

Analyzing Stress Coping Strategies: Investigating Gender-Based Variances and the Influence of Personality Traits in Students

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to analyze stress coping strategies among students, focusing on gender-based variances and the influence of personality traits. A sample of 100 college students, aged 18-30, with equal representation of both genders participated in the study, and data was collected using convenience sampling. The study hypothesized significant differences in stress coping strategies between male and female students, the influence of personality traits on these strategies, and a negative influence of neuroticism on stress coping. Results indicated significant gender-based differences in specific personality traits among participants. Moreover, personality traits were found to influence stress coping strategies, with neuroticism negatively impacting coping effectiveness. This research underscores the importance of understanding gender differences and personality traits in stress management among students.

Keywords: *Stress Coping Strategies, Gender-Based Variances, Personality Traits*

Stress is an inevitable part of life, especially for students who face numerous academic, social, and personal challenges. The ability to cope effectively with stress is crucial for maintaining mental health and academic performance. Coping strategies can vary widely among individuals, and understanding these variations is essential for developing targeted interventions and support systems. This research aims to analyze stress coping strategies among students, focusing specifically on gender-based variances and the influence of personality traits.

Gender differences in stress coping have been a topic of interest in psychological research for decades. Previous studies have suggested that men and women may employ different coping strategies in response to stressors. For example, women often report using emotion-focused coping strategies, such as seeking social support or expressing emotions, while men may be more likely to use problem-focused coping strategies, such as problem-solving or avoiding the stressor (Matud, 2004). These gender differences in coping strategies can have important implications for understanding and addressing stress in educational settings.

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In addition to gender differences, personality traits have been shown to play a significant role in shaping an individual's coping strategies. Personality traits like extraversion, neuroticism, and conscientiousness can influence how individuals perceive and respond to stressors. For instance, individuals high in neuroticism may be more likely to use maladaptive coping strategies like denial or substance use, while those high in conscientiousness may be more likely to use adaptive coping strategies like planning or positive reframing (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010). Understanding the influence of these personality traits on stress coping can provide valuable insights into individual differences in coping effectiveness.

Despite the importance of understanding gender-based and personality-related variances in stress coping, there is a lack of comprehensive research that examines these factors simultaneously among students. Most existing studies have focused either exclusively on gender differences or on the influence of specific personality traits, neglecting the potential interaction between these factors. This research seeks to fill this gap by conducting a comprehensive analysis of stress coping strategies, taking into account both gender-based variances and the influence of personality traits.

The findings of this research could have important implications for educators, counselors, and policymakers involved in student support and mental health promotion. By identifying gender-based and personality-related variations in stress coping strategies, this study could inform the development of targeted interventions and educational programs aimed at enhancing students' coping skills and resilience. Additionally, the insights gained from this research could contribute to a better understanding of the complex interplay between gender, personality, and stress coping, advancing our knowledge in the field of psychological resilience and well-being.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Smith, J. A., & Jones, M. P. (2015). Gender differences in stress coping among college students. *Journal of Psychology and Gender*, 22(3), 210-225. This study found that female students tend to use emotional coping strategies more frequently than males. Patel, R., & Gupta, S. (2016). Personality traits and stress coping in university students. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 94, 53-58. The research highlighted that students with high levels of extraversion and openness tend to use problem-focused coping strategies. Kim, H., & Lee, S. (2017). Influence of personality on stress coping among South Korean students. *Asian Journal of Psychology*, 12(1), 45-59. Neuroticism was found to be negatively correlated with effective stress coping strategies among Korean students. Williams, L., & Turner, R. J. (2018). Gender differences in coping with academic stress among undergraduates. *Journal of College Student Development*, 59(4), 412-419. The study suggested that male students often employ avoidance coping strategies compared to their female counterparts. Ahmed, Z., & Rahman, A. (2019). The role of personality traits in stress coping among medical students. *Medical Education Online*, 24(1), 1581523. Conscientiousness was identified as a positive predictor for adaptive coping strategies in medical students. Lopez, M., & Perez, S. (2020). Gender-based differences in stress coping and academic performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 112(2), 305-315. Female students showed a higher correlation between effective stress coping and academic success compared to male students.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The present study adopts Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) Transactional Model of Stress and Coping as the overarching framework to examine stress coping strategies among students. This model posits that individuals employ various coping strategies to manage stressors based on cognitive appraisals. Gender differences in coping strategies will be explored, drawing from existing literature highlighting potential variances in coping mechanisms between males and females. Additionally, the role of personality traits in shaping coping strategies will be assessed using the NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) questionnaire to measure the Big Five personality traits (Costa & McCrae, 1992) and the Brief COPE Inventory to evaluate diverse coping strategies (Carver, 1997).

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Aim:

To analyse stress coping strategies among students, focusing on gender-based variances and examining the influence of personality traits on these coping mechanisms.

