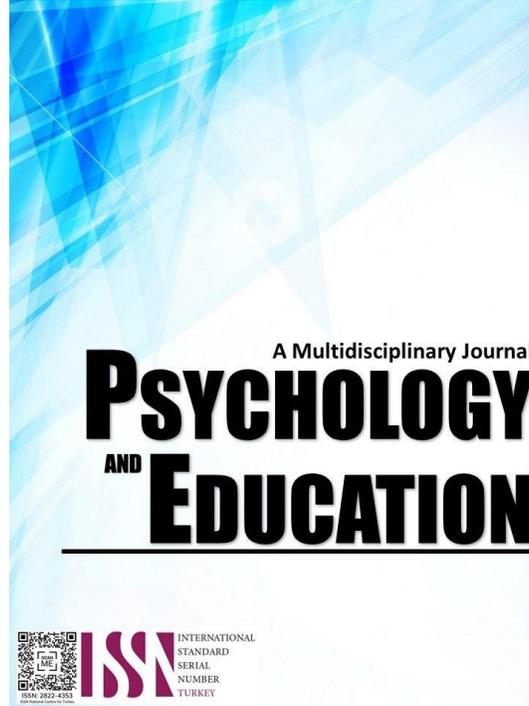


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Utilization of Mental Health Services among Undergraduate Students

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Abstract

Mental health services encompass a range of activities aimed at promoting mental well-being, preventing mental disorders, and providing treatment for those affected. The array of mental health programs and services encompasses a wide range of strategies and initiatives tailored to meet the intricate needs of individuals, particularly undergraduate students, to promote psychological well-being. However, a significant number of undergraduate students hesitate to access mental health services, creating a gap between the availability of resources and their utilization. This study assessed the utilization of mental health services among undergraduate students in a university in the northern part of the Philippines. This descriptive correlational research was conducted among 358 undergraduate students. The respondents were selected using a stratified random sampling method. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data. Data were analyzed using frequency and percentage, and the Chi-square test of independence was used to determine factors that may be associated with the utilization of mental health services. Results showed that the majority of students demonstrated poor health-seeking behavior towards mental health services (51.7%). Moreover, the majority of the students demonstrated a negative attitude (61%) and poor utilization of mental health services (69.3%). The students also received a poor to moderate level of social support (79.6%) towards the use of mental health services. Students' gender ($p=0.043$), religion ($p=0.001$), and attitude towards mental health services ($p=0.001$) were also found to be significantly associated with their utilization of these services. It can be concluded that despite the availability of mental health services in the university, the students are facing a multitude of barriers preventing them from seeking or utilizing these services. Therefore, programs to improve the utilization, attitudes, and health-seeking behaviors of the students towards mental health services must be implemented.

Keywords: *mental health services, undergraduate students, health-seeking behavior, social support, attitude*

Introduction

Students' mental health issues can have a detrimental influence on many aspects of their lives, including their relationships with friends and family, academic performance, physical health, and contentment with their college experience (Iqra, 2024; Kashif et al., 2024). Undergraduate students are going through a period of life transition. For many, this involves many changes in their living habits as they move from a structured environment, which is high school, to a relatively unstructured environment, which is college. This period can be one of the most challenging phases in a person's life (Rodríguez-Romo et al., 2022). Moreover, university life involves highly challenging responsibilities, new and unfamiliar situations, and more complex academic tasks (Rodríguez-Romo et al., 2022). This means that undergraduate students are vulnerable and have a high prevalence of mental health disorders (Limone & Toto, 2022). Undergraduate students represent a diverse and dynamic population, navigating a critical phase in their lives marked by academic pursuits, social interactions, and personal development.

