third of college students worldwide report experiencing significant mental health problems, adversely affecting their academic performance, social interactions, and overall well-being (Auerbach et al., 2018). The transition to university life often involves substantial stressors, including academic pressure, financial strain, and separation from family and familiar support systems, which can exacerbate preexisting mental health conditions or contribute to new ones. Despite the critical importance of mental health, universities worldwide struggle to provide adequate support and resources to address these issues effectively. The World Health Organization (WHO) highlights the lack of mental health services in educational institutions, noting that mental health care is often underfunded and understaffed (WHO,

2021). This gap in support services is particularly detrimental as it leaves students without the necessary tools to manage their mental health challenges, potentially leading to severe consequences, including academic failure and an increased risk of suicide.

In Africa, the scenario is even more challenging due to socio-economic factors, cultural stigmas, and a shortage of trained mental health professionals. Cultural attitudes towards mental health can lead to significant stigma, preventing individuals from seeking help. Ndetei et al. (2020) describe how many African students suffer in silence due to fear of discrimination and inadequate access to mental health services. The infrastructure for mental health care in African universities is underdeveloped. Many institutions lack the necessary resources to provide comprehensive mental health support. A cultural context frequently misunderstands or dismisses mental health issues, compounding this deficit. Students experiencing mental health problems may be reluctant to disclose their struggles or seek help, further exacerbating their conditions.

In this context, the mental health landscape within Nigeria's university mirrors many of the broader challenges seen across the African continent, making it a significant player in the continent. Mental health issues among Nigerian university students are often underreported and inadequately addressed due to stigma and a lack of mental health education. According to Gureje et al. (2015), the prevalence of mental health disorders among Nigerian adolescents is significant, yet the awareness and support mechanisms in place are insufficient. Nigerian universities face challenges in this regard. The lack of comprehensive mental health support systems means that many students do not receive the help they need. Oginni et al. (2018) highlight that the mental health and well-being of Nigerian university students are critical yet often neglected areas, leading to a range of adverse outcomes, including poor academic performance, social isolation, and even suicide.

Lecturers play a pivotal role in university students' academic and personal development. Often viewed as mentors and sources of guidance, lecturers go beyond their educational responsibilities. This positions them uniquely to influence and advance mental health awareness among students. However, lecturers' effectiveness in this role depends on their knowledge and attitudes toward mental health. Adewunmi and Ojo (2022) emphasize that lecturers may be ill-equipped to support students effectively without adequate knowledge and positive attitudes towards mental health. They may inadvertently perpetuate stigma or fail to recognize the signs of mental health issues, thereby missing opportunities to intervene and provide support. Therefore, it is essential to assess and enhance the mental health literacy of lecturers to ensure they can fulfil this critical role effectively. Lecturers face significant challenges in promoting mental health awareness among students. As critical stakeholders in students' educational and personal lives, these lecturers may lack the knowledge and attitudes to advocate for and support mental health initiatives effectively.

The problem of the study will centre on understanding university lecturers' knowledge and attitudes towards common mental health disorders and how these factors will influence their interactions with students and willingness to engage in mental health promotion activities. It will seek to evaluate the extent of lecturers' knowledge about mental health disorders and to identify specific gaps in their understanding. Additionally, the study aims to explore how lecturers' perceptions and attitudes, including stigma and misconceptions, affect their ability to support students' mental health needs. It

tends to investigate the challenges lecturers face in promoting mental health awareness and examine how these challenges will impact their effectiveness. Furthermore, the study will consider differences in knowledge and attitudes based on demographic variables such as gender, age, academic rank, and years of experience. Finally, it will explore the relationships between lecturers' knowledge, attitudes, and the perceived challenges they encounter, providing a comprehensive analysis of the factors that will influence mental health literacy and support within the academic environment.

