

Coping Mechanisms of the Senior High School Students during COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: *The study explored on the coping mechanisms of the senior high school students during COVID-19 pandemic. The results showed: (1) The common problem of students implementing the new normal setting were: hard to adjust in the current set up, deadlines to be missed such as the availability of sleep, they feel drained and exhausted, they have more demanding works than face to face classes, they don't have an experience on this distance learning, they don't have experience on home schooling. (2) The issues associated using technology used to support online distance learning were: different online learning tools are constantly being introduced to students, participants choose to attend webinar workshops, watch online tutorials, and be mentored by peers, to broaden their knowledge and develop useful skills as they create instructional plans. (3) The issues associated encountered by students under the new normal were: difficulties on their internet connection, the stability of internet connection and load of school works, experiencing academic anxiety, burnouts, frustration, thinking of dropping out of school because of the situation, frustrating whenever there's something they cannot comprehend, they get exhausted and drained easily, developed social anxiety, impacting their self-confidence, relationships, schooling, and jobs. (4) The students coping mechanism addressing the issues encountered were: self-care, prioritize studies, always take time and effort, organizing schedule, rest.*

Keywords— Coping mechanisms, Senior High School Students, New Normal, Qualitative Study

1. INTRODUCTION

The pandemic of COVID-19, which started in December 2019, seriously affected the functioning of private basic education institutions in the country and around the world. It became a worldwide health epidemic in which, regardless of age, gender and social status, everybody was literally affected. The world stopped, and when all corporations wound down operations, the economy crashed. Community lockdown and quarantine led teachers to work from home and students research from home through digital distance education. [1]. Other institutions trimmed their classes short of what they planned, causing further employment institutions to be severely disrupted. The opening of cases for the next academic year was postponed and schools were given more time to plan continuity plans and handle alternative modalities of learning.

The teaching and learning that occurs predominantly within the classroom is most vulnerable. Globally, several schools have now replaced conventional classroom systems with imaginative flexible learning methods as these are found to maximize the learning outcomes of students. [2]. The educational system of the Philippines faces challenges related to learning delivery modalities, especially in primary education. [3]. At a rather short notice, the transition to online learning was too sudden, but academic institutions have to strategize and accelerate new ways of pedagogy teaching.

In the Philippines, the sudden change to online learning created a hot debate, citing the poor living conditions of the learners. [4]. It mentions an apparent difference between those who can and can't afford the money to make use of the latest platform for education. At this point, reopening the schools is very costly. [5].

The psychological and emotional effect of the

COVID-19 pandemic has been apparent since its onset. Its appearance and dissemination cause a great deal of fear among people, contributing to increased levels of anxiety [6]. Coping skills are influences that affect how an individual responds to a challenge and how effective they are [7]. When a person feels in control of a difficult situation, he or she is more likely to react confidently to it [8]. Stress coping skills are described as "the ability to apply techniques that mitigate and control the stress response." [9]. There are numerous coping styles, and the two primary coping strategies addressed are problem- focused coping and emotion-focused coping [10].

The researchers determined what challenges come to students' mind and how it affected in their academic achievement of senior high school student private school in Marilao, Bulacan. The data and evidences were gathered through survey questions, and purposive sampling method.

2. RELATED WORKS

Coping is described because the mind and behaviors mobilized to manipulate the inner and outside traumatic situations. [14]. It is a time period used distinctively for aware and voluntary mobilization of acts, specific from 'protection mechanisms' which can be unconscious or subconscious adaptive responses, each of which intention to lessen or tolerate stress. [15]. When people are subjected to a stressor, the various approaches of coping with it are termed 'coping styles,' which can be a fixed of surprisingly solid tendencies that determine the individual's behavior in reaction to stress. These are regular through the years and throughout situations. [16]. Many of the coping

mechanisms show beneficial in sure situations. Some research recommended that a problem-centered method may be the maximum beneficial; different research, have regular information that a few coping mechanisms are related to worse outcomes. [17]. Maladaptive coping refers to coping mechanisms which are related to terrible intellectual fitness consequences and higher ranges of psychopathology symptoms. These encompass disengagement, avoidance, and emotional suppression. [18].

