APQ Utilization in Primary Assessment of Career Paths for College Students

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ABSTRACT

Career plays a vital role in an individual's life as it shapes professional growth, personal fulfillment, and overall well-being. Career path guidance may start as early as childhood which places direction on what academic program a child would be engaged with. Though some students entering undergraduate studies may still be in the process of choosing their career paths, the Adolescent Personality Questionnaire (APQ) serves as a tool for career guidance counselors to assess their students and provide professional interventions as they go through their undergraduate studies. In this study, an APQ program was integrated into a course taken by students at the early onset of their college years. The results of the APQ are very useful in developing programs that could aid and help students develop their character, improve their strengths, and deal with some weaknesses. Overall, integrating APQ sessions into academic programs would improve career awareness and understanding of the self.

Keywords: Career Exploration, Personality, Psychological Assessment

INTRODUCTION

Life transitions from one educational level to another opens valuable opportunities for growth while bringing potential heightening self-doubt, disappointment, and even encouraging self-defeating habits [1]. Due to significant shifts in academic expectations, social relationships, and personal responsibility, the transition from high school to college can be challenging for many students. The college transition experiences of students in the Philippines are affected by their socioeconomic status, level of academic preparation, and their location. Some of the typical experiences and difficulties that students may encounter during the transition period to college could be due to monetary challenges, problems with academics, social changes, and mental health concerns.

In the Philippines, a lot of college students come from poor families and struggle to pay for things like tuition and books. Some students may be forced to work part-time or drop out of school entirely as a result of this, which can cause significant stress and anxiety[2]. For some students, the transition from high school to college can be difficult because of the increased workload, higher academic expectations, and greater academic independence[3]. Time management, studying techniques, and test-taking strategies may be challenging for some students[4], [5]. There are those who are moving away from home or going to school in another region[4], [6].Social change can be a huge test. Building new social networks and support systems, as well as adjusting to a new language, culture, and social norms, may be part of this[7].Mental health concern is very nominal nowadays and students can also suffer as a result of the pressures and stresses that come with college life. Some normal emotional wellness worries among college students in the Philippines incorporate nervousness, gloom, and stress[8].

Many universities in the Philippines offer orientation programs, academic support services, and counseling services to help students adjust to college life. Additionally, in order to assist students in overcoming

obstacles to success, community organizations and government agencies may provide financial aid and other resources.

This study is based on Catell's personality theory. According to Cattell, personality can be described in terms of 16 primary source traits or factors. These factors represent the basic building blocks of human personality and capture the fundamental dimensions of individual differences. This theory of personality development integrates the intellectual, temperamental, and dynamic aspects of personality in the context of environmental and cultural influences [9].

The 16pf Adolescent Personality Questionnaire (APQ) aims to understand how adolescents perceive themselves and how this self-perception influences various aspects of their lives, including academic achievement, emotional well-being, challenges they face, potential career choices, and problem-solving abilities. The APQ is a valuable tool in counseling and career exploration settings for young individuals. It proves particularly useful in situations where personality plays a crucial role, such as adapting to educational settings, dealing with personal and social difficulties, or navigating developmental milestones [10].

The facilitation of college and career readiness stands as a pivotal responsibility of counselors, given its significance in preparing students for the transition to the workforce upon completion of their college education [11]. To fulfill this role effectively, counselors employ personality tests and career inventories to assist students in developing a sense of preparedness and competence in enteringthe professional realm. This process involves counselors actively collaborating with students to ensure they acquire a comprehensive understanding of the intricacies involved in college and career exploration. Moreover, the utilization of APQ represents a noteworthy and recommended approach that imparts students with valuable insights, tools, and resources essential for achieving success in the workplace subsequent to their graduation.

