Navigating the Challenges of Online Distance Learning: Silliman University Students' Coping Strategies and Psychological Well-Being

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Abstract

The study investigates challenges and coping strategies among college students during the rise in online distance learning, highlighting this demographic's limited knowledge of psychological well-being despite extensive research. A survey of 676 college students revealed internal and external challenges, primarily related to connectivity issues like limited Wi-Fi access, slow speeds, and power interruptions. The top coping strategy was emotion-focused coping strategies, like taking breaks. The study found that college students' psychological well-being is generally average or moderate despite their vulnerability to adverse mental health consequences in online distance learning.

Keywords: Psychological Well-being, Challenges, Coping strategies

Introduction

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO), through their director-general, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, declared COVID-19 a pandemic, citing over 118,000 cases detected over 110 countries and territories around the globe (Ducharme, 2020). The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically affected people's lifestyles.

All over the globe, the educational sector has suffered from these

setbacks. This health crisis not only impacted the physical health but also the mental well-being of individuals in societies. It has changed how people do things and pushed them to cope and adjust to uncertainties.

For more than a year, schools were forced to innovate and address the challenges brought about by the shift to online distance learning, flexible learning, or other means to facilitate student learning. Teachers, educators, and school staff were trained and retrained to deliver services to their clients.

In the Philippines, as early as January 30, 2020, and upon the declaration of the WHO which turned the epidemic into a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) released CMO No. 4 Series of 2020 on the implementation of the Guidelines on Flexible Learning by private and public higher education institutions (HEIs). However, with the lockdown in March 2020 under Proclamation No. 929, which proclaimed a nationwide state of disaster in the Philippines because of COVID-19, both private and public schools remained closed, with some opting to use the online distance learning platform for their classes, while most public schools and some private schools used blended and modular learning methods.

Silliman University maximized and further strengthened its learning management system called MySOUL (Silliman Online University Learning), which the University has been operating since before the pandemic hit. The University's official Learning Management System (LMS) is an "all-in-one web-based teaching and learning platform" for synchronous and asynchronous classroom interaction and activities. Thus, the necessary upskilling of faculty and staff and preparations for online distance learning were adapted to address the needs of the students studying remotely from their homes.

Following the pandemic, other changes brought about by the climate crisis, which included critical incidents such as typhoons and, recently, the heat wave, have made it imperative to maximize the online distance learning platform. Online distance learning became the mode of delivery of education.

However, several challenges arose because of these changes. Ensuring an equitable and quality learning environment for the students, faculty, and staff was only one of the difficulties encountered. Other setbacks include having a slow internet connection, limited accessibility to gadgets like laptops, among others, adjustments in the use of technology, and the stresses and anxiety that come with these challenges.

The Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism chronicled the lives of Filipino individuals who battled with depression brought about by

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the pandemic (Omengan, 2021). The Department of Health also reported that, at most, a quarter of Filipinos battled with "moderate to severe" anxiety issues, which were results of the COVID-19 pandemic and from working from home. This was based on a study by the University of the Philippines involving 1,879 respondents, a sixth of whom reported moderate to severe depression (Domingo, 2021). Disruption of work-life balance was highlighted, and limited face-to-face interactions with family and peers were also mentioned. The inability to move around easily and the implementation of travel restrictions were the difficulties they faced, not to mention access to healthcare facilities and ease of setting up doctor appointments.

The phenomenon is similar to the students' experiences. They also had to contend with fatigue due to screen time and adjusting to a different modality in teaching. A study by Rotas and Cahapay (2020) thoroughly discussed the difficulties of distance learning because of the pandemic. Online learning fatigue, increased anxiety, and depression were challenges faced by students and teachers alike. As a result, the Department of Education (DepEd) issued a memo (Memorandum-OUCI 2020-307) suggesting measures to reduce stress and anxiety and foster "academic ease" during online distance learning.

The study aimed to identify the different challenges, coping strategies, and the student's psychological well-being to help the school counselors and the Guidance and Testing Division create programs and possible interventions to address the needs, concerns, and problems of students resulting from the shift to online distance learning among students of Silliman University. The following specific research questions guided the investigation:

1. What challenges did college students face during online distance learning?
2. What were the coping strategies of college students during online distance learning?
3. What was the psychological well-being of college students in terms of positive relations, self-acceptance, Autonomy, personal growth, environmental mastery, and purpose?

With the study's results, the researchers were committed to adhering to and adapting to best practices concerning implementing mental health programs and interventions necessary to capacitate the learners to help them positively adjust to environmental changes.

