

THE RELATIONSHIP OF LIFESTYLE AND MENTAL HEALTH OF GENERATION Z

M.Elyas Arif Budiman^a | M. Faqih Ubaidillah Shaddam^{b*}

^{a,b} Fakultas Of Health, Universitas dr. Soebandi

*Corresponding Author: muhammadfaqih.u.s@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The mental health of adolescents, especially generation Z, is a concern amidst social and technological changes. One of the factors that influence mental health is lifestyle. This study aims to determine the relationship between lifestyle and mental health of generation Z.

Methods: This study used a cross-sectional approach with a correlational design. The population in this study were 243 nursing students from the 2021 intake at Dr. Soebandi University, Jember. The sample in this study consisted of 151 respondents using a cluster sampling method. Lifestyle was measured using a Likert scale questionnaire and mental health was measured using the SRQ-2 (Self-rating Questionnaire). Univariate analysis used frequency distribution and percentage, while bivariate analysis used Spearman's Rho Rank and correlation coefficient.

Result: Most respondents' lifestyle (58.3%) is a high lifestyle, mental health of respondents (60.9%) is indicated mental health. The results of the Rank Spearman Rho analysis obtained $p\text{-Value } (0.00) \leq (\alpha) (0.05)$ means that H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected with a correlation coefficient value of -0.344 meaning a low relationship.

Conclusion: There is a low relationship between lifestyle and mental health in generation Z. The higher the lifestyle, the lower the mental health in generation Z. Students are advised to adopt a balanced lifestyle, such as getting enough sleep, managing stress, and reducing the use of social media to maintain mental health

Introduction

The mental health problem of adolescents, especially generation Z, is increasingly becoming an important concern. Adolescents are a group that shows rapid progress in physical and mental aspects, however, they also face various challenges that can have an impact on mental health, such as social, cultural and moral issues. One important element that influences mental health is lifestyle. Research shows that health behavior and lifestyle, including discipline, emotional control, and social interaction have a significant effect on their mental (Aisyaroh et al., 2022). Adolescents with various changes in lifestyle, social pressure, and technological advances, mental health has become a problem phenomenon among teenagers (Ilham, 2023).

Lifestyle problems in teenagers today are dominated by unhealthy behavior, such as lack of physical activity, poor diet, social media addiction, and stress. Data shows that 5.5% of Indonesian teenagers (10-17 years) experience mental disorders, with 3.7% anxious and 1% depressed. Physical problems are also prominent, including anemia, obesity, and wasting (chronic lack of energy) (Statistik Indonesia 2024, 2024). The results of a preliminary study on teenagers showed that 7 out of 10 (70%) of them had a high lifestyle, followed trends and indicated mental health



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problems because they could not fulfill their desires and the other 3 had a low lifestyle because they did not do unnecessary things or did not have to follow trends (Scheiner et al., 2022).

Adolescent mental health has become a global concern in recent decades, as various global health organizations report a rising prevalence of anxiety disorders, depression, and stress among this age group (Laird & Kuhn, 2014). Lifestyle changes driven by technological advancements, shifts in social interaction patterns, and mounting academic demands have contributed to this situation manifesting in issues ranging from irregular sleep patterns, a lack of physical activity, and social media dependency to unhealthy dietary habits. Adolescent lifestyles are heavily influenced by technological advancements and social media, which have both positive and negative impacts on their mental health (Morgado et al., 2021). On one hand, adolescents have extensive access to information, entertainment, and ways to connect with peers; on the other, excessive exposure to social media often triggers social comparison, pressure to appear perfect, and sleep disturbances, as well as feelings of anxiety and low self-esteem. Furthermore, high academic demands, a lack of physical activity, irregular eating habits, and insufficient time for rest and face-to-face socializing further exacerbate adolescents' psychological well-being (Anderson & Priebe, 2021).

Mental health is caused by a variety of triggers, including daily habits that can be changed. Information regarding the extent to which lifestyle plays a role in the emergence of symptoms of depression and mental disorders is still minimal (Cherewick et al., 2024). These triggers come from the social environment, people around them, and internal aspects. Unpreparedness to face change often comes from internal psychology (Nobre et al., 2022). Aspects that influence mental conditions include personal character and attitudes, socio-economic conditions, and the environment including lifestyle, culture and psychological education (Santre, 2022). Students hang out with friends with a luxurious lifestyle, encouraged to adapt to be accepted by their group (Budiman, 2023). Generation Z particularly adolescents who have grown up as digital natives faces a life landscape vastly different from that of previous generations (Kapadia, 2024). This period is often marked by conflicting demands from school, family, and peer circles, as well as from within the adolescents themselves, rendering them vulnerable to lifestyle changes that directly impact their psychological well-being (Orth & Wyk, 2022).

