

## Impact of Fanship and Coping Strategies on Psychological Well-Being among Young Adults

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### ABSTRACT

This research paper investigates the complex Relationship between Fanship, Coping Strategies and Psychological well-being in a sample of 162 individuals aged 18 to 26. By utilizing an extensive range of statistical analyses, including correlation and regression, this study aimed to shed light on the factors that influence people's experiences inside fan groups, as well as how people manage stress and how it affects their mental health. The findings revealed that fanship alone did not significantly impact psychological well-being. However, problem-focused coping strategies were positively correlated with higher psychological well-being, while emotion-focused and avoidant-focused strategies showed a negative association. Importantly, the study underscored the collective influence of both fanship and coping strategies in elucidating the variability in psychological well-being.

**Keywords:** *Fanship, Coping Strategies, Psychological Well-being, Relationship*

In the contemporary digital landscape, where access to diverse media and entertainment is at its zenith, fandom culture has emerged as a prominent phenomenon among young adults. Encompassing a wide array of interests such as J-pop, K-pop groups like BTS or Seventeen, sports teams, music artists, anime, and k-dramas, fandoms serve as vibrant communities that offer excitement and a sense of belonging. However, excessive involvement can lead to detrimental effects on mental well-being, as individuals may become consumed by their interests to the detriment of other aspects of their lives.

Central to the study of fandom is the concept of fanship, which encompasses the level of psychological attachment individuals have to their fan interests (*Schroy et al., 2016*), and is associated with psychological and interpersonal well-being (*Reysen S. et. Al. 2010*). Fanship can take many different forms, from casual interest to intense obsession. The intensity of fanship not only influences individuals' level of engagement but also plays a significant role in shaping their identities and social affiliation.

Individuals derive a sense of self-worth and identity from their affiliation with organization or communities they are a part of (*Social Identity Theory, Henri Tajfel and John Turner, 1970*). For instance, identifying as a fan of a particular sports team or music group provides

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individuals with a sense of belonging, as they share common values and aspirations with fellow enthusiasts. Moreover, the emotional bonds fans form with media figures, such as K-pop idols, despite the absence of reciprocal interaction. Through their music, performances, and social media presence, these figures evoke a sense of familiarity and connection, leading to strong emotional attachments among fans (*Par-asocial Interaction Theory Donald Horton and Richard Wohl, 1956*). The motivations behind individuals actively seeking out media content is to fulfill emotional and social needs. Ingroup identification with fan communities positively correlates with well-being, especially when motivated by social relationships (*Plante C. Et al. 2017*)

Even during the covid-19 pandemic, Participation in fandom has been demonstrated to have a good impact on wellbeing, bringing happiness and contentment (*Aoki K. 2022*). It provides a safe haven for escape, emotional support, and a feeling of community, all of which help people develop resilience and a sense of self in the face of adversity. Additionally, fanship promotes social relationships and general wellbeing by reducing loneliness and elevating self-esteem (*AlHarouny J. Et.Al., 2022*). In essence, fandom serves as a multifaceted coping mechanism for individuals navigating the complexities and stresses in life.

Coping mechanisms are vital tools individuals employ to navigate life's challenges and preserve their well-being. The stress appraisal paradigm suggests that when individuals encounter a stressor, they engage in cognitive evaluation, which involves assessing its significance and their ability to cope. This process comprises two phases: primary appraisal and secondary appraisal. Primary appraisal involves evaluating the significance of the stressor, while secondary appraisal involves assessing available resources and coping mechanisms to address it effectively. The two primary categories of coping strategies are emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping (*Lazarus and Folkman, 1970s*).

Problem-focused coping involves actively addressing the stressor by seeking solutions, guidance, or information to change or eliminate it. On the other hand, emotion-focused coping strategies aim to regulate emotional reactions to the stressor without necessarily altering the stressor itself. This may involve adopting coping mechanisms, seeking social support, or engaging in activities to distract from the stressful situation.

