

Influence of Personality Traits and Coping Strategies on Mental Health Status among Gen Z Students

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the influence of personality traits and coping strategies on mental health status among Generation Z students in a Philippine higher education context. Anchored in the Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping and aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 3, which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all. It explored how the Big Five personality traits and coping strategies predict mental health outcomes. A quantitative correlational–predictive design was employed using validated instruments and simple random sampling. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and multiple regression. Results indicated that personality traits were at moderate levels, coping strategies were generally high, and mental health outcomes reflected low levels of stress and depression, with moderate anxiety. Conscientiousness showed a significant negative relationship with mental health, whereas neuroticism and coping strategies showed significant positive relationships. Regression analysis revealed that coping strategies were the strongest predictor of mental health, followed by neuroticism and conscientiousness, explaining 44.2% of the variance. The findings highlight the critical role of coping strategies in shaping mental health outcomes and underscore the importance of developing coping-based interventions and mental health programs to promote psychological well-being among Generation Z students.

Keywords: Coping Strategy; Generation Z; Mental Health; Neuroticism; Personality Trait

INTRODUCTION

Mental health has become one of the most pressing concerns among young people today, with Generation Z students reporting higher levels of stress, anxiety, and emotional distress compared to previous generations (Twenge & Farley, 2021). This generation faces unique pressures from academic demands, digital environments, and societal expectations, making their psychological well-being a growing concern for educators, counselors, and health professionals.

Globally, researchers and health organizations identify Gen Z as the “most stressed generation,” exhibiting higher rates of anxiety and depression compared to millennials and older cohorts. International studies reveal that personality traits—such as neuroticism, introversion, or low conscientiousness—play crucial roles in predicting vulnerability to mental health issues. (Kotov et al., 2022; Widiger & Oltmanns, 2021) Likewise, coping strategies used by students, whether adaptive or maladaptive, significantly influence their psychological resilience and stress outcomes. (Skinner et al., 2021; Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2020). With mental health disorders increasing worldwide, there is a growing emphasis on understanding how young individuals’ personal dispositions and coping behaviors shape their mental well-being.

In the Philippines, similar concerns are evident as various institutions report a surge in mental health cases among students, particularly during and after the pandemic (Alampay et al., 2020; Tuliao & Velasquez, 2021). Local studies show that Filipino Gen Z learners often struggle with academic pressure, parental expectations, financial challenges, and the psychological toll of digital environments. These stressors are often met with mixed coping strategies—some positive, like seeking social support, and some negative, like avoidance or emotional withdrawal (Villafania, 2023; Martinez et al., 2020). Despite efforts to improve school-based mental health programs, the role of personality traits and coping styles in the mental health of Filipino Gen Z students

remains insufficiently addressed, limiting the effectiveness of intervention programs (Buenconsejo et al., 2024).

While prior studies have explored either personality traits or coping strategies in isolation, few investigate their combined influence on mental health status among Gen Z students, especially in local academic settings (Ramos & Cheng, 2021). This lack of integrated research hinders the development of holistic and evidence-based interventions tailored to the unique stressors and psychological needs of today's students.

Globally, the study contributes to the growing literature on youth mental health by highlighting the role of personality traits and coping strategies in psychological well-being. Socially, it provides practical insights for educators, counselors, and mental health professionals to design interventions that strengthen resilience and promote mental health among Filipino Gen Z students. Lastly, it serves as a reference for future researchers and program developers aiming to support the mental health of young learners.

Statement of the Problem

This study aims to examine the influence of personality traits and coping strategies on mental health status of Gen Z students. Specifically, (a) It seeks to determine the levels of personality traits, coping strategies, and mental health status among Gen Z students; (b) Identify the relationships between personality traits, coping strategies, and mental health status; and (c) Analyze how personality traits and coping strategies jointly influence mental health status of Gen Z students.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mental Health Challenges Among Generation Z University Students

Mental health challenges among university students have intensified globally, with Generation Z consistently identified as a high-risk cohort due to academic pressure, digital saturation, social comparison, and post-pandemic uncertainty (Twenge & Farley, 2020; American Psychological Association [APA], 2023). Recent epidemiological and psychological studies indicate that Gen Z reports higher levels of anxiety and emotional distress than previous generations, making the identification of psychological risk and protective factors a priority for educational and mental health institutions (Kotov et al., 2010; Widiger & Oltmanns, 2021).