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Review of Related Literature

Several studies have been conducted to understand college students' difficulties and coping strategies in online distance learning worldwide and in the Philippines. This section reviews the related literature and studies on the topic to guide the researchers and the readers regarding the direction of this study and the interpretation of the results.

The body of literature regarding online distance learning and college students' challenges and coping strategies is diverse. Much research has been done on this topic, and the studies presented here are anchored on the most recent studies conducted in the Philippines and worldwide.

Challenges Faced

Presently, the propagation of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has become unbeatable, infecting more than 12 million people (Chen et al., 2021). The detrimental effects of the pandemic are not only limited to the individual's physical health but, more importantly, to the mental and social facets that COVID-19 has wrought. The coronavirus pandemic has significantly impacted every aspect of human life, including education (Saraswati et al., 2020).

The outcome of COVID-19 on Nepal's educational system, along with the difficulties and coping mechanisms it has forced upon students to learn to survive, have given rise to a critical examination and contemplation of the opportunities and problems the pandemic has presented for the technological advancement of the educational system.

In the Philippines, Cahapay and Rotas (2020) listed several methods of delivering education used in colleges, universities, and higher education worldwide. These methods include blended learning, online learning, remote learning, blended learning, and distance education. In their study, students reported that they experienced difficulty in the new educational setup.

Students' levels of isolation and independence have increased due to the sudden switch to remote learning, which has also become a major source of pressure for college students. According to Saraswati et al. (2020), the pandemic severely impacted students' learning and welfare, which probably widened the gap between privileged and unprivileged students in their fair obtainment of high-quality education.

College students have more severe physiological and psychological health problems, such as dealing with close relationships, coping with

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financial stress, and managing responsibilities and roles (Chen, 2021). This study aimed to expand the knowledge by centering on college students as the respondents to examine the impact of various vital stressors on their well-being during the COVID-19 outbreak. Three significant stressors were identified among college students—academic responsibilities, detachment from school, and distress due to possible virus contamination (Chen et al., 2021).

The vulnerability of college students to experience harmful psychological and mental health repercussions brought on by the pandemic poses a probable danger to their mental, physical, psychological, and emotional well-being as well as their developmental and educational advancement (Singh et al., 2020).

Limone and Toto (2021) also stated the positive and negative impacts of online distance learning due to the increased technological usage during the pandemic. Communication gadgets enhance people's lives, but people cannot picture living without them once they utilize them (Amichai-Hamburger, 2009). Further, Amichai-Hamburger (2009) shared the positive effect of online relationships on people's well-being, such as the unique context of openness and self-disclosure. Limone and Toto (2021) cited video games as an example that regardless of being a problem to the potential development of mental illness, video games are found to lessen anxiety and depression and boost skills, creativity, and cognition in children. Similarly, Limone and Toto (2021) associated using smartphones as an escape to loneliness. Research proved that smartphones and other technologies during the pandemic have escalated significantly. This increase in technology usage is perceived as a risky condition for getting psychological conditions. They likewise reiterated that the overuse of technology is considered an alarming component that impacts the psychological well-being of individuals. Angoluan (2021) also mentioned in her research that social media usage is a platform of information for gaining connections. However, the different and opposing opinions taking place on the platform have become a cause of stress to individuals. Depending on usage patterns, the growing use of technology can affect children's and adolescents' mental development in both positive and negative ways. During these trying pandemic times, parents should monitor their kids' behavior and mental health (Limone & Toto, 2021).

Coping Strategies Adapted

With all the mentioned challenges, remote learning is the most

appropriate instructional modality during emergencies like the COVID-19 pandemic. Amidst the challenges of remote learning, studies on coping strategies were also conducted worldwide. Coping is a strategy or mechanism people use to deal with or manage stress and uncomfortable feelings or emotions. Coping mechanisms are either active or avoidant. Active coping is when there is awareness of the cause of stress, and the individual addresses the concern.

On the other hand, avoidant coping happens when the cause of stress is disregarded or not addressed. Coping styles can either be problem-focused or emotion-focused. Coping mechanisms are often interchangeably used with defense mechanisms. That being said, not all coping mechanisms can be helpful to individuals. When it comes to coping strategies, adaptive coping mechanisms are useful, whereas maladaptive coping strategies are harmful (Bailey, 2022).

In the Philippines, coping strategies were reported in the study of Cahapay (2020), such as coping with the challenge by participating in online classes and downloading lessons using the student's 5-inch screen phone and making them easier to read by rewriting on paper. Additionally, personal coping strategies such as talking to oneself and motivating oneself, focusing on other things at home to avoid the stress caused by COVID-19, and connecting with friends and family to relieve stress were reported.