Coping Mechanism among students the current study aimed to provide insight into their emotional adjustment and coping mechanism. Over a period of time, coping mechanisms among students has increased drastically due to parental expectation and competitive environment among students. This has resulted in having harmful effect to the individual, parents, society and nation. Competition among students leading them to mental health issues like depression, anxiety and suicide. These facts require immediate attention; hence, awareness among students, parents and teachers should be created so that preventive measures can be taken to create a friendly and, healthy environment. In order to overcome such issue the counselors and health professionals must take initiative to create awareness among the parents and teachers about their role in fostering a healthy environment. Thus, to save youth from such vulnerable behaviors they should be directed towards creative and constructive activities to enhance their capabilities, interests, aptitudes and encourage them to achieve their goals.[19]

Among the factors that could be weakened by coping mechanism, attention has been paid to expectations of self- efficacy, which are considered one of the most important determinants for student engagement, persistence, and academic success. From a proactive perspective, research on academic stress has emphasized the importance of coping strategies in preventing harmful consequences. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in discovering the extent to which individuals are able to combine different coping strategies and the adaptive consequences.

Planful problem solving, finding social reinforcement, confrontive coping, distancing, self-control, escape- avoidance, taking accountability, and constructive reappraisal are among the eight styles of coping mechanisms listed by Lazarus and his colleagues. These eight 8 coping strategies were further subdivided into active coping strategies and passive coping strategies. Coping skills increase class attendance, engagement, perseverance even when faced with losses or loss in general, and arm them with a better, more robust self, which can lead to a much more productive learning experience. We are complex creatures living complex lives, and we are not all capable of coping with the challenges that we face. As a

result, we are vulnerable to becoming tense and nervous [20].

Coping has been identified as a critical factor in the mechanism of eliminating, mitigating, or tolerating stress and avoiding psychological distress [21]. Coping is characterized as cognitive and emotional attempts to cope with the situation's internal or external demands. It is viewed as a mechanism rather than an attribute or consequence. A minority of students find the task too difficult, and as a result, they leave their programs of study Some students use constructive stress control techniques such as finding social reinforcement or engaging in recreational activity, while others use maladaptive stress management strategies such as escape/avoidance. Other weak coping mechanisms include avoiding the issue, failing to get support from others, and seeking escapism through drug use. As a consequence, some students, especially young people, consider self-harm and suicide [22]

A research on coping mechanisms used by distant students showed that students use a range of coping strategies, including finding social help and making improvements to enhance the difficult situation. They can also use escapism through drug abuse, comfort food, or attempting to avoid difficult situations. There has been no research on the methods used by teacher education students to deal with depression during their educational programs. Finding help and participating in recreational activity are two of the positive coping mechanism. However, disruptive coping mechanisms, such as venting frustrations on children, have been documented, especially among married distance learning students [23].

Another research on the coping mechanisms used by distance learning students revealed four coping mechanisms: planful problem solving, taking accountability, finding social help, and confrontive coping. Coping strategies are methods for dealing with traumatic and difficult situations. Coping was clinically characterized by Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman as the amount of continuously evolving cognitive and behavioral efforts aimed at dealing with specific demands, whether internal or external, that are perceived as challenging [24].

Students encounter tension when they are attempting to cope with the pressures of transitioning to a new living setting, new friends, academic pressure, and sexual issues. These conditions can leave them with shaking hands, strained limbs, migraine, headache, and a number of other stress- related symptoms, or they can limit the student to ineffectiveness [25].