Recent post-pandemic studies further indicate that Generation Z students experience persistent anxiety related to academic uncertainty, future employability, and digital overexposure. Research conducted during and after the COVID-19 pandemic suggests that these stressors disproportionately affect emotional regulation and coping capacities, reinforcing the need for personality- and coping-based mental health interventions within higher education settings (APA, 2023; Burro et al., 2023; Elsayed, 2025).

Personality Traits and Mental Health Outcomes

A substantial body of research situates personality traits, particularly those described by the Five-Factor Model, as stable predictors of mental health outcomes. Among these traits, neuroticism has emerged as the most robust risk factor for psychological distress. Individuals high in neuroticism exhibit heightened emotional reactivity, sensitivity to stress, and a tendency toward negative affect, which increases vulnerability to anxiety, stress, and depressive symptoms (Lahey, 2009; Kotov et al., 2010). Recent post-pandemic studies confirm that neuroticism remains a strong predictor of mental health problems among university students, particularly anxiety-related symptoms (Gök & Karaca, 2023; Dincer et al., 2024).

Neuroticism as a Risk Factor for Psychological Distress

Recent network and predictive studies have expanded these findings by demonstrating that neuroticism indirectly influences mental health outcomes through maladaptive coping mechanisms such as avoidance and emotional dysregulation. A recent network analysis revealed that neuroticism was strongly linked to anxiety and depressive symptoms via ineffective coping pathways, suggesting that coping behaviors act as a crucial mechanism translating dispositional vulnerability into psychological distress (Misiak et al., 2025).

Conscientiousness as a Protective Personality Trait

Conversely, conscientiousness has been consistently identified as a protective personality trait. Characterized by self-discipline, organization, and goal-directed behavior, conscientiousness facilitates effective stress appraisal and emotion regulation (Roberts et al., 2014). Empirical findings demonstrate that conscientious students experience lower psychological distress and greater emotional stability, especially in academically demanding environments (Soto, 2019; Chow et al., 2022).

Post-pandemic cross-national studies further confirm the protective role of conscientiousness, demonstrating that conscientious students are more likely to maintain routines, engage in proactive coping, and regulate academic stress effectively. These traits significantly predict lower stress and depressive symptoms among university students across diverse cultural contexts (Burro et al., 2023; Gök & Karaca, 2023).

Other Personality Traits and Mental Health: Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Openness

Evidence regarding extraversion, agreeableness, and openness to experience remains mixed. While extraversion is often associated with positive affect and social engagement, its direct relationship with mental health outcomes appears context-dependent (Lucas & Diener, 2008). Agreeableness may buffer interpersonal stress through cooperation and social harmony, whereas openness supports cognitive flexibility; however, these traits generally exert weaker predictive effects on psychological distress compared to neuroticism and conscientiousness (Widiger & Oltmanns, 2021).

Coping Strategies and Mental Health Outcomes

Beyond personality dispositions, coping strategies play a central role in shaping mental health outcomes. Grounded in the Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping, coping is conceptualized as the cognitive and behavioral efforts used to manage stressors appraised as overwhelming or challenging (Lazarus & Folkman, 2022). Contemporary research distinguishes between adaptive coping strategies—such as problem-solving, cognitive reappraisal, social support seeking, relaxation, and religiosity—and maladaptive strategies, including avoidance and substance use (Compas et al., 2017; Skinner et al., 2021).

Recent empirical studies emphasize that coping strategies function not only as responses to stress but also as mediators between stress exposure and mental health outcomes. Students who engage in flexible and problem-focused coping consistently report lower anxiety and depressive symptoms regardless of baseline stress levels (Antón-Ruiz et al., 2025; Xu & Zhang, 2025).

Recent post-pandemic research increasingly demonstrates that coping strategies exert a stronger influence on mental health outcomes than personality traits alone. Predictive studies reveal that while personality traits predispose individuals to psychological risk or protection, coping behaviors determine whether these vulnerabilities translate into distress (Compas et al., 2017; Gök & Karaca, 2023; Dincer et al., 2024).

Coping Strategies as Mediators Between Personality and Mental Health

Longitudinal and mediation studies further demonstrate that coping strategies often account for a greater proportion of variance in mental health outcomes than personality traits alone. Adaptive coping buffers the negative effects of high neuroticism, while maladaptive coping amplifies psychological vulnerability, reinforcing coping as a primary intervention target in student mental health programs (Zhang et al., 2024; Antón-Ruiz et al., 2025).