Saraswati et al. (2020) further support the studies mentioned above. The study shows that when schools reopen, students will likely experience more family-related issues. For example, some students may return with increased anxiety related to family or health problems brought on by the pandemic and the loss of learning during this time (Saraswati et al., 2020). Schools may find it difficult to manage students' health and welfare. The researchers suggest that to address the following issues, and schools should consider offering student and parent counseling.

During this pandemic, schools must continuously communicate with parents and students. This can be achieved by calling students through the telephone, interacting with them on social media, and conducting home visits while physically distancing. It is also important to emphasize that during this pandemic, the emphasis should be more on the welfare of the students than on their academics.

Psychological Well-being

A study by Bhat (2018), titled "A Study of Psychological Well-being of Adolescents about School Environment and Place of Living," aims

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to analyze the influence of school environment and school type (urban or rural setting) on the mental health of senior secondary school students in Kashmir Valley. The study results show that students in rural and urban areas have very different psychological well-being, with rural students having greater levels than urban students.

Another study conducted in India, titled "Relationship between Self-esteem and Psychological Well-being among Indian College Students," investigates the function of self-valuation in psychological health. The study sought to explore the function of gender in one's degree of psychological well-being and self-esteem and assess the relationship between the two. In this way, self-esteem influences an individual's overall psychological well-being. The study also revealed that self-esteem is inextricably linked to an individual's personal, cultural, and social realms. This means that one's environment considerably impacts how he perceives his image. Additionally, the "hassles of schoolwork, lacking fulfillment from oneself, parents, and peers result in the moderate level of psychological distress" among respondents are examples of the dynamics of such social realms. (Singhal et al., 2020) As a result, addressing issues such as "social belongingness and respect in society" may help individuals (students) perform better because it boosts the learner's self-esteem.

Framework of the Study

The Transactional Theory on Stress and Coping by Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman (1984) was adopted to provide the theoretical framework in this study for understanding stress and the coping strategies or objective appraisals used to manage stressful circumstances. The theory further identified people's different coping resources and coping responses in dealing with stressors, whether internal or external. It also showed both the long-term (i.e., physical and mental health, life satisfaction) and short-term outcomes (i.e., relaxation and mood).
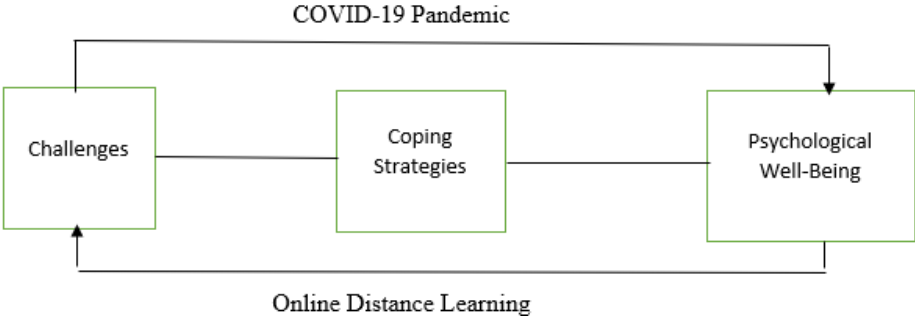
Figure 1

The Transactional Theory on Stress and Coping (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)
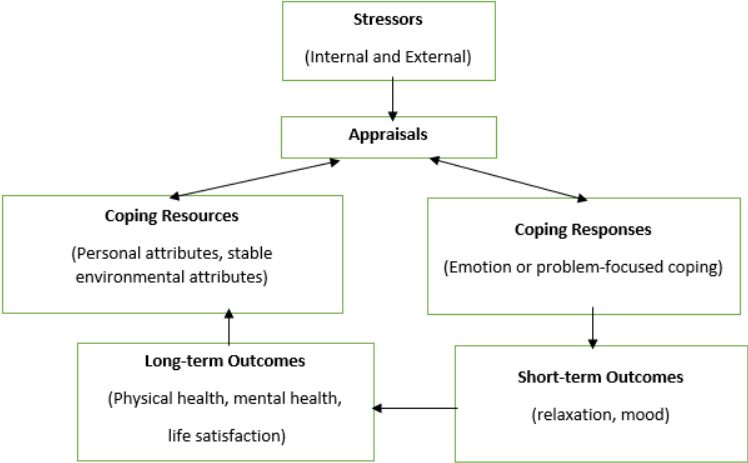
Conceptually, this study identified pertinent variables that the researchers deemed necessary in understanding what the learners or students of Silliman University experienced during the pandemic concerning the shift to online distance learning. The variables were the challenges faced by the students, which affected their psychological well-being, as well as the coping strategies they used to deal with these challenges and how these techniques may have contributed to their psychological well-being. The variables identified were explored in the context of online distance learning as the student platform.