Literature Review

Mental health awareness in educational settings is crucial for fostering a supportive environment that enhances student well-being and academic performance. Lecturers play a significant role in shaping this environment. This literature review explores the knowledge and attitudes of lecturers regarding mental health issues, the impact of these factors on students, and the necessity for targeted interventions to enhance mental health literacy among educators. Knowledge of mental health disorders among university lecturers is essential for providing adequate support and advocacy. Studies indicate that while some lecturers have a basic understanding of common mental health issues, significant gaps remain. Adewunmi and Ojo (2022) found that many lecturers at Nigerian universities lack comprehensive knowledge about mental health disorders, which hampers their ability to provide adequate support to students. This lack of knowledge extends to recognizing early symptoms and understanding the appropriate steps to take when a student shows signs of mental distress (Jorm, 2012).

More recent studies further highlight these gaps. Oladele et al. (2023) found that although 70% of lecturers recognized symptoms of depression, only

45% were aware of the signs of bipolar disorder. Similarly, Akinsola and Ogunyemi (2023) reported that lecturers often confuse the symptoms of anxiety with everyday stress, leading to underreporting and mismanagement of mental health issues among students. This confusion can result in delayed intervention and inadequate support for students facing mental health challenges. Furthermore, Ojedokun and Balogun (2023) emphasized that lecturers' limited knowledge about less common mental health disorders, such as schizophrenia and PTSD, significantly impairs their ability to identify and refer students to appropriate mental health services. Their study showed that only 35% of lecturers could accurately identify symptoms of schizophrenia, and even fewer could recognize PTSD symptoms. This lack of knowledge not only affects the immediate well-being of students but also contributes to a longer-term stigma and misunderstanding of mental health issues within the academic community.

Adequate mental health literacy among lecturers requires comprehensive training programs that cover a broad spectrum of mental health issues. Numerous studies have well documented the effectiveness of such programs. Kitchener and Jorm (2012) highlighted the success of the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training in Australia, significantly improving participants' knowledge of mental health disorders and their confidence in providing support. In their study, lecturers who completed the MHFA training were more likely to recognize the symptoms of various mental health conditions and felt more equipped to assist students in distress.

In Nigeria, similar training initiatives are gaining traction. A study by Afolabi et al. (2023) evaluated a pilot mental health training program for university lecturers and found substantial improvements in their understanding of

mental health issues and their ability to support students. Participants reported a 50% increase in their confidence to identify and manage mental health problems among students, suggesting that targeted training can effectively bridge the knowledge gap.

Continuous professional development (CPD) is crucial for maintaining and updating lecturers' knowledge of mental health issues. Regular CPD sessions ensure that educators stay informed about the latest developments in mental health research and best practices for supporting students. According to Ogundipe et al. (2023), lecturers who participated in ongoing CPD programs demonstrated better knowledge retention and were more proactive in addressing mental health concerns within their classrooms. Numerous researchers have advocated the integration of mental health education into CPD programs. Tunde and Akinola (2023) argue that incorporating mental health modules into existing CPD frameworks could standardize knowledge across institutions and ensure that all lecturers have a baseline understanding of mental health issues. Their study found that lecturers who engaged in regular CPD were more likely to use mental health resources and refer students to appropriate support services.

The knowledge and understanding of mental health issues among lecturers directly impact student outcomes. Lecturers with a thorough understanding of mental health disorders are better equipped to create supportive and inclusive learning environments. This, in turn, encourages students to seek help and reduces the stigma associated with mental health issues. Kutcher, Wei, and Morgan (2013) demonstrated that students who felt supported by their lecturers were likely to seek help on mental health issues and reported better overall well-being. Reavley and Jorm (2014), who found that positive interactions with informed lecturers

significantly reduce the stigma surrounding mental health, making it easier for students to discuss their problems openly, support this finding. Lecturers' attitudes toward mental health significantly influence their interactions with students and their willingness to engage in mental health promotion activities. Boadu and Addoah (2018) highlight that stigma and misconceptions about mental health are pervasive among educators, which can discourage students from seeking help. Reavley and Jorm (2014) observed that positive attitudes toward mental health among educators correlate with a higher likelihood of students disclosing their mental health issues and seeking assistance.

At Nigerian universities, stigmatizing attitudes are particularly problematic. Oginni, et al., (2018) reported that stigma is a significant barrier to mental health support in Nigerian educational institutions. Lecturers who hold stigmatizing views are less likely to provide empathetic and supportive responses to students experiencing mental health issues, which further exacerbates the problem. More recent data by Eze et al. (2023) corroborate these findings, indicating that 55% of lecturers still harbor negative stereotypes about mental health, which significantly affects their engagement with affected students.

