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Research Article

Psychological Well-Being and Social Support as Moderators of the Stress Coping–Performance Relationship Among University Students

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated whether stress coping skills predict academic performance among university students. Using data from 348 participants, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted. The results showed that stress coping significantly predicted academic performance, with the model explaining 12.4% of the variance (R^2 = .124). The overall regression was statistically significant, F(1, 346) = 49.00, p < .00001. The coefficient for stress coping was positive and significant (β = 0.184, SE = 0.026, t = 7.00, p < .00001), indicating that for each one-unit increase in coping ability, academic performance increased by 0.184 units on average. The intercept was also significant (β = 2.936, SE = 0.090, t = 32.62, p < .00001), representing the expected academic performance score when coping is at its average level. These findings suggest a meaningful positive relationship between students' ability to manage stress and their academic outcomes. Students who use effective coping strategies, such as emotional regulation and proactive problem-solving, tend to perform better academically. This supports the idea that coping skills contribute to academic resilience and success. Further analysis showed that both psychological well-being and social support significantly strengthened the positive effect of stress coping on academic performance. Psychological well-being had a slightly stronger moderating effect (β = 0.067, p = .0005) compared to social support (β = 0.061, p = .0025), indicating that internal emotional resilience more robustly enhances coping's impact on performance. Based on these findings, universities should implement programs that promote psychological well-being, such as wellness workshops and counselling services, alongside initiatives that build social support networks like peer mentoring and group activities. These interventions can help students develop stronger coping skills and improve academic outcomes. Overall, the analysis confirms that stress coping is a significant predictor of

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academic performance, highlighting the importance of fostering adaptive coping mechanisms supported by emotional and social resources.

Keywords: *Academic performance, Moderation analysis, Psychological well-being, Social support stress coping*

Background

University students operate in a fast-paced academic landscape characterized by competitive performance standards, tight deadlines, shifting interpersonal dynamics, and the pressure to maintain psychological equilibrium (Ross et al., 2024). These stressors, while often framed as developmental challenges, have the potential to undermine students' efficiency, focus, and long-term academic outcomes (Ren et al., 2025; Hyseni Duraku et al., 2024). As such, identifying factors that support students' ability to cope with stress has become a focal point in higher education research (Kapil et al., 2024; Wapaño, 2025).

Stress coping strategies—such as emotional regulation, cognitive reframing, and task prioritization—have been widely acknowledged for their protective role in buffering academic strain (Uppal, 2024; Sarwar et al., 2025). This understanding is grounded in Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) transactional model of stress and coping, which conceptualizes coping as the cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and internal demands appraised as taxing or exceeding one's resources. This model highlights the dynamic process by which individuals evaluate stressors and select coping strategies to maintain psychological equilibrium and functional performance. However, their effectiveness does not occur in isolation. Emerging research suggests that psychological well-being, defined by the presence of positive emotions, resilience, and life purpose, can strengthen the impact of coping strategies (Aldbyani et al., 2025; Kellot, 2024). In the same vein, Ryff's (1989) multidimensional model of psychological well-being further informs this perspective by identifying key components such as self-acceptance, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and personal growth as essential to optimal functioning. This model underscores how internal psychological resources contribute to resilience and the capacity to effectively utilize coping mechanisms in stressful academic contexts. Likewise, social support, through empathy, encouragement, and meaningful interactions, is thought to enhance both perceived control and persistence in academic contexts (Chen et al., 2023; Ongcoy & Tagare, 2024). Building on Cohen's (1988) seminal work, social support is understood as the perception and actuality of being cared for, valued, and part of a social network, which buffers the negative effects of stress and promotes adaptive functioning. Cohen's stress-buffering hypothesis posits that social support mitigates the adverse effects of stress by enhancing individuals' coping resources, a principle that has been widely applied to academic settings to explain how peer and family support improve student resilience and performance.