Students who attain high academic achievement are more likely to experience difficulty as a result of the academic standards that they must meet. Furthermore, those students demonstrated a variety of stress coping mechanisms to relieve their stress [26]. Coping entails controlling one's engagement reactions in order to alter

the cause of tension or one's emotional reaction [27]. Coping, is an attempt to handle particular external and internal tension demands [28]. Coping is characterized as a deliberate, voluntary mechanism that involves attempts to control feelings and perceptions, regulate behavior and physical arousal, and act on the atmosphere to mitigate a stressor [29].

Explored the contrast between positive and poor coping strategies. According to research, healthy coping styles include exercising or the use of a strategic task such as finding the bright side of a problem. The same study, poor coping strategies involve students who blamed themselves or engaged in unhealthy habits such as drug misuse or ignoring others [30]. On the other hand, described avoidance coping as a form of emotion-focused technique. This technique is used by more anxious teens and consists of cognitive efforts to deny or diminish the source of stress. According to study, the themes that fall under this approach mostly centered on denial and evasion or mental disengagement as a measurement of stress coping [31]. It provided teenagers with a therapeutic break by encouraging them to withdraw from a traumatic environment by wishful thinking, denial, self-distraction, or mental disengagement [32]. Coping behaviors may also be built in the light of life skills and instruction offered in a school environment, stressed the importance of assisting youth in seeking social resources and communicating effectively [33].

Teens must learn how to deal with difficult situations. According to study, there are both constructive and negative approaches to coping [34]. Communication and finding assistance from others, as well as problem solving, taking action, and seeking help [35]. Two emotion-focused coping behaviors recur: introducing emotional reinforcement and reducing stress by limiting tension. Emotionally based coping elicits both positive and negative reactions. Bad coping habits included emotional reactions [36] and venting [37], while constructive coping behaviors included getting support from friends implementing humor [38].

More recent report in 2011 that linked approach coping behavior as a problem-focused behavior that school children should use to combat the rise in bullying in classrooms that impacts students' academic achievements [39].

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The main goal of the study was to determine the coping mechanism of the Senior High School students. Specifically, the researchers sought answers to the following questions.

- 1.What is it like being a student under the new normal?
- 2.What are the disadvantages as a student studying

under the new normal?

- 3.What are the difficulties/challenges you encountered under the new normal as a student?
- 4.How do the respondents cope up in those difficulties/challenges that they encountered as a student?

4. METHODOLOGY

The research method for this study was a qualitative phenomenological approach. This approach focuses on explaining people's living situations. The goal of phenomenology is to describe the meaning of this experience both in terms of what was experienced and how it was experienced. [40]. Instead of analyzing it, the researchers explained the data obtained. There are five levels or phases in the clarification phase referred to: (1) bracketing and phenomenological elimination, (2) delineating meaning units, (3) clustering meaning units to shape themes, (4) summarizing each interview, and (5) collecting common and special themes from all the interviews and assembling a composite overview in the form of a grounded theoretical structure.

The researchers used interviews and observation data gathering. This is to get the information requirements for this study. The researchers interviewed the respondents. The investigators also sent a letter of request to the participants. This letter shows that they agree with the interview.

The respondents of the study comprised senior high school students in Barcelona academy of- Marilao, Bulacan, Philippines. We used purposive sampling method to select the respondents of the study. Purposive sampling is a convenience sampling method. This method is applied when it is difficult to access subjects with the target characteristics. In this method, the existing study subjects recruit future subjects among their acquaintances. Sampling continues until data saturation. [41].

We used researcher-made interview questions to compile the information for this study. These questions describe the issues and problems in implementing the new normal. This was for them to be informed of the topic at hand and to give them the readiness to tell their lived experiences as students this new normal. The questions of the guide acted as prompts to get the respondents' perspectives on the topics.