Studies conducted during and after the COVID-19 pandemic further confirm that adaptive coping strategies significantly buffer psychological distress, even among individuals high in neuroticism. Students who engage in problem-solving, cognitive reappraisal, and relaxation consistently report lower depressive symptoms over time (Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2020; Chow et al., 2022).

These findings closely parallel the results of the present study, where coping strategies emerged as the strongest predictor of mental health status, surpassing the predictive power of individual personality traits.

Philippine Studies on Coping, Personality, and Mental Health

Within the Philippine context, studies highlight religiosity and social support as culturally salient coping strategies. Filipino students frequently rely on faith-based practices and prayer to manage stress and emotional difficulties (Bernardo & Estrellado, 2017; del Castillo et al., 2023). Local research further indicates that religiosity is associated with lower levels of depression and stress (Alampay et al., 2020).

Filipino students also demonstrate a strong preference for problem-solving and social support-seeking as coping mechanisms, reflecting collectivist cultural values (Datu et al., 2021; Tuliao & Velasquez, 2021). These patterns are reflected in the present study, where religiosity, problem-solving, and relaxation strategies were frequently utilized, while substance use was minimally practiced.

Despite growing international evidence, integrated predictive studies examining personality traits, coping strategies, and mental health among Filipino Generation Z students remain limited (Tuliao & Velasquez, 2021). Addressing this gap, the present study provides empirical evidence demonstrating that coping strategies and specific personality traits—particularly conscientiousness and neuroticism—significantly influence mental health status among Filipino Gen Z students.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on the Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), which explains mental health outcomes as a result of the interaction between the individual and the environment. The theory emphasizes the roles of cognitive appraisal and coping strategies in determining psychological well-being.

According to the theory, stress arises when individuals perceive environmental demands as exceeding their available resources (Lazarus, 1993). This appraisal process is influenced by personality traits, which shape how individuals interpret stressors and regulate emotional responses (Widiger & Oltmanns, 2017). As such, personality traits affect whether situations are perceived as manageable or threatening. (Gök & Karaca, 2023)

Following appraisal, individuals employ coping strategies, defined as cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage stress. These strategies may be problem-focused or emotion-focused and vary in effectiveness. Adaptive coping strategies are associated with positive mental health outcomes, while maladaptive coping strategies may increase psychological distress. (Brailovskaia & Margraf, 2020; Chow et al., 2022; Dincer et al., 2024).

In this study, the Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping provide a relevant framework for understanding how personality traits and coping strategies influence the mental health status of Gen Z students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This chapter outlines the methodological procedures employed in the study, including the research design, respondents, research locale, data-gathering instruments, data collection procedures, and ethical considerations. The goal is to ensure that the methodology aligns with the research objectives and is grounded in best practices for quantitative research.

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, correlational–predictive research design to examine the relationship and influence of personality traits and coping strategies on the mental health status of Gen Z students. The design allowed for objective measurement of variables and the use of statistical analyses to determine significant relationships and predictive effects among the variables.

Locale and Respondents of the Study

The study was conducted at Notre Dame of Midsayap College, located in Poblacion 5, Midsayap, Cotabato,

Philippines. The respondents of the study were Generation Z students currently enrolled at the institution. These students were selected because they are within the age group approximately 14 to 29 years old as of 2026 born between 1997 and 2012 commonly exposed to academic, social, and developmental stressors that may influence mental health status.

Sampling Design

A simple random sampling technique was utilized to select the respondents of the study. This method ensured that each eligible Gen Z student had an equal chance of being included in the sample. The sample size was determined using an appropriate sample size computation with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error to ensure representativeness and adequacy for statistical analysis.

Instrumentation

Data were gathered using three standardized research instruments. The Personality Traits Scale, based on the Big Five Personality Model (Goldberg, 1993; McCrae & Costa, 1997), measured openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Each item in this instrument was rated using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree).

The second instrument used was based on the development of the Filipino Coping Strategies Scale by John Robert C. Rilveria (2018), assessed nine coping strategies, namely: cognitive reappraisal (pagsusuri), social support (paghingi ng tulong), problem-solving (pagtugon), religiosity (pagkarelihiyoso), tolerance (pagtitiis), emotional release (paglabas ng saloobin), overactivity (pagmamalabis), relaxation or recreation (paglilibang), and substance use (pagbibisyo). Responses were rated using a 4-point Likert scale with the following verbal interpretations: 1 – Hindi (Never), 2 – Minsan (Sometimes), 3 – Madalas (Most of the time), and 4 – Palagi (Always).