While approach-oriented coping, or problem focused coping involves confronting stressors directly, and avoidance-oriented coping, focusing on minimizing interaction with stressors (*Carver, Scheier, and Weintraub ,1989*). Avoidant coping involves temporary escape from stressors but may not address underlying issues effectively. Thus, Effective coping involves problem-solving and seeking social support, while maladaptive strategies like avoidant-focused offer short-term relief (*Bondarchuk O. et al. 2023*). Seeking social support enhances resilience, while acceptance-based coping emphasizes acknowledging and accepting circumstances without judgment. Studies have demonstrated that Adaptive coping mechanisms correlate with better psychological well-being, while maladaptive coping leads to poor outcomes (*Othman W.N.W. Et. Al. 2021*).

Psychological well-being encompasses a rich array of emotions, thoughts, and experiences that contribute to a meaningful and fulfilling life. It's more than just happiness; it's about thriving in all aspects of life and feeling fulfilled. Resilience plays a crucial role in psychological well-being, enabling individuals to navigate life's challenges gracefully and emerge stronger. Positive relationships and a sense of belonging provide comfort and support during difficult times, while self-esteem forms the foundation of confidence and self-worth.

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The key components of psychological well being are: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. These elements contribute to a sense of purpose, satisfaction, and overall well-being (*Martin seligman,2002*) Happy emotions like joy and gratitude enable individuals to see beyond their current circumstances, fostering creativity, adaptability, and problem-solving skills. (*Barbara Fredrickson, 1998*). Prioritizing psychological well-being not only enhances individual resilience and personal growth but also benefits communities by fostering harmony and serenity.

The interplay between fanship, coping mechanisms, and psychological well-being is influenced by various factors, including individual differences, situational contexts, and the nature of fanship itself. The interaction can lead to diverse outcomes. Those who utilize adaptive coping strategies and form positive social bonds within fandoms may experience greater psychological well-being, including feelings of happiness and fulfillment. Conversely, individuals who struggle to manage tensions or engage in conflict within fan communities may be more susceptible to psychological distress, such as feelings of isolation or disappointment.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### *Sample*

Convenience sampling method was employed, selecting individuals based on their willingness to participate and accessibility. A sample of 162 individuals aged 18 to 26 participated in the study, with 56% female and 44% male participants. The research tools were administered through questionnaires, in a paper-and-pencil format.

#### *Measures*

The Fanship scale: Fanship was measured using Fanship scale (*Reysen & Branscombe, 2010*). The Fanship Scale accurately measures the degree of identification with a fan interest, showing strong psychometric properties (*Reysen S. et. Al.,2010*).

The Brief COPE scale: This was used to measure the degree to which participants engaged in different coping behaviors, such as planning, positive reframing, emotional expression, seeking assistance, or avoidance. There are 28 items in the questionnaire, each of which represents a distinct coping strategies. It is 4-point likert scale (*Carver, Scheier, and Weintraub*). The Brief COPE measure demonstrates strong psychometric qualities, aiding in assessing coping strategies (*AlHarouny J. et al.,2022*)

The PERMA profiler: There are 23 items in the tool. It was used to evaluate and measure a person's total psychological well-being along five major aspects, which are denoted by the acronym PERMA- Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning and accomplishment (*Martin seligmen*). The PERMA-Profiler is a reliable tool for assessing psychological well-being across multiple domain (*Buttler J. Et. Al. ,2016*).

### **RESULTS**

The study revealed diverse levels of well-being, fanship, and coping strategies among participants (N-162).

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics**

	Mean.	Std. Deviation.	N
<b>OWB</b>	<b>145.57</b>	<b>29.029.</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>FANSHIP</b>	<b>66.60</b>	<b>20.710.</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>PROBLEM</b>	<b>57.77</b>	<b>9.835.</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>EMOTION</b>	<b>58.48</b>	<b>10.063.</b>	<b>162</b>
<b>AVOIDANT</b>	<b>44.70</b>	<b>7.456.</b>	<b>162</b>

As shown in table 1, the average overall well-being score fell within a specific range, there was considerable variability among individuals' reported well-being levels. Similarly, participants showed varied degrees of identification with their respective fandoms, indicating a range of fanship affinity. Regarding coping strategies, participants demonstrated varying frequencies in their use of problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and avoidant-focused coping mechanisms, highlighting individual differences in how they manage stressors or difficulties.