The factors influencing undergraduate students are multifaceted and can significantly impact their well-being. Academic stress is a prevalent factor, with the pressure to excel in coursework and manage the demands of higher education contributing to heightened stress levels (Iqra, 2024; Kashif et al., 2024). Additionally, social challenges, including the transition to undergraduate life, relationship dynamics, and feelings of isolation, can play a crucial role in shaping the undergraduate experience (Abdullah et al., 2025). Significant associations were also found between physical activity levels and sleep quality with the mental health of students (Wang et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2023). Attending university can be a stressful time for many students. In addition to coping with academic pressure, some students have to deal with the stressful tasks of separation and individuation from their family of origin, while others may have to attend to numerous work and family responsibilities (Hwang et al., 2024). The pervasive use of technology and social media introduces another layer of influence, affecting how students connect and perceive themselves (Campbell et al., 2022). Furthermore, barriers to seeking mental health support, such as stigma and a lack of awareness, can impact students' willingness to address their mental health needs (Ahad et al., 2023). Recognizing and understanding these factors is essential for designing effective interventions to support the mental well-being of undergraduate students. Mental health services within universities should be implemented to cater to the needs of these students.

Mental health services play a crucial role in supporting students by providing a range of interventions and resources to address their psychological well-being. Mental health services in universities are critical resources that undergraduate students can access to address their psychological well-being. Several studies have emphasized the significance of these services in promoting students' mental well-being (Sakız & Jencius, 2024; Zou et al., 2024). University counseling services have an essential role in providing individual and group therapy sessions to address the diverse mental health needs of undergraduate students and emphasize the importance of crisis intervention services, such as 24/7 hotlines and emergency response teams, which offer immediate support during acute mental health

crises (Satrio et al., 2025; Wang & Gupta, 2025). Many universities provide mental health awareness campaigns, workshops, and educational programs to reduce stigma and encourage early intervention. Additionally, academic support services are often integrated with mental health services to address the intersection of academic and mental health needs. These services aim to create a comprehensive support system for undergraduate students, fostering a positive campus environment and promoting student success. In the study of Lipson et al. (2022), they emphasized the increasing rates of mental health service utilization from 2007 to 2017. However, studies showed that the utilization of professional mental health services by undergraduate students in the Philippines and abroad is low (Alejandria et al., 2023; Ezemenaka, 2025). Students often resort to professional mental health services when their conditions become severe and when "informal" mental health assistance from family, friends, and peers is no longer enough (Pantaleon et al., 2022).

Understanding factors that influence students' mental health and well-being offers the potential to identify strategies that enhance the students' abilities to cope with the challenges of higher education (Campbell et al., 2022). Moreover, this can provide insight into how students access and use available mental health services within their communities and school environment. Many facilitating and hindering factors significantly affect undergraduate students' utilization of available mental health services. Self-stigma, financial concerns, cultural and social factors such as stigma and misunderstanding of mental illness, academic and family stress, and community and peer support are among the identified barriers to utilizing and seeking mental health services among Filipino undergraduate students (Alejandria et al., 2023; Ezemenaka, 2025; Radez et al., 2021; Tan et al., 2025). Facilitating factors in seeking and utilizing mental health services were also identified, which include female gender, social support, and the severity of the mental health issue or distress felt by the student (Alejandria et al., 2023; Ezemenaka, 2025). The accessibility and quality of mental health services for undergraduate students are also critical factors. Perceived access to mental health services strongly influences students' likelihood of seeking help. If students perceive mental health services as accessible, confidential, and of high quality, they are more inclined to seek assistance (Ezemenaka, 2025; Pantaleon et al., 2022). Moreover, positive attitudes and health-seeking behaviors toward mental health services were also found to greatly facilitate the utilization of mental health services (Kukoyi et al., 2022).

Although many studies assessing the utilization of mental health services have been conducted in the Philippines, there are no studies yet in the northern part of the country, particularly in the Cagayan Valley region, where the cultural background of students differs from that of other parts of the country, prompting the researchers to conduct this study. Therefore, this study assessed the utilization of mental health services among undergraduate students in a university in the northern part of the Philippines. Moreover, this study looked into the possible factors that affect the utilization of mental health services among undergraduate students. The results of this study will be useful in crafting targeted interventions that will help address the utilization of mental health services among undergraduate students.