The third instrument used was the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale–21 (DASS-21) Lovibond, P. F., & Lovibond, S. H. (1995), which assessed the levels of stress, anxiety, and depression among the respondents. Responses were rated using a 4-point Likert scale with the following verbal interpretations: 0 – Never, 1 – Sometimes, Often – 2, Almost Always – 3.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The research instruments used in the study were adopted from previously validated scales. To ensure reliability, internal consistency was determined using Cronbach's alpha. The computed reliability coefficients met acceptable standards, indicating that the instruments were reliable and appropriate for use in the present study.

Data Gathering Procedure

Prior to data collection, approval to conduct the study was secured from the appropriate institutional authorities. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, and informed consent was obtained before participation. Data were collected through an online survey questionnaire, allowing respondents to answer at their convenience. Completed responses were reviewed for completeness, encoded, and prepared for statistical analysis.

Statistical Tools and Treatment of the Data

Descriptive and inferential statistical tools were used in analyzing the data. Mean, and standard deviation were employed to describe the levels of personality traits, coping strategies, and mental health status. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to determine the significant relationships among variables, while multiple linear regression analysis was utilized to determine the influence of personality traits and coping strategies on the mental health status of Gen Z students.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical standards in research involving human participants. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. Confidentiality and anonymity were ensured by excluding personally identifiable information from data processing and reporting. All data collected were used solely for academic purposes and were presented only in aggregated form.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the data and analytical interpretation of findings derived from respondents' responses, addressing the objectives of the study concerning the influence of personality traits and coping strategies on the mental health status of Gen Z students.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Personality traits, Coping strategies and Mental Health Status

Personality Traits	SD	Mean	Interpretation
Extroversion	0.396	2.83	Moderate
Agreeableness	0.368	3.39	Moderate
Conscientiousness	0.454	3.33	Moderate
Neuroticism	0.547	3.33	Moderate
Openness to Experience	0.46	3.22	Moderate
Coping Strategies			
Coping Strategies	SD	Mean	Interpretation
Cognitive Reappraisal	0.678	2.86	High
Social Support	0.753	2.67	High
Problem Solving	0.724	3.16	High
Religiosity	0.749	3.32	Very High
Tolerance	0.796	2.75	High
Emotional Release	0.726	2.31	Low
Overactivity	0.706	2.53	High
Relaxation/Recreation	0.727	3.09	High
Substance Use	0.854	1.8	Low
Overall	0.551	2.72	High
Mental Health			
Mental Health	SD	Mean	Interpretation
Depression	0.756	1.45	Low
Anxiety	0.742	1.57	Moderate
Stress	0.697	1.43	Low
Overall	0.707	1.48	Low

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for personality traits, coping strategies, and mental health status among Gen Z students. All five personality traits registered moderate mean levels, with agreeableness ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 0.368$) and conscientiousness ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 0.454$) emerging as the most prominent traits. These findings suggest that respondents generally exhibit cooperative, responsible, and goal-oriented tendencies, which are commonly associated with adaptive functioning and psychological stability (Soto, 2019; Widiger & Oltmanns, 2021). Neuroticism likewise displayed a moderate mean ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 0.547$), reflecting notable emotional sensitivity among respondents which have been linked to heightened emotional reactivity and increased vulnerability to stress-related symptoms (Kotov et al., 2010; Misiak et al., 2025).

The close clustering of standard deviations across traits suggests relatively consistent personality distributions within the sample. The moderate levels indicate that students possess balanced personality dispositions while experiencing sufficient emotional responsiveness that may influence mental health outcomes. This pattern aligns with contemporary findings that personality traits in late adolescence and early adulthood tend to stabilize while remaining responsive to contextual and developmental demands (Soto, 2019).

For coping strategies, the overall mean was high ($M = 2.72$, $SD = 0.551$), demonstrating frequent utilization of coping behaviors. Religiosity emerged as the most employed strategy ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 0.749$), followed by problem-solving ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 0.724$) and relaxation or recreation ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.727$). In contrast, emotional release and substance use were rated low, suggesting minimal engagement in maladaptive coping strategies.

