

Early Childhood Behavior, Adult Personalities and Coping Mechanisms of College of Arts and Sciences Students in UPHSL Biñan Laguna

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Index Terms:

Early childhood behavior, personality traits, coping mechanisms, college students, psychological development

Abstract. This study examined the relationship among early childhood behavior, personality traits, and coping mechanisms among college students at the University of Perpetual Help System Laguna using a descriptive-correlational research design. Data were gathered from selected respondents through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using weighted mean and Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient (r) to determine the degree of relationship among variables. The findings revealed that respondents demonstrated generally positive early childhood behavior across social, emotional, and behavioral domains. In terms of personality traits, students exhibited high levels of openness, conscientiousness, and agreeableness, while extraversion and neuroticism were moderately observed. Coping mechanisms were found to be strong, particularly in emotional and academic domains, while social coping was comparatively lower. Correlation analysis showed that early childhood behavior had mostly weak and non-significant relationships with personality traits and coping mechanisms, with only limited significant associations observed in conscientiousness, extraversion, and behavioral regulation. In contrast, personality traits—particularly openness and conscientiousness—showed significant relationships with academic and emotional coping, while neuroticism demonstrated a negative relationship with emotional coping. These findings suggest that while early childhood behavior has minimal direct influence, personality traits play a more significant role in shaping coping mechanisms among college students. The study highlights the importance of strengthening adaptive personality traits and coping strategies through targeted interventions to support students' academic performance and psychological well-being.

Introduction

Early childhood is a crucial stage of human development where foundational behaviors, emotional responses, and social interactions are formed. These early experiences significantly influence personality development and coping mechanisms later in life. Behavior during childhood reflects how individuals interact with their environment, shaping their ability to respond to challenges and regulate emotions.

As individuals grow into adulthood, personality traits become more stable and play a key role in determining how they handle stress. The Five-Factor Model of personality, which includes openness, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism, provides a framework for understanding individual differences. These traits influence how people perceive situations and choose coping strategies.

Coping mechanisms refer to the strategies individuals use to manage stress and emotional challenges. Effective coping mechanisms are essential for maintaining psychological well-being, especially among college students who face academic and social pressures.

Although previous studies have explored early childhood behavior, personality traits, and coping mechanisms independently, limited research has examined their relationships in a single framework among college students. This study addresses this gap by analyzing how early childhood behavior influences personality traits and coping mechanisms.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Assess early childhood behavior among respondents in terms of Social, Emotional and Behavioral.
2. Determine the adult personality traits of respondents in terms of the Big Five Personality Traits framework.
3. Examine the coping mechanisms of respondents in terms of Academic, Social and Emotional.
4. Test the relationship between early childhood behavior, adult personality traits, and coping mechanisms among college students.

The primary goal of this study is to examine how early childhood behavior influences personality traits and coping mechanisms among College of Arts and Sciences students in UPHSL Biñan, Laguna, while the secondary goal is to propose an action plan based on the findings. The succeeding sections present the study's methodology, results, and discussion, providing empirical evidence that may inform educational practices and guide school-based interventions for student development.

Methodology

Research Design

This study utilized a descriptive-correlational research design to examine the relationships among early childhood behavior, personality traits, and coping mechanisms. This design was appropriate as it allowed the researcher to determine the degree of relationship among variables without manipulating them.

Research Respondents

The respondents consisted of selected college students from the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Perpetual Help System Laguna during the academic year 2025–2026. Random sampling was used to select participants.

Research Instruments

Data were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire designed to measure early childhood behavior, adult personality traits, and coping mechanisms among college students. The instrument was developed based on relevant psychological theories and constructs, including the Big Five Personality Traits framework and established concepts on coping mechanisms, to ensure theoretical grounding. The items were carefully constructed and adapted to align with the local context of Filipino college students. This approach allowed the instrument to maintain conceptual relevance while ensuring appropriateness for the target respondents.