**Table 2: Correlation**

		Fanship	Problem focused	Avoidant focused	Emotion focused	OWB
<b>Fanship</b>	Pearson correlation	1	.153	.151	.156*	.130
	sig. (2-tailed)		.052	.055	.047	.100
	N	162	162	162	162	162
<b>Problem focused</b>	Pearson correlation	.153	1	.958**	.975**	.195*
	sig. (2-tailed)	.052		<.001	<.001	.013
	N	162	162	162	162	162
<b>Avoidant focused</b>	Pearson correlation	.151	.958**	.930**	1	.145
	sig. (2-tailed)	.055	<.001	<.001		.067
	N	162	162	162	162	162
<b>Emotion focused</b>	Pearson correlation	.156*	.975**	1	.930**	.104
	sig. (2-tailed)	.047	<.001		<.001	.187
	N	162	162	162	162	162
<b>OWB</b>	Pearson correlation	.130	.195*	.104	.145	1
	sig. (2-tailed)	.100	.013	.187	.067	
	N	162	162	162	162	162

**Correlation analysis:** In the correlation analysis as shown in the table 2, it was found that there is a positive but weak correlation ( $r = 0.130$ ,  $p = 0.100$ ) between fanship and psychological well-being (OWB), although it is not statistically significant at the standard level of 0.05. However, a moderate positive association was observed between problem-focused coping strategies and psychological well-being ( $r = 0.195$ ,  $p = 0.013$ ), indicating that individuals who utilize such strategies tend to report greater levels of overall well-being. Conversely, emotion-focused and avoidant-focused coping showed minor relationships with OWB but were not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

Furthermore, a weak positive correlation was identified between fanship and emotion-focused coping strategies among young adults (Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.156, with a p-value of 0.047, significant at the 0.05 level, 2-tailed), suggesting that individuals with higher levels of fanship tend to engage slightly more in emotion-focused coping strategies.

**Table 3: Model summary**

Model.	R	R Square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the estimates	Durbin-watson
1	.431 <sup>a</sup>	.186	.165	26.528	2.313

**Regression analysis:** Regression analysis revealed that fanship and coping strategies predict psychological well-being in young adults. The R-squared value of 0.186 indicates moderate predictive power, suggesting that 18.6% of the variability in psychological well-being scores can be explained by these variables. The adjusted R-squared value of 0.165 suggests that including predictor variables may not significantly enhance predictive ability. The standard error of estimates (26.528) gauges the model's variability, while the Durbin-Watson statistic (2.2313) indicated no significant autocorrelation in the residuals, upholding the model's independence assumption. As displayed in table 3.

**Table 4: Anova**

Model	Sum of Squares		Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	25179.663	4	6294.916	8.945	<.001
Residual	110490.090	157	703.759		
Total	135669.753	161			

The F-statistic of 8.945, with a significance level of less than 0.001, indicates that the regression model, including fanship and coping strategies as predictors, is statistically significant. This suggests that these predictors collectively contribute to explaining the variability in psychological well-being. The low p-value (<0.001) associated with the F-statistic confirms that the regression model significantly enhances the prediction of psychological well-being scores compared to a model with no predictors. As shown in the table 4.