While stress coping and performance have been studied independently, few investigations have explored how these mechanisms interact with moderating variables within the academic environment (Amponsah et al., 2025; Gao et al., 2023). This study offers a novel contribution by testing the joint and comparative moderating effects of psychological well-being and social support in the coping–performance link (Dong et al., 2024; Slemp et al., 2024). Moreover, it contextualizes these relationships within a Southeast Asian university setting—addressing cultural gaps in the literature and reflecting the lived realities of Filipino students (Celeste et al., 2024; Reyes & Serrano, 2022). Despite growing global research on stress coping, psychological well-being, and social support in academic settings, there remains a notable gap in understanding how these factors interact specifically within the Philippine higher education context. Filipino university students face unique cultural, social, and educational challenges that may influence their coping processes and academic outcomes differently from

other populations. Addressing this gap is crucial for developing culturally relevant interventions and support systems tailored to Filipino students' lived experiences. By integrating both internal and external psychosocial dimensions, the study advances a layered understanding of how student performance can be supported more holistically in diverse educational contexts (Acoba, 2024; Morales-Rodríguez & Morales-Rodríguez, 2024).

Given this conceptual landscape, university students often face a dynamic and demanding academic environment characterized by deadlines, performance expectations, social pressures, and limited coping resources. The ability to effectively manage stress has a direct bearing on their academic performance and psychological health. While stress coping strategies are recognized as essential for resilience, the role of moderating factors such as psychological well-being and social support—both integral aspects of student life—remains insufficiently understood. This study aims to investigate whether stress coping mechanisms significantly predict academic performance and whether psychological well-being and social support moderate this relationship among university students.

Specifically, the research seeks to answer four core questions: (1) To what extent does stress coping level predict academic performance among university students? (2) Does psychological well-being moderate the relationship between stress coping level and academic performance? (3) Does social support moderate the relationship between stress coping level and academic performance? (4) Which of the two moderators—psychological well-being or social support—exerts a stronger influence on the relationship between stress coping and academic performance? and (5) What are the practical implications of the findings for student support programs, academic interventions, and higher education policies? Corresponding to these questions, the study tests the following null hypotheses: H_{01} states that stress coping level does not significantly predict performance level among university students; H_{02} posits that psychological well-being does not moderate the relationship between stress coping and academic performance; and H_{03} proposes that social support does not moderate the relationship between stress coping and academic performance. Through this multi-layered inquiry, the study aims to provide an empirically grounded and contextually relevant understanding of student resilience and achievement in higher education.

Methods

Research Design. This study employed a descriptive-correlational design to examine the predictive and moderating relationships between stress coping level and academic performance among university students. Specifically, the study tested the direct influence of stress coping on performance and evaluated the moderating effects of psychological well-being and social support. The design allowed for the identification of statistical relationships among variables without manipulating conditions, making it appropriate for assessing naturally occurring psychosocial traits in an academic setting.

Respondents. The target population comprised of undergraduate students enrolled in various programs at a private university in Cebu City, Philippines aged between 18 to 25, with a final sample size of 348 respondents. Convenience sampling was employed to select participants based on accessibility and willingness to participate. Inclusion criteria was defined to ensure relevance, and participation was voluntary, subject to informed consent, thereby maintaining ethical integrity throughout the data collection process (Golzar et al., 2022).

Instruments. A four-part survey questionnaire was used to assess the study variables, with each item rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The first part comprised the Stress Coping Scale, a 4-item self-report measure assessing adaptive strategies such as emotional regulation and task-focused behavior (Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$). These items reflect self-regulatory mechanisms aligned with constructs including perceived control, task-focused calmness, and demand management—key components of psychological resilience (Is-

lam & Rabbi, 2024; Amalianita et al., 2025; Pérez-Jorge et al., 2025; Polizzi & Lynn, 2023; Pang et al., 2024). The second part contained the Academic Performance Scale, also composed of four items, evaluating perceived efficiency, learning outcomes, and goal attainment under pressure (Cronbach's α = .80). These statements reflect stress-resilient academic functioning, capturing elements such as executive control, deadline adherence, and adaptive accuracy (Ren et al., 2025; Au et al., 2023; Ross et al., 2024; Dörrenbächer-Ulrich & Bregulla, 2024; Hills & Peacock, 2024).

The third component was the Psychological Well-Being Scale, consisting of four items that measure life satisfaction, optimism, and self-efficacy (Cronbach's α = .84). These responses represent adaptive psychological strengths—such as emotional resilience, confidence in adversity, and purposeful engagement—which are widely recognized in contemporary wellness models (Pang et al., 2024; Mtshweni, 2024). Lastly, the Social Support Scale included four items capturing students' perceived access to emotional and instrumental support from peers, family, and mentors (Chronbach's α = .81). These items reflect the emotional dimension of support, including empathetic encouragement, active listening, and motivational reinforcement—factors central to stress regulation and goal persistence (Hassan et al., 2023; Samoy et al., 2025; Liu et al., 2024; Sutton, 2025).