Instrumentation Validation

The researcher-made questionnaire underwent expert validation by three psychology experts and was reviewed by the research adviser to ensure the appropriateness, clarity, and alignment of the items with the target population. The instrument consisted of three parts measuring early childhood behavior, adult personality traits based on the Big Five Personality Traits framework, and coping mechanisms. Reliability testing was conducted using Cronbach's alpha, with coefficients exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating internal consistency of the scales (0.851 for early childhood behavior, 0.878 for adult personality traits, and 0.834 for coping mechanisms). Content validity was established through expert review to ensure that the adapted items accurately reflected the constructs being measured. This process strengthened the credibility, validity, and reliability of the instrument for use among college students.

Data Gathering Procedures

Prior to data collection, approval was secured from the research adviser and the appropriate institutional authorities. The researcher-made questionnaire was administered to the college student respondents in a structured setting, with clear instructions provided to ensure proper understanding and accurate responses. Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study, including voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality of all responses, and the right of participants to withdraw at any stage without any penalty. This procedure ensured that the study was conducted in an ethical and responsible manner in accordance with established research standards involving student respondents.

Statistical Treatment of Data

The collected data were encoded and analyzed using appropriate statistical tools. Descriptive statistics, specifically the mean, were used to summarize the levels of early childhood behavior, adult personality traits, and coping mechanisms among the respondents. To determine the relationships among the variables, Pearson’s correlation coefficient (r) was employed as the primary inferential statistical tool. The level of statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$ to determine significant relationships among the variables. This approach allowed for a clear and reliable interpretation of the relationships between early childhood behavior, adult personality traits, and coping mechanisms among college students.

Results and Discussion

The results of this study are presented according to the research questions:

1. Assess early childhood behavior among respondents in terms of Social, Emotional and Behavioral.

Scale	Domains	WM	Interpretation
Early Childhood Behavior	Social	3.15	Positive
	Emotional	3.04	Positive
	Behavioral	3.01	Positive
OVERALL		3.07	Positive

Table 1. Summary Table for the Respondents' Early Childhood Behavior

The summary table indicates that the respondents demonstrated generally adequate early childhood behavior across the social, emotional, and behavioral domains (Composite WM = 3.07). Among the three domains, social behavior obtained the highest mean score (WM = 3.15), followed by emotional behavior (WM = 3.04), while behavioral regulation obtained the lowest mean score (WM = 3.01), though all were interpreted as positive. These results suggest that the respondents exhibited observable patterns of social interaction, emotional expression, and behavioral control during early developmental stages, reflecting generally developing competencies in peer interaction, emotional awareness, and rule-guided behavior. These findings indicate that early childhood development among the respondents was generally adequate across all domains, although slight variations in weighted mean scores suggest that emotional regulation and behavioral control may still require further strengthening to support more consistent adaptive functioning. The findings are aligned with Wang and Liu (2025), who emphasized that balanced development across social, emotional, and behavioral domains during early childhood is associated with better academic readiness, interpersonal relationships, and long-term adjustment. Their study highlights that strong social competencies, supported by emotional regulation and behavioral control, contribute significantly to positive developmental outcomes, which is consistent with the present results where social behavior emerged as the most dominant domain followed by emotional and behavioral aspects

2. Determine the adult personality traits of respondents in terms of the Big Five Personality Traits framework.

Scale	Domains	WM	Verbal Interpretation
Personality Traits	Openness	3.44	Very Positive
	Conscientiousness	3.53	Very Positive
	Extraversion	2.77	Very Positive
OVERALL	Agreeableness	3.57	Positive
	Neuroticism	2.87	Positive
		3.24	Positive