The negative attitudes of lecturers toward mental health issues have far-reaching consequences. When educators hold stigmatizing views, they inadvertently contribute to a culture of silence and avoidance among students. This environment discourages students from seeking help due to fear of judgement or misunderstanding. Studies have shown that lecturers with stigmatizing attitudes are less likely to engage in mental health training or utilize available resources, perpetuating a cycle of ignorance and stigmatization (Corrigan & Watson, 2002; Oginni et al., 2018). Conversely, positive

attitudes about mental health can significantly enhance student engagement and support. Reavley and Jorm (2014) found that educators who view mental health positively are likelier to foster an environment where students feel safe discussing their issues. This openness leads to early identification of mental health problems and timely interventions, which are critical for preventing more severe mental health crises.

A study by Eze et al. (2023) found that lecturers who participated in mental health awareness programs exhibited a 40% increase in positive attitudes toward students with mental health issues. These lecturers were more proactive in referring students to counseling services, and they provided more supportive responses to distressed students. This shift in attitude can significantly improve student mental health outcomes. Cultural factors play a substantial role in shaping attitudes toward mental health. Cultural beliefs and a lack of awareness often lead to misunderstood or stigmatized mental health issues in many African contexts, including Nigeria. Ndetei et al. (2020) highlighted that socio-economic factors and cultural stigmas significantly hinder mental health education and support. These cultural barriers make it challenging for students to seek help and for lecturers to provide appropriate support. Addressing these cultural stigmas through education and awareness campaigns is crucial for changing attitudes and improving mental health outcomes.

Studies continue to emphasize the importance of addressing stigmatizing attitudes among educators. Makanjuola et al. (2023) found that students who perceived their lecturers as knowledgeable and supportive of mental health issues were twice as likely to seek help than those who perceived their lecturers as uninformed or unsympathetic. This finding underscores the importance of improving mental health literacy among educators to

foster a more supportive learning environment. The knowledge gaps and changing attitudes among lecturers require targeted interventions. Jorm et al. (2010) emphasized the effectiveness of mental health first aid training for educators, significantly improving their ability to identify and respond to mental health issues. Lecturers can tailor such training programs to their specific needs, taking into account the unique challenges they encounter. Eyo and Eyo (2023) highlighted the success of a pilot mental health training program in a Nigerian university, where 85% of participating lecturers reported increased confidence in handling student mental health issues.

Furthermore, institutional policies play a crucial role in supporting mental health initiatives. The World Health Organization (2021) stressed the importance of comprehensive mental health policies in educational institutions. These policies should include regular training for lecturers, mental health resources for students, and mechanisms for early intervention and support. Umeokafor and Umeokafor (2022) noted that universities with well-defined mental health policies had better student mental health outcomes and higher overall satisfaction rates.

Several universities globally have successfully implemented mental health programs that can serve as models; Kutcher, Wei, and Morgan (2013) reported on the success of a Canadian mental health curriculum resource that significantly improved student mental health literacy when implemented by classroom teachers. Similarly, Auerbach et al. (2018) highlighted the importance of global mental health initiatives, such as the WHO World Mental Health Surveys International College Student Project, in providing data that can inform local interventions. More recently, the University of Melbourne implemented a comprehensive mental health strategy that

includes mandatory mental health training for all staff, on-campus counselling services, and student-led mental health awareness campaigns (Reavley et al., 2023). This approach has led to a 30% increase in students seeking mental health support and a significant reduction in reported stigma.

Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate lecturers' knowledge and attitudes regarding mental health issues. The aim was to gather numerical data for statistical analysis to provide objective insights into lecturers' mental health literacy, perceptions, and attitudes. The population consisted of university lecturers, and a stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure representation across different faculties. Ninety lecturers participated, with 30 from three faculties (Education, Science and Technology), completing the questionnaire. This sampling ensured adequate representation and reliability of the results.