This pattern reflects a predominance of adaptive coping strategies, which are consistently associated with lower psychological distress and improved emotional regulation (Compas et al., 2017; Lazarus & Folkman, 2022). The prominence of religiosity as a coping strategy is particularly salient within the Philippine context, where spirituality and faith-based practices serve as significant sources of emotional support and meaning-making among young adults (Alampay et al., 2020; del Castillo et al., 2023). These culturally grounded coping strategies function as protective factors that help regulate emotional distress and sustain psychological well-being (Tuliao & Velasquez, 2021).

Mental health status was generally low in terms of distress symptoms ($M = 1.48$, $SD = 0.707$). Depression and stress levels were low, while anxiety remained at a moderate level, indicating that worry and performance-related concerns persist despite overall healthy functioning. Similar trends have been observed among university students, wherein anxiety symptoms remain prevalent even when depressive and stress indicators are comparatively low, particularly in academically demanding environments (Morales-Rodríguez, 2021; Zhang et al., 2024).

Table 2: Relationship Between Personality Traits, Coping Strategies, and Mental Health Status

Independent Variables	Mental Health Status		
	Pearson's r	p-value	Interpretation
Extroversion	0	0.996	Not significant
Agreeableness	-0.049	0.591	Not significant
Conscientiousness	-0.301	<.001	Significant
Neuroticism	0.356	<.001	Significant
Openness to Experience	-0.017	0.852	Not significant
Coping Strategies	0.488	<.001	Significant

Table 2 shows the correlation analysis revealed a moderate negative correlation between Conscientiousness and mental health Status ($r = -0.301$, $p < .001$), indicating that disciplined and organized students tend to experience lower psychological distress. This finding is consistent with prior research linking conscientiousness to effective self-regulation, adaptive coping, and reduced vulnerability to anxiety and depression (Antón-Ruiz et al., 2025; Burro et al., 2023). Conversely, neuroticism demonstrated a significant positive relationship with mental health status ($r = 0.356$, $p < .001$), suggesting that emotionally reactive students are more prone to anxiety, stress, and depressive symptoms. This relationship has been robustly supported across cultures and populations (Kotov et al., 2010; Widiger & Oltmanns, 2021).

Coping strategies showed a strong positive correlation with mental health status ($r = 0.488$, $p < .001$), highlighting the essential role of adaptive coping behaviors in maintaining emotional stability. This finding supports the stress-coping literature emphasizing that effective coping responses significantly buffer the negative impact of stressors on psychological well-being (Compas et al., 2017; Fullana et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, extroversion ($r = 0.000$, $p = .996$), agreeableness ($r = -0.049$, $p = .591$), and openness to experience ($r = -0.017$, $p = .852$) did not demonstrate significant associations with mental health status. These findings suggest that social engagement, interpersonal warmth, and cognitive curiosity alone may not directly influence psychological well-being without the presence of emotional regulation capacities and effective coping mechanisms. Contemporary studies similarly report that these traits often exert indirect or situational effects on mental health through mediators such as social support, coping styles, and environmental stressors rather than through direct correlations (Burro et al., 2023; Pérez-Chacón et al., 2023).

Table 3: Influence of Personality Traits and Coping Strategies on Mental Health Status

Predictor	Estimate	SE	t	p	Interpretation
Intercept	0.869	0.677	1.282	0.202	
Extroversion	0.126	0.13	0.97	0.334	Not Significant
Agreeableness	-0.188	0.173	-1.083	0.281	Not Significant
Conscientiousness	-0.394	0.138	-2.855	0.005	Significant
Neuroticism	0.469	0.118	3.961	<.001	Significant
Openness to Experience	-0.306	0.16	-1.911	0.058	Not Significant
Coping Strategies	0.6	0.1	5.967	<.001	Significant
R= 0.665 R²= 0.442 F= 15.2 Sig.= 0.000					

Table 3 presents the regression analysis examining the influence of personality traits and coping strategies on mental health status. The model was statistically significant, $F_{15.2}$, $p=.001$, with a multiple correlation coefficient of $R = 0.665$ and $R^2 = 0.442$, indicating that 44.2% of the variance in mental health status was jointly explained by personality traits and coping strategies, reflecting a moderate to strong predictive capacity of the model.