Mateus, Campis, Aguaded, Parody & Ruiz [12] established a connection between the personality traits and academic performance of students enrolled in a higher education institution. It can be argued that comprehending and predicting the occurrence of personality traits in cognitive and behavioral processes could greatly assist in implementing educational interventions. Maeus, et al. (2021)demonstrated a positive correlation between personality traits associated with cognitive aspects,and highlighted the importance of understanding the personality characteristics of university students, as it enables individual monitoring and facilitates the promotion of holistic development. Hence, it is a challenge to academic institutions on how to match their programs and services to the personality traits of their students at the early onset of their studies.

In this study, APQ was administered to college students at the early onset of their stay in their respective undergraduate programs to serve as an assessment tool to determine students' personality profiles and be able to identify the career areas where strategies can be developed to serve the students on how they could achieve their career goals.

METHODOLOGY

1. Profile of the Students

A self-report questionnaire called the Adolescent Personality Questionnaire (APQ) was used to evaluate personality qualities of teenagers between 12 and 18 years of age. The Five-Factor Model (FFM) of personality, which covers five major dimensions—openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism—serves as the foundation for the questionnaire.

1. Instrument

The APQ has 104 questions and takes 20 to 30 minutes to complete. Each question is rated by respondents on a Likert scale with five possible responses, from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The questionnaire evaluates personality traits in three areas: emotional adjustment, interpersonal perception, and self-perception.

The adolescent's self-perception is measured by the self-perception domain, which includes self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-determination. The adolescent's interpersonal perceptions are evaluated in the interpersonal perception domain, which includes social competence, trust, and empathy. The close to home change area surveys how the young adult directs feelings and incorporates attributes like tension, gloom, and profound strength.

In clinical and research settings, psychologists and mental health professionals frequently use the APQ to evaluate the personality traits of adolescents. It can be used to identify strengths and weaknesses, guide treatment planning, and track over time progress. However, it is essential to keep in mind that the questionnaire should be interpreted in conjunction with other assessment tools and clinical observations and should not be used as the sole measure of personality.

1. Participants and Sampling

The participants of this study are 2,716 freshman students who took the assessment in their SAS1000 course during the 1st and 2nd terms of academic year 2019-2020. These terms covered the period before the COVID-19 pandemic happened, and schools in the country were locked down. The typical ages of the examinees are in the 18 or 19 years of age.

SAS1000 is a required course for students to take.For the given number of participants for this course, the margin of error would be less than $\pm3\%$ since for a 2500 population, it just needs 748 respondents [13]. Hence, majority of the group is represented.

1. Procedures

The APQ tests were administered by giving them passcodes to access the online APQ with their class. Scores are generated and processed by Institute for Personality and Ability Testing, Inc. (IPAT). Generated student individual profiles were sent to the university counselors for test interpretation feedback which is useful for counseling and career exploration.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In a Sten distribution, most people are expected to score in the middle. That is, about 68% obtain a score within plus-or-minus one from the mean. About 16% score at the low end, and another 16% score at the high end. To serve the purpose of this analysis, the lower end and the higher end of the average range were indicated in the classification. The results presented in this section showcase the Primary Factors, Global Factors, Life Difficulties, and Work Activity Preferences.

1. Primary Factors

- Factor A: Warmth – Approximately 92% of the Freshman students scored Average to High in the area of Warmth as shown in Fig. 1. This finding suggests that most of the students would be generally friendly and sociable. Meanwhile, about 8% would be more reserved and focused on tasks than on
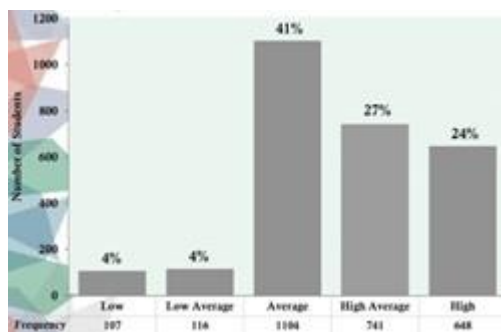
people.