One approach to maintaining mental stability is through the practice of mindfulness the skill of remaining aware and fully present in each moment of experience. This practice has been shown to benefit both mental and physical health, helping individuals sharpen their focus and more effectively regulate negative emotions. Building on this phenomenon, the present study aims to examine the relationship between lifestyle and mental health among Generation Z, with a particular focus on identifying which lifestyle factors most significantly contribute to their psychological well-being.

Methods

Design and Setting

This study employs a quantitative correlational design with a cross-sectional approach, wherein data regarding lifestyle and mental health variables were collected at a single point in time without subsequent follow-up observations.

Population and Sample

The study population consisted of students, with a sample of 151 respondents selected via probability sampling specifically cluster sampling involving the identification of specific groups or clusters followed by the random selection of respondents from within those clusters. Inclusion



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criteria comprised active students registered for the current academic year who fell within the Generation Z age range, were willing to participate (evidenced by signing an informed consent form), and were capable of using Google Forms to complete the online questionnaire. Conversely, exclusion criteria included students on academic leave, respondents with a diagnosed history of severe mental disorders undergoing intensive treatment, and respondents who failed to complete the questionnaire or provided incomplete data during the study.

Instruments and Measurement

The instruments used in this study consisted of a lifestyle scale questionnaire measuring respondents' activity patterns, dietary habits, sleep, and time usage, and the SRQ-20 (Self-Reporting Questionnaire-20) to assess indications of emotional mental health disorders. Both instruments underwent validity and reliability testing prior to use in the study. The validity test was conducted using Pearson Product Moment correlation involving respondents, with results showing that all of the items were declared valid, with r-values ranging from to exceeding the r-table value of at a significance level of 5%. The reliability test, conducted using Cronbach's Alpha, yielded coefficients of for the lifestyle scale and for the SRQ-20, both exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.60/0.70, indicating that both instruments were reliable and suitable for use in this study. Data collection was conducted over a 15-day period via the online distribution of questionnaires using Google Forms to respondents who met the established inclusion criteria.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the Spearman-Rho correlation test to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between the lifestyle and mental health variables. Decision-making was based on the significance value (p-value) to determine the acceptance of the research hypothesis and the correlation coefficient to assess the strength of the relationship between the variables.

Ethical Consideration.

This study obtained ethical clearance (reference number 930/KEPK/UDS/III/2025), ensuring that the entire research process adhered to ethical principles regarding studies involving human subjects.

Results

The results should include findings of the study, including, if appropriate, results of statistical analysis, which must be included either in the text or as tables and figures.

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents Based on Age and Gender

Age	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
19 years	1	0,7%
21 years	3	2,0%
22 years	34	22,5%
23 years	104	68,9%



24 years	9	6,0%
Total	151	100,0%
Gender (JK)	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Man	38	25,2%
Female	113	74,8%
Total	151	100,0%

Based on the research results in table 1, it shows that the majority of respondents were aged 23 years at 68.9%. The most common gender is female at 74.8%.

Table 2. Characteristics of Respondents Based on Lifestyle in Generation Z

Lifestyle	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Low	25	16,6%
Currently	38	25,2%
High	88	58,3%
Total	151	100,0%

Based on the research results in table 2, it shows that the lifestyle of generation Z remaqja is mostly in the high lifestyle category at 58.3%.

Table 3. Characteristics of Respondents Based on Mental Health in Generation Z

Mental Health	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Normal	59	39,1%
Indicated Mental Health Problems	92	60,9%
Total	151	100,0%

Based on the research results in table 3, it shows that the mental health of Generation Z teenagers is mostly in the category of indicated problems, 60.9%.

Table 4 Cross Tabulation Between Lifestyle and Mental Health in Generation Z

No	Lifestyle	Mental Health				Total	(%)
		Normal	%	Indicated Mental Health Problems	%		
1.	Low	23	92,0%	2	8,0%	25	100,0%
2.	Currently	27	71,1%	11	28,9%	38	100,0%
3.	High	42	47,7%	42	52,3%	88	100,0%
Total		92	60,9%	59	39,1%	151	100,0%
Spearman Rho				0,000			
Correlation Coefficient				-0,344			

Based on the research results in table 4, it shows that 25 participants had a low lifestyle, (92.0%) had normal mental health, and 38 participants had a medium lifestyle, (71.1%) had normal health, 88 participants had a high lifestyle, (52.3%) indicated mental health problems. The Spearman Rho Rank test describes p value $(0.00) \leq (\alpha) (0.05)$ H_a is accepted, meaning there is a relationship between lifestyle and mental health, the correlation value is -0.344, meaning a low relationship between lifestyle and mental health. The negative sign (-) in the correlation value is that the higher the lifestyle, the lower the mental health.