Among the predictors, coping strategies ($B = 0.600$, $t = 5.967$, $p < .001$) emerged as the strongest and most influential factor affecting mental health status. This suggests that students who actively engage in adaptive coping behaviors demonstrate significantly better psychological well-being, regardless of underlying personality tendencies. This result supports contemporary psychological models proposing coping as a central mechanism through which individuals regulate stress and emotional distress. Recent empirical studies have similarly identified coping strategies as a primary determinant of mental health outcomes, often mediating the effects of personality traits on psychological functioning (Dincer et al., 2024; Elsayed, 2025).

Conscientiousness ($B = -0.394$, $t = -2.855$, $p = .005$) functioned as a protective factor, indicating that individuals characterized by self-discipline, organization, and goal-directed behavior tend to experience fewer mental health difficulties. This aligns with trait-based resilience theories suggesting that conscientious individuals are more likely to engage in proactive problem-solving, emotional regulation, and health-promoting behaviors that buffer against psychological distress. In contrast, neuroticism ($B = 0.469$, $t = 3.961$, $p < .001$) significantly increased vulnerability to mental health problems. This finding is consistent with extensive psychological literature identifying neuroticism as a core risk trait associated with heightened emotional reactivity, anxiety, rumination, and stress sensitivity.

The remaining personality traits—extroversion ($p = .334$), agreeableness ($p = .281$), and openness to experience ($p = .058$)—did not exhibit statistically significant direct effects on mental health status. This suggests that emotional regulation and coping engagement are more critical determinants of mental health than social or experiential personality traits alone. Similar findings have been reported in recent studies indicating that these traits exert indirect or context-dependent effects rather than direct influences on psychological distress (Burro et al., 2023; Pérez-Chacón et al., 2023).

Overall, the findings emphasize the dual role of dispositional vulnerability and behavioral regulation in mental health. While certain personality traits—particularly neuroticism and conscientiousness—shape psychological risk and resilience, coping strategies represent the most powerful modifiable factor influencing mental health status. This underscores the importance of interventions that strengthen adaptive coping skills, such as stress management training, cognitive-behavioral techniques, emotional regulation programs, and resilience-building initiatives within educational institutions.

Given the substantial proportion of variance explained ($R^2 = 0.442$), personality traits and coping strategies collectively constitute meaningful psychological determinants of students' mental health status. However, the dominance of coping strategies highlights the potential for targeted psychosocial programs to mitigate personality-related vulnerabilities and promote psychological well-being. Educational administrators,

counselors, and mental health practitioners should therefore prioritize coping skills development alongside personality-informed support systems to foster long-term emotional stability and academic functioning.

CONCLUSIONS

The descriptive results showed that Gen Z students exhibited moderate levels across all personality traits, with agreeableness and conscientiousness emerging as the most prominent characteristics. Coping strategies were generally utilized at high levels, particularly religiosity, problem-solving, and relaxation-based approaches, while maladaptive coping behaviors such as substance use and excessive emotional release were minimally practiced. Mental health outcomes reflected low levels of depression and stress, although anxiety remained moderately present among respondents.

The inferential findings demonstrated that conscientiousness and coping strategies were significantly and negatively associated with psychological distress, while neuroticism showed a significant positive relationship with mental health problems. Regression analysis further revealed that coping strategies were the strongest predictor of mental health status, followed by neuroticism and conscientiousness, indicating that adaptive coping behaviors play a central role in maintaining emotional well-being despite individual personality vulnerabilities.

These outcomes empirically support the Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), which emphasizes the dynamic interaction between personal dispositions, stress appraisal, and coping responses in shaping mental health outcomes. The findings suggest that while certain personality traits predispose students to psychological risk, effective coping mechanisms substantially buffer emotional distress and promote resilience.

Based on the findings, educational institutions and mental health practitioners are encouraged to strengthen students' adaptive coping capacities through structured stress management programs, emotional regulation training, problem-solving workshops, and culturally responsive interventions such as spiritual support activities.

To address the heightened levels of anxiety observed among students, counseling services should incorporate cognitive-behavioral strategies, resilience-building initiatives, and peer-support systems that foster healthy emotional expression and proactive coping.

Finally, school administrators should create a mental health-supportive environment by integrating regular psychological screening, counseling-informed academic advising, and wellness programs into campus life. Such efforts will promote sustained emotional well-being, academic engagement, and overall psychological resilience among Gen Z students.

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