


Exploring the relationship between mental well-being and coping strategies among graduate students of a state university in the Philippines

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Abstract

This study examines the coping strategies and mental well-being of 77 graduate school students from the College of Teacher Education at Nueva Vizcaya State University for the academic year 2024-2025. Employing a quantitative research design using the descriptive-correlational method, data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using statistical procedures such as mean, analysis of variance (F-test), and Pearson-r correlation, with hypotheses tested at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings indicate that the overall mental well-being of graduate students is generally positive, with social and professional well-being rated as very good, while emotional and physical well-being received the lowest ratings of good. coping strategies were found to be effective, with a strong preference for focus on positives and support coping, while evasive coping was the least utilized. Statistical analyses reveal no significant differences in mental well-being and coping strategies across academic programs, suggesting that students experience similar challenges and employ comparable coping mechanisms. Furthermore, no significant relationship was found between mental well-being and coping strategies, indicating their independence. Based on these insights, a training program was developed to enhance key areas of well-being and coping, ensuring sustained support for students' academic and personal resilience.

Keywords: coping strategies, intervention program, mental well being

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1. Introduction

The concept of holistic well-being is critical in the teaching profession, where educators encounter unique psychological and emotional demands. Mental well-being is fundamental to teachers' effectiveness, given the multifaceted challenges they face—ranging from classroom management and academic expectations to administrative duties and community engagement. These cumulative pressures often result in elevated stress levels and emotional exhaustion. As such, the adoption of effective coping strategies is vital to sustaining professional competence and personal wellness. This study is grounded in the belief that self-care practices—such as regular physical activity, nutritious diets, and sufficient sleep—are foundational to mental resilience. Incorporating daily routines that promote physical relaxation and stress relief can significantly enhance overall well-being. Equally important is establishing a healthy work-life balance. By setting boundaries between professional obligations and personal time, teachers can prevent burnout, promote recovery, and achieve greater career satisfaction and sustainability. The researcher posits that prioritizing mental well-being and embracing proactive coping mechanisms empowers teachers to manage the intricacies of their roles with enhanced resilience and adaptability. Practices such as mindfulness, setting boundaries, seeking social support, and cultivating optimism are essential to maintaining mental health in high-pressure educational environments. When educators invest in their well-being, they are more equipped to create positive learning experiences, benefiting not only themselves but also their students.

Globally, mental well-being is recognized as a central component of health and development. The World Health Organization (WHO) and its member states have adopted the Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan 2013–2030, which outlines strategies to strengthen governance, develop community-based care systems, promote mental health, and enhance evidence-based policymaking. WHO's report, *World Mental Health Report: Transforming Mental Health for All* (2022), further emphasizes three transformative pathways: elevating mental health as a societal priority, reshaping environments to support well-being, and improving access to quality mental health services. Human rights, empowerment of people with lived experience, and cross-sectoral collaboration remain central to this agenda. Mental health is intrinsically linked to physical health and significantly shapes individuals' capacity to function and thrive. According to the Scottish Government (2023), mental well-being is not merely the absence of illness but a state of resilience, autonomy, and life satisfaction. It encompasses individuals' ability to manage psychological stress, maintain productivity, and live in alignment with personal values. Effective coping strategies—such as mindfulness, emotional regulation, and social support—foster psychological balance, enabling individuals to lead meaningful and sustainable lives.

In educational settings, these coping strategies are particularly crucial. Teachers encounter diverse challenges, including workload pressures, behavioral issues, and institutional demands. The American Psychological Association (APA, 2018) underscores the importance of both problem-focused strategies—such as improving classroom management and professional development—and emotion-focused strategies, including mindfulness and peer support. Additionally, fostering a supportive organizational culture is vital. Policies that prioritize teacher welfare, mental health resources, and open communication can enhance collective resilience and professional well-being. This study aligns with several key policy frameworks. It addresses the National Research Agenda for Teacher Education (2018) by focusing on teacher resilience and mental health—essential components of teacher quality and effectiveness. Graduate students, as prospective educators and educational leaders, are integral to this vision. By investigating their mental well-being and coping mechanisms, the research contributes to improving teacher preparation and long-term classroom success.