A structured questionnaire was the primary data collection tool, divided into four sections: Section A collected demographic information (age, gender, academic rank, and years of teaching experience). Section B assessed knowledge of mental health disorders, including symptoms and intervention strategies. Section C used Likert-scale items to measure attitudes toward mental health, including stigma, misconceptions, and willingness to promote mental health. Section D investigated challenges lecturers faced in supporting student mental health and their views on needed resources and policies.

Data collection was done through online surveys using Google Forms, with links distributed via lecturers' platforms and follow-up reminders sent to ensure a high response rate. The survey remained open for sufficient time to allow ample responses. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) to summarize demographics and overall responses, and inferential statistics (t-tests and ANOVA) to examine differences in knowledge and attitudes based on demographic variables. Correlation analysis explored relationships between lecturers' knowledge, attitudes, and perceived challenges. While the study relied on self-reported data, which could introduce response bias, and an online survey, which might limit participation to those with internet access, efforts were made to mitigate these limitations, providing a comprehensive understanding of lecturers' knowledge and attitudes regarding mental health issues.

Results:
Table 1: Demographic Variable of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	54	60.0
Female	36	40.0
Age		
25-34	20	22.2
35-44	40	44.4
45-54	25	27.8
55 and above	5	5.6

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Academic Position		
Assistant Lecturer	20	22.2
Lecturer II	30	33.3
Lecturer I	25	27.8
Senior Lecturer	15	16.7
Years of Experience		
1-5	25	27.8
6-10	40	44.4
11-15	15	16.7
16 and above	10	11.1

Table 1 provides a comprehensive overview of the demographic characteristics of the 90 university lecturers who participated in the study. The sample consisted of 54 male lecturers (60%) and 36 female lecturers (40%), reflecting a gender distribution that aligns with broader trends in higher education institutions in Nigeria.

The age distribution among the respondents shows that the largest group, 44.4%, fell within the age range of 35–44 years. Those aged 25-34 years accounted for 22.2% of the sample, while lecturers aged 45-54 years comprised 27.8%. A smaller proportion, 5.6%, were aged 55 and above. In terms of academic position, the distribution was diverse: 22.2% of respondents were Assistant Lecturers, 33.3% were Lecturer II, 27.8% were Lecturer I, and 16.7% were Senior Lecturers. Regarding years of teaching experience, 44.4% of lecturers reported having 6-10 years of experience, indicating a substantial mid-career presence in the sample. Additionally, 27.8% had 1-5 years of experience, 16.7% had 11-15 years, and 11.1% had 16 years or more of teaching experience.

Research Question 1: To what extent do lecturers know about common mental health disorders?

Table 2: Knowledge of Mental Health Disorders

Knowledge Item	High	Low	Percentage (%)
Recognizing depression symptoms	75	15	83.3
Understanding anxiety disorders	60	30	66.7
Identifying bipolar disorder	50	40	55.6
Awareness of schizophrenia	55	35	61.1
Knowledge of PTSD	40	50	44.4

Table 2 presents the results of an assessment on university lecturers' knowledge of common mental health disorders, providing insights into their overall awareness and understanding. The mean knowledge score was 68 out of 100 (SD = 12.5), indicating a moderate level of knowledge. However, the assessment revealed significant gaps in specific areas. 83.3% of the lecturers correctly identified symptoms of depression, while 66.7% demonstrated knowledge of anxiety disorders. Approximately 55.6% were able to recognize symptoms of bipolar disorder, and awareness of schizophrenia symptoms was noted in 61.1% of respondents. Only

44.4% of the lecturers demonstrated knowledge of symptoms associated with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Research Question 2: How do lecturers' perceptions and attitudes towards mental health issues, including stigma and misconceptions, influence their interactions with students and willingness to engage in mental health promotion activities?

Table 3: Attitudes Towards Mental Health

Attitude Score	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1 (Very Negative)	5	5.6
2 (Negative)	10	11.1
3 (Neutral)	20	22.2
4 (Positive)	40	44.4
5 (Very Positive)	15	16.7

Table 3 presents the distribution of attitudes toward mental health among university lecturers based on five distinct attitude scores, ranging from 1 (very negative) to 5 (very positive). It details the number of lecturers and the corresponding percentage of total respondents for each attitude score. In the category of Attitude Score 1 (very negative), five lecturers, constituting 5.6% of the respondents, expressed a notably negative attitude toward mental health issues. Attitude Score 2 (negative) revealed that ten lecturers, accounting for 11.1% of the respondents, held negative views regarding mental health. Twenty lecturers, or 22.2% of the respondents, expressed a neutral stance on mental health under Attitude Score 3 (Neutral). Attitude Score 4 (positive) showed that forty lecturers, representing 44.4% of the respondents, held positive attitudes toward mental health.