Discussion

The research results show that there is a relationship between lifestyle and mental health. This research is in line with Ariska's research which shows that most respondents experience a high lifestyle (Ariska, Nur, 2022). This research is in line with Tekla research, with the most respondents indicating mental health problems (Farneubun, Tekla, 2024). This research is also supported by Kotler & Armstrong's theory which states that lifestyle is influenced by age and gender (Kotler & Armstrong, 2020). In this study, the majority of respondents were 23 years old. At this age, many individuals are actively seeking or forming their identity through lifestyle choices, for example choosing types of entertainment, clothing styles, social communities, or even political views (Zatrahadi, 2025). On the other hand, most of the participants were female. Female gender is related to lifestyle due to psychosocial, cultural and consumption factors that shape distinctive activity patterns, interests and opinions (Rani & Naqiyah, 2022).

This research is also in line with Tekla research which shows that most respondents indicated mental health problems (Rani & Naqiyah, 2022). One trigger that causes mental health is lifestyle. When someone has a high lifestyle, it makes their mental health worse because they often force themselves to fulfill life's desires and demands (Younker & Radunovich, 2022). In this study, the majority of respondents were 23 years old. At this age, many people start to become independent, look for work and plan their future, so they feel stressed. They also often compare themselves with their peers, which makes them anxious, afraid of failure, or lacking self-confidence (Santrock, 2022). On the other hand, most of the participants were female, where women have a higher risk of experiencing mental health disorders than men due to biological, psychological and socio-cultural triggers (Albert, 2022).

The digital dimension of Generation Z's lifestyle is a key focus of this discussion. Digitalization plays a significant role in shaping the digital consumption patterns, social habits, and psychological well-being of the younger generation; meanwhile, other studies specifically explore the impact of social media usage on Generation Z's mental health focusing on social comparison, anxiety, and stress and indicate that the intensity of social media exposure can be a significant pathway to emotional and mental health issues. However, high levels of awareness and digital literacy among Generation Z do not necessarily correlate with a willingness to seek help when facing mental health problems (Jamnik & DiLalla, 2019). Research on healthcare service utilization reveals that the most significant barriers are bureaucratic procedures and the social stigma surrounding mental health services, even among respondents with high digital literacy. These findings point to a knowledge-action gap regarding mental health help-seeking among Generation Z, highlighting a critical area for educational and healthcare institutions to address when designing interventions that are more accessible and user-friendly for this demographic (Yang et al., 2022).

The study results outline that a person's lifestyle is influenced by age and gender. At the age of 23, like the majority of respondents in this study, many people are actively searching for their identity, for example in determining how they dress, the entertainment they like, the community they join, or their political views (Ostaszewski, 2020). At this age too, they begin to plan their future and try to be independent, so that their lifestyle becomes clearer than at a younger age. In addition, most of the respondents were women (Kapadia, 2024). Women tend to have more diverse lifestyles due to psychological and cultural factors, such as shopping, personal care or social activities (Davydov et al., 2010). This shows that age and gender are interrelated in shaping a person's lifestyle, because in early adulthood, they begin to determine their life choices according to their interests, needs and environmental demands (Anderson & Priebe, 2021). This study also outlined that participants experienced mental health problems, especially those aged



23 years and female. At the age of 23, many people are trying to be independent, looking for work, and planning their future, so they easily feel depressed, anxious, or afraid of failure. They also often compare themselves with their peers, for example in terms of work or life achievements, so that their self-confidence can decrease. In addition, women have a higher potential to face mental health problems than men (Al-Zawaadi et al., 2021). The triggers are biological, such as hormonal changes, as well as psychological and socio-cultural factors, for example the demand to always look good, be polite, or maintain one's appearance.

Their mental health problems are also influenced by their high lifestyle. When someone forces themselves to fulfill life's excessive desires and demands, it actually adds to the burden on their mind and makes their mental health worse. Thus, it can be concluded that early adulthood, gender, and lifestyle are interrelated in influencing a person's mental health condition.

Conclusion

The study results show that the majority of Gen Z participants face a high lifestyle and are indicated to have mental health problems. In addition, it was found that there was a low relationship between lifestyle and mental health, the higher the lifestyle, the lower the level of mental health. These findings show that lifestyle plays a role in influencing the psychological condition of Generation Z.

Ethics approval and consent to participate

This research has received ethical permission No.930/KEPK/UDS/III/2025.

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