It also supports the Basic Education Research Agenda (2016) of the Department of Education, particularly

under the theme of *human resource development and employee welfare*. The study recognizes the need for innovative, non-monetary support strategies that enhance resilience and motivation. By understanding how current welfare provisions impact the mental well-being of graduate students, the research offers insights for strengthening institutional support mechanisms. Moreover, the study is anchored on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3, which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all. Graduate students in education are future change-makers; supporting their mental health contributes not only to individual success but also to broader societal well-being. This research aligns with SDG 3's emphasis on mental health as a critical aspect of sustainable development and public health.

Despite growing recognition, existing research on mental well-being and coping strategies among graduate students—especially in teacher education—remains limited. Specific stressors, such as academic pressure, financial concerns, and future career uncertainty, necessitate targeted, culturally responsive interventions. This study addresses these gaps by focusing on graduate students in the College of Teacher Education, aligning with the college's commitment to nurturing competent, emotionally resilient educators. By highlighting the relationship between mental well-being and coping strategies, this study contributes to the academic discourse on educator development, resilience, and mental health. It offers evidence-based insights that can inform institutional practices, policy initiatives, and future research in teacher education and well-being.

2. Review of Literature

This study is anchored in two foundational psychological theories that offer a comprehensive lens for examining mental well-being and coping mechanisms among graduate students in teacher education. These theories—the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) of Deci and Ryan (2000) and the Coping Theory of Lazarus and Folkman (1984)—collectively provide a robust framework for understanding how individuals sustain mental health through internal motivation and adaptive responses to stress.

2.1 Self-Determination Theory and Mental Well-Being

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) posits that individuals are inherently motivated to grow, develop, and thrive when three fundamental psychological needs are met: **autonomy** (the desire for self-governance and personal choice), **competence** (the need to feel effective and capable), and **relatedness** (the desire for meaningful connections with others). Deci and Ryan (2000) assert that the satisfaction of these needs fosters intrinsic motivation, which is essential for optimal psychological functioning, emotional stability, and well-being. Conversely, when these needs are frustrated, individuals are more vulnerable to diminished motivation and adverse mental health outcomes. SDT has been extensively applied in research on academic achievement, workplace engagement, and personal development. Within educational settings, it provides valuable insights into how learning environments and interpersonal relationships can either enhance or hinder mental wellness. By understanding and supporting these psychological needs, educational institutions can foster environments conducive to personal growth, sustained motivation, and psychological resilience.

Further reinforcing this perspective, Seligman (2018) describes mental well-being as a state of flourishing characterized by positive emotions, deep engagement, strong relationships, meaning, and achievement—components encapsulated in his PERMA model. This view aligns with Keyes' (2015) articulation of emotional well-being as the capacity to experience and regulate positive and negative emotions, and Ryff's (2019) conceptualization of psychological well-being, which includes autonomy, purpose in life, and personal growth. Keyes (2018) also highlights the significance of social well-being, emphasizing community engagement and belonging as vital components of mental health.

In addition, multidimensional frameworks for well-being extend to **professional well-being** (Diener, Oishi, & Tay, 2018), focusing on job satisfaction and fulfillment; **physical well-being** (Huppert & So, 2013), including health and fitness; **cognitive well-being** (Greenspoon & Saklofske, 2018), emphasizing decision-making and

intellectual engagement; and **environmental well-being** (Diener et al., 2018), which pertains to satisfaction with one's surroundings and sustainable living. Each of these dimensions contributes uniquely to the overall experience of mental wellness. These perspectives affirm that mental well-being is not merely the absence of illness but a dynamic, multidimensional state that encompasses emotional regulation, personal agency, social connection, and environmental satisfaction. By adopting this holistic lens, the present study investigates how graduate students navigate their academic and personal challenges while maintaining psychological resilience.

2.2 Coping Theory and Stress Adaptation

Complementing SDT, the Coping Theory by Lazarus and Folkman (1984) provides essential insights into how individuals respond to stress. Defined as the constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage external or internal demands appraised as taxing or exceeding one's resources, coping is central to psychological adaptation. The theory distinguishes between problem-focused coping, which aims to change the stressful situation, and emotion-focused coping, which aims to regulate emotional responses. Coping is influenced by a person's appraisal of the stressor and their available internal and external resources. Lazarus and Folkman identified key coping functions, including self-control, confrontation, emotional distancing, social support, escape-avoidance, radical acceptance, positive reappraisal, and strategic problem-solving. These functions serve as mechanisms through which individuals seek to restore psychological equilibrium and adapt to adversity.