Table 2. Summary Table of the Respondents' Personality Traits

The summary table indicates that the respondents demonstrated a generally moderate to high level of adult personality traits (Overall WM = 3.24). Among the five domains, agreeableness obtained the highest mean score (WM = 3.57), followed by conscientiousness (WM = 3.53) and openness to experience (WM = 3.44), all interpreted as very positive. Neuroticism ranked fourth (WM = 2.87), while extraversion obtained the lowest mean score (WM = 2.77), though both were still

interpreted as positive. These results suggest that the respondents exhibit a balanced and generally adaptive personality profile characterized by cooperation, responsibility, openness, emotional sensitivity, and moderate social engagement. These findings indicate that agreeableness and conscientiousness are the most dominant traits among the respondents, reflecting strong interpersonal harmony and goal-directed behavior, while neuroticism and extraversion are comparatively less pronounced. Overall, the results suggest that the respondents possess personality characteristics that may support effective interpersonal relationships and academic functioning. The findings are aligned with the studies of Schwaba and Thalmayer (2025), Stolz et al. (2023), and Chen et al. (2025), which emphasized openness to experience as a key dimension of the Big Five personality model associated with creativity, curiosity, and adaptability. Their findings suggest that individuals who exhibit higher levels of openness are more likely to demonstrate cognitive flexibility and engagement in learning contexts. This supports the present results, where openness emerged as one of the dominant traits, contributing to the respondents' overall adaptive personality profile.

3. Examine the coping mechanisms of respondents in terms of Academic, Social and Emotional.

Scale	Domains	WM	Verbal Interpretation
Coping Mechanisms	Academic	3.93	Strong
	Social	3.56	Strong
	Emotional	4.15	Strong
OVERALL		3.88	Strong

Table 3. Summary of the Respondents' Coping Mechanisms

The summary table indicates that the respondents demonstrated generally strong coping mechanisms across emotional, academic, and social domains (Overall WM = 3.88). Among the three domains, emotional coping obtained the highest mean score (WM = 4.15), followed by academic coping (WM = 3.93), while social coping obtained the lowest mean score (WM = 3.56), though all were interpreted as strong. These results suggest that the respondents commonly utilize self-regulation strategies, task-oriented approaches, and interpersonal support systems in managing academic demands, reflecting a balanced but more internally driven coping profile. These findings indicate that emotional coping is the most dominant strategy among the respondents, highlighting a stronger reliance on internal regulation such as self-motivation, cognitive reframing, and stress management, while social coping is less frequently utilized. This suggests that although respondents demonstrate strong coping mechanisms overall, greater engagement in help-seeking behaviors and peer support may further enhance their coping effectiveness. The findings are aligned with Amalianita et al. (2025), who emphasized that academic coping strategies such as time management, self-regulation, and problem-solving are significantly associated with improved resilience and academic adjustment among university students. Their study suggests that individuals who consistently apply structured coping strategies are better equipped to manage academic demands and maintain performance, which supports the present results showing strong use of emotional and academic coping among the respondents.

4. Test the relationship between early childhood behavior, adult personality traits, and coping mechanisms among college students

Personality Traits	Social Behavior (r, p)	Emotional Behavior (r, p)	Behavioral Regulation (r, p)	Interpretation
Openness	r = .001, p = .990	r = -.011, p = .866	r = .127, p = .050*	Negligible to very weak; significant only in behavioral
Conscientiousness	r = .160, p = .013*	r = .177, p = .006*	r = .156, p = .015*	Very weak positive, all significant
Extraversion	r = .086, p = .185	r = .205, p = .001*	r = .176, p = .006*	Very weak to weak positive; partially significant
Agreeableness	r = .043, p = .508	r = .059, p = .364	r = -.056, p = .388	Negligible; not significant

Neuroticism	$r = -.037, p = .564$	$r = .036, p = .577$	$r = .008, p = .902$	Negligible; not significant
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Table 4. Relationship Between Early Childhood Behavior and Personality Traits