Fig.1 Frequency distribution and percentage of responses under Factor A: Warmth

2) Factor B: Reasoning – This factor is a brief reasoning test that estimates the examinees level of intelligence and capacity to draw insight from their behavior. It could be said that more than half of the students (52%) have high average to high mental ability as shown in Fig. 2. Hence, their capacity to learn and grasp new ideas would generally be sufficient.
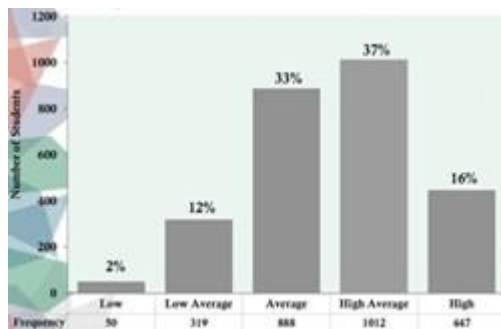

Fig.2 Frequency distribution and percentage of responses under Factor B: Reasoning

- Factor C: Emotional Stability – Approximately 51% of the Freshman students scored Low to Low Average (fair) in Emotional Stability as shown in Fig. 3. About 26% of the student would likely encounter difficulties in coping with stress while 25% would generally cope with the common pressures. The remaining 48% would be generally calm and composed when faced with demanding situations.
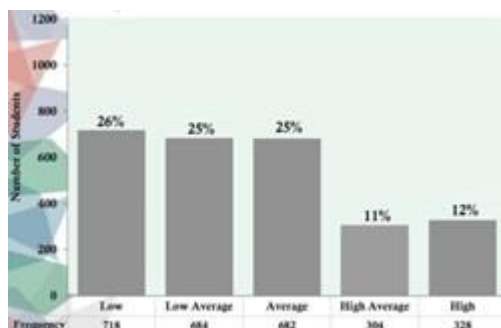

Fig.3 Frequency distribution and percentage of responses under Factor C: Emotional Stability

- Factor E: Dominance – The highest percentage of the Freshman population scored Low (38%) for Dominance as shown in Fig. 4. Low scorers may encounter difficulty in asserting themselves. They tend to be soft-spoken, submissive, and would likely follow the commands of others. Meanwhile, the

average scorers (29%) tend to balance being timid with being assertive. The rest would comfortably assert their views.
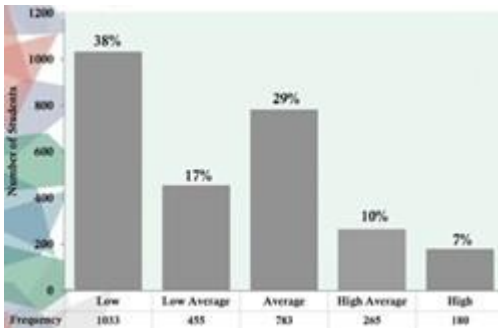

Fig.4 Frequency distribution and percentage of responses under Factor E: Dominance

- Factor F: Liveliness – About half of the Freshman students (54%) scored Low to Low Average (fair) in the area of Liveliness as shown in Fig. 5. Likely, they tend to be quiet and reserved when relating to others. On the other hand, about 46% of students would show moderate to high levels of energy and enthusiasm in their dealings.
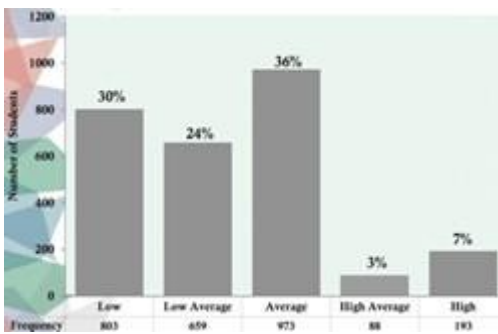

Fig.5 Frequency distribution and percentage of responses under Factor F: Liveliness