Carver (2017) adds that coping strategies may be conscious or unconscious, adaptive or maladaptive. Effective coping fosters psychological adjustment and resilience, while maladaptive coping—such as chronic avoidance—may prolong stress and undermine well-being. Common strategies include active coping (taking initiative to resolve issues), support coping (seeking help from others), and focus on positives (reframing stressors optimistically). According to Taylor and Stanton (2017), focusing on positive reinterpretation enhances resilience by fostering hope, while support coping reduces emotional distress through emotional or instrumental assistance (Cohen & Wills, 2015). In contrast, evasive coping, as outlined by Skinner, Edge, Altman, and Sherwood (2018), involves denial or distraction and may offer temporary relief but can lead to long-term emotional and psychological strain if overused. Thus, recognizing the variability and personal nature of coping strategies is essential to tailoring effective interventions.

The relevance of these theoretical frameworks is substantiated by recent empirical studies. For instance, Birmi (2023), in his investigation of academic engagement and mental well-being, found that class engagement and its underlying motivations were stronger predictors of university students' mental health than GPA. His findings highlight the importance of motivation and active participation in academic life as key contributors to student well-being. This supports the integration of SDT and Coping Theory in studying the psychological experiences of students in educational contexts. By integrating Self-Determination Theory and Coping Theory, the present study adopts a holistic approach to understanding mental well-being among graduate students. SDT informs the intrinsic motivational forces that sustain personal growth and fulfillment, while Coping Theory elucidates how individuals respond to stress and maintain psychological equilibrium. This dual-theoretical framework enables a nuanced exploration of how motivational needs, coping styles, and contextual stressors interact to shape well-being outcomes.

In sum, this study aims to illuminate the complex interplay between internal psychological needs and external coping behaviors, offering insights into how graduate students in education can thrive amid academic and life challenges. Grounded in established theories and contemporary empirical findings, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of mental well-being and informs future interventions designed to enhance resilience and life satisfaction in educational environments.

2.3 Synthesis of Related Studies

The current researcher conducted an extensive review of various foundational concepts and theories on

well-being from leading scholars in the field. Seligman's (2018) work on mental well-being emphasized the importance of positive emotions and ongoing personal development as key components of flourishing. Keyes (2015) contributed to understanding emotional well-being, focusing on the presence of positive emotions and life satisfaction. Ryff's (2019) conceptualization of psychological well-being highlighted dimensions such as self-acceptance, personal growth, and purpose in life. Additionally, Keyes (2018) explored social well-being, emphasizing the significance of positive social relationships, social integration, and social contribution to overall well-being. Diener, Oishi, and Tay (2018) provided insights into professional well-being, which includes satisfaction and fulfillment in one's career or academic pursuits.

Huppert and So (2013) addressed physical well-being, encompassing factors such as physical health, fitness levels, nutrition, and sleep quality, all of which influence mental health and overall well-being. Greenspoon and Saklofske (2018) discussed cognitive well-being, focusing on cognitive processes such as decision-making, problem-solving, and intellectual curiosity. Furthermore, Diener et al. (2018) posited environmental well-being, which considers satisfaction with one's physical surroundings, including safety, access to nature, and sustainability. The researcher integrated these diverse perspectives into the conceptual framework of her study, recognizing the multidimensional nature of well-being and its various facets. By synthesizing these theories, the researcher gained a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to overall well-being across different domains of life. This conceptualization phase informed the researcher's approach to studying well-being, guiding the selection of variables, measurement tools, and research methodologies relevant to exploring the complexities of well-being in her research study.

The current researcher also examined relevant studies. Reinilä et al. (2023) analyzed the structure and stability of multidimensional mental well-being, focusing on its various dimensions and their long-term consistency. Hoelterhoff et al. (2023) investigated the conceptualization and experiences of mental well-being among frontline educators, exploring their unique perspectives and challenges. Yilmaz and Tunc (2022) explored the mediating roles of hope and its sub-dimensions in the relationship between mental well-being and resilience levels among psychological counselors. These studies are akin to the current research as they all center on mental well-being as a key research variable. However, they differ in terms of respondent demographics, survey instruments utilized, and research settings compared to the present investigation. Furthermore, the researcher also reviewed local studies. Diaco (2021) explored the perspectives of Asian college students on globalization and its impact on their traditional cultural beliefs and mental well-being. Dela Rosa et al. (2022) investigated the relationships among generational identity, mental well-being, and life satisfaction among Millennial and Generation X Filipino adult learners. Sandoval (2023) examined the mental well-being of teachers in the Southern Tagalog Region of the Philippines, focusing on its correlation with job satisfaction and coping strategies.