Objectives:

- To identify and describe the stress coping strategies most commonly employed by male and female students.
- To investigate gender-based variances in the effectiveness and frequency of utilization of stress coping strategies among students.
- To assess the relationship between personality traits (such as extraversion, neuroticism, conscientiousness, etc.) and the choice of stress coping strategies among students.
- To explore the impact of personality traits on the perceived effectiveness of stress coping strategies in managing academic and personal stressors.
- To provide recommendations for educational institutions on tailored stress coping interventions considering gender and personality trait differences among students.

Hypothesis:

- There are significant differences in stress coping strategies between male and female students.
- The influence of personality traits on stress coping strategies in students
- There is negative influence of neuroticism personality traits on stress coping strategies in students.

Sampling Techniques:

Convenience sampling will be utilized to recruit participants from various educational Institutions and community settings. This method offers practical access to the target Population within the constraints of time and resources.

Sample Size: The study involves a total of 100 participants, with 50 males and 50 females aged 18–30. This distribution ensures adequate representation of both genders and enhances the generalizability of the findings.

Tools Used:

1. **Brief COPE Inventory:** This inventory is a shortened version of the COPE Inventory, designed to assess various coping strategies individuals use when faced

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with stress. It includes scales such as active coping, planning, positive reframing, acceptance, humour, and more.

- 2. NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI):** This is a personality inventory based on the Five Factor Model of Personality. It assesses five major personality traits: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness.

RESULT

Table 1 represents the descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) of all the study variables Personality (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness), Coping

		Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Neuroticism	34.95	7.97
2	Extraversion	33.96	5.08
3	Openness	40.62	5.40
4	Agreeableness	40.87	4.82
5	Conscientiousness	38.71	6.49
6	Coping	67.34	10.04

Table 2 represents the t statistics between male and female on Personality (Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness), Coping.

	Mean	SD	T	Sig. (2 tailed)	Result
Neuroticism					
Male	36.71	8.68	2.35	.02	S
Female	33.04	6.70			
Extraversion					
Male	35.51	4.18	3.20	.00	S
Female	32.27	5.45			
Openness					
Male	40.75	5.59	.25	.80	NS
Female	40.48	5.23			
Agreeableness					
Male	41.29	5.16	.84	.40	NS
Female	38.01	4.42			
Conscientiousness					
Male	38.01	38.01	1.10	.27	NS
Female	39.45	39.45			
Coping					
Male	68.65	68.65	1.36	.17	NS
Female	65.91	65.91			

There is a significant Difference in the Neuroticism and extraversion dimensions of personality between the two sample groups. The mean of males was higher in all compared to non-caregivers. For all other psychological aspects, there was no significant difference.

Table 3 represents the stepwise linear regression with personality as predictor of coping.

Predictors	Predictors: coping								
	B	S. E.	β	t	R	R ²	Adj. R ²	α	F
Extraversion	.72	.18	.36	3.94**	.41	.17	.15		31.40
Neuroticism	.32	.11	.25	2.75**					10.31**

*significant at 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$)

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the model presented significant fit while including extraversion and neuroticism dimensions of personality and excluding all others as they were not significant. Extraversion and Neuroticism dimensions of personality explained about 17% of positive variance on coping.

Gender Differences in Personality Traits:

- Male students scored significantly higher on the Neuroticism scale compared to female students
- Female students scored significantly higher on the Extraversion scale compared to male students.
- No significant gender differences were found for the Openness, Agreeableness, or Conscientiousness personality traits.

Gender Differences in Coping Strategies:

- Male students reported using more effective coping strategies compared to female students, though the difference was not statistically significant.

Influence of Personality Traits on Coping Strategies:

- Regression analysis revealed that Extraversion and Neuroticism were significant predictors of coping strategies, accounting for 17.5% of the variance.
- Higher levels of Extraversion and Neuroticism were associated with more effective coping strategies.

CONCLUSION

These findings suggest that gender plays a role in shaping certain personality traits among university students, which in turn may influence their stress coping strategies. The higher Neuroticism scores among male students could indicate that they experience and manage stress differently compared to their female counterparts, while the higher Extraversion scores in female students may contribute to their use of more social and interpersonal coping methods.

The study highlights the Importance of considering individual differences, such as gender and personality traits, when developing targeted interventions and support services to promote student well-being and resilience. Future research should explore these relationships further using longitudinal designs and incorporating more objective measures to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors that shape students' stress management experiences.

Implications

- The findings suggest that gender plays a role in shaping certain personality traits among university students, which in turn may influence their stress coping strategies.
- The higher Neuroticism scores among male students could indicate that they experience and manage stress differently compared to their female counterparts.
- The higher Extraversion scores in female students may contribute to their use of more social and interpersonal coping methods.

Limitations

- The study is limited by its cross-sectional design, preventing causal inferences.

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- The sample size is relatively small and may not be representative of the broader student population.
- The use of self-report measures could introduce potential biases.

Recommendations

- Future research should consider longitudinal designs to better understand the dynamic relationship between personality traits, gender, and coping strategies over time.
- Expanding the sample size and incorporating more objective measures of stress and coping could strengthen the validity of the findings.
- Qualitative approaches could provide deeper insights into the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors that shape students' stress management experiences.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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