- Factor G: Rule-Consciousness – About 94% of the Freshman students scored Average to High in Rule-Consciousness as shown in Fig. 6. Generally, they would obey school policies and regulations. They could also be expected to show high regard to professors and those in authority. It should be noted though that there are 3% who tend to be tax with rules and may at times question those in authority.
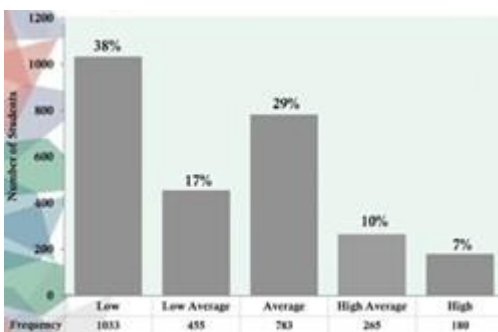

Fig.6 Frequency distribution and percentage of responses under Factor G: Rule-Consciousness

- Factor H: Social Boldness – The social boldness of the Freshman population is somewhat diverse. Their influence and collaboration with others would vary. Some would be timid within a group while

some would be valiant. It should be noted though that the highest scores range from Low Average (fair) to Low as shown in Fig. 7. Thus, most students tend to be timid than upfront.
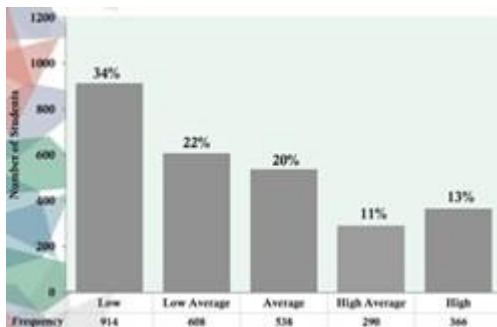

Fig.7 Frequency distribution and percentage of responses under Factor H: Social Boldness

- Factor I: Sensitivity – Half of the Freshman population (50%) tend to be more sensitive or attuned to the emotional side of things when making decisions as shown in Fig. 8. About 39% scored moderate, suggesting that they would likely be flexible in their thinking style and able to consider both emotions and facts. There are 12% in this group who tends to be objective-minded.
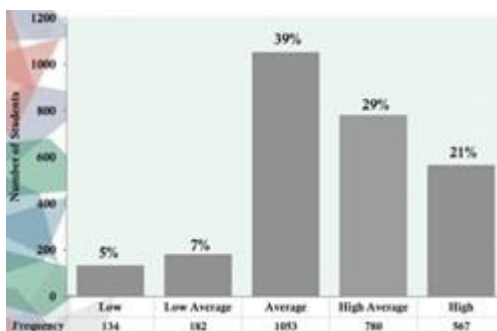

Fig.8 Frequency distribution and percentage of responses under Factor I: Sensitivity

- Factor L: Vigilance – Approximately 42% of Freshman students scored High Average to High in Vigilance as shown in Fig. 9. These students would likely be cautious of other people's motives. Meanwhile, 35% of students whose scores were Average would tend to balance openness with being guarded towards other people.
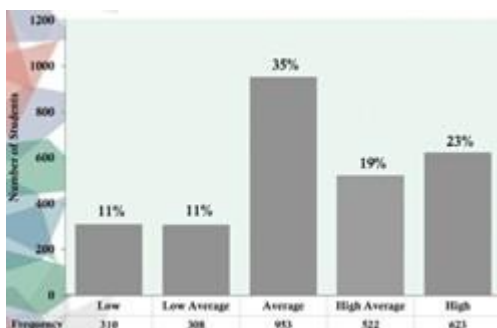

Fig.9 Frequency distribution and percentage of responses under Factor L: Vigilance

