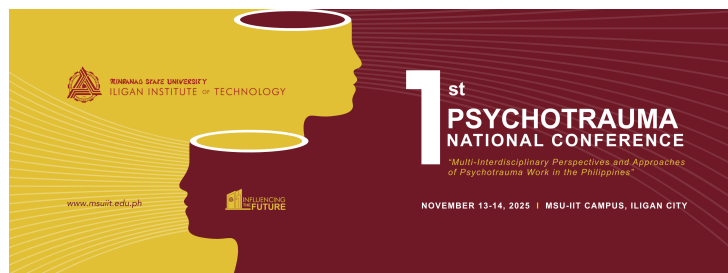


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# Perceptions of Mental Health Counseling: A Qualitative Study of Parents and Students

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The recent health crisis has led to a sharp and alarming increase in anxiety and depression throughout the Philippines, affecting an estimated 3.6 million people, according to the Philippine WHO Special Initiative for Mental Health. Despite the urgent need for mental health services, deeply ingrained stigma surrounding mental illness continues to pose significant obstacles within Filipino society. This stigma discourages many from seeking professional help due to fears of negative judgment, misunderstanding, and the potential damage to their family's reputation in general. Moreover, individuals or family's experiencing mental health challenges often face social isolation, discrimination, and rejection from their communities, further exacerbating their struggles in life. These powerful cultural barriers really contribute to a widespread reluctance to access medical and mental health care, making it increasingly challenging to effectively address the growing mental health crisis in the country and even worldwide.

Keywords: Mental Health Counseling, Mental Health Issues, Stigma

## OBJECTIVE

This research seeks to deepen understanding of how Generation X and Generation Z view mental health issues and counseling. By examining their attitudes, beliefs, and experiences, the research highlights similarities and differences between these age groups. This helps reveal how factors like cultural background, societal influences, and personal experiences shape their perceptions. Ultimately, the study provides valuable insights that can inform the development of tailored mental health services and communication strategies, ensuring they effectively address the unique concerns and needs of each generation.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study holds significance for both younger and older generations because it provides a clearer understanding of how these groups perceive mental health issues and counseling. It examines the complex attitudes they hold, including the stigma and acceptance present within their communities. These insights are crucial not only for individuals but also for professionals like guidance counselors and medical practitioners, as the findings help them recognize and challenge societal stereotypes and misconceptions that often hinder mental health support. By highlighting these barriers and attitudes, the study enables professionals to develop more targeted and effective approaches to mental health care. Additionally, this research serves as a valuable resource for future studies in the field, offering a foundation for further exploration of generational perspectives. Ultimately, the study contributes to broader efforts aimed at raising awareness and fostering greater acceptance of mental health counseling across all age groups, promoting a more inclusive and supportive approach to mental wellbeing.

## METHODOLOGY

This descriptive qualitative research study centered on 12 nursing students from MSU IIT and their 12 parents, who were not employed in healthcare or medically related fields. The researchers conducted in-depth interviews with both generations—Generation X (parents) and Generation Z (students)—to gather rich, detailed data. Through careful analysis of these interviews, the study aimed to explore and understand the perspectives and experiences of both groups, providing valuable insights into their views on mental health and related topics.

## RESULTS

Generational theory and the Socio-cultural theory as the foundation for their research. It suggests that individuals from the same generation are influenced by the historical and social context of their upbringing, which affects their attitudes and behaviors. It emphasizes the role of social interactions and cultural influences in cognitive development, suggesting that individuals' beliefs and attitudes are shaped by their interactions and cultural norms. The researchers aimed to prove the existence of a generation gap in perceptions of mental health counseling between Generation X and Generation Z. However, the results of the study did not support their assumptions, indicating that the selected participants did not exhibit distinct perspectives on mental health counseling.

#### CONCLUSION

The older and younger age groups demonstrate encouragingly positive attitudes toward mental health, showing a readiness to seek professional assistance despite challenges like societal stigma. By exploring the experiences and viewpoints of these two generations, the study offers valuable insights into how mental health is perceived across different age groups. This nuanced understanding can inform the design of more effective interventions, support networks, and strategies that are sensitive to the unique needs of diverse populations. Ultimately, the study aims to raise mental health awareness, break down barriers, and foster a compassionate and supportive environment that empowers individuals to access the care and support they require.

#### RECOMMENDATION

Since the researcher assumed that attitude differences between Generation X and Generation Z, as social and cultural factors may not sharply separate their views. Instead of relying on broad generational labels, it is important to focus on individual and situational factors that influence mental health perceptions. Additionally, exploring other influences beyond generation and culture can provide a deeper understanding of these attitudes. It is also essential to recognize that social and cultural norms do not always create clear generational divides. Finally, increasing the sample size in future studies will help better capture evolving cultural and societal trends.

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