Research Questions

The study assessed the utilization of mental health services among undergraduate students in a university in the northern part of the Philippines. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of the following:
 - 1.1. ethnicity;
 - 1.2. gender;
 - 1.3. year level;
 - 1.4. religion; and
 - 1.5. sources of information about mental health?
2. What is the utilization of mental health services by the respondents?
3. What is the extent of the factors among respondents:
 - 3.1. health-seeking behavior;
 - 3.2. attitude towards utilization of mental health services; and
 - 3.3. level of social support in utilization of mental health services?
4. Is there a significant association between profile and utilization of mental health services?
5. Is there a significant association between mental health services utilization and factors?

Methodology

Research Design

A descriptive correlational design was used in this study. The study was conducted in a Catholic Higher Education Institution in Tuguegarao City, Cagayan.

Respondents

The researchers used stratified random sampling to select 358 respondents from a total population of 4,929 undergraduate students. A proportional allocation of respondents was made based on the population of each undergraduate department. With this, 72 respondents were chosen from the Allied Health department, 149 from the Engineering and Architecture department, 44 from the Education and



Arts department, and 93 from the Business and Hospitality department. This sampling method was used to obtain a representative sample of undergraduate students based on the total population of the university's departments.

Instrument

In this study, the researchers utilized a structured questionnaire adapted from a similar study conducted in Nigeria (Kukoyi et al., 2022), which assessed the utilization and factors influencing the use of mental health services among undergraduate students. The questionnaire is divided into five parts. The first part assessed the socio-demographic profile of the participants, which included age, gender, ethnicity, relationship status, department, year level, religion, and source of information about mental health. The second part consists of six 4-point Likert scale questions (1 = "Never," 2 = "Rarely," 3 = "Occasionally," and 4 = "Always"), which assessed the patterns of health-seeking behavior of undergraduate students towards mental health services. The respondents' health-seeking behavior was then categorized into two: Good (>50% of the total score) and Poor (<50% of the total score). The third part consists of seven 4-point Likert scale questions (1 = "Strongly Disagree," 2 = "Disagree," 3 = "Agree," and 4 = "Strongly Agree"), which assessed the attitude of the students towards the utilization of mental health services.

The respondents' attitudes were categorized into two groups: Good (score > 50% of the total score) and Poor (score < 50% of the total score). The fourth part consists of twelve 4-point Likert scale questions (1 = "Never," 2 = "Rarely," 3 = "Occasionally," and 4 = "Always"), which assessed the utilization of mental health services among the students. The respondents' utilization of mental health services was categorized into two: Good (>50% of the total score) and Poor (<50% of the total score). Lastly, the fifth part assessed the level of social support the students received towards the utilization of mental health services, which consisted of seven 4-point Likert scale questions (1 = "Never," 2 = "Rarely," 3 = "Occasionally," and 4 = "Always"). The respondents' social support was categorized into three: Poor (scored 8–18), Moderate (scored 19–25), and Strong (scored 26–32). The questionnaire was submitted for evaluation among nursing, psychology, and research experts for face validation to ensure validity among Filipino undergraduate students before administration. The comments and suggestions of the experts, especially on the formulation of some statements, were incorporated into the final questionnaire. The questionnaire was then administered face-to-face among the respondents.

Procedure

The researchers personally administered the questionnaire to the respondents after obtaining their informed consent. The researchers ensured that data collection was done during the respondents' free time, which took about 5 to 10 minutes.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was done using descriptive and inferential statistical tests. Frequency and percentage were used to present the utilization of mental health services, students' health-seeking behavior, attitude towards utilization of mental health services, and the barriers to utilization of mental health services based on the total scores. The Chi-square test was used to determine any association among the different variables in the study.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers first obtained the necessary approvals and permissions from the university, including clearance from the university's Research Ethics Board (protocol number: 010-2024-05), before conducting data collection. After obtaining these approvals and identifying the respondents of the study, the researchers obtained the voluntary consent of the respondents after a thorough explanation of the nature, risks, and benefits or significance of the study. The questionnaires were distributed personally to the respondents to ensure that any questions or concerns were addressed by the researchers immediately. Anonymity and confidentiality of the respondents were ensured, and no identifying information was presented or kept by the researchers.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. *Distribution of the Respondents Based on their Profile*