While these studies all examine mental well-being as a key variable, they differ from the present research investigation in terms of the research frameworks utilized, respondent demographics, and research environments. Furthermore, the researcher thoroughly reviewed and incorporated several seminal concepts and ideas related to coping strategies. Carver (2017) provided insights into various coping strategies used by individuals facing stress and adversity. Taylor and Stanton (2017) emphasized focusing on positives as a coping strategy, highlighting its role in fostering resilience and optimism during challenging times. Cohen and Wills (2015) explored support seeking as a coping strategy, underscoring its importance in receiving emotional, informational, or instrumental assistance from others.

Additionally, Lazarus and Folkman's (2014) discussion on active coping detailed the proactive approach of directly addressing stressors through problem-solving, planning, and assertive communication. In contrast, Skinner et al. (2018) described evasive coping strategies, such as denial, avoidance, or distraction techniques, which individuals employ to minimize direct confrontation with stressors. These diverse concepts and frameworks provided the researcher with a comprehensive understanding of coping strategies as a central construct in her research. By synthesizing these perspectives, the researcher was able to conceptualize how

different coping strategies influence individuals' responses to stress and adversity. This conceptualization phase guided the selection of variables, research methodologies, and analytical approaches relevant to exploring coping strategies in the context of her study.

As a point of reference, the researcher also examined pertinent foreign studies. Terrell et al. (2024) underscored the significance for practitioners on college campuses to comprehend the interplay among stressful life events, depression, and coping strategies. Van Heijst et al. (2024) explored the coping strategies employed by second-career student teachers. Chennamsetti and Khawaja (2023) investigated the challenges faced by Indian international students in American higher education and examined the coping strategies they utilized. Mercer and Thomas (2024) conducted a study highlighting heightened stress levels and increased mental health risks, evaluating coping strategies among their subjects. These studies all delve into coping strategies similar to the present investigation but differ in terms of respondent selection, questionnaire design, research methodology, and study environment.

She also examined several local studies focusing on coping strategies as a variable. Ngohayon and Culimay (2023) conducted a descriptive survey examining stress experiences and coping strategies among employed university teachers. Cruz et al. (2023) investigated academic stress and coping mechanisms among college freshmen during the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically in the context of online education. Yazon et al. (2017) conducted a descriptive-correlational study exploring the relationship between students' coping mechanisms and academic performance among Filipino undergraduate students. These Philippine-based studies all centered on coping strategies as a critical variable. Paclit (2022) studied **organizational health of Alfonso Castaneda district and its correlation to instructional leadership styles of school administrators and coping strategies of teachers in the new normal**. However, they differ from the present investigation in terms of their research frameworks, participant demographics, and specific research environments. Each study provided unique insights into how coping strategies are employed in different contexts within the Philippines, contributing valuable perspectives to the broader understanding of coping mechanisms and their implications for well-being and academic success.

3. Methodology

Research Design. This study made use of quantitative research design employing descriptive-correlational approach in investigating the probable correlation between coping strategies of graduate school students of Nueva Vizcaya State University-Bambang Campus, and their mental well-being for academic year 2024-2025. This research design objectively aimed to measure phenomena, using structured research instruments or observations. The use of statistical analysis to draw conclusions by the researcher, and generalize findings to larger populations is noted. Moreover, the descriptive-correlational technique enables the analysis of relationships between different constructs, in this study are mental well-being and coping strategies. It is also known by the current researcher that quantitative research design with the utilization of descriptive-correlational method usually provides a structured framework for mental well-being as a phenomenon. This research design and method offers clarity and accuracy in identifying variables or constructs that influence the outcome of mental health outcomes. This contributes to evidence-based processes and making decisions in the academic landscape.