- Factor M: Abstractedness – Most of the Freshman students (33%) scored Average in abstractedness as shown in Fig. 10. This finding suggests that they would generally be capable of being both practical and imaginative in their thinking style. It was also noted that 26% of students scored Low in this area,

suggesting that they tend to be more practical and grounded in their thinking style.
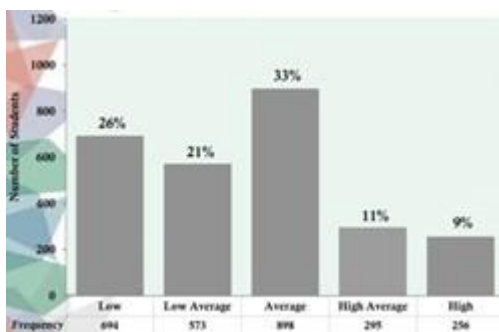

Fig.10 Frequency distribution and percentage of responses under

Factor M: Abstractedness

- Factor N: Privateness – The highest percentage of Freshman students scored Average (30%) to High (35%) in Privateness as shown in Fig. 11. Those who ranked High Average to High tend to be cautious about disclosing personal information. High scorers would likely prefer to keep their lives private while the average scorers balance their privacy with openness to others.
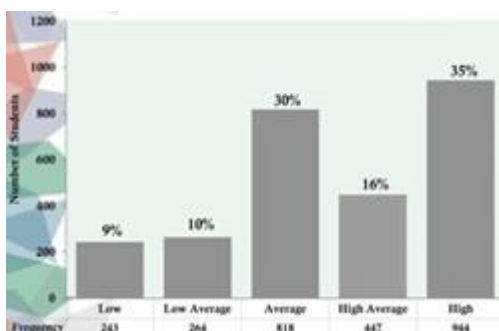

Fig.11 Frequency distribution and percentage of responses under

Factor N: Privateness

- Factor O: Apprehension – Half of the Freshman population appears to be highly apprehensive. This finding suggests that they may tend to be self-doubting and to have low self-worth. On the contrary, about 15% of the batch scored Low to Low Average in Factor O as shown in Fig. 12. They are more likely to be self-assured and confident.
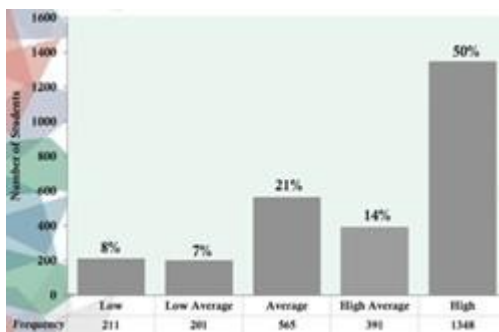

Fig.12 Frequency distribution and percentage of responses under

Factor O: Apprehension

- Factor Q1: Openness to Change – In Fig. 13, results show a significant percentage of students (38%) would be generally open-minded to venture and try new things but would still uphold the traditional ways of doing things.
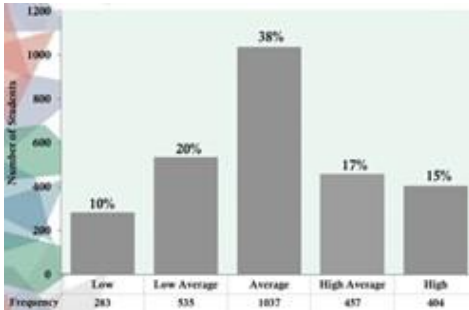

Fig.13 Frequency distribution and percentage of responses under

Factor Q1: Openness to Change

- Factor Q2: Self-Reliance – In Fig. 14, more than one-third (36%) of the batch would be comfortable working either in teams or individually. The rest of the students would either prefer to accomplish tasks in groups (Low to Low Average) or by themselves (high Average to High).