Profile Variable		Frequency	Percentage
Ethnicity	Ilocano	134	37.4
	Itawes	69	19.3
	Tagalog	65	18.2
	Ybanag	53	14.8
	Kalinga	27	7.5
	Igorot	3	0.8
	Ivatan	2	0.6
	Isneg	2	0.6
	Bisaya	1	0.3
	Kapampangan	1	0.3
	Ifugao	1	0.3
	Gender	Female	186
Male		172	48.0



Year Level	1 st Year	85	23.7
	2 nd Year	69	19.3
	3 rd Year	130	36.3
	4 th Year	65	18.2
	5 th Year	9	2.5
Religion	Roman Catholic	274	76.5
	Iglesia Ni Cristo	32	8.9
	Methodist	12	3.4
	Born Again	12	3.4
	Muslim	9	2.5
	Baptist	8	2.2
	Islam	3	0.8
	Pentecostal	3	0.8
Sources of Information About Mental Health	Others	5	1.4
	Family	193	25.56
	Friends	267	35.36
	Guidance Office	150	19.87
	Psychiatrist	87	11.52
	Social Media/ Internet	40	5.30
	Self-Learning	3	0.40
	Teachers/ Course	13	1.72
	Research or journal articles	2	0.26

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the undergraduate students. It can be seen that the students come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. However, a greater percentage of the students are either Ilocano or Itawes, female, in their third or junior year, and follow the Roman Catholic faith. Moreover, it can be seen that the prevailing sources of information for the students about mental health and mental health services are their family and friends.

The respondents come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. This ethnic diversity highlights the importance of culturally sensitive mental health services. Recognizing and respecting cultural differences in mental health treatment is vital for effective engagement and outcomes (Ahad et al., 2023). Therefore, mental health services at the university should be tailored to accommodate the diverse cultural backgrounds of students, ensuring that all ethnic groups feel understood and supported. Gender distribution among the respondents is relatively balanced, but there are more females than males. This balance reflects the general trend in higher education, where gender representation is often quite even (Verdugo-Castro et al., 2022). However, it is important to note that males are typically less likely to seek mental health services due to societal stigma and traditional notions of masculinity (McKenzie et al., 2022). This suggests a need for targeted outreach and support strategies to encourage male students to access mental health services without fear of stigma or judgment. Year-level distribution shows that 3rd-year students form the largest group at 36.3%. Transition periods, such as the first and final years of college, are often associated with increased stress and anxiety (Mulaudzi, 2023). This suggests that tailored mental health interventions during these critical periods can be particularly beneficial in helping students manage stress and maintain their well-being. The respondents' religious affiliation is predominantly Roman Catholic, at 76.5%, with smaller proportions identifying with other religions, such as Iglesia Ni Cristo, Methodist, Born Again, Muslim, Baptist, Islam, and Pentecostal. Religion can significantly influence attitudes toward mental health and help-seeking behaviors. Religious beliefs can either facilitate or hinder access to mental health services, depending on the community's views on mental health. Collaborating with religious organizations to promote mental health awareness and support within these communities can enhance service utilization (Lefevor et al., 2022).

The sources of information about mental health primarily include friends (74.58%) and family (53.91%). The reliance on informal networks highlights the need for formal mental health education and outreach. Rickwood (2022) suggests that enhancing mental health literacy through formal channels can lead to better recognition of mental health issues and increased help-seeking behavior. Universities should therefore invest in robust mental health education programs, ensuring that accurate information is easily accessible and disseminated through trusted sources. Overall, the diverse demographic profile of the respondents highlights the need for tailored mental health services that take into account cultural, gender, and academic factors. By addressing these specific needs and promoting mental health awareness, universities can create a supportive environment that fosters the well-being of all students. This approach not only improves the accessibility and effectiveness of mental health services but also contributes to the overall academic success and personal development of the student body.

