



UNITED
REPUBLIC
OF TANZANIA

TANZANIAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

3RD TAPA SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE AND 10TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

THEME

**Advancing Mental Health and
Wellbeing in Changing Societies**



MORENA HOTEL
MOROGORO



25th - 26th
JUNE 2026

PROGRAM BOOK

TANZANIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

3RD SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

AND

10TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Morena Hotel Morogoro

-25th – 26th June 2026

THEME

“Advancing Mental Health and Well-being in Changing Societies”

Welcoming Remarks

Dear Distinguished Guests, Keynote Speakers, Conference Presenters, Delegates, Partners, Sponsors, Members of TAPA, Students, and Friends of TAPA,

It is my great pleasure and honor, on behalf of the Executive Committee and the entire membership of the Tanzanian Psychological Association (TAPA), to warmly welcome you to the *3rd TAPA Scientific Conference and the 10th Annual General Meeting (AGM)* here in the beautiful Municipality of Morogoro, Tanzania.

This year's conference is held under the theme: “**Advancing Mental Health and Well-being in the Changing Societies.**” This theme could not be timelier. Across the world, societies are undergoing profound transformations driven by scientific and technological advancements, economic changes, urbanization, environmental challenges, demographic shifts, and evolving social relationships. While these changes bring new opportunities, they also create significant challenges for mental health, psychosocial well-being, social cohesion, and resilience.

As psychologists and mental health stakeholders, we are called upon to understand these changes, generate evidence-based solutions, and contribute meaningfully to building healthier, more resilient, and more inclusive communities. This conference therefore provides a valuable platform for researchers, practitioners, policymakers, educators, students, and development partners to exchange knowledge, share innovations, strengthen professional networks, and collectively explore solutions to contemporary mental health challenges.

I am particularly delighted by the growing diversity of participants attending this conference. The presence of psychologists, psychiatrists, counsellors, social workers, medical professionals, community development practitioners, government officials, religious leaders, media professionals, academics, students, and development partners reflects our shared recognition that mental health is everyone's responsibility and that meaningful progress requires multidisciplinary collaboration.

As we gather for this conference, we also celebrate an important milestone—the *10th Annual General Meeting of TAPA*. This milestone offers us an opportunity to reflect on our journey as an association, appreciate the dedication of our members and partners, and renew our commitment to advancing psychology as a science, profession, and force for social transformation in Tanzania.

Over the past few years, TAPA has experienced remarkable growth in membership, partnerships, professional visibility, and national engagement. These achievements have been made possible through the commitment of our members, the support of our partners, and the confidence placed in us by stakeholders across the country. Together, we have strengthened the voice of psychology in national development conversations and contributed to efforts aimed at improving mental health and psychosocial well-being for all Tanzanians.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to our Guest of Honour, distinguished speakers, conference presenters, sponsors, development partners, organizing committee members, volunteers, and all participants whose contributions have made this event

possible. Your support demonstrates a shared commitment to promoting mental health and advancing the well-being of our communities.

I would also like to extend special appreciation to our sponsors and partners for their invaluable support and collaboration. Your contribution has played a significant role in making this conference a reality and in advancing the broader agenda of mental health and psychosocial well-being in Tanzania.

As we engage in the scientific sessions, discussions, and networking opportunities over the next two days, I encourage each of you to participate actively, share your experiences generously, build meaningful professional relationships, and seek innovative solutions that can improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities.

May this conference inspire new ideas, strengthen partnerships, generate impactful research, and contribute to a future where mental health and psychosocial well-being are recognized as fundamental pillars of sustainable development.

Once again, I warmly welcome you to Morogoro and wish you a productive, enriching, and memorable conference.

Karibuni sana.



Dr. Magolanga Shagembe, PhD
President
Tanzanian Psychological Association (TAPA)
2022–2026

Our Story

The Tanzanian Psychological Association (TAPA) is a professional association of Tanzanian psychologists joined intending to advance Psychology as a science, a profession, and as a means of promoting human well-being. It was established in 2009 by the Societies Registrar with registration number S.A. 16218. Currently, TAPA has over 500 members who include researchers, educators, clinicians, consultants, and students.

Mission

To promote and support psychological training and services in Tanzania.

Principle Objective

To promote the common interests of the members of the association, who are practitioners of or who are involved in the field of psychology.

Activities

- i. Continuous Professional Development:** The association supports the professional growth of psychologists and related professionals through training, workshops, and conferences.
- ii. Advocacy:** Advocating for mental health awareness, access to services, and policies supporting psychological research and practice.
- iii. Ethics and Standards:** Establishing and upholding ethical guidelines, providing resources, and supporting adherence to ethical principles.
- iv. Research:** Promoting research, supporting educational initiatives, and facilitating knowledge-sharing among members.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Dr. Magolanga Shagembe – President



Mr. George Boniphace Chacha – Vice President



Mr. Barnabas Nkinga Michael – Secretary General



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Member (Internationalization)