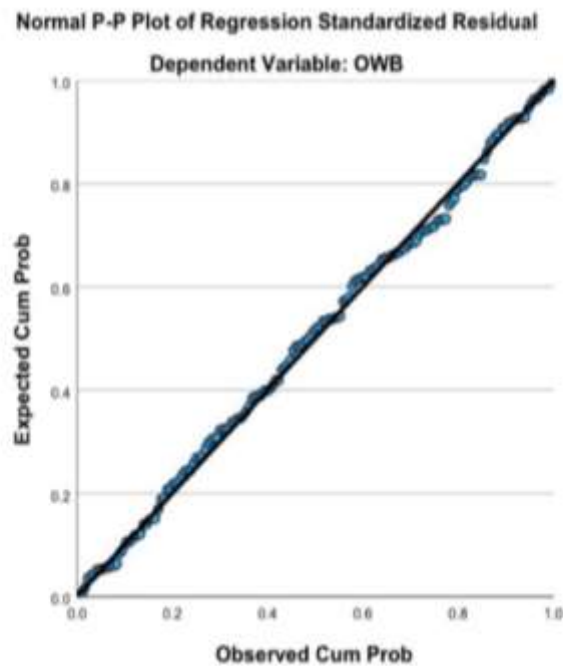
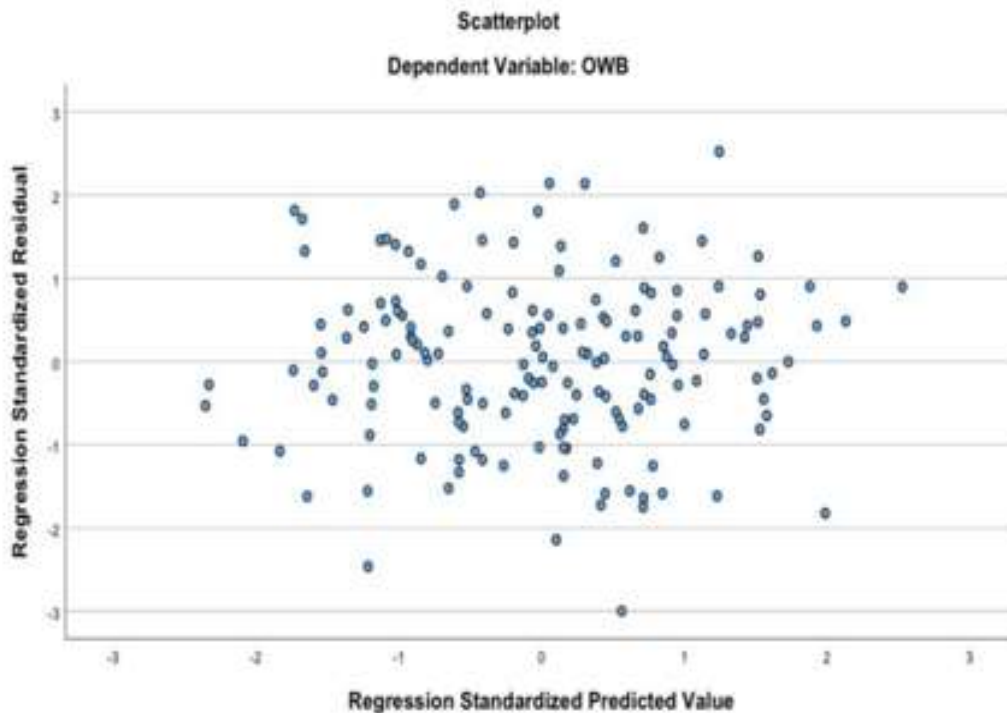
**Table 5: Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized B	Coefficient std. error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Lower Bound
(Constant)	118.589	13.664		8.679	<.001	91.600
FANSHIP	.160	.102	.114	1.569	.119	-.042
PROBLEM	6.565	1.237	2.224	5.307	<.001	4.121
EMOTION	-3.027	.941	-1.049	-3.216	.002	-4.886
AVOIDANT	-4.159	.980	-1.068	-4.243	<.001	-6.095