Finally, Attitude Score 5 (Very Positive) indicated that fifteen lecturers, making up 16.7% of the respondents, reported having a very positive attitude toward mental health.

Research Question 3: What challenges do lecturers face in advancing mental health awareness?

Table 4: Challenges in Supporting Student Mental Health

Challenge	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Lack of training	63	70.0
Insufficient resources	54	60.0
High student-to-teacher ratios	45	50.0
Limited time	40	44.4
Stigma and cultural barriers	35	38.9

Table 4 outlines the challenges faced by university lecturers in supporting student mental health, along with their respective frequencies and percentages of total respondents. The most reported challenge was Lack of Training, cited by 63 lecturers (70.0%), indicating a significant obstacle due to insufficient training in mental health support. Insufficient resources were noted by 54 lecturers (60.0%), highlighting challenges related to inadequate access to counselling services and educational materials essential for effective support. High

student-to-teacher ratios affected 45 lecturers (50.0%), making it difficult to provide personalized assistance to students with mental health needs. Approximately 40 lecturers (44.4%) highlighted limited time, indicating that heavy workloads and teaching schedules limited their ability to address students' mental health needs.

Stigma and cultural barriers were significant concerns for 35 lecturers (38.9%), reflecting challenges posed by societal attitudes and cultural beliefs that hinder open discussions and support initiatives related to mental health in academic settings.

Differences in Knowledge and Attitudes Based on Demographic Variables
Table 5: ANOVA Results for Differences in Knowledge-Based on Academic Rank

Academic Rank	Mean Knowledge Score	Standard Deviation	F-Value	P-Value
Assistant Lecturer	62.0	8.5	4.32	0.01
Lecturer II	68.5	10.2		
Lecturer I	69.0	11.5		
Senior Lecturer	72.0	12.8		

Table 5 displays the results of an ANOVA analysis examining how knowledge scores vary across different academic ranks among university lecturers. It includes the mean knowledge score, standard deviation, F-value, and p-value for each academic rank category.

The mean knowledge score represents the average understanding of mental health disorders within each academic rank group. Assistant Lecturers had the lowest mean score (62.0), while Senior Lecturers had the highest (72.0), indicating a trend of increasing knowledge as academic rank rises.

Standard deviation measures the spread of knowledge scores within each group. A higher standard deviation implies more variability in scores among lecturers within that academic rank. A higher F-value suggests larger differences in knowledge across ranks, while P-values indicate the significance of the F-test, as Assistant Lecturer's p-value of 0.01 suggests a statistically significant difference in knowledge compared to other ranks, prompting further exploration into these disparities and their implications for mental health education and support strategies among lecturers.

Relationships between Knowledge, Attitudes, and Perceived Challenges
Table 6: Correlation Analysis

Variables	Knowledge	Attitudes	Perceived Challenges
Knowledge	1	0.45**	-0.32*
Attitudes	0.45**	1	-0.28*
Perceived Challenges	-0.32*	-0.28*	1

The correlation analysis in Table 6 highlighted significant positive associations between knowledge and attitudes (r = 0.45, p <.01), indicating that greater knowledge is linked with more positive attitudes towards mental health. Additionally, there were significant negative correlations between perceived challenges and both knowledge (r = -0.32, p <.05) and attitudes (r = -0.28, p <.05), suggesting that higher levels of knowledge and positive attitudes can reduce the challenges lecturers face in supporting student mental health. Table 6 presents the outcomes of a correlation analysis investigating how knowledge about mental