Mr. Nemael Thomas Bura – Student
Representative

THE GENERAL TIMETABLE

DAY 1 Thursday, June 25, 2026		
Time	Event	Responsible
08:00 – 09:00	Arrival, Registration and Breakfast	Secretariat
09:00-09:05	Announcements	Director of Ceremony
09:05-09:30	Arrival of Guest of Honor, Visiting exhibitions by the Guest of Honor and Invited Guests	TAPA EXCOM
09:30-09:35	National Anthem	All
09:35-09:50	Introductory remarks and overview of the 3rd TAPA conference and 10th AGM	Mr. Barnabas Nkinga, <i>TAPA Secretary General</i>
09:50 – 10:15	Greetings from Sponsors & Partners ITV, WILCAH, TanzMED, UTT AMIS, NHC, Bonite Bottlers, BMC, Emerlard	Sponsors and Partners
10:15– 10:25	Keynote Address 1: Advancing Mental Health and Wellbeing in Changing Societies	Dr. Lusajo Kajula, <i>Senior Health Behavior Scientist</i>
10:25 –10: 40	Address by TAPA President	Dr. Magolanga Shagembe, <i>TAPA President</i>
10-40- 10:55	Official Opening Speech by Guest of Honour	Mr. Adolf H. Ndunguru, <i>Permanent Secretary, PMO-RALG/TAMISEMI</i>
10:55-11:15	Book Launch Ceremony: "From Vision to Voice: The Evolution of the Tanzanian Psychological Association (TAPA) and the Future of Psychology in Tanzania"	Mr. Adolf H. Ndunguru, <i>Permanent Secretary, PMO-RALG/TAMISEMI</i>
11:15-11:30	Awards and Recognition	Mr. Barnabas Nkinga, <i>TAPA Secretary General</i>
11:30 – 11:50	Group Photo and Networking	All
11:50– 12:15	Keynote Address 2: Opportunities and Challenges of Psychologists in Africa	Prof. Saths Cooper, <i>Founder and former PAPU president</i>
12:15 – 13:15	Plenary Presentations 1: Community, Culture, and Psychosocial Well-being in Tanzania	Dr. Mustapha Almasi <i>Senior Lecturer, MZUMBE</i>
13:15 – 14:15	Plenary Presentations 2: Mental Health, Stigma, and Well-being Across Institutions	Dr. Milka Otieno <i>Lecturer, SJUT</i>
14:15 – 15:00	Lunch	All participants
15:00 – 16:00	Plenary Presentations 3: Digital Psychology, Social Media, and Emerging Technologies	Ms. Editha Laizer <i>Clinical Psychologist, Agakhan University</i>
16:00 – 17:00	Panel Discussion: From Classroom to Campus: Strengthening Mental Health Support Systems in Education	Ms. Eunice Kitenge <i>Assistant Lecturer, UDSM</i>
17:00 – 17:15	Address from The American Psychological Association (APA) and Global Psychology Alliance (GPA)	Dr. Amanda Clinton, Senior <i>Director for the APA's Office of International Affairs</i>

17:15 – 17:30	Recap and Evaluation of Day 1	Secretariat
17:30 -	Evening Tea and Networking	All Participants
DAY 2 Friday, June 26, 2026		
08:00 – 08:45	Arrival, Registration and Breakfast	Secretariat
08:45 – 09:00	Arise Moment	Director of Ceremony
09:00 – 09:15	Address from PAPU	Prof. Andrew Zamani <i>PAPU President</i>
09:15 – 09:30	Address from PPAK	Prof. Sahaya Selvam <i>PPAK Founder</i>
09:30 – 12:30	Annual General Meeting (AGM)	EXCOM
12:30 – 14:00	TAPA General Election	Election Committee
14:00-14:10	Closure and Vote of Thanks	Outgoing TAPA President
14:00 – 15:00	Lunch	All participants

Presentations

SESSION	TIME	TITLE	PRESENTER
Keynote Presentation <i>Chairperson</i> <i>Dr. Mustapha Almasi</i>	15 Min	Opportunities and challenges of Psychologists in Africa	Prof. Saths Cooper
	10 min	Discussion	
Plenary Presentations Theme 1: Community, Culture, and Psychosocial Well-being in Tanzania <i>Chairperson</i> <i>Dr. Mustapha Almasi</i>	10 Min	Trauma in the Tissues of Social Life: Community Experiences after the 2025 Post-Election Violence in Tanzania	Dr. Emanuel Maphie <i>UDSM</i>
	10 Min	Between the Spirit and the Clinic: Cultural Meanings of Distress, Gender, and Community-Centered Mental Health in Tanzania	Carol Mfinanga
	10 min	The Protective Role of Secured Childhood Experience for Adult Psychosocial Well-being: A Reflection of Changing Non-Parental Caregiving Environments in Tanzania	Christian Bwaya <i>UDOM</i>
	10 min	Ustawi wa Vijana Tanzania (UVITA): Youth Well-being, Healthy Relationships and GBV Prevention in Tanzania	Dr. Richard Sambaiga, (UDSM) & Dr. Lyndsay McLean University of Sussex (UK) <i>UDSM</i>
	20 min	<i>Discussion</i>	<i>All</i>
Theme 2: Mental	10 min	Prevalence of Internalized Stigma and Associated Factors among	Dr. Rehema Nina

Health, Stigma, and Well-being Across Institutions <i>Chairperson</i> <i>Dr. Milka Otieno</i>		Out-Patients with Severe Mental Illness at Muhimbili National Hospital	<i>MUHAS</i>
	10 min	Human-Centric Leadership and Employee Mental Wellbeing in Modern Organizations	Dr. Kelvin Mwita <i>MZUMBE</i>
	10 min	Stress Prevalence and Coping Preferences among University Students: A Mixed-Methods Sequential Design	Yohana Gesase <i>SUA</i>
	10 min	The Untapped Potential of Psychologists in Tanzania's SUD Recovery System	Deogratius Ramale <i>DCEA</i>
	10 min	Psychological Services in the Tanzania Police Force: Progress and Prospects	Rehema Kitalika, <i>Tanzania Police</i>
	10 min	Mental Health and Rehabilitation in Tanzanian Prisons: Current Practices and Future Opportunities	Judith Mbogo <i>Tanzania Prisons</i>
	30 min	<i>Discussions</i>	<i>All</i>
Theme 3: Digital Psychology, Social Media, and Emerging Technologies <i>Chairperson</i> <i>Ms. Editha Laizer</i>	10 min	Social Media Engagement and Real-Life Social Interaction Quality Among Undergraduate Students	Mahundu Diana <i>ISW</i>
	10 min	Social media overuse, addiction tendencies, and behavioral risks among Tanzanian university students.	Dr Mustapha Almasi & Dr Justine Kavindi <i>MZUMBE</i>
	20 min	Digital Innovation and AI	Mkata Nyoni <i>TANZMED</i>
	20 min	<i>Discussion</i>	<i>All</i>
Theme 4: From Classroom to Campus: Strengthening Mental Health Support Systems in Education <i>Chairperson</i> <i>Ms. Eunice Kitenge</i>	10 min	Teaching and Learning experience of Learning Psychology at ISW	Dr. Zainab Rashid <i>ISW</i>
	20 mins	<p>What are the most pressing mental health challenges currently facing Tanzanian learners?</p> <p>How can schools balance academic performance demands with student well-being?</p> <p>How can universities and schools strengthen mental health services despite limited resources?</p>	<p>Dennis Kalinga (JUCO)</p> <p>Anna Jengo (TAHMEF)</p> <p>Dr Upendo Biswalo</p>