The summary table indicates that early childhood behavior demonstrated mostly weak and selectively significant relationships with adult personality traits at the 0.05 level. Social early childhood behavior showed negligible to very weak and non-significant correlations with openness ($r = .001, p = .990$), extraversion ($r = .086, p = .185$), agreeableness ($r = .043, p = .508$), and neuroticism ($r = -.037, p = .564$), while a significant very weak positive relationship was observed with conscientiousness ($r = .160, p = .013$). Emotional early childhood behavior likewise showed no significant relationships with openness ($r = -.011, p = .866$), agreeableness ($r = .059, p = .364$), and neuroticism ($r = .036, p = .577$), but demonstrated significant very weak positive correlations with conscientiousness ($r = .177, p = .006$) and extraversion ($r = .205, p = .001$). Behavioral early childhood behavior showed significant very weak positive relationships with openness ($r = .127, p = .050$), conscientiousness ($r = .156, p = .015$), and extraversion ($r = .176, p = .006$), while no significant relationships were found with agreeableness ($r = -.056, p = .388$) and neuroticism ($r = .008, p = .902$). These findings indicate that early childhood behavior has limited but selective influence on adult personality traits, particularly conscientiousness and extraversion, suggesting that early developmental experiences may contribute modestly to self-regulation and social engagement, although most relationships remain weak. The findings are consistent with Smith and Jones (2021), who emphasized that structured and supportive early childhood experiences are associated with higher levels of conscientiousness in adulthood. Their study suggests that individuals exposed to consistent guidance and discipline during childhood are more likely to develop responsibility, organization, and goal-directed behavior, which supports the present results showing significant associations between early childhood behavior and conscientiousness.

Early Childhood Behavior	Academic Coping (r, p)	Social Coping (r, p)	Emotional Coping (r, p)	Interpretation
Social	$r = .106, p = .102$	$r = .005, p = .941$	$r = .096, p = .138$	Very weak to negligible; not significant
Emotional	$r = .008, p = .907$	$r = .054, p = .402$	$r = .086, p = .184$	Negligible to very weak; not significant
Behavioral	$r = .086, p = .184$	$r = -.037, p = .565$	$r = .127, p = .048^*$	Very weak; significant only in emotional coping

Table 5 Relationship Between Early Childhood Behavior and Coping Mechanisms

The summary table indicates that early childhood behavior demonstrated mostly weak and non-significant relationships with coping mechanisms across academic, social, and emotional domains. Social early childhood behavior showed no significant relationships with academic coping ($p = .102$), social coping ($p = .941$), and emotional coping ($p = .138$), indicating that early social experiences do not significantly influence coping strategies in adulthood. Similarly, emotional early childhood behavior showed no significant relationships with academic coping ($p = .907$), social coping ($p = .402$), and emotional coping ($p = .184$), suggesting that early emotional experiences do not have a meaningful effect on the respondents' coping mechanisms. In terms of behavioral early childhood behavior, no significant relationships were found with academic coping ($p = .157$) and social coping ($p = .565$), while a significant very weak positive relationship was observed with emotional coping ($r = .127, p = .048$). This indicates that early behavioral patterns may have a slight influence on how respondents manage emotional coping strategies, although the relationship remains weak. These findings are consistent with Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, which explains that coping is primarily shaped by cognitive appraisal and current environmental demands rather than early developmental experiences. In line with Smith et al. (2022), who found that coping strategies are more strongly influenced by academic stressors and present functioning, the results suggest that coping mechanisms among respondents are largely determined by current situational factors. Similarly, Algorani (2023) emphasized that adaptive coping strategies such as problem-solving and emotional

regulation are more effective in managing stress, while Alkhalwaldeh et al. (2023) highlighted that coping responses vary based on current stress levels rather than early childhood behavioral patterns.