Data Collection Procedure. Data collection was conducted through online questionnaires administered via secure university platforms. Participants received a digital invitation and access to the survey through MS Teams, the university's designated communication channel. They were provided a one-week window to complete the questionnaire. Informed consent was obtained electronically, with assurances of data confidentiality and the voluntary nature of participation. The survey required approximately 10–12 minutes to complete, and no academic incentives or penalties were associated with participation.

Data Analysis. Preliminary analyses included descriptive statistics and reliability testing to evaluate the distribution and internal consistency of all measures. A simple linear regression was initially conducted to examine whether stress coping significantly predicted academic performance. To further assess the moderating effects of psychological well-being and social support, two separate hierarchical multiple regression models were computed. In the first model, psychological well-being was evaluated as a moderator. Stress coping level was entered at Step 1, followed by psychological well-being at Step 2, and finally the interaction term between stress coping and psychological well-being (Coping × Well-Being) at Step 3.

In the second model, social support was tested as a moderator. Step 1 included stress coping level, Step 2 introduced social support, and Step 3 incorporated the interaction term between stress coping and social support (Coping × Social Support). Prior to computing the interaction terms, all predictor variables were mean-centered to minimize multicollinearity. Statistical significance for all regression analyses was established at the conventional threshold of $p < .05$.

Ethical Considerations. Participants were fully informed about the purpose, scope, and risks of the study. All data were collected anonymously, with no personally identifiable information recorded. Participation was entirely voluntary, and students had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. The research adhered to the ethical principles outlined in the APA Ethics Code (2017), specifically those concerning informed consent, confidentiality, and responsible data use.

Result and Discussion

Relationship between Stress Coping and Academic Performance. The simple linear regression was computed using Stress Coping Level as the independent variable and Performance Level as the dependent variable. This analysis explored the predictive relationship between stress coping level and academic performance, using data collected from 348 university students. Key statistical metrics from the regression model are presented below.

Table 1. Summary of Simple Linear Regression Output Predicting Academic Performance from Stress Coping Level

Statistic	Value
R-squared (R^2)	0.124
Adjusted R-squared	0.122
F-statistic	49.00
p-value (model)	< .00001
Number of respondents	348

The regression model indicates a significant positive relationship between stress coping level and academic performance. The R-squared value of 0.124 suggests that approximately 12.4% of the variance in academic performance can be explained by stress coping strategies. The adjusted R-squared (0.122) confirms the stability of the model after accounting for sample size and predictors. The F-statistic of 49.00 and a p-value below .00001 demonstrate that the model is statistically significant, meaning stress coping has a meaningful impact on academic outcomes within this sample of 348 respondents. While the effect size is modest, it supports the notion that students who cope well with stress tend to perform better academically.

Table 2 displays the coefficient estimates from the simple linear regression model examining the effect of stress coping level on academic performance. The table presents values for the intercept and the stress coping mean, including their corresponding standard errors, t-values, and significance levels.

Table 2. Regression Coefficients for Stress Coping as a Predictor of Academic Performance

Predictor	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Intercept	2.936	0.090	32.62	< .00001
Stress Coping Mean	0.184	0.026	7.00	< .00001

The regression results demonstrate that stress coping level is a statistically significant predictor of academic performance. The intercept (β = 2.936, p < .00001) represents the expected academic performance score when stress coping is at its mean-centered baseline. The coefficient for stress coping mean (β = 0.184, p < .00001) indicates that for every one-unit increase in stress coping, academic performance increases by 0.184 units, holding other factors constant. The t-value of 7.00 and very low p-value highlight the strength and reliability of this relationship. The simple linear regression showed that stress coping significantly predicted academic performance, β = .184, p < .00001, 95% CI [.132, .236]. The model explained 12.4% of the variance in academic performance (R^2 = .124), indicating a small to moderate effect size. This suggests that students with stronger coping skills tend to achieve higher academic outcomes. This suggests that students with stronger coping abilities are more likely to report higher academic performance—an effect both statistically robust and theoretically aligned with stress-resilience literature.