		What policies are needed to improve psychosocial support in educational institutions?	(SJUT) Dr Daniel Marandu (UDSM)
	25 Min	Discussion	

Trauma in the Tissues of Social Life: Community Experiences after the 2025 Post-Election Violence in Tanzania

Emanuel Ismael Maphie, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Dar es Salaam.

Abstract

Research on political violence often centers on clinical diagnoses such as PTSD, overlooking how communities collectively experience and internalize trauma. Following the 2025 post-election violence in Tanzania, many communities reported persistent fear, mistrust, silence, and emotional disruption long after unrest subsided. This qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of both direct survivors and neighboring residents exposed to prolonged uncertainty. Semi-structured interviews with 36 participants from Dar es Salaam, Arusha, and Mwanza were analyzed using Braun and Clarke’s thematic analysis.

Six interconnected themes emerged: anticipation of violence, breakdown of trust, emotional silence, children absorbing fear, political identity as suspicion, and trauma embedded in everyday spaces. These patterns reveal how trauma extended beyond individuals into the collective social fabric. The findings show how political violence can evolve into collective trauma that reshapes social relations, perceptions of safety, and community identity, with implications for psychosocial intervention and reconciliation.

Keywords: collective trauma, political violence, lived experience, elections, Tanzania, qualitative research

Between the Spirit and the Clinic: Cultural Meanings of Distress, Gender, and Community-Centered Mental Health in Tanzania

Carol Mfinanga, Assistant Lecturer, University of Dar es Salaam

Abstract

Mental health discourse in Tanzania continues to be shaped by a tension between biomedical frameworks imported from the Global North and deeply embedded indigenous epistemologies of distress, healing, and collective wellbeing. This paper examines how culture, gender, and community intersect to define mental health experiences and help-seeking behaviors in contemporary Tanzanian society. Drawing on a qualitative intersectional framework, the paper interrogates the cultural idioms through which psychological distress is expressed and interpreted across diverse ethnic and religious communities in Tanzania, where suffering is frequently understood through spiritual, relational, and communal lenses rather than individual clinical diagnoses. The paper argues that dominant mental health models fail to account for the gendered dimensions of distress: women's suffering is disproportionately embedded in domestic labor burdens, intimate partner violence, reproductive health pressures, and economic marginalization, while men face culturally enforced norms of stoicism that suppress disclosure and delay care-seeking. Drawing on existing empirical literature and conceptual analysis, the paper further foregrounds the roles of family systems, religious institutions, and community elders as first-line mental health intermediaries' resources that formal health systems have systematically undervalued. It advocates for community-based, gender-responsive, and age-appropriate mental health interventions that are grounded in local epistemologies, amplify existing collective healing practices, and integrate spirituality as a legitimate therapeutic resource. The paper concludes that advancing mental health and wellbeing in Tanzania's rapidly changing society demands a decolonial reorientation of mental health policy and practice, one that centers cultural competence, dismantles gendered stigma, and positions community solidarity as both a protective factor and a vehicle for sustainable mental health promotion.

Keywords: Mental health, gender, culture, help seeking, decolonial health, Tanzania

The Protective Role of Secured Childhood Experience for Adult Psychosocial Well-being: A Reflection of Changing Non-Parental Caregiving Environments in Tanzania

Christian Bwaya, Department of Educational Psychology and Curriculum Studies, University of Dodoma. Email: christian.bwaya@udom.ac.tz

Magolanga Shagembe, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Dar es Salaam. Email: magolanga.shagembe@udsm.ac.tz

Abstract

Secure early childhood caregiving experiences play a foundational role in shaping psychosocial well-being. From early years of human life, studies have reliably underscored the human need for safety and close, meaningful relationships as a basis for healthy psychological and social functioning that contributes to overall health, happiness, and quality of life. Guided by attachment theory and the ecological model of human development, this paper examines how secure caregiver-child attachment builds emotional regulation, long-term mental resilience, and psychological well-being, while critically reflecting on the risks associated with changing non-parental caregiving environments that often lead to child-parent separation. Three specific objectives guide this paper: (1) to examine how secure early caregiver-child attachment builds long-term adult psychosocial well-being; (2) to reflect on the risks that non-parental caregiving arrangements such as day care centres, boarding schools, and domestic workers present to psychosocial well-being; and (3) to analyse the implications of these shifts within the Tanzanian sociocultural and economic context. The paper employs a narrative literature review methodology to synthesize findings from 52 peer-reviewed papers sourced from international databases and African repositories. The review finds that secure childhood experiences, characterized by close caregiver-child relationships, significantly enhance adult psychosocial-wellbeing. Further, the paper finds that economic pressure and evolving family structure increase reliance on non-parental caregiving as an alternative, but often characterised by inconsistent emotional attunement, high caregiver ratios, and fragmented bonds. These caregiving shifts potentially disrupt secure attachment formation, elevating risks for anxiety, depression, problem behaviours, and reduced well-being in adulthood. While the existence of traditional African multiple caregiving practices offer psychological buffering, modern socioeconomic pressures appear to undermine their protective value. In this paper, we argue for greater policy attention to attachment-informed practices in alternative care settings, and we call for socio-emotional learning interventions that safeguard early childhood experiences amid the changing social landscape. We further highlight the need for studies that examine the rationale for, and effect of, increased reliance on non-parental caregiving to inform evidence-based strategies that balance economic realities with child psychological and social functioning.

