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**A TREATISE ON THE HANDLING OF MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN NIGERIAN  
PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A FOCUS ON RIVERS STATE**

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**ABSTRACT**

The study investigated counselling, school orientation and students' mental health problems in public secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Two research questions with corresponding null hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population of the study comprised all the 368 Principals in the 368 public Secondary Schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was used to arrive at the sample size of 368. Two non-cognitive instruments titled "Counselling, School Orientation Scale" (CSOS) and "Students Mental Health Problems Scale" (SMHPS) were used for data analysis. Face and content validities were ensured. The reliability coefficient of CSOS is 0.88 and SMHPS is 0.71 respectively. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used for data analysis. It was found out among others that counselling has a high negative relationship (-0.96) with students' mental health problems in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria. It was recommended among others that the school heads should not only subject students that are troubled to counselling until the moody nature is exterminated but should be proactive in providing days for counselling services in the schools.

*Keywords:* Counselling, Students' Mental Health, Public Education, Nigeria.