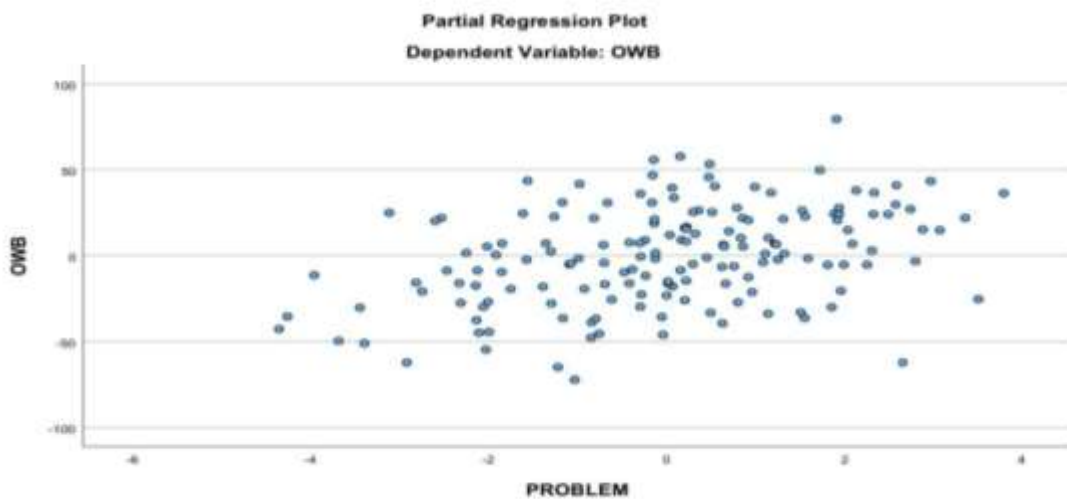
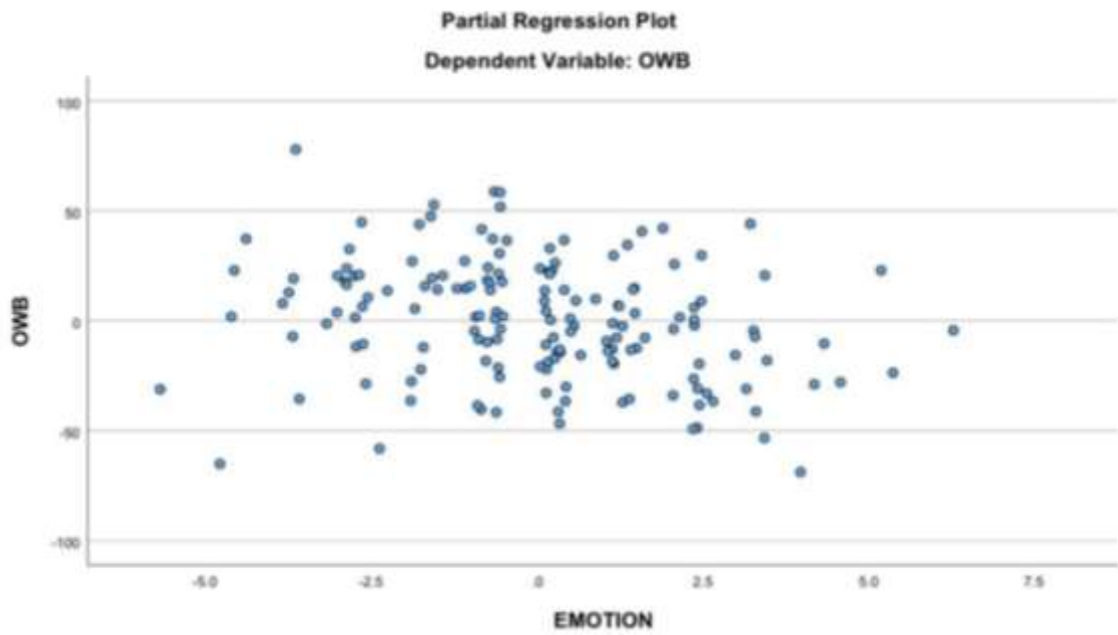
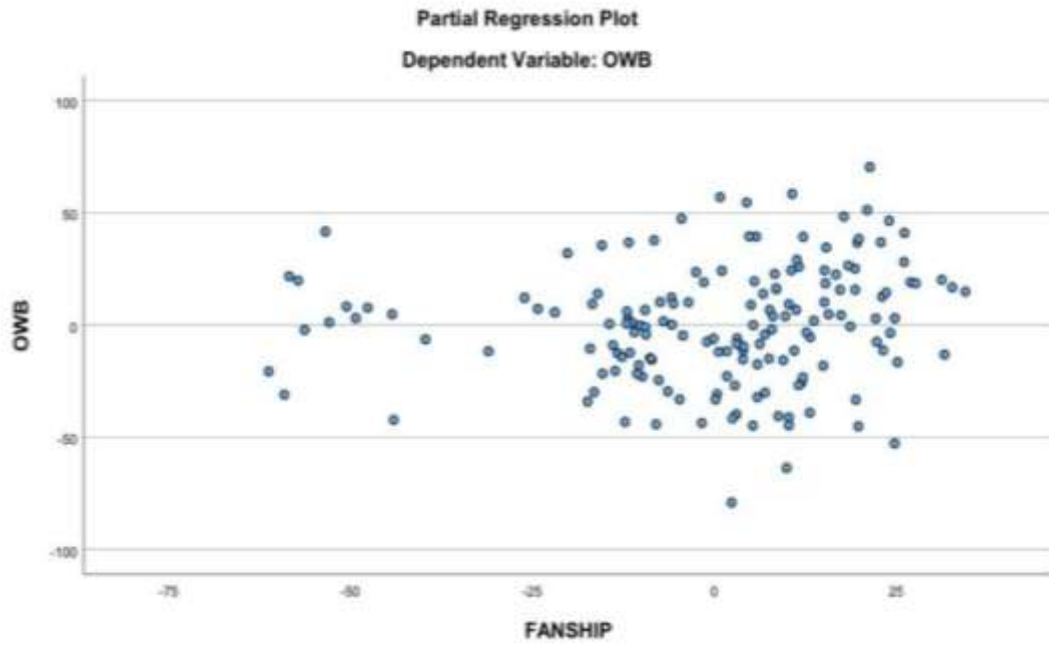
Model	95.0% Confidence Upper Bound	Zero-order	Correlations Partial	Part	Collinearity Tolerance	Statistics VIF
(Constant)	145.577					
FANSHIP	.362	.130	.124	.113	.975	1.025
PROBLEM	9.008	.195	.390	.382	.030	33.864
EMOTION	-1.168	.145	-.249	-	.049	20.519
AVOIDANT	-2.223	.104	-.321	-	.082	12.220
				.232		
				-		
				.306		