Key words: *emotional attunement, caregiver-child attachment, psychosocial well-being, childcaring environment*

Ustawi wa Vijana Tanzania (UVITA): Youth wellbeing, healthy relationships and GBV Prevention in Tanzania

Dr. Richard Sambaiga, Dr. Lyndsay McLean; Dr. Mona Mwakalinga, Dr. Kisiaya Saruni, Dr. Haroun Yassin, and Dr. Magolanga Shagembe

Abstract

The project known in its Kiswahili name as “**Ustawi wa Vijana Tanzania (UVITA)**,” is a transformative, three-year participatory research project co-funded by the UK’s Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). By centering emotional well-being, creative engagement, and youth-led solutions, UVITA complements national policy while setting a benchmark for public service innovation. UVITA provides an integrated platform to address youth challenges through context-relevant teaching and community-based research; student-led innovation in psychology, sociology, and the creative arts; and policy translation that shapes local and national discourse. It places young people at the center, not merely as research subjects but as peer researchers, artists, and change agents. Operating across three sites – Wazo Hill (Kinondoni), Mbagala (Temeke), and the UDSM Mwalimu Nyerere Mlimani campus – UVITA empowers young men and women aged 18–25. They actively co-design tools to promote mental wellness, reduce Gender-Based Violence (GBV), and foster respect, consent, and constructive gender dynamics. The preliminary data analysis generated nine interrelated themes that illuminate the lived experiences of young people in relation to aspirations, stress, mental health, relationships, gender-based violence (GBV), and support systems. Across themes, a consistent pattern emerged linking economic precarity, psychosocial stress, and relational dynamics, suggesting that youth wellbeing is shaped by interconnected structural and interpersonal factors. Developmental changes, life conditions and University transition increase vulnerability for emotional distress, unhealthy relationships and GBV among youth.

Key words: Youth, wellbeing, healthy relationships, Gender-based Violence, Tanzania

Human-Centric Leadership and Employee Mental Wellbeing in Modern Organizations

Dr. Kelvin M Mwita

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Abstract

Modern organisations are increasingly changing in due to dynamic and demanding working environments which are characterized by technological changes, globalization and changing employee expectations. While these transformations are important they have contributed to workplace stress, burnout, anxiety and emotional exhaustion that employees are experiencing. This has made employee mental wellbeing a critical organizational and leadership concern. This paper examines the role that human-centric leadership can play in promoting employee mental wellbeing in modern organizations.

The paper defines human-centric leadership as leadership approach that emphasizes on empathy, emotional intelligence, inclusiveness trust, employee support and respect for dignity. With reference to literature on leadership and organizational behaviour, the paper argue that leaders have a significant influence on employees' psychological wellbeing through their behaviours, communication styles, and organizational practices. Human-centric leaders play a key role in fostering psychologically safe workplaces where employees feel valued, heard, and supported. An environment like this helps employees to experiences reduced stress levels, improved job satisfaction, stronger organizational commitment and enhanced employee resilience. On the other hand, this paper highlights how toxic leadership behaviors, excessive performance pressure, poor communication and lack of emotional support negatively affect employee mental health and organisationla performance.

This paper concludes and recommends that organisations should integrate human-centric leadership practices into leadership development programs and workplace wellbeing strategies to create healthier, more productive and mentally supportive work environments.

Keywords: Human-centric leadership, employee wellbeing, mental health, emotional intelligence, workplace wellbeing, psychological safety.

Prevalence of Internalized Stigma and Associated Factors among Out-Patients with Severe Mental Illness at Muhimbili National Hospital.

Dr. Rehema Nina, MUHAS

Background: In Sub-Saharan Africa, internalized stigma affects 24% to 32% of people with severe mental illness and reduces their confidence to engage fully in treatment, social, and occupational activities. However, no study has examined the prevalence of internalized stigma among individuals with severe mental illness in Tanzania. Understanding the burden of and factors associated with internalized stigma is important for developing strategies to improve mental healthcare services in Tanzania and similar settings.

Objective: To determine the prevalence of internalized stigma and associated factors among outpatients with severe mental illness at Muhimbili National Hospital

Methodology: A hospital-based cross-sectional study was conducted among 341 adults with severe mental illness, selected through simple random sampling. Internalized stigma was assessed using the ISMI-29, and psychosocial factors were evaluated using adapted tools. Data were analyzed in SPSS version 28 using bivariable and multivariable modified Poisson regression analysis with robust estimators. Associations were expressed as prevalence ratios (cPR and aPR) with 95% confidence intervals. Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$.

Results: Among 341 individuals with severe mental illness, 10.3% had high internalized stigma, while 89.7% had lower levels. Factors independently associated with high internalized stigma included unemployment ($p=0.041$), low self-esteem ($p=0.004$), mild or moderate symptom severity ($p=0.021$), and missing scheduled clinical visits in the past six months ($p < 0.001$). In contrast, individuals aged 31–40 years had a lower prevalence of high internalized stigma ($p=0.025$).