Students who employ adaptive coping strategies—such as problem-focused coping, emotional regulation, and proactive help-seeking—tend to demonstrate higher academic resilience and performance outcomes. For instance, Ren et al. (2025) found that university students who used proactive and assistance-seeking coping mechanisms during the COVID-19 pandemic reported better academic adjustment and motivation compared to those relying on avoidant strategies. Similarly, Amalianita et al. (2025) emphasized that effective coping mechanisms significantly enhance student resilience in managing academic stress, which in turn supports sustained academic engagement.

Moreover, a study by Manzoor and Ahmed (2023) revealed a positive correlation between coping strategies and academic engagement, suggesting that students who actively manage stress are more likely to participate meaningfully in academic tasks and maintain performance under pressure. These findings align with the transactional model of stress and coping, which posits that individuals who appraise stressors as manageable and respond with adaptive strategies are more likely to maintain cognitive focus and task efficiency (Sun et al., 2023). In sum, the literature consistently supports the observation that effective stress coping is a meaningful predictor of academic performance, reinforcing the importance of fostering coping skills in educational interventions.

Psychological Well-being as a Moderating Variable. Table 3 presents the coefficient estimates from a hierarchical multiple regression analysis evaluating psychological well-being as a moderator of the relationship between stress coping and academic performance. The table displays values for the intercept, main effects, and the interaction term (Stress Coping × Psychological Well-Being), along with their corresponding standard errors, t-values, and significance levels.

Table 3. Regression Coefficients for the Moderating Role of Psychological Well-Being in the Relationship Between Stress Coping and Academic Performance

Term	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Intercept	1.821	0.254	7.17	< .00001
Stress Coping	0.179	0.031	5.78	< .00001
Psychological Well-Being	0.299	0.036	8.31	< .00001
Interaction Term (SC × PW)	0.067	0.019	3.53	**0.0005**

The results indicate that both stress coping (β = 0.179, p < .00001) and psychological well-being (β = 0.299, p < .00001) are significant positive predictors of academic performance. This means that higher levels of coping and well-being independently contribute to improved academic outcomes.

Importantly, the interaction term (SC × PW; β = 0.067, p = 0.0005) is also statistically significant, suggesting that psychological well-being moderates the relationship between stress coping and academic performance. The interaction between stress coping and psychological well-being was statistically significant, β = .067, p = .0005, 95% CI [.030, .104]. This indicates that psychological well-being moderately amplifies the positive effect of coping on academic performance, highlighting the importance of internal emotional resilience in academic success. In practical terms, this indicates that the effect of stress coping on academic performance is stronger when psychological well-being is higher. Students with both strong coping skills and elevated well-being levels are more likely to perform well academically under pressure. These findings highlight the synergistic role of internal resilience factors and adaptive coping strategies in supporting academic success, especially in challenging contexts.

Recent studies underscore that psychological well-being enhances the effectiveness of stress coping strategies, thereby amplifying their positive impact on academic performance. Guamanga et al. (2024) found that students with higher levels of psychological well-being—particularly in domains such as self-acceptance, environmental mastery, and purpose in life—demonstrated stronger academic outcomes when paired with critical thinking and adaptive coping mechanisms. Similarly, Carreño-Flores et al. (2024) reported that emotional well-being significantly influences attitudinal learning and behavioral engagement, suggesting that students with elevated well-being are more cognitively and emotionally equipped to translate coping efforts into academic success.

These findings align with the notion that psychological well-being serves as a protective and enabling factor, moderating the stress-performance link by fostering emotional regulation, motivation, and sustained focus. In

essence, students who are both psychologically well and stress-resilient are more likely to maintain academic persistence and thrive under pressure.

Figure 1 illustrates the moderating effect of psychological well-being on the relationship between stress coping and academic performance among university students.