Table 2. Utilization of mental health services among the students

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Good utilization	110	30.7
Poor utilization	248	69.3
Total	358	100.0

Legend: Poor (scored 1-24) and Good (scored 15-48)

Table 2 presents the utilization of mental health services among students. The responses highlight several factors that significantly

impact students' engagement with mental health resources provided by their institution. It can be seen in the table above that the majority of the students have poor utilization of mental health services. This means that the students do not have the time to visit mental health facilities, are too afraid that their privacy will be breached, or they find the mental health facilities or services too far or too expensive.

The data show that students demonstrate poor utilization of mental health services in the university. This is aligned with previous studies conducted in the Philippines, indicating that undergraduate students generally have low utilization of mental health services despite the rising cases of mental health problems in the country (Alejandria et al., 2023; Ezemenaka, 2025). This indicates that various barriers may still hinder a significant number of students in utilizing these services (Khouri et al., 2022; Theurel & Witt, 2022). Addressing these barriers requires a multifaceted approach, including increasing awareness, improving accessibility, ensuring confidentiality, offering flexible service hours, and enhancing the quality of care. Educational institutions must prioritize mental health initiatives to create a supportive environment that encourages students to seek help without fear of stigma or logistical challenges (Staff, 2024).

Similar studies suggest that the perception of mental health services as expensive is a major barrier to the utilization of mental health services among students (Janota et al., 2022; Kukoyi et al., 2022). Another possible reason for the poor utilization of mental health services is the proximity of the mental health facility to students' residences (Lipson et al., 2022). This could necessitate the provision of more accessible or decentralized services. Privacy and confidentiality concerns are prevalent and are also identified as reasons for poor utilization of mental health services among students. When students have some level of concern about their privacy being compromised, this can deter them from utilizing mental health services even if these services are readily available (Radez et al., 2021). Time constraint is also another reason for the poor utilization of mental health services among students, which reflects the demanding academic schedules of students and suggests a need for more flexible service hours or additional support to accommodate their availability (Alejandria et al., 2023).

Lack of knowledge about mental health services is another considerable reason for poor access to mental health services. Better communication and education about the mental health resources available to students are needed to improve knowledge and consequently improve the utilization of mental health services among students (Aranha et al., 2022). Lastly, skepticism about the effectiveness of mental health services can also lead to poor utilization of mental health services. This indicates a lack of confidence in the mental health support provided, which could be addressed through testimonials, increased transparency, and improved service quality (Osborn et al., 2022). Negative past experiences with counselors also significantly impact utilization and can deter students from seeking further help. This suggests a need for improving the quality and consistency of counseling services (Campbell et al., 2022; Janota et al., 2022).

Table 3. *Health seeking behavior of undergraduates towards mental health services*

<i>Categories</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Good Behavior	173	48.3
Poor Behavior	185	51.7
Total	358	100.0

Legend: Poor (scored 1-24) and Good (scored 15-48)

Table 3 presents the pattern of health-seeking behavior of undergraduates towards mental health services. These data provide insights into the frequency and manner in which students engage with mental health discussions and services, and also their openness to speak out about any mental health issues or concerns they experience. It can be seen in the table that a greater percentage of undergraduate students have poor health-seeking behavior when it comes to mental health services^{**, **} which implies that they do not frequently speak or discuss mental health concerns and also do not frequently seek help or visit mental health services in the community.

The data indicate that a substantial portion of students have poor health-seeking behavior towards mental health services. This means that the students rarely engage in discussions about their mental health and prefer informal support from family and friends rather than seeking the services of mental health professionals (Alejandria et al., 2023; Pantaleon et al., 2022). Students often turn to professional mental health services as a last resort when issues or problems become too severe or unmanageable through informal means (Pantaleon et al., 2022). This reluctance or infrequency in discussing mental health issues can be attributed to stigma or lack of awareness, a trend observed across various educational settings (Alejandria et al., 2023; Radez et al., 2021). Students fear being judged or labeled, discouraging them from seeking mental health services. Filipino cultural values of resilience and self-reliance are also a key factor in the poor health-seeking behavior of students towards mental health services (Alejandria et al., 2023).