Conclusion: Although the prevalence of high internalized stigma among outpatients with severe mental illness at MNH was relatively low, fundamental components of stigma, notably alienation and perceived discrimination, were high. Therefore, addressing modifiable factors such as low self-esteem, unemployment, and clinic attendance may help reduce stigma-related barriers to mental health-seeking behaviors and improve treatment outcomes and social engagement within this population.

Recommendation: This study recommends strengthening patient–clinician interactions, implementing routine stigma screening, and training healthcare providers in stigma-sensitive care. It also recommends providing occupational therapy interventions, including vocational skills training and support for income-generating activities. Further analytical research is needed to capture the experience of stigma effectively, and community-based research is necessary to identify individuals who are not engaged in care.

Social Media Engagement and Real-Life Social Interaction Quality Among Undergraduate Students

Mahundu Diana Erick, Faculty of Education, Languages, Psychology & Music, SEGi University, Malaysia

Abstract

The increasing integration of social media into the daily lives of young adults has raised concerns regarding its potential impact on face-to-face interactions and interpersonal wellbeing. While previous studies have frequently emphasized the negative effects of excessive social media use, evidence regarding its influence on real-life social relationships remains inconclusive. This study investigated the relationship between social media engagement and the quality of real-life social interactions among undergraduate students.

A quantitative correlational research design was employed. Data were collected from 272 undergraduate students aged 18–25 years using an online survey distributed through convenience and snowball sampling methods. Social media engagement was measured using the Social Media Engagement Scale (SMES), while the Quality of Relationships Inventory (QRI) assessed the quality of real-life social interactions. Additional measures examined patterns of social media use and attention and emotional presence during face-to-face interactions. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation, multiple linear regression, and Welch's one-way ANOVA.

Results indicated that participants reported moderately high social media engagement ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 0.66$) and high levels of real-life social interaction quality ($M = 4.01$, $SD = 0.66$). Significant positive relationships were found between social media engagement and real-life social interaction quality ($r = .498$, $p < .001$). Attention and emotional presence during face-to-face interactions demonstrated the strongest association with interaction quality ($r = .602$, $p < .001$) and emerged as the strongest predictor in the regression model. Together, the predictor variables accounted for 39% of the variance in real-life social interaction quality ($R^2 = .390$). No statistically significant gender differences were identified.

The findings suggest that social media engagement does not necessarily diminish the quality of face-to-face relationships among undergraduate students. Rather, emotional presence and attentiveness during interpersonal interactions appear to be more important determinants of relationship quality. The study highlights the importance of promoting mindful digital engagement and interpersonal presence as components of student mental health and wellbeing initiatives.

Keywords: social media engagement, real-life social interaction, emotional presence, undergraduate students, digital wellbeing, mental health.

Stress Prevalence and Coping Preferences among University Students: A Mixed-Methods Sequential Design

Yohana Richard Gesase, Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Educational Psychology and Counseling, Sokoine University of Agriculture

Abstract

University students often experience varying levels of stress, and their coping mechanisms may differ depending on stress intensity. Understanding these patterns is essential for designing effective support interventions. This study employed a mixed methods sequential explanatory design. In the quantitative phase, 402 second-year university students completed the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-14). Results showed 113 students with low stress, 172 with moderate stress, and 117 with high stress. In the qualitative phase, 10 students from each stress category were purposively sampled for interviews to explore coping mechanisms. The interviews revealed distinct coping preferences across stress levels. Students with low and high stress predominantly relied on emotional coping strategies, while those with moderate stress favored problem-focused coping mechanisms. These findings suggest that coping preferences vary systematically with stress intensity. By integrating quantitative prevalence data with qualitative insights, this sequential design provides a comprehensive understanding of stress and coping among university students. The results highlight the need for tailored mental health interventions that align coping strategies with students' stress profiles.

**TAPA 10th AGM and 3rd Scientific Conference, June 25-26, Morena, Morogoro,
Tanzania**

**Connected but Vulnerable: Social Media Overuse, Addiction Tendencies, and
Behavioural Risks Among Tanzanian University Students**

Mustapha Almasi¹ and Justine Kavindi

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Social media has become deeply embedded in the daily lives of university students in Tanzania; however, excessive use has raised concerns about its psychological and behavioural consequences. This study examined the extent of social media use, assessed the association between overuse and addiction, and examined behavioural and psychosocial correlates among Tanzanian university students. A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 372 students. Data were collected using a questionnaire. Descriptive analysis, Pearson correlations and independent-samples *t* test were done. The majority of students (67.3%) spent 1–4 hours online daily, while 29.5% spent more than five hours. WhatsApp (70.5%), Instagram (44.7%), Facebook (37.8%), and TikTok (31.8%) were the most frequently used platforms. Addiction risk was identified in 34.1% of participants, including 10.1% at very high risk. Students who spent more time online and checked social media more frequently were more likely to exhibit addictive tendencies. Participants reported moderate levels of preoccupation with social media and used it as a means of escaping personal problems, but experienced relatively low levels of discomfort when unable to access it. No significant differences in addiction risk were observed between male and female students, although married students appeared less vulnerable than single students. Consequently, excessive social media use is associated with addictive behaviours and other adverse outcomes among university students. This calls for digital well-being programmes in and targeted support for students who may be more susceptible to problematic social media use.

Keywords: social media addiction, behavioural outcomes, university students, Tanzania, digital well-being.

Strengthening Adolescent Mental Health Support Through School-Based Capacity Building in Tanzania

Tanzania Health and Medical Education Foundation

Adolescent mental health challenges are a growing concern in Tanzania, yet many young people face barriers to accessing mental health information and support due to stigma, limited awareness, and shortages of mental health professionals. AHADI, implemented by Tanzania Health and Medical Education Foundation (TAHMEF), is Tanzania's first hybrid mental health program, combining digital services, including a helpline, SMS platform and mobile application, tele-counselling; complimented with, community-based interventions which involves school outreach programs and training of intermediaries/frontline responders (teachers, peers, and community healthcare workers) to improve access to stigma-free mental health and psychosocial support for youth.

