

Factors Influencing Psychological Flexibility in Adults With Generalized Anxiety Disorder: A Qualitative Study

Maura. McDonnell¹, Erwin A. William^{2*}, Chidinma. Chikwe³

¹ Department of Psychology, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN, USA

² Department of Counseling and Psychology, University of the Philippines Manila, USA

³ Department of Psychology, University of Toronto, Canada

*** Corresponding author email address:** Erwin.william@up.edu.ph

Editor

José Aparecido Da Silva
Full Professor, Department of
Psychology, University of Sao
Paulo, Ribeirao Preto, Sao Paulo,
Brazil
jadsilva@ffclrp.usp.br

Reviewers

Reviewer 1: Orsolya Demetrovics

Institute of Psychology, ELTE Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary. Email:
orso.demetrovics@ehok.elte.hu

Reviewer 2: Winfrida Lusignan

Department of Psychology, Université de Montréal, Montreal, Quebec, Canada.
Email: winfrida.lusignan@umontreal.ca

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

The phrase “Research shows that individuals with GAD struggle not only with excessive rumination...” should be supported with more recent meta-analytical references (post-2023). Consider integrating newer global prevalence studies.

The demographics table is informative, but the sample skews toward employed adults. Discuss whether this distribution limits representation of more severely impaired or marginalized GAD populations.

The claim “Lifestyle adjustments... though less studied” is interesting. Please provide supporting literature, as lifestyle interventions for anxiety have gained evidence recently (diet, exercise trials).

Authors revised and uploaded the document.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

The discussion of COVID-19 context is strong, but it might appear outdated for 2026 readers. Consider reframing this as an illustration of flexibility's importance in crises, rather than focusing heavily on the pandemic.

The statement "Despite the accumulating evidence, gaps remain in understanding..." is accurate but too general. Specify which populations, contexts, or processes remain underexplored to sharpen the rationale for your qualitative design.

Clarify the geographic diversity of U.S. participants. Were they concentrated in a specific state/region? This affects transferability.

You state "These findings resonate with earlier quantitative studies...". Please more clearly articulate what is new that your qualitative lens added beyond existing quantitative literature.

The link to mindfulness studies is appropriate, but this paragraph conflates trait mindfulness with trained mindfulness. Differentiate them.

The comparison with caregivers (Tan et al., 2023) is useful, but caregivers differ significantly from GAD patients. Clarify limits of cross-population generalization.

Authors revised and uploaded the document.

2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.