Research Environment. In advancing the professional development and expertise of educators, the Graduate School of the College of Teacher Education at Nueva Vizcaya State University (NVSU) - Bambang Campus plays a critical role in advance education system of the region and even in the national level where this study was conducted. The College of Teacher Education- Graduate School at the Bambang campus promotes a culture of research and scholarly inquiry both for its students and faculty. These stakeholders are encouraged to engage in researches that can complement and contribute to the advancement of educational practice and theory building in aid of policy making for higher education in the country. Professors in the graduate school initiates and propose research projects that address both local and national challenges in education, drawing inspiration

from international discourse in education. These professors also serve as advisers and research consultants to graduate school students. In terms of the university internationalization efforts. The Graduate School is committed in advancing beyond borders. This effort has been acknowledged through its ranking of 101-200 in the Global Top 100 Innovative Universities of the World University Rankings for Innovation (WURI) as part of the Internationalization Champions of Nation-Building and Sustainability (ICONS) 2023.

Respondents of the Study. The respondents of this research investigation consisted of graduate school students enrolled at the College of Teacher Education, Nueva Vizcaya State University-Bambang Campus. A sample was selected using the Slovin Formula, ensuring a representative distribution of the population. Out of the 94 graduate students enrolled in the first semester of the 2024-2025 academic year, 77 students were chosen, representing an overall response rate of 81.91%. The breakdown of participants by program is as follows: 11 out of 13 students (84.62%) were from the Doctor of Education program, 47 out of 58 students (81.03%) were from the Master of Arts in Education program, and 19 out of 23 students (82.61%) were from the Master of Arts in Teaching program.

Table 1

Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents of the Study

	Population	Sample	Percentage
Doctor of Education	13	11	84.62
Master of Arts in Education	58	47	81.03
Master of Arts in Teaching	23	19	82.61
Total	94	77	81.91

Sampling Procedure. The researcher employed a stratified sampling technique, using a simple random sampling procedure to select respondents from the various courses within the graduate school. These courses served as the strata for this investigation. In conducting an investigation into the mental well-being and coping strategies of graduate school students at NVSU-Bambang Campus, the observance of research ethics was of paramount importance. To safeguard the privacy and respect of all participants involved, ethical considerations were meticulously observed throughout the research study. Informed consent as a cornerstone of the ethical protocol were observed by the researcher. The respondents were informed about the nature, purpose, and some implications of the research study. They were informed about their participation including any risks and benefits if there are. Consent was obtained through writing, ensuring that participation by the respondents is voluntary and that respondents understood they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences whatsoever.

Research Instrument. The needed data for this research investigation is being gathered using the following research instruments that are valid and reliable.

Mental Well-Being Descriptive Questionnaire. In order to measure the dimensions of emotional, psychological, social, professional, physical, cognitive, and environmental well-being, the 42-item questionnaire developed and validated by Apostol et al. (2024) was utilized.

COPE Instrument. In order to identify the coping strategies of the graduate school students when they experience a stressful event, this 48-item questionnaire was adopted by the researcher. This research tool was developed and validated by Carver (1997) and was revalidated by Knoll and Associates (2005). It was also utilized by Paclit (2022) in his PhD-OPD dissertation at the Nueva Vizcaya State University.

Statistical Treatment of Data - The analysis of data gathered through the questionnaire were done using the following appropriate statistical tools.

Mean. In order to determine the perceived mental well-being and coping strategies of the respondents, this statistical tool was used by the researcher.

Analysis of Variance I or F-test. This was utilized to establish significant differences on the perception of the

respondents of their mental well-being and coping strategies when they are group according to degree enrolled in the graduate school.

Pearson-r: This was used to determine the significant relationship between the respondents' mental well-being and coping strategies.

4. Results and Discussion

Problem 1. What is the perception of the graduate school students of their mental well-being along the dimensions of emotional, psychological, social, professional, physical, cognitive, and environmental well-being?

Table 2

Mean and Qualitative Description of the Respondents' Perception of their Mental Well-Being (n=77)

Mental Well-Being	Area Mean	Qualitative Description
Emotional Well-Being	3.11	Good
Psychological Well-Being	3.43	Good
Social Well-Being	3.77	Very Good
Professional Well-Being	3.69	Very Good
Physical Well-Being	3.16	Good
Cognitive Well-Being	3.44	Good
Grand Mean	3.45	Good

The overall perceived mental well-being of graduate school students at the Nueva Vizcaya State University-Bambang Campus is rated as Good, with a grand mean of 3.45. This indicates that, on average, graduate school students maintain a positive outlook on their mental well-being across various dimensions. Among the dimensions, Social Well-Being holds the highest mean score of 3.77, rated as Very Good, suggesting that graduate school students feel highly satisfied with their interpersonal relationships and social interactions. This is followed closely by Professional Well-Being with a mean of 3.69, also rated as Very Good, reflecting a strong sense of fulfillment and satisfaction with their professional or academic endeavors.