Objective: To improve adolescent mental health literacy, strengthen community-level support by strengthening frontline responders' capacity to provide basic mental health support in the form of Psychological First Aid, and facilitate early identification and referral of students experiencing psychosocial challenges.

Intervention: An ongoing school-based mental health outreach program is currently being implemented in ten government secondary schools across the Pwani and Dar es Salaam regions. Using a Train-the-Trainer approach, teachers receive government-reviewed foundational training on adolescent mental health and are equipped to facilitate mental health education through school health clubs. Training includes writing measurable learning objectives, structuring engaging learning sessions, providing constructive feedback, and assessing learning outcomes. The outreach curriculum consists of five modules for the students: (1) Understanding Mental Health in Adolescents; (2) Stress, Anxiety and Academic Pressure; (3) Emotional Resilience and Self-Awareness; (4) Relationships, Boundaries and Peer Pressure; and (5) Social Media, Identity, Self-Esteem. Monthly follow-up visits are conducted for quality assurance purposes and MEL reporting, such as to monitor implementation, reinforce learning, and provide one-on-one support and referrals for students requiring additional assistance.

Preliminary Results: As of May 2026, the outreach program has reached 858 students across ten government secondary schools. A total of 51 one-on-one support sessions have been conducted for students requiring additional support, demonstrating the relevance of the intervention as the topics of distress align with the designated module topics. The initiative has strengthened school-based mental health engagement and created opportunities for early identification, support, and referral of students experiencing psychosocial challenges.

Conclusion: The AHADI outreach program demonstrates the feasibility of integrating mental health promotion and early psychosocial support within existing school systems through school-based capacity building and structured adolescent mental health education. Plans include expanding community-based capacity building through the training of Community Health Workers (CHWs), strengthening referral pathways and scaling implementation to additional schools and communities.

BIOGRAPHIES



Dr Lusajo Kajula,

Health Behaviour Scientist with over 25 years of working in the research and academic industry. Skilled in Mental Health, Gender, Reproductive Health, Mixed Methods Research and Global Health. Strong research professional with a PhD in Health Behaviour and Promotion from the University of Maastricht, Netherlands



Prof Saths Cooper, PhD

Past President of the Pan-African Psychology Union (PAPU), the International Union of Psychological Science (IUPsyS) and the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA), Cooper is a Fellow of the psychological societies of South Africa (SA), India, Ireland, Britain and Nigeria. The first black chair of the Professional Board for Psychology (1999), and the first non-medical/dental professional to become Vice President of the Health Professions Council of SA (HPCSA), medical/dental professional to become

Vice President of the Health Professions Council of SA (HPCSA), he was Principal and Vice Chancellor of the University of Durban-Westville. A founding Governing Board Member of the International Science Council (ISC, 2018-2021), he is an ISC Foundation Fellow.

Obtaining his PhD in Clinical/Community Psychology from Boston University (USA) as a Fulbright Scholar in 1989, his awards include the inaugural IUPsyS *Achievement Against the Odds* (2012), the American Psychological Association's *Distinguished Contributions to the International Advancement of Psychology* (2014) and the inaugural HPCSA *Presidential Merit Award Honouring Outstanding Achievement in Psychology* (2019) and the University of South Africa's Chancellor's *Calabash Award*.

A close colleague of the Black Consciousness founder Steve Biko, he was banned and house-arrested when he was 22 years of age, and jailed for nine years. Accused No. 1 in the seminal SA Students Organisation/Black People's Convention trial in Pretoria, he played leadership roles from the late 1960s

A Clinical Psychologist for some 40 years, Cooper is in the leadership of the anti-racist, anti-sexist, and anti-sectarian 70s Group of activists from the key 1970s period – described as the “spark that lit a veld fire across South Africa” (Mandela, 2002).

Extraordinary Professor at the University of Pretoria, he serves on the Freedom Park Council (2021-current), and chairs the Robben Island Museum Council (2022-current).



Professor Andrew Ezadueyan Zamani

Is a Professor of Psychology at Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nigeria. He is a distinguished scholar and academic administrator with an accomplished career spanning the University of Jos, the University of Abuja Teaching Hospital, and Nasarawa State University, Keffi.

At Nasarawa State University, he has held several key leadership positions, including Director of the Institute of Governance and Development Studies, Director of Quality Assurance, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Head of Department, and Member of the University's Management Committee. Professor Zamani also serves on the editorial boards of several academic journals. In addition, he is currently a member of the Governing Councils of two prestigious tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

A respected leader in the field of psychology, he is a Past President of the Nigerian Psychological Association, a Member of the Executive Committee of the International Union of Psychological Science, and the current President of the Pan-African Psychology Union.



Amanda Clinton, M.Ed., Ph.D., is the Senior Director for the Office of International Affairs at the American Psychological Association (APA). Prior to joining the APA, Dr Clinton served as Professor of Psychology at the University of Puerto Rico where she specialized in cultural adaptation, early childhood, social-emotional development, and the neuropsychology of bilingualism. Dr Clinton is a licensed psychologist and a credentialed school psychologist with

experience in community clinics, pediatric hospitals, public schools, academic settings, and public policy.

Dr. Clinton completed an APA/AAAS Congressional Fellowship in the office of Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT) where she helped write the Mental Health Reform Act of 2016 (passed as 21st Century Cures). Dr Clinton's scholarly work includes publication of the text, "Integrated Assessment of the Bilingual Child," and numerous peer-reviewed papers and book chapters, as well as Associate Editorship of both the Journal of Educational and Consulting Psychology (JEPC) and the Interamerican Journal of Psychology. Dr Clinton has won several prestigious awards, including a

Fulbright Scholarship and SPSSI Educator/Mentor of the Year. Dr Clinton earned her master's degree at the University of Washington and her doctoral degree at the University of Georgia.