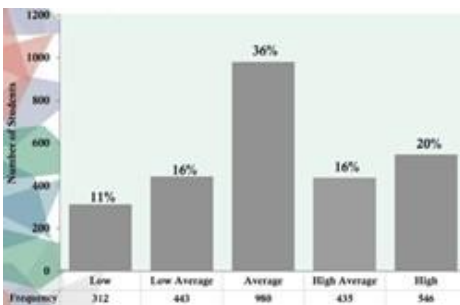Fig.14 Frequency distribution and percentage of responses under

Factor Q2: Self-Reliance

- Factor Q3: Perfectionism – About 36% of the Freshman students would strive for excellence and quality work outputs as seen in the results of Fig. 15. Likewise, they could be expected to be systematic and organized in their endeavors. Meanwhile, about 8% would need more supervision when it comes to meeting deadlines.
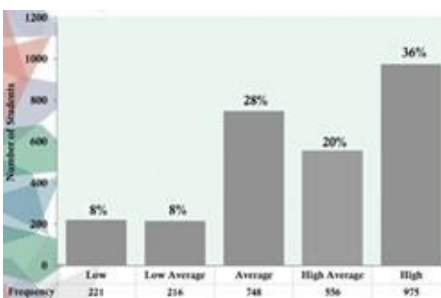
Fig.15 Frequency distribution and percentage of responses under

Factor Q3: Perfectionism

- Factor Q4: Tension – About 34% of the Freshman students have moderate level of tension as shown in Fig. 16. This finding suggests that they tend to have enough drive to achieve goals but in a more easy-going manner. On the other hand, about 13% of the students would be extremely restless and impatient.
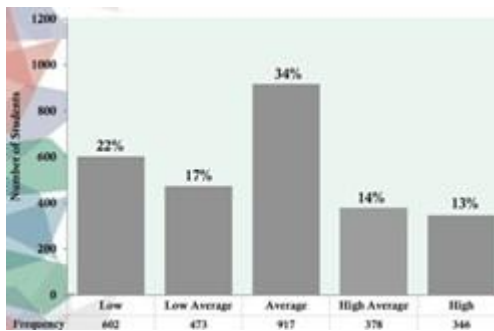

Fig.16 Frequency distribution and percentage of responses under

Factor Q4: Tension

The primary factors can be classified as vector results leading towards either the left or right directions. Each direction has its meaning and can be used to characterize and build more in-depth description of the identified primary factors. Table I shows the general trends of the primary factors.

Those that generally falls under the left meaning include the Factors C, E, F, H, M, and Q4 while on the other side are the Factors A, B, G, I, L, N, O, Q2, and Q3. The Q1 factor lies between the sides.
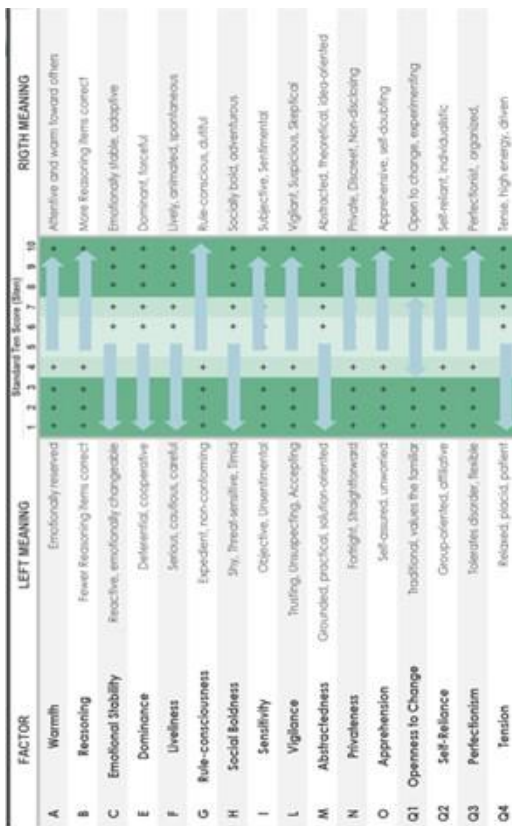
1. Global Factors

The Global Factors are the underlying organizational patterns among the Primary Factors. They generally represent the "Big Five" personality factors that are currently popular.