Environmental Well-Being comes next, with a mean of 3.52 and a rating of Very Good, indicating that students perceive their surroundings as supportive and conducive to their overall well-being. Meanwhile, Cognitive Well-Being and Psychological Well-Being are rated as Good, with mean scores of 3.44 and 3.43, respectively, reflecting positive evaluations of their intellectual engagement and mental states. Physical Well-Being, with a mean score of 3.16, is also rated as Good, suggesting moderate satisfaction with their physical health and fitness. Lastly, Emotional Well-Being, while still rated as Good, has the lowest mean score of 3.11, indicating that graduate school students feel relatively less satisfied in this area compared to others.

The above result reveals strengths in social, professional, and environmental well-being, which are rated as Very Good, while emotional and physical well-being emerge as areas that may benefit from additional support or interventions to enhance the respondents overall mental well-being. The above findings find support from Seligman's (2018) conceptualization of mental well-being as a state of flourishing that integrates positive emotions, meaningful relationships, active engagement, a sense of achievement, and continuous personal growth. Seligman's holistic approach aligns with the dimensions explored in the study, emphasizing that well-being encompasses more than the absence of illness. It incorporates emotional stability, social support, and purpose, all of which are evident in the higher ratings for Social Well-Being, Professional Well-Being, and Environmental Well-Being among the students.

The emphasis on positive emotions, which Seligman identifies as foundational to resilience and stress management, resonates with the students' overall **Good** rating in Emotional Well-Being, though it indicates an area for growth. Similarly, active engagement—linked to the concept of flow and satisfaction in purposeful activities—parallels the strong ratings in Professional and Cognitive Well-Being. These findings illustrate how nurturing an environment of engagement and meaningful relationships supports mental well-being.

Seligman's framework also underscores the critical roles of physical health and emotional resilience,

mirroring the need for targeted interventions in Emotional and Physical Well-Being. By fostering holistic initiatives, educational administrators can align with this model to enhance students' capacity to thrive academically and personally.

Problem 2. What is the perception of the respondents of their coping strategies along the dimensions of focus on positives, support coping, active coping, and evasive coping?

Table 3

Mean and Qualitative Description of the Respondents' Perception of their Coping Strategies (n=77)

Coping Strategies	Area Mean	Qualitative Description
Focus on Positives	3.78	Very Good
Support Coping	3.57	Very Good
Active Coping	3.48	Good
Evasive Coping	2.11	Fair
Grand Mean	3.23	Good

The data on the perceived coping strategies of graduate school students at NVSU-Bambang Campus reveals an overall Grand Mean of 3.23, indicating a Good level of coping strategies among the students. Among the specific strategies, the highest-rated approach is Focus on Positives, with a mean score of 3.78, described as Very Good, suggesting that students excel in maintaining a positive outlook amidst challenges. Similarly, Support Coping is also rated as Very Good, with a mean score of 3.57, highlighting the students' strong reliance on social support systems and interpersonal connections to manage stress. Active Coping, with a mean of 3.48, is described as Good, demonstrating that students employ problem-solving and proactive measures to address difficulties effectively, though slightly less consistently than the first two strategies. Conversely, Evasive Coping has the lowest mean score of 2.11, described as Fair, indicating that avoidance or escapism is less favored or effective among the students as a coping mechanism. The findings suggest that graduate students at NVSU-Bambang Campus generally adopt constructive coping strategies, with a tendency to focus on positive thinking and seek support, while showing less reliance on evasive approaches.

The above findings find support from Carver (2017), who asserts that coping strategies represent deliberate efforts individuals use to navigate stressful events that exceed their available resources. The results align with this theory, as student-respondents at NVSU-Bambang Campus employ a variety of both cognitive and behavioral strategies to manage stress. The Focus on Positives and Support Coping strategies indicate adaptive, constructive efforts to reframe challenges and seek emotional support, demonstrating that students tend to engage in resilience-building behaviors, such as accepting the situation, seeking advice, or relying on faith and social networks. These strategies reflect adaptive coping, as they help foster personal growth, resilience, and emotional well-being.