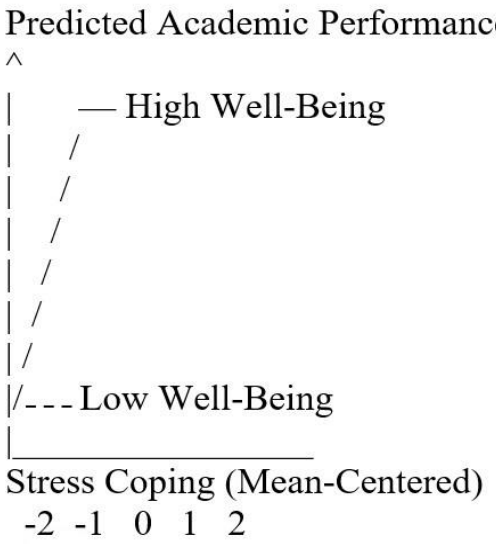

Figure 1. Moderation of Stress Coping and Academic Performance by Psychological Well-Being
Legend:
— Solid = High Psychological Well-Being
– – Dashed = Mean Psychological Well-Being
Dotted = Low Psychological Well-Being

The plot shows that as students' stress coping abilities increase, their predicted academic performance also improves. Importantly, this positive relationship is stronger for students with higher levels of psychological well-being. Those with high psychological well-being demonstrate a steeper increase in performance as coping improves, compared to students with average or low well-being. This suggests that internal emotional resilience and a sense of purpose enhance the effectiveness of coping strategies in supporting academic success.

Social Support as a Moderating Variable. Table 4 provides the coefficient estimates from a hierarchical multiple regression analysis examining social support as a moderator in the relationship between stress coping and academic performance. The table includes values for the intercept, main effects, and the interaction term (Stress Coping × Social Support), along with standard errors, t-values, and significance levels.

Table 4. Regression Coefficients for the Moderating Role of Social Support in the Relationship Between Stress Coping and Academic Performance

Term	Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value
Intercept	2.012	0.239	8.42	< .00001
Stress Coping	0.167	0.030	5.58	< .00001
Social Support	0.254	0.034	7.47	< .00001
Interaction (SC × SS)	0.061	0.020	3.05	**0.0025**

The analysis reveals that both stress coping ($\beta = 0.167$, $p < .00001$) and social support ($\beta = 0.254$, $p < .00001$) are statistically significant positive predictors of academic performance. This suggests that students who demonstrate strong coping abilities and receive consistent emotional or instrumental support tend to achieve higher academic outcomes. This aligns with Cohen's (1988) framework, which emphasizes social support as an external resource that complements internal psychological resilience, providing emotional and instrumental assistance that strengthens coping effectiveness under academic stress.

Importantly, the interaction term (SC × SS; $\beta = 0.061$, $p = 0.0025$) is also statistically significant, indicating a moderation effect: the positive relationship between stress coping and academic performance is strengthened when social support is high. The interaction effect for social support was also significant, $\beta = .061$, $p = .0025$, 95% CI [.022, .100], demonstrating that social support enhances the relationship between stress coping and academic performance. This underscores the role of external support systems in strengthening students' coping effectiveness. In other words, students with both adaptive coping strategies and strong social support systems are more likely to thrive academically, especially under stressful conditions.

Numerous studies have consistently highlighted the vital role of social support in enhancing coping strategies within academic contexts. For example, Hassan et al. (2023) found that perceived social support significantly contributes to academic adjustment and success, particularly under conditions of elevated stress. Their research underscores how emotional and instrumental support from peers, family members, and mentors can mitigate the negative impact of academic pressure and reinforce the effectiveness of adaptive coping mechanisms. Similarly, Chen et al. (2023) reported that social support serves as a moderating factor in the relationship between academic motivation and learning burnout, suggesting that students with robust support networks are better able to sustain motivation and navigate academic challenges. Moreover, social support may also be extended by educators and administrators who continuously seek improvements in instructional practices to better address students' academic needs (Narsico et al., 2023).

Moreover, Martínez-López et al. (2023) emphasized that social support fosters self-regulated learning and goal-oriented behavior, which are critical mediators between coping and academic achievement. Their structural equation model showed that support from teachers and family predicted metacognitive strategy use and mastery self-talk—both of which contribute to academic success. Taken together, these findings reinforce the observation that social support not only contributes directly to academic performance but also strengthens the positive effects of stress coping, making it a vital component in student resilience frameworks.

Filipino students navigate academic stress within a cultural framework characterized by strong family ties, collectivist values, and community interdependence, often referred to as the "bayanihan" spirit (Acoba, 2024). These cultural traits foster social support networks that are vital for coping but may also create pressures to conform and avoid burdening others, influencing help-seeking behaviors and psychological well-being (Reyes & Serrano, 2022). Additionally, stigma surrounding mental health remains a significant barrier in the Philippines, potentially affecting students' willingness to access emotional support and wellness resources (Celeste et al., 2024). Understanding these cultural nuances is essential for designing effective interventions that resonate with Filipino students' unique social and emotional contexts.