Personality Traits	Social Behavior (r, p)	Emotional Behavior (r, p)	Behavioral Regulation (r, p)	Interpretation Summary
Openness	r = .001, p = .990	r = -.011, p = .866	r = .127, p = .050*	Negligible to very weak; significant only in behavioral
Conscientiousness	r = .160, p = .013*	r = .177, p = .006*	r = .156, p = .015*	Very weak positive, all significant
Extraversion	r = .086, p = .185	r = .205, p = .001*	r = .176, p = .006*	Very weak to weak positive; partially significant
Agreeableness	r = .043, p = .508	r = .059, p = .364	r = -.056, p = .388	Negligible; not significant
Neuroticism	r = -.037, p = .564	r = .036, p = .577	r = .008, p = .902	Negligible; not significant

Table 6 Relationship Between Personality Traits and Coping Mechanisms

The summary table indicates that personality traits demonstrated a mix of significant and non-significant relationships with coping mechanisms across academic, social, and emotional domains. Openness showed a significant very weak positive relationship with academic coping ($r = .139, p = .031$) and a weak positive relationship with emotional coping ($r = .230, p < .001$), while no significant relationship was found with social coping ($r = .096, p = .139$). Conscientiousness demonstrated a significant weak positive relationship with academic coping ($r = .277, p < .001$) and emotional coping ($r = .213, p = .001$), but no significant relationship with social coping ($r = -.015, p = .816$). Extraversion and agreeableness showed negligible to very weak and non-significant relationships across all coping domains. Neuroticism showed no significant relationships with academic coping ($r = -.111, p = .085$) and social coping ($r = .033, p = .611$), but a significant very weak negative relationship with emotional coping ($r = -.143, p = .027$). These findings indicate that certain personality traits, particularly openness and conscientiousness, are associated with the use of academic and emotional coping strategies, while most traits show limited influence on social coping. The findings are consistent with McCrae and Costa (2020), who emphasized that openness is linked to cognitive flexibility and adaptive thinking, which supports effective coping strategies. In line with Phan et al. (2020), conscientious individuals tend to utilize structured and goal-oriented coping approaches such as planning and time management, contributing to better academic adjustment and emotional regulation. These results suggest that personality traits play a selective role in shaping coping behaviors, particularly in domains that require internal regulation and task-oriented strategies.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study revealed that College of Arts and Sciences students in UPHSL Biñan, Laguna demonstrated generally adequate early childhood behavior across social, emotional, and behavioral domains, alongside adaptive adult personality traits characterized by high agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness. In addition, the respondents exhibited strong coping mechanisms, particularly in emotional and academic domains, while social coping was comparatively lower. Correlation analyses showed that early childhood behavior had mostly weak and non-significant relationships with both personality traits and coping mechanisms, with only limited associations observed in conscientiousness, extraversion, and behavioral regulation. In contrast, personality traits—particularly openness and conscientiousness—showed weak but significant relationships with academic and emotional coping, while neuroticism was negatively associated with emotional coping. These findings suggest that coping mechanisms are more strongly influenced by present personality characteristics than early developmental experiences, extending theoretical perspectives that emphasize the role of individual traits in stress adaptation and coping processes.

Drawing from these results, the proposed action plan “Enhancing Early Childhood Behavior, Personality Traits, and Coping Mechanisms among College of Arts and Sciences Students” was designed to address the interconnected domains of personality development and coping effectiveness. The program builds on students’ strengths in adaptability,

responsibility, and emotional awareness while targeting areas needing improvement, such as emotional coping and social support utilization. Through structured workshops on emotional regulation, stress management, personality development, and coping skills enhancement, alongside reflective activities and peer support systems, the program aims to strengthen resilience, improve adaptive coping strategies, and support holistic student development for academic success and personal well-being.

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Competing Interests Statement

The authors declares that there are no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this study. This research was conducted independently, and all analyses, interpretations, and recommendations were carried out solely for academic purposes.

Data Availability Statement

The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are available from the researcher upon reasonable request. However, due to ethical considerations and the need to protect the confidentiality of the student participants, raw individual responses are not publicly available. Nonetheless, aggregated data, statistical results, and supporting materials used in the analysis may be provided for academic and research purposes upon appropriate request.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.