On the other hand, the Active Coping strategy, while effective, shows a Good but less frequent application of problem-solving and direct actions, suggesting that students apply proactive strategies, but there is room for greater consistency in utilizing these methods. The Evasive Coping strategy, with a Fair mean score, aligns with maladaptive coping as students show minimal use of avoidance behaviors. These strategies—such as denying the reality of a stressful event or delaying action—are employed to a lesser extent, signaling that while some students may engage in avoidance, it is not their primary method of coping. Overall, the results underscore the diversity and adaptability of coping strategies, where students mainly rely on adaptive methods to manage stress but occasionally revert to maladaptive strategies, which can have mixed effects on their psychological well-being.

Problem 3. Are there significant differences in the perceived mental well-being and coping strategies of the respondents when they are grouped according to degree?

Table 4 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in the perceived mental well-being of respondents across academic programs, as evidenced by the computed F-value of 2.91, which is lower than the critical F-value of 3.12 at a 0.05 level of significance with 2 and 74 degrees of freedom. The results of the F-test

confirm that variations in mental well-being among the groups are not statistically significant. Despite this, the mean scores show slight differences, with Master of Arts in Education (MAEd) students reporting the lowest mean score (3.13), Doctor of Education (EdD) students having a moderate mean score (3.48), and Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) students exhibiting the highest mean score (3.74). However, these variations are not statistically significant due to several factors or reasons.

Table 4

Summary of Differences on the Perceived Mental Well-Being of the Respondents when Grouped According to Degrees (n=77)

Degrees (n = 77)				
Groupings	Mean	Computed F-value	Critical F-value	Remarks
EdD	3.48	2.91	3.12	Not Significant
MAEd	3.13			
MAT	3.74			
Degrees of Freedom: 2 and 74		Level of Significance: 0.05		

One possible reason for the lack of significant differences is that all respondents, regardless of their academic program, experience similar academic and professional stressors. The pressures of coursework, research requirements, deadlines, and the challenge of balancing work, studies, and personal responsibilities are common among graduate students, leading to relatively uniform mental well-being levels. Additionally, students across these programs may have access to the same institutional support systems, such as faculty mentorship, academic resources, and mental health services, which help regulate stress and promote overall well-being. Furthermore, individual coping strategies and resilience play a crucial role, as graduate students often develop time management, adaptability, and problem-solving skills that enable them to navigate academic challenges effectively.

Another factor that may contribute to the similar well-being scores is the overlapping career aspirations and motivations among students in the MAEd, MAT, and EdD programs. Many pursue graduate studies for professional development, career advancement, and personal fulfillment, fostering a shared sense of purpose that enhances motivation and emotional stability. Moreover, while different programs present unique challenges—such as the research-heavy coursework of MAEd students, the practical teaching applications of MAT students, and the leadership responsibilities of EdD students—these stressors may balance out across groups, preventing significant differences in mental well-being.

In conclusion, although minor variations in mean scores exist, the statistical analysis confirms that perceived mental well-being does not differ significantly among respondents from different academic programs. This finding suggests that shared experiences, institutional support, coping mechanisms, and career motivations contribute to similar well-being levels. As a result, rather than focusing on differences between programs, mental health interventions should be designed to address common stressors while providing targeted support for the specific challenges each group faces.

Problem 4. Is there a significant relationship between the perceived mental well-being and coping strategies of the respondents?

Table 5 below reveals a very weak negative relationship between the perceived mental well-being and coping strategies of the respondents, as indicated by the computed r-value of -0.043, which is significantly lower than the critical r-value of 0.224 at a 0.05 level of significance with 75 degrees of freedom. This finding leads to the acceptance of the null hypothesis, suggesting no significant relationship between these two variables. The results suggest that as the respondents' mental well-being increases, their reliance on coping strategies tends to decrease slightly. This could imply that individuals with higher mental well-being may feel less need to actively employ coping mechanisms, as they might already possess a strong sense of resilience or stability. Conversely, those with lower mental well-being might engage more frequently in coping strategies as a way to manage their stress or challenges. However, the weak magnitude of the relationship indicates that other factors likely play a more significant role in shaping both mental well-being and coping strategies.