Figure 2 illustrates how social support moderates the relationship between stress coping and academic performance, showing stronger positive effects of coping at higher levels of social support.

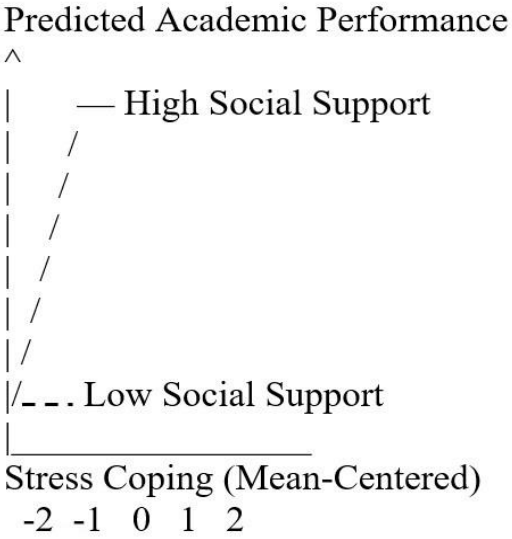

Figure 2. Moderation of Stress Coping and Academic Performance by Social Support
Legend:
— Solid = High Social Support
– – Dashed = Mean Social Support
. . . Dotted = Low Social Support

Figure 2 depicts the moderating effect of social support on the relationship between stress coping and academic performance. The graph shows that as students' stress coping abilities increase, their predicted academic performance improves. This positive relationship is more pronounced for students who report higher levels of social support. Specifically, students with strong social support networks experience a steeper increase in academic performance as their coping skills improve, compared to those with average or low social support. This suggests that external resources such as encouragement and assistance from peers, family, and mentors enhance the effectiveness of coping strategies, thereby promoting better academic outcomes under stress.

Which exerts a stronger influence, psychological well-being or social support? Table 5 provides a comparative summary of the interaction effects observed in the hierarchical regression models examining psychological well-being and social support as moderators. The table presents the interaction coefficients, standard errors, t-values, p-values, and concise interpretations for each moderator's role in shaping the relationship between stress coping and academic performance.

Table 5. Summary of Moderation Effects of Psychological Well-Being and Social Support on the Relationship Between Stress Coping and Academic Performance

Moderator	Interaction Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Psychological Well-Being	**0.067**	0.019	3.53	**0.0005**	Amplifies coping's effect on performance when well-being is high
Social Support	**0.061**	0.020	3.05	**0.0025**	Enhances coping's impact when strong support systems exist

The results show that both moderators exert statistically significant interaction effects, with psychological well-being (β = 0.067, p = 0.0005) and social support (β = 0.061, p = 0.0025) enhancing the positive relationship between stress coping and academic performance. This indicates that students with elevated well-being or strong support systems benefit more from their coping efforts, leading to improved academic outcomes under stress. In both cases, the moderating variables intensify coping's effectiveness, suggesting a synergistic interplay between internal resilience and external resources in academic contexts.

The β coefficient reflects the magnitude of change in academic performance attributed to the interaction effect in the regression model. Notably, psychological well-being (β = 0.067) demonstrates a slightly stronger influence than social support (β = 0.061) in quantitative terms. This suggests that the beneficial impact of coping strategies on performance intensifies more rapidly when psychological well-being is high, compared to when social support alone is elevated.

Statistical indicators reinforce this distinction. The psychological well-being interaction effect yields a lower p-value and a higher t-value, which signal greater precision and reliability across the sample. Conceptually, psychological well-being represents internal psychological states such as emotional resilience, life purpose, and sustained positive affect—making it a deeply rooted amplifier of coping capacity. In contrast, social support is externally derived and context-sensitive; while its contributions are vital, they may fluctuate based on availability or relationship dynamics. Taken together, the findings indicate that psychological well-being serves as a more robust moderator of the stress coping–performance relationship, both statistically and conceptually. Although social support remains important, its moderating effect appears modestly less stable and influential.