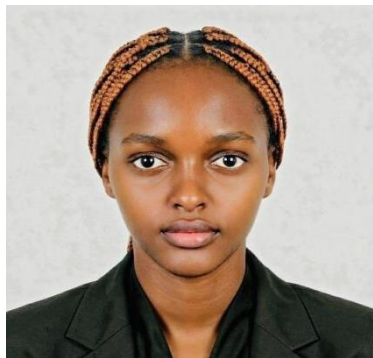


Rev. Dr Sahaya Selvam SDB

Originally from India, he has been working in the academic and youth ministry contexts as a Catholic priest in East Africa since 1992. He has separate undergraduate degrees in Philosophy, Sociology, and Religious Studies, and master's degrees in Philosophy (India) and in Psychology (London), specialising in the Psychology of Religion and Positive Psychology. He completed his PhD in Psychology at the University of London in 2012. He

has published over 30 peer-reviewed academic journal articles and book chapters, and written several books.

He is trained in Narrative Therapy, Ignatian Spiritual Accompaniment, and a licensed user of Griffiths III Early Childhood Assessment. Selvam is a registered member and senior supervisor at the Kenya Counsellors Psychologists Association. He is the founding chair of the Positive Psychology Association of Kenya. He runs Character Coaches Training programmes with his team, forming Character Clubs in schools and youth centres in Kenya. He is also an Associate Professor and Research Associate at Marist International University College, Nairobi.



Carol Mfinanga is an Assistant Lecturer in Gender Studies at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), Tanzania. Her academic and research interests lie at the intersection of gender, health, mental health and social development, with a particular focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), maternal and child health, gender-based violence, Mental health, health systems strengthening, and gender equity.

She holds a Master of Public Health (MPH) from the University of Dar es Salaam, And She also earned a Bachelor of Arts in Community Development Studies from Ardhi University. Her current work includes research on a paper titled “Between the Spirit and the Clinic: Cultural Meanings of Distress, Gender, and Community-Centered Mental Health in Tanzania,” which examines how culture, gender, spirituality, and community shape mental health experiences and help-seeking behaviours in Tanzanian society.

Beyond teaching and research, Carol is engaged in academic writing, community engagement, proposal development, and capacity-building initiatives that promote gender-responsive and equitable health systems



Dr. Rehema Nina

Dr. Rehema Nina is a medical doctor whose journey started at Kilimanjaro Christian Medical College (KCMC) and is currently a Psychiatry and Mental Health resident at Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS), Tanzania. Her work focuses on understanding and addressing mental health stigma, with a particular interest in how societal attitudes shape the experiences and outcomes of people living with mental illness. Through research, clinical practice, and advocacy, she is committed to advancing

mental health awareness, reducing stigma, and improving access to mental healthcare.



Mwl. Yohana Richard

Gesase is a holder of an MA Applied Social Psychology, and Bed Educational Psychology (Both from UDSM).

Currently Mwl. Gesase is persuing doctoral studies at Makerere University.

His primary research area is Mental health and Learning, Emotional intelligence and mental health, child development and learning, and Sexology



Dr. Kelvin M. Mwita is a Senior Lecturer at Mzumbe University, researcher, consultant, author, and corporate trainer with over 12 years of experience in professional training and capacity development.

He specializes in Human Resource Management, Organizational Leadership, Organizational Psychology, and Soft Skills Development, delivering practical and engaging learning experiences for organizations across various sectors. He is also an

active researcher and consultant with numerous publications in peer-reviewed journals. His recent book, *Human-Centric Approach to Leadership*, promotes people-centered leadership for sustainable organizational success. Dr. Mwita holds a PhD in Human Resource Management, an MSc in Human Resource Management, a Bachelor of Human Resource Management, and a Bachelor of Laws.



Deogratus Ramale is a Tanzanian psychologist with over six years of experience in substance use prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and works with a Government Agency, supporting evidence-based responses to substance use problems.

He is a member of the Tanzanian Psychological Association (TAPA) and the International Society of Substance Use Professionals (ISSUP), where he serves as Head of Training and Development, ISSUP Tanzania, and Africa Youth Representative, ISSUP Global. He is a certified trainer in the Universal Treatment Curriculum (UTC) and Universal Prevention Curriculum (UPC), delivering capacity-building trainings to professionals, communities, and institutions across Tanzania.

Deogratus is passionate about youth empowerment and strengthening the substance use workforce. He also provides corporate trainings and facilitation on workplace wellness, mental health, stress management, leadership development, organizational behavior, conflict resolution, and psychosocial well-being using practical and evidence-informed approaches.



Rehema Julious Kitalika

ni Mrakubu Msaidizi wa Polisi. Mimi ni Mshauri (COUNSELOR) kazi yangu kubwa ni kutoa msaada wa kisaikolojia na kihisia ili kuwasaidia wagonjwa wa aina mbalimbali na familia zao kukabiliana na changamoto zinazotokana na magonjwa, maumivu, na taratibu ngumu za matibabu.



Dr. Mustapha Almasi is a social psychologist, consultant, trainer, and a blended learning expert. He is a senior lecturer in the Department of Education at Mzumbe University, with extensive expertise in psychology of retirement, personality, mental health, emotional intelligence, interpersonal communication, guidance and counselling, and blended and online course development. He holds a PhD in Educational

Sciences from Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium), MSc. Educational Sciences (VUB, Brussel), MA. Applied Social Psychology, and BED (Psychology), UDSM. Dr. Almasi is an active reviewer for leading academic publishers including Taylor and Francis, Sage Publishers, Elsevier, and the University of Brighton. He has supervised and examined postgraduate research at both local and international levels, including serving as an external PhD examiner in Belgium. He works with the Tanzanian government in developing psychometric tests to measure personality attributes of workers. He trains in areas of psychology of retirement, persuasion, personality development, mental health in work settings, emotional intelligence, interpersonal communication, attitude and behaviour change, among other things. He has published extensively in different areas of learning psychology, guidance and counseling, educational technology, and education.