Table 5

Correlation Coefficient Between the Perceived Mental Well-Being and Coping Strategies of the Respondents (n=77)

Compared Variables	Computed r-value	Critical r-value	Remarks
Mental Well-Being (3.45) VS Coping Strategies (3.23)	-0.043 (<i>very weak negative relationship</i>)	0.224	Significant

Degrees of Freedom: 75

Level of Significance: 0.05

The results in Table 6, which show a very weak negative relationship between perceived mental well-being and coping strategies, suggest several important insights. First, the weak correlation indicates that mental well-being and coping strategies function largely independently, meaning that the level of coping strategies employed by respondents does not strongly influence their overall mental well-being, and vice versa. The negative direction of the relationship could imply that individuals with higher mental well-being may feel more resilient and less reliant on active coping mechanisms. Their positive mental state might naturally buffer them against stress, reducing the perceived need for intentional stress-management techniques. Furthermore, the results suggest that coping strategies alone may not be the primary drivers of mental well-being. Other factors, such as personal resilience, external support systems, life satisfaction, or work environment, could have a stronger impact. Additionally, the variability in the effectiveness of coping strategies may play a role, as not all approaches are equally beneficial. For instance, some respondents might use avoidance-based strategies, which provide temporary relief but do not address underlying issues, leading to limited improvements in mental well-being. These findings highlight the importance of considering external factors and a broader approach to mental health. Educational institutions or organizations could benefit from implementing comprehensive mental health programs that address multiple dimensions, such as resilience-building, professional development, and social support, rather than solely focusing on coping strategies. This holistic perspective is essential for fostering overall mental well-being among individuals.

5. Conclusions

- The overall mental well-being of graduate school students at Nueva Vizcaya State University-Bambang Campus is generally positive, with a Good rating. Students excel in Social Well-Being and Professional Well-Being, both rated as Very Good, indicating high satisfaction in their social and professional interactions. Other dimensions, such as Environmental Well-Being, Cognitive Well-Being, and Psychological Well-Being, show favorable evaluations. However, Physical Well-Being and Emotional Well-Being are rated as Good, with Emotional Well-Being identified as the lowest-rated dimension.
- The coping strategies employed by the graduate school students reveal a good level of effectiveness. The highest-rated strategies are Focus on Positives and Support Coping, indicating strong reliance on maintaining positivity and social support. Active Coping is rated as Good, suggesting moderate use of problem-solving approaches. Conversely, Evasive Coping is the least utilized strategy, rated as Fair.
- There is no significant difference in the perceived mental well-being of students across academic degree programs. Similarly, no significant variation is observed in their coping strategies, indicating that students employ similar coping mechanisms regardless of their academic program.
- There is no significant relationship between the mental well-being and coping strategies of the respondents, as indicated by a very weak negative correlation. This suggests that the two variables are largely independent of one another.
- Based on these findings, a training program was developed to address the areas of mental well-being and coping strategies rated as Good, with specific focus on Emotional Well-Being, Psychological Well-Being, Physical Well-Being, Cognitive Well-Being, and Active Coping. Additionally, the

program includes topics to sustain dimensions rated as Very Good, ensuring continuous improvement and support for students' strengths in both constructs.

5.1 Recommendations

- Graduate school administrators and professors should develop targeted programs to improve emotional and physical well-being, as these are the lowest-rated dimensions. Workshops focusing on stress management, emotional regulation, and physical health promotion can be organized to support students in these areas.
- Students should be encouraged to adopt and practice effective coping strategies, particularly Active Coping, as it demonstrates moderate use. Training sessions or peer mentoring programs could be introduced to teach proactive problem-solving techniques and encourage their application in academic and personal challenges.
- Efforts should be made to sustain the positive evaluations in Social Well-Being, Professional Well-Being, Environmental Well-Being, Focus on Positives, and Support Coping. Programs that foster a supportive academic environment, strengthen interpersonal relationships, and promote professional growth should be continued and enhanced.
- Given no significant differences in perceived mental well-being across academic degrees, tailored interventions should be developed to address the specific needs of students in different programs. Faculty and program heads can work collaboratively to identify and implement strategies that best suit their students' unique circumstances.
- Since there is no significant relationship between mental well-being and coping strategies, further research should be conducted to explore other factors influencing these variables. This can guide the development of more comprehensive interventions to address students' needs holistically.
- The proposed training program should be implemented and regularly evaluated to ensure its effectiveness in enhancing areas of mental well-being and coping strategies rated as Good while reinforcing those rated as Very Good. Continuous feedback from participants can guide adjustments and improvements to the program.
- It is strongly recommended to replicate this study in a different research environment to validate and strengthen the reliability and generalizability of the results. Conducting the study in varied settings can provide deeper insights, identify potential contextual differences, and further establish the validity and reliability of the findings.

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