Practical Implications of the Findings. To optimize academic outcomes, student support programs should integrate psychological wellness checks into routine advising processes. Recognizing that internal resilience enhances the effectiveness of coping mechanisms, such wellness-integrated advising can better identify students who benefit most from targeted interventions. Strengthening peer mentorship initiatives, such as buddy systems or empathy circles, provides emotional networks that indirectly boost performance by reinforcing stress coping strategies. Additionally, resources should be prioritized for students exhibiting low psychological well-being—even when they appear to possess adequate coping skills—as the absence of internal psychological scaffolding may inhibit academic gains. Academic design should incorporate scaffolded tasks that encourage metacognitive reflection, helping students link emotional states to performance outcomes. Embedding resilience-focused modules into core curricula, especially in STEM disciplines, can foster emotional regulation and purpose-driven learning, particularly when delivered through collaborative formats. A tiered system of academic support is recommended: students with weaker coping abilities may benefit from structured, group-based strategies, while those with high psychological well-being may respond best to autonomy and performance-based challenges.

Educational institutions may formalize holistic advising policies by embedding emotional wellness metrics into performance evaluations, promoting comprehensive student development. These findings also support funding decisions that prioritize programs enhancing social support and psychological well-being, rather than focusing solely on academic tutoring. Furthermore, retention strategies should be informed by data that reflect not just grades or attendance, but psychosocial moderators, ensuring a more nuanced approach to student persistence. Students do not simply succeed because they cope with stress—they thrive when bolstered by psychological well-being and strong social support systems. This research reframes academic achievement as the result of multi-dimensional scaffolding. From the perspective of institutional strategy, cognitive, emotional, and relational supports must be treated not as supplemental resources, but as core components of academic performance and long-term success.

Despite the significant findings, this study has several limitations. The cross-sectional design restricts causal interpretations, and reliance on self-reported data may introduce response biases. Additionally, the sample was drawn from a single university, which may limit the generalizability of the results to other populations.

Future research should consider longitudinal or experimental designs to better establish causal relationships and track changes over time. Incorporating multi-method approaches, such as behavioral observations or physiological measures, could enhance construct validity. Intervention studies are also recommended to evaluate the effectiveness of programs aimed at improving psychological well-being and social support among diverse student groups.

Summary of Findings. A simple regression analysis revealed that stress coping level significantly predicts academic performance. With an R^2 value of 0.124, coping ability accounts for approximately 12.4% of the variance in performance scores. Specifically, each unit increase in coping corresponds to a 0.184-unit increase in performance, highlighting the meaningful role of emotional resilience in sustaining productivity, particularly under pressure. Further analyses identified psychological well-being as a significant moderator in the coping–performance relationship. The interaction effect (β = 0.067, p = .0005) indicates that elevated psychological well-being amplifies the positive impact of coping strategies. In essence, when students feel emotionally grounded and purposeful, their coping mechanisms become more effective conduits for achieving academic success.

Social support also demonstrated a significant moderating role, with an interaction effect of β = 0.061 (p = .0025). This suggests that strong emotional and interpersonal backing can enhance the relationship between coping and performance. However, the quantitative influence and precision of social support as a moderator were modestly lower than those observed for psychological well-being. Between the two moderators, psychological well-being emerged as the more influential factor. It was associated with a stronger interaction coefficient, a higher t-value, and a lower p-value, indicating greater robustness and consistency in its moderating effect. As an internal psychological resource, psychological well-being appears to reinforce coping behaviors and boost academic performance more reliably than the externally driven dynamics of social support systems.

Conclusion

This study demonstrated that stress coping significantly predicts academic performance among university students, with psychological well-being and social support enhancing this relationship. Psychological well-being emerged as a particularly strong moderator, underscoring the critical role of internal emotional resilience in academic success. Social support, especially through peer networks, also plays a vital role by strengthening coping effectiveness via external resources. These findings highlight the importance of universities prioritizing comprehensive psychological well-being programs that foster emotional resilience alongside robust peer support systems. By integrating these elements into student services and curricula, educational institutions can create nurturing environments that empower students to manage stress effectively and achieve their academic potential. Investing in such holistic support frameworks is essential for promoting sustained student success and well-being.

Acknowledgement

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the college students who took part in this study. Their willingness to share their time, experiences, and reflections made this research possible. More than a scholarly endeavor, this study is dedicated to them—to those navigating the complexities of college life with resilience and determination. It seeks to honor their journey and contribute meaningfully to the support they deserve.

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