The researchers utilized thematic coding analyzing data. Normally, different people can refer to the same question in different ways, using terms or phrases that don't match but are always thoughtfully related. The open codes, created from a first pass through the data that focuses on identifying, labeling, and classifying, may be combined into a single overall concept. Qualitative data processing employs a wide range of coding types, including those related to meaning, situation, viewpoints, points of view, measures, methodologies, and relations, among others, whether in the field making findings or performing interviews.

The guide questions were:

1. What is it like for you as a student under the new normal?
2. What are the disadvantages as a student studying under the new normal?
3. What are the difficulties/challenges you encountered under the new normal as a student?
4. How do you cope up in those difficulties/challenges you encountered as a student?

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Student under the New Normal

A.1 Struggle in the New Normal Setting

The answer of the participants revolves around the fact that senior high school students under the new normal are feeling hard to adjust in the current set-up. In fact, student 2 indicated that “Online class in these days take a lot of time to adjust and to adapt to the new normal”. In addition, that student also indicated that, “As a student, it is hard at first because I'm not used to this, I also had a hard time adjusting and adapting to this situation but as time pass by, I learned to adjust and I got used to it.” Also, some of the participants face some struggle because they feel drained and exhausted which were indicated by student 3 and student 4. The procedures which were commonly utilized in face-to-face classes are not appropriate in distance learning. Fear comes along as instructors grasp innovation. They are given a sense of duty to adjust and investigate such things so they can coordinate it into their instructional method and still perform proficient capacities [42].

A.2 First Occurrence

Most answer of the participants stated that they don't have an experience on this distance learning and they also don't have experience on home schooling. So, this is their first-time taking classes at home that is supported by student 1. Technology is used to support online distance learning. Participants are constantly becoming acquainted with various online learning platforms. Participants decide to attend webinar sessions, watch video tutorials, and are mentored by peers in order to equip themselves with the new normal education. This enables them to broaden their knowledge and develop useful skills as they create instructional materials. This also enables them to broaden their knowledge and develop useful skills as they create instructional plans. Teachers play an important role in improving educational quality; thus, teacher's capacity building must be a top priority [43].

B. Disadvantages Studying under the New Normal

B.1 Procrastination

The disadvantages encountered of a student studying under the new normal is procrastination. Student 1 stated that, "Procrastination is a big problem, especially while working in the comfort of your own home. There are many tempting things to do that may hinder your workflow which cause deadlines to be missed such as the availability of sleep. This may result in other problems like lack of sleep due to one trying to catch up to deadlines, causing missed classes, and many more." Some also experienced distractions they can't focus because they are inside of their home and are distracted, poor time management and tardiness. However, most students struggle with issues such as task aversion and uncertainty. As a result, students begin to procrastinate their activities, unable to organize their duties according to their priorities, causing them to become easily distracted. It is one of the most difficult skills to master and it is one of the keys to higher academic achievements [44].

B.2 New Normal Learning Struggles

Some participants stated that it doesn't equalize the quality of learnings we gain in a face-to-face setting. Some also stated that they have more demanding works than face to face classes. Many instructors and students who prefer in- person instruction have found the abrupt transition to fully adopt online learning to be especially stressful. Online learning is frequently portrayed as a weaker option that provides a lower-quality education than face-to-face learning (Hodges et al. 2020). Clearly, despite the fact that online learning has been around for many decades, some faculty members and students do not see the value of fully online learning. Many instructors have to come up with quick online learning solutions during the current health crisis [45].

C. Difficulties/Challenges Encountered under the New Normal

C.1 Unstable Internet Connection

Most answers of the participants are difficulties on their internet connection. The participants mentioned that unstable and slow internet connection impede their class works as one student stated that challenges that he encountered is when the internet connection is too slow that he thought he can't attend to his class because of the internet. Another student said that he is also having a hard time with the internet connection. Especially when he had to attend zoom meetings and some time he cannot study properly because he can't understand what his teacher is saying because of the poor internet

connection. Another student said that the stability of internet connection and load of school works are the difficulties they encounter as new normal learners. Steady and fast internet connection supports the directions, conveyance in online distance learning. Even so, as of early this year, the Philippines' fixed average speed is just 26.18 Mbps, ranking the country 114th in the world for mobile speeds and 108th for fixed broadband speeds [46].