Dr. Justine Kavindi

Is a lecturer and researcher at the Mwalimu Nyerere Memorial Academy (MNMA), Tanzania. He holds a PhD in (Educational) Psychology and has extensive experience in teaching, research, and community engagement. His scholarly interests include psychological distress, social media use, social media addiction, and psychology of learning. He has been working with the Tanzanian government to develop psychometric test system

used in measuring personality and work-related attributes. Dr Kavindi has been involved in training workers and the general society in areas of customer care support, emotional intelligence, mental health, improving social and psychological welfare, guidance and counselling and career guidance.



Dr. Zainabu Rashid is a Tanzanian Lecturer and Head of the Department of Psychology at the Institute of Social Work (ISW) in Dar es Salaam. She holds a PhD in Educational Psychology and is an experienced psychologist, counsellor, trainer, and researcher specializing in social psychology, mental health, and behavioural management. She has extensive experience in teaching, curriculum development, and participation in various national education reforms and professional activities. Dr. Rashid has also served as a consultant and facilitator

in several national and institutional training programs on mental health, stress management, work–life balance, parenting, gender, and youth development across both public and private sectors in Tanzania.



Anna-Nimbugu Mkopi Jengo

Is a Mental Health Advocate and Counseling Psychologist currently pursuing a Master of Science in Counseling Psychology at the University of Iringa. She is passionate about promoting mental health awareness, personal development, and psychological well-being through education, research, and community engagement. Anna serves as a Youth and Community Psychotherapist at the Tanzanian Health and Medical Education Foundation (TAHMEF), where she supports mental health

advocacy, community outreach, and psychosocial support initiatives aimed at improving access to mental health services. She is also a member of the Tanzanian Psychological Association (TAPA) committed to making mental health knowledge accessible and impactful across Tanzanian communities.



My Name is **Dennis Leonard Kalinga**.

I'm currently a second year student pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and Counselling at Jordan University. My academic journey focuses on understanding mental health and fostering supportive approaches to counselling. I have participated in academic conferences and community initiatives that emphasize learning, connection, and growth. I'm passionate about bridging psychology with everyday life, He brings a youthful perspective on how mental health

awareness can empower individuals and strengthen communities.



Ms. Editha T. Laizer is a Clinical Psychologist dedicated to raising awareness on mental health and its importance, and is deeply committed to empowering individuals and communities to embrace resilience, wellness, and psychological well-being as a cornerstone of human health.

She holds a Bachelor of Science in Counselling Psychology (BSc.) from the University of Iringa, a Master of Science in Clinical Psychology

(MSc) from Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, and is also a proud member of the Tanzania Psychological Association (TAPA). Her academic journey has equipped her with both theoretical knowledge and practical expertise, enabling her to design and deliver evidence-based interventions that resonate with diverse populations.

Her commitment and expertise opened doors for engagement as an ethnographer in different research studies with Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS), A consultant with Agakhan Hospital, and Lisa Jensen Foundation (LJF) in their mental health projects focusing on mental health awareness and stigma reduction.

Currently, she serves as a clinical psychologist at the **Aga Khan University** and a consultant with the **Tanzania Counselling Academy in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania**, where she engages in training, mentorship, providing mental health care and developing community-based initiatives aimed at strengthening mental health services in the country.



Name: Christian Bwaya

Institution: University of Dodoma

Qualifications: BSc (Ed); MA (Applied Social Psychology); PhD candidate (Psychology)

Specialization: Psychology, Child Development, Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL)

Christian teaches Psychology at the University of Dodoma. He previously worked at Mwenge Catholic University (Moshi),

where he taught Educational Psychology and School-Based Counselling for nearly 10

years. Trained at the University of Dar es Salaam, Christian developed an interest in the socio-cognitive development of children in boarding primary schools, which became the focus of his MA (Social Psychology) dissertation. His ongoing PhD at the University of Dar es Salaam examines Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) among boarding primary school children in Tanzania.

Beyond academia, Christian serves as Director of Programs at Learning Inspire Tanzania, a firm that designs evidence-based interventions integrating the science of learning and emotional intelligence in education. Since 2020, he has trained over 20,000 school teachers in Tanzania. He has consulted with governmental and non-governmental organizations on socio-emotional learning, child safeguarding, school-based counselling programmes, behavioural sciences, and gender mainstreaming. He also maintains a weekly psychology column in *Mwananchi* Newspaper.



Dr. Upendo Paul Biswalo is a Lecturer in Guidance and Counselling and Psychology of Child Development at St John's University of Tanzania, with 18 years of experience in youth development and counselling. She holds a PhD in Education from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand, a Master of Education in Child Study from Smith College, USA, and a BA with Education from the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Dr. Biswalo is a lecturer, researcher, consultant, and counsellor specializing in child and adolescent development. She also serves as an Executive Committee Member for Strategic Partnerships at the Tanzanian Psychological Association (TAPA), where she promotes mental health, personal growth, and healthy relationships through research, training, and advocacy.



Ms. Eunice Kitenge
Assistant Lecturer at the University of Dar es Salaam in the Department of Educational Psychology.
Member of the Tanzanian Psychological Association and the Global Psychology Alliance.
Her research interests are in trauma, counselling and social psychology.
She is a corporate trainer in career development and wellness. She is also a moderator and host for academic workshops, conferences and other professional events.

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