Lastly, financial constraints and lack of awareness about available mental health services also play a role in the poor health-seeking behavior of students (Aranha et al., 2022). These findings emphasize the need for enhanced mental health awareness and support interventions on campus (Campbell et al., 2022; Janota et al., 2022). Moreover, the findings suggest a pressing need for educational institutions to foster a more supportive environment for mental health discussions and to improve access to mental health services. This could involve initiatives aimed at reducing stigma, increasing mental health literacy, and promoting the availability and benefits of mental health services (Denuwara et al., 2025; Osborn et al., 2022). By addressing these issues, universities can better support their students' mental health and overall well-being.



Table 4. *Attitudes of students towards the utilization of mental health services.*

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Positive Attitude	129	36.0
Negative Attitude	229	64.0
Total	358	100.0

Legend: Poor (scored 1-24) and Good (scored 15-48)

Table 4 presents the attitudes of students towards the utilization of mental health services. This data provides a comprehensive view of students' perceptions and attitudes, which significantly influence their willingness to seek help and utilize available services. The table shows that the students have a negative attitude towards utilizing mental health services, which means that they are hesitant to utilize mental health services and have low confidence in seeking professional help for their mental health issues. The findings reveal that students have a negative attitude towards utilizing mental health services at the university. This is consistent with the results of previous studies conducted in the Philippines, where students were found to be reluctant and show unfavorable attitudes towards using professional mental health services (Alejandria et al., 2023; Kukoyi et al., 2022; Radez et al., 2021).

This unfavorable attitude of students may stem from cultural, religious, and social factors, which result in a misunderstanding of mental illness, as well as a lack of social support, financial constraints, and accessibility issues, which discourage students from seeking mental health services (Alejandria et al., 2023). Cultural beliefs appear to influence attitudes towards mental health services significantly (Denuwara et al., 2025). These findings suggest the need for targeted interventions to address negative attitudes and misconceptions, promote mental health literacy, and encourage the use of mental health services. Educational institutions should focus on creating supportive environments, reducing stigma, and providing clear information about the benefits and processes of mental health treatment (Denuwara et al., 2025; Lipson et al., 2022).

Table 5. *Level of Social Support Students Received Towards the Utilization of Mental Health Services*

Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Poor Social Support	112	31.3
Moderate Social Support	173	48.3
Strong Social Support	73	20.4
Total	358	100.0

Legend: Poor (scored 8-18), Moderate (scored 19-25), and Strong (scored 26-32)

Table 5 presents the level of social support students received regarding the utilization of mental health services, highlighting the critical role of social support networks in influencing students' mental health service utilization. It can be seen that the majority of the students have a poor to moderate level of social support, which indicates that they either rarely or never receive assistance and encouragement from family, friends, or special persons whenever they need to seek mental health services. The findings of this study show that undergraduate students receive a moderate to low level of social support when it comes to the utilization of mental health services. Findings from previous studies conducted in the Philippines indicate that social support is present and beneficial for undergraduate students, particularly in addressing mental health concerns (Fronza et al., 2025).

Research findings, however, argue that the mere presence of social support is not enough. The quality, source, and cultural context of social support for mental health among students greatly influence the likelihood of seeking and utilizing mental health services (Abad Santos et al., 2023; Fronza et al., 2025). Moreover, consistent encouragement can significantly enhance adherence to mental health interventions and improve outcomes (Rickwood, 2022). The findings of this study further reveal that social support for students' mental health services comes from friends, parents, a special person or a relationship, and that multiple sources of social support are available for the students. This is consistent with the findings of previous studies, which also identified family, friends, and peers as sources of social support for Filipino students (Fronza et al., 2025). However, school or organizational support and online social support are also identified as sources of social support for mental health issues among Filipino students (Vicary et al., 2024), which are not explored in this study. It is therefore helpful for future researchers to investigate these sources of social support for students, as well as the quality and consistency of the support received.