- Extraversion – Most of the students (40%) are Average scores with regard to Extraversion. They would like to seek interaction with others but would be comfortable in solitude.
- Independence – The highest percentage of the population scored Low (37%) in the area of independence. Low scorers would prefer working with a group. The average scorers who closely followed at 33% would be able to work either with a team or on their own.
- Tough–Mindedness – Results show that about 39% of the students scored Low in this area while 22% falls in the Low Average range. The general trend for the students appears to be more sensitive and sentimental. Nonetheless, 32% of them would balance facts and personal considerations when making their decisions.
- Self – Control – In this domain, 37% of the batch scored High while 22% are in the par range. This finding suggests that the majority of the students tend to be disciplined and self-restrained. Meanwhile, 32% of them scored Average, suggesting that they would generally refrain from acting impulsive.
- Anxiety – The highest percentage of the students (32%) scored Average in the area of Anxiety. They generally feel secure but may experience apprehension at times meanwhile, 29% scored High in this area, indicating that they may feel more tensed than others. Looking at the trend, more students seem

to feel anxious than relaxed.

TABLE I GENERAL TRENDS OF THE PRIMARY FACTORS

Similar to the Primary Factors, the Global Factors can also be classified as vector results leading toward either the left or right directions. Table II shows the general trends of the Global Factors.

Those that generally fall under the left meaning include the Independence, and Tough-Mindedness while on the other side are the factors, Self-Control, and Anxiety. The Extraversion factor lies between the sides.

TABLE II GENERAL TRENDS OF THE GLOBAL FACTORS

1. Life's Difficulties

The challenges of life are an inevitable aspect of the human experience. They can come in several shapes and from a range of causes, such as internal struggles, outside factors, and unforeseen events. Even though enduring difficult experiences can be difficult and even painful, they can also present important chances for development and learning. In this section, 4 general areas of dealing with difficulties were explored including Personal Discomfort (Discouragement, Worry, Poor Body Image, Overall Discomfort), Getting in Trouble (Anger or Aggression, Authority Problems, Alcohol or Drugs, Overall Trouble), Context of

Difficulties (at home and at school), and Managing Difficulty/Coping Skills (General Coping).

- Personal Discomfort – In the Personal Difficulties section of the APQ, 30% of the students had a Superior score in the Discouragement scale while 24% of students scored High Average. These high scores imply that the students tend to be quite pessimistic and would likely experience negative thoughts and low mood. Under Worry, the highest percentage of the students in this batch scored Superior (34%) and Above Average (21%). This finding indicates that most of the students tend to be worried and pre-occupied with their problems. Meanwhile, those who scored from Average to Low (about 45% in all) are likely to be at ease, self-assured and less focused on potential problems. Majority of the students reported apprehension concerning their physical attributes to some extent. About 37% are highly insecure while 45% of the population tend to be self-conscious at an Average to Above Average rate. Only 17% (Low to Below Average) shows confidence in their body image. More than half (54%) of the population reported more than the usual levels of Overall Discomfort. These high scores reflect the students' high levels of discouragement, worry, and poor body image. Table III shows that the factors considered under Personal Discomfort are more meant to the right which are indicative of negative impressions.

TABLE III GENERAL TRENDS FOR PERSONAL DISCOMFORT

- Getting in Trouble – Nearly 47% of the students scored Below Average in Anger or Aggression. This finding suggests that they are less likely to respond violently even when agitated. Meanwhile, students who scored highly (24%) seem to be harboring anger and may display more aggressive tendencies when provoked. Majority of the students (64%) garnered Low to Low Average scores in Authority problems. As thus, most of the students are likely to follow and respect authority. The Average to High scorers would generally follow, but may at times question authority when they do not agree with them. About 75% of the students reported that they would hardly encounter challenges in avoiding alcohol or drugs. However, about 19% (Above Average to Superior) may encounter problems regarding this issue. Approximately 68% of the students scored from Low to Low Average for Overall Trouble. It is likely that they would avoid conflict with authority and would refrain from the use of alcohol substance. On the other hand, 19% of the students might be more prone to getting into trouble. Table IV shows that the factors considered under Getting in Trouble are more meant to the left sided except of the possibility for some alcohol or drug abuse.