health disorders, attitudes toward mental health issues, and perceived challenges interrelate among university lecturers. The table displays correlation coefficients illustrating these relationships: Knowledge shows perfect correlation with itself ($r = 1$), while attitudes exhibit a moderately positive correlation of 0.45** (significant at $p < 0.01$) with knowledge, indicating that lecturers with greater mental health knowledge tend to hold more positive attitudes. Perceived challenges display a negative correlation of -0.32* (significant at $p < 0.05$) with knowledge, suggesting that increased mental health knowledge correlates with fewer perceived challenges in supporting students' mental health. Similarly, attitudes demonstrate a negative correlation of -0.28* (significant at $p < 0.05$) with perceived challenges, indicating that lecturers with positive attitudes towards mental health perceive fewer challenges in supporting students. Overall, these findings underscore the importance of enhancing mental health literacy among lecturers to foster positive attitudes and potentially reduce perceived barriers in supporting students' mental well-being.

Discussion of Findings

The findings indicate a moderate level of knowledge about mental health disorders among university lecturers, with significant gaps in certain areas. Attitudes toward mental health are generally positive, but stigma and misconceptions persist. Challenges such as lack of training and resources hinder lecturers' ability to support student mental health effectively. The significant correlations suggest that improving knowledge and attitudes could reduce perceived challenges, highlighting the need for targeted interventions and training programs. Reavley and Jorm (2014) underscore the importance of enhancing mental health literacy among lecturers to foster a supportive educational environment for students. The study's findings can inform the development of

policies and practices to promote mental health awareness and support within the university.

Furthermore, the demographic data suggest that university lecturers come from varied backgrounds in gender, age, academic rank, and teaching experience. Understanding this demographic variable is essential, as it may impact lecturers' perspectives on mental health. Younger lecturers or those with less teaching experience have different levels of exposure to contemporary mental health training compared to their more experienced counterparts. Similarly, gender differences played a role in how mental health issues are perceived and addressed within the academic environment (Chigudu et al., 2018). Considering these demographic factors, the study provides a nuanced understanding of the context in which mental health awareness initiatives need to be developed and implemented. This demographic analysis helps identify specific groups that require more targeted interventions to enhance their mental health literacy and support capabilities.

The study also examined lecturers' knowledge of specific mental health disorders, revealing high awareness of depression symptoms (83.3%) and understanding of anxiety disorders (66.7%). However, knowledge of bipolar disorder (55.6%), schizophrenia (61.1%), and PTSD (44.4%) was notably lower, indicating gaps in understanding less common or more complex conditions (American Psychiatric Association, 2020). These gaps highlight the need for targeted educational initiatives to improve comprehensive mental health literacy among lecturers. The correlation analysis further underscores the relationship between knowledge and attitudes, suggesting that improving mental health knowledge may positively influence attitudes toward mental health issues (Jorm, 2012). This agrees with the findings

by Jorm et al. (2010), which advocate that comprehensive mental health training programs for lecturers should be prioritized to enhance their knowledge and ability to support students effectively. These findings emphasize the interrelatedness of knowledge, attitudes, and perceived challenges and the need for comprehensive training programs that address all these aspects.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, university lecturers generally demonstrate a moderate level of knowledge concerning common mental health disorders, with notable gaps identified in areas such as bipolar disorder and PTSD. While there is substantial awareness of prevalent conditions like depression and anxiety disorders among students, deficiencies in understanding fewer common disorders underscore the necessity for targeted educational interventions. Enhancing mental health literacy among lecturers is crucial to effectively supporting students experiencing diverse mental health challenges. Attitudes toward mental health among lecturers are predominantly positive, indicating strong support for mental health initiatives. However, persistent stigma and misconceptions among some lecturers may impact their interactions with students and their willingness to engage in mental health promotion activities. Addressing these attitudes through training and awareness programs could foster a more inclusive and supportive educational environment.

Lecturers face significant challenges in supporting student mental health, including insufficient training, limited resources, high student-to-teacher ratios, time constraints, and stigma. These challenges intersect with lecturers' knowledge and attitudes, as evidenced by correlations suggesting that improved knowledge and positive attitudes could help mitigate these barriers. The study underscores the importance of institutional support in providing comprehensive training, increasing resource allocation, and cultivating a culture that prioritizes mental health awareness within universities. Universities can better equip lecturers to play a pivotal role in promoting student mental well-being and fostering an environment conducive to academic success and overall student flourishing.

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