Table 6. *Association between demographic profile and utilization of mental health services among students*

Variables	χ^2 -value	p-value	Interpretation
Ethnicity	13.829a	.181	Not significant
Gender	1.922a	0.043*	Significant
Year Level	4.080a	.395	Not significant
Religion	35.770a	.001*	Significant
Sources of Information About Mental Health	1.887a	0.418	Not significant

*Significant at 0.05 level

Table 6 above shows that gender and religion are significantly associated with undergraduate students' utilization of mental health services in the university. Moreover, female students and those who are Roman Catholics are more likely to have good utilization of available mental health services. These findings imply that gender and religion play significant roles as factors that can determine the utilization of available mental health services by undergraduate students in the university. The findings of the study reveal that gender

and religion are the only demographic variables associated with the utilization of mental health services by undergraduate students. This is consistent with the findings of previous studies, which indicate that female students are more likely to seek and use mental health services than male students (Ezemenaka, 2025; McKenzie et al., 2022).

Religious and cultural factors were also found to influence the utilization of mental health services by students. These factors may contribute to misunderstanding and stigma towards mental health issues, which serve as significant barriers to seeking and utilizing mental health services (Alejandria et al., 2023). The results of this study indicate that other demographic factors not explored may also influence the utilization of mental health services by students. Factors such as the financial capabilities of students and academic factors need to be examined, as these are identified variables that may either facilitate or hinder health-seeking and the utilization of mental health services by students (Alejandria et al., 2023).

Table 7. Association between identified factors and utilization of mental health services among students

Variables	χ^2 -value	p-value	Interpretation
Social Support	1.644	0.123	Not significant
Attitude	7.976	0.001*	Significant
Health Seeking Behavior	0.971	0.456	Not significant

*Significant at 0.05 level

As shown in Table 7 above, only attitude among the studied factors exhibits a significant association with students' utilization of mental health services, indicating that a positive attitude is associated with effective utilization of these services. This implies that interventions to improve the utilization of mental health services in universities can be geared towards improving students' attitudes towards these services. The findings also reveal that students' attitude toward mental health services is the only factor found to influence the use of these services. This is consistent with the findings of previous studies, which showed that negative attitudes such as self-stigma, misunderstanding of mental illness, and a tendency for self-isolation and resilience can hinder the effective utilization of mental health services (Alejandria et al., 2023; Kukoyi et al., 2022; Tan et al., 2025).

The results further reveal that health-seeking behavior and social support do not influence students' utilization of mental health services. This contrasts with previous studies showing that good social support and positive health-seeking behavior strongly facilitate the utilization of mental health services (Alejandria et al., 2023). However, studies have also emphasized that the quality, consistency, and source of social support are more important predictors than the mere presence of social support (Abad Santos et al., 2023; Fronda et al., 2025), which may explain the findings of this study. Further research must therefore focus on these aspects of social support to obtain a deeper understanding of its influence on undergraduate students. Efforts should also prioritize reducing stigma, increasing awareness, and creating supportive environments that encourage help-seeking behaviors among students to facilitate the utilization of mental health services (Rickwood, 2022).

Conclusions

It can be concluded from the results of this study that undergraduate students have a poor utilization of mental health services at the university. The students also have poor health-seeking behavior, attitude, and inadequate support systems toward the use of mental health services. Gender, religion, and the students' attitude toward mental health services also influence their utilization of these services. Moreover, it can be concluded that despite the availability of mental health services in the university, the students are facing a multitude of barriers preventing them from seeking or utilizing these services. Therefore, programs to improve the utilization, attitudes, and health-seeking behaviors of the students toward mental health services must be implemented. Programs such as health education and awareness initiatives aimed at improving the utilization of mental health services on campus must be strengthened or enhanced to inform students better and promote more positive behavior and attitudes toward the use of available mental health services. Moreover, initiatives to allow students to voice out their concerns while preserving their anonymity or without fear of being stigmatized must be developed or strengthened to facilitate students' communication of mental health concerns. Further research should also investigate other factors, such as financial, familial, and academic stress, which may influence students' utilization of mental health services. Further investigation on the quality and consistency of social support is also needed to understand better how this variable influences the utilization of mental health services by the students.

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