TABLE IV GENERAL TRENDS FOR GETTING IN TROUBLE

- Context of Difficulties – More than one-third (39%) of the respondents perceive themselves to be having more than the usual problems at school, while 36% of them reported to be experiencing normal levels of school-related difficulties. About 25% of the students indicated low levels of perceived problems at school. With regards to perceived Home Problems, more than one-third or 38% of the students see their home to be generally problem-free. However, it should be noted that 30% of students seem to have serious concerns at home. Table V shows that the context of difficulties of the respondents come more from school than home.

TABLE V GENERAL TRENDS FOR CONTEXT OF DIFFICULTIES

Context of Difficulties: Overview	LEFT MEANING	20	40	60	80	100	RIGTH MEANING
Problems at School	No Problems at School						Some Problems at School
Problems at Home	No Problems at Home						Some Problems at Home

- Managing Difficulty / Coping Skills – Almost half (44%) of the students reported to have Superior coping skills. They tend to believe that they have the necessary resources to address their tasks, and get along with others. On the other hand, about a quarter (27%) of the students seem to have difficulties adapting to stressful circumstances. Table VI shows that the respondents have broad coping skills.

TABLE VI GENERAL TRENDS FOR MANAGING DIFFICULTIES

	LEFT MEANING	20	40	60	80	100	RIGTH MEANING
General Coping	Has Limited Coping Skills						Has Broad Coping Skills

1. Work Activity Preferences

The types of tasks and activities that people prefer to perform while working are known as work activity preferences. These preferences are highly individualistic and frequently impacted by traits including personality, aptitude, interests, and values.

Understanding one's preferences for work activities might be crucial for career success and job satisfaction. People are more likely to be motivated, productive, and content with their occupations when they are involved in work activities that they enjoy and find gratifying. However, if a person's job doesn't match their preferred work activities, they might be less motivated and more likely to experience job dissatisfaction and burnout.

One can evaluate their preferences for work activities using a variety of techniques, including personality tests, talent tests, and interest inventories. These resources can aid people in understanding their skills and areas of interest, which can assist them make decisions about their career paths and job search strategies.

In this section, the Holland Codes were used as basis of categorizing vocational interests and preferred work activities. The six types of codes are Realistic, Investigative, Artistic, Social, Enterprising, and Conventional which were translated into styles as Manual, Scientific, Artistic, Helping, Sales/Management, Procedural, respectively.

Fig.17 Holland codes

As shown in Fig. 17, the highest percentage of Freshman students (23%) reported that they prefer activities and tasks related to Helping people. The second largest percentage (19%) is interested in the field of Sales. This is closely followed by the Artistic group (18%) and those who find Procedural (16%) tasks engaging. The lowest percentage (10%) of the students prefer working with things than People (Manual).

Focusing on the top 3 Holland codes which are helping, sales, and artistic, the University could develop programs and activities related to social services, business management, marketing, and sales, as well as creative arts and crafts. It is expected that students who belong to these cluster will participate in programs where their traits match. With proper planning, setting of objectives, implementation, and evaluation, students will be more prepared to face and take the careers that suit their personality traits.

CONCLUSION

The utilization of the APQ aids in the preparation of programs and services to be offered by a career guidance and counseling office. Moreover, the administration of these tests provides awareness to the student about the services of the University for them to fit in a career that suits their personality hence, providing higher chances of matching between career and the skills of the students.

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