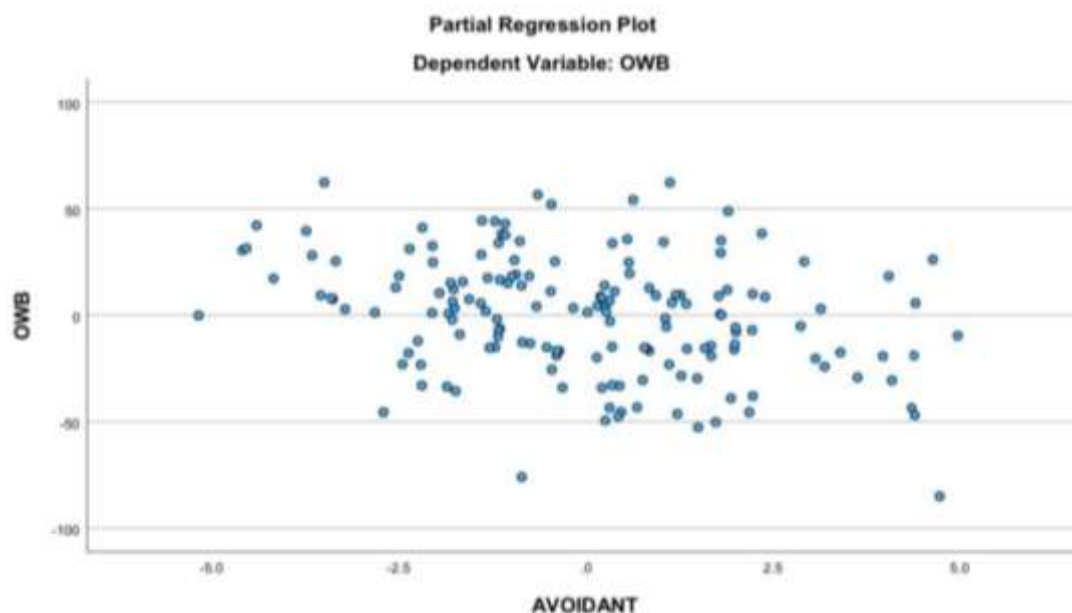
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Table 5 displays the Coefficients. While Fanship's coefficient (0.160,  $p = 0.119$ ) suggests it doesn't significantly impact well-being, Problem-focused coping (coefficient: 6.565,  $p < 0.001$ ) positively affects well-being. Whereas Emotion-focused coping (coefficient: -3.027,  $p = 0.002$ ) and avoidant-focused coping (coefficient: 4.159,  $p < 0.001$ ) have negative impacts on well-being. Also, Collinearity statistics (VIF and tolerance) indicate no significant multicollinearity issues, as all VIF values are within acceptable limits ( $< 10$ ).