C.2 Mental State

Some participants are experiencing academic anxiety, burnouts, frustration, thinking of dropping out of school because of the situation right now. They also feel stress because of the activities that their professor gives immediately. They also stated that learning is frustrating whenever there's something they cannot comprehend. They get exhausted and drained easily. They experienced a lot of breakdowns and burnouts. Worse, they kind of developed social anxiety. Educational institutions, being the students' primary environment during their formal educational years, should establish systems, wherein actual and potential mental health problems among the youth can be addressed. The link between mental health of students, and academic engagement [47] and school environment [48]. Students with frequent feelings of internalized distress such as sadness, anxiety, depression) show poor academic functioning and those with externalized distress such as anger, frustration, and fear exhibit school difficulties [49].

D. Coping Mechanisms Despite Difficulties/Challenges Encountered

Despite the difficulties/challenges encountered by the student participants in school, home, community students still have positivity in them and coping mechanism to overcome these difficulties/challenges that they have. One student said, "I prioritize my studies and I always take time and more effort to overcome that challenges that I face. I usually watch tv shows or movies to relax myself and it is therapeutic for me and helps me stay calm and think straight, another thing I do is to organize my schedule so that I know what to do and what to do next." Another student said, "I cope up by doing my school works immediately right after my teachers' instructions for me to enjoy the rest as my free time and take care of my mental health."

Remote learning in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis presents challenges for students, but it also motivates them to persevere amid the amounts of difficult activities they must complete every day. As a result, the aim of this study was to explain how senior high school students coping up with remote learning in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Students can also cope with remote learning by renting instructional materials. Since activities necessitate the use of laptops or tablets, a typical coping mechanism is to seek assistance from family and other. Another coping mechanism is to get help from friends. Students who face depression when participating in a remote learning program often seek social reinforcement from their peers, relatives who can provide urgent assistance [50] [51]. When it comes to doing lesson activities, students cope with it by exercising time control, performing learning assignments ahead of time, and

expanding the time for learning tasks. All three coping mechanisms are linked since time control frees up time for other activities.

Meanwhile, students who begin remote learning are more likely to be concerned about increased teacher standards. However, they are able to cope with the pressure by balancing themselves. These students may have developed an identity management culture. Similarly, the students cope by praying and weeping. Students must adapt emotionally as a result of the abrupt transition to remote study. Students studying use this coping mechanism in the same way [52]. When they are exhausted by a large number of assignments, students turn to prayer and weep before they weep.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, we drew the following conclusions: (1) The common problem of students implementing the new normal setting were: hard to adjust in the current set up, deadlines to be missed such as the availability of sleep, they feel drained and exhausted, they have more demanding works than face to face classes, they don't have an experience on this distance learning, they don't have experience on home schooling. (2) The issues associated using technology used to support online distance learning were: different online learning tools are constantly being introduced to students, participants choose to attend webinar workshops, watch online tutorials, and be mentored by peers, to broaden their knowledge and develop useful skills as they create instructional plans. (3) The issues associated encountered by students under the new normal were: difficulties on their internet connection, the stability of internet connection and load of school works, experiencing academic anxiety, burnouts, frustration, thinking of dropping out of school because of the situation, frustrating whenever there's something they cannot comprehend, they get exhausted and drained easily, developed social anxiety, impacting their self-confidence, relationships, schooling, and jobs. (4) The students coping mechanism addressing the issues encountered were: self-care, prioritize studies, always take time and effort, organizing schedule, rest.

7. RECOMMENDATION

It appears imperative that the school

administrators may get attention towards the findings of this study and use it as a basis for their intervention planning, and for other programs of the school in context.

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