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### DISCUSSION

The Aim was to study the relationship between Fanship, Coping Strategies and Psychological well-being among young adults. While signification relationships were found but not all of them supported the hypothesis and were predicted. Consequently, *H1*: There is a significant correlation between fanship, effective coping strategies and Psychological well-being among young adults. The hypothesis is partially rejected. The results of the study showed a weakly positive correlation but no statistically significant relationship between fanship and psychological well-being. This finding runs counter to earlier research that suggested that fanship had a beneficial effect on well-being and life satisfaction (*Reysen et. Al.,2022 and Laffan, 2020*). However, both researchers have pointed out that the social connections made within fan communities may be the reason for this positive correlation. This aspect, which was not addressed in the current study's hypothesis, could potentially explain the discrepancy in findings. Nevertheless, the result is consistent with a study that found no significant correlation between Fanship and Psychological well-being (*AlHarouny J. Et. Al.,2022*).

Moreover, coping strategies particularly problem-focused coping showed a statistically significant strong positive association with psychological well-being. This is consistent with other research that highlights how problem-focused techniques have been linked to lower stress levels and enhanced psychological Health (*Fitzgibbon K. Et. Al.,2023*). Conversely, there was minimal evidence of an impact on mental health outcomes from emotional and avoidant-focused coping strategies, as they exhibited weak and non-significant relationships with psychological well-being. Moreover, fanship and coping techniques had a weak positive correlation, with emotion-focused coping exhibiting a statistically significant correlation. This implies that people who are deeply engrossed in fandoms could utilize emotion-focused coping mechanisms to deal with stress or emotional challenges. This is in line with a study's findings that women employed emotion-focused coping mechanisms by participating in fan communities (*Anderson C. Et. Al.,2021*).

*H2*: Fanship and Coping strategies significantly predict the psychological well-being of young adults. The results showed a moderate level of predictive power, while these variables contribute to explaining some of the variability in psychological well-being, there are likely



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other factors influencing well-being that are not accounted for in the model. Fanship and coping strategies were discovered to be the predictors that collectively contribute to the variations in psychological well-being. The coefficient analysis result showed that fanship had no meaningful effect on psychological well-being, as evidenced by the lack of statistical significance. However, problem-focused coping had a substantial positive effect on psychological well-being, implying that using these techniques more frequently associated with higher well-being. In contrast, both emotion-focused and avoidant-focused coping had statistically significant but conflicting effects on psychological well-being. Both Emotion-focused and Avoidant-focused coping showed a negative effect, implying that increased engagement in this coping approach was associated with lower psychological well-being. As a result, the hypothesis is partly rejected.

### *Implications*

The study's implications span various domains. To gain a more advanced knowledge of their dynamics, research should look deeper into the intersection of coping techniques, psychological well-being, and fanship. From a clinical approach, therapies should prioritize problem-focused coping while addressing avoidant- and emotion-focused strategies, with clinicians evaluating fandom's impact on mental health. In educational contexts, institutions can promote awareness of the consequences of coping strategies and provide support groups that focus on problem-solving coping skills. Fan groups can create peer support programs in their areas to encourage healthy coping and raise mental health awareness using online platforms.

### *Limitations and Future Directions*

Despite notable findings, several limitations should be considered. These include the use of self-report measures, a small sample size, a focus on young adults, the possibility of response biases or social desirability effects, and a cross-sectional design. To obtain a thorough understanding of psychological well-being in the context of fanship and coping mechanisms among young adults, future research should investigate moderators and mediators of the relationship between fanship and psychological well-being, adopt qualitative approaches for deeper insights, and take a wider range of variables into consideration.

## **CONCLUSION**

The intersection of coping strategies, fanship and psychological well-being, is increasingly important specially for young adults as they are drawn more and more to fandom culture in this digital era. During this period of growth and achievements, this age group frequently experiences stress, therefore developing useful coping mechanisms is essential. This study looked at their relationship and concluded that while problem-focused coping is helpful, fanship has no discernible effect on psychological well-being. Relying solely on avoidant and emotion-focused coping techniques, however, could have negative effect on psychology well-being. In general, fandom has less of an impact on psychological well-being variability than coping strategies. However, It is necessary to conduct additional study to investigate potential elements that impact psychological well-being in this community and to improve theoretical models that depict the connections between well-being, coping strategies, and fanship Future research is suggested to conduct the research after collecting a larger, more random sample in light of these constraints. Incorporating participants with diverse ages and backgrounds could potentially mitigate the acquired results and improve their generalizability.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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