Figure 2

Conceptual Model

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Methodology

This research study used a descriptive design. The respondents identified the challenges they encountered and coping strategies they adapted during the online distance learning. Furthermore, the study investigated the respondents' perceived level of psychological well-being.

The investigation was conducted at Silliman University with students engaged in Online Distance Learning (ODL). Online distance Learning in this study means using Silliman Online University Learning (MySOUL), an all-in-one web-based teaching and learning platform where students attend classes in real time and perform asynchronous activities.

The respondents of the study were bona fide Silliman University tertiary level students across all year levels and programs from the schools/institutes/colleges who were enrolled full-time in online distance learning in the institution in the second semester of school year 2021–2022, including those with at least one semester of online distance learning.

This study used the convenience sampling method. Of the 5,580 tertiary student population enrolled in the second semester of the academic year 2021–2022, only 12.11% or 676 respondents participated in the study.

Formal letters were sent to the Vice President for Academic Affairs, MySOUL Administrative Officer, University Registrar, and Deans of schools/colleges/institutes, informing them of the purpose and rationale of the research study and requesting their support in cascading the information to their faculty and students. A formal letter was also sent to the author/s of the psychological well-being instrument requesting permission to use the tool for the study, indicating the purpose and its rationale. Guidance Counselors and Personality Enhancement Program (PEP) facilitators did an open, active call for participation in the study on both online and offline platforms.

During the second semester of the school year 2021–2022, Silliman Online University Learning (MySOUL) posted the Google Survey form on the course page of each bona fide tertiary-level student. Students were asked to complete the survey after signing the consent form and agreeing to voluntary participation. The Google Questionnaire Survey results were collected, collated, and analyzed extensively.

Research Instrument

The data collection instruments consisted of two sections. The first section was a researcher-made questionnaire that presented the participants

The respondents were requested to list their top five challenges faced and the top five coping strategies in their distance learning setup. The study consisted of two parts, the first part being a questionnaire and the second part being the modified and adapted multidimensional scaling of psychological well-being (PWB) by Ryff CD and Singer B., an assessment that includes 18 items. The measuring instrument implemented in phase one was the Perceived Well-Being (PWB) questionnaire. It asks the participants to reflect on their overall quality of life and psychological health and express how much they generally appreciate their lives. The questionnaire used to assess psychological health consisted of 54 self-report items, responses to which were scored on a general term of well-being.

Autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance are the six subscales of PWB. Including a measure of the first PWB could lead to multicollinearity with measures of subsequent predictors of high well-being. These scales tap into one's self-concept, understanding self-esteem, and overall sense of well-being and decision-making to allow individuals to engage, explore, and adjust to situations, all while maintaining social relationships.

Data Analysis

The study used frequency distribution and percentages to identify patterns and to determine the challenges encountered and coping techniques adapted by the respondents during online distance learning.

Frequency distribution and percentages were also utilized to establish the respondents' level of psychological well-being.

Ethical Consideration

A letter was addressed to all respondents to ensure that the Data Privacy Act was observed. A formal letter was sent to the author of the standardized testing tool, requesting permission to use the PWB instrument. Students' responses were treated with the utmost confidentiality, and their names were kept anonymous while the data were processed and interpreted. All data gathered was kept strictly confidential and in a file that will be deleted after five years.

Respondents

The respondents comprised Silliman University students at the

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tertiary level who were officially enrolled during the online distance learning mode of delivery of classes during the second semester of the school year 2021–2022. The data gathered were from the 676 respondents of the fourteen schools/colleges/institutes of Silliman University, placed in five clusters.

The Allied Health and Sciences Cluster with the College of Nursing, Institute of Rehabilitative Sciences and Institute of Clinical Laboratory Sciences ranks first with 221 respondents or 32.70%. The College of Arts and Sciences have 136 respondents, or 20.11%, closely followed by the Science and Technology Cluster composed of the College of Engineering and Design, Institute of Environment and Marine Sciences, College of Computer Studies and College of Agriculture with 134 respondents or 19.82%. The Third Cluster, composed of the College of Education, College of Mass Communication, College of Performing and Visual Arts, Divinity School and School of Public Affairs and Governance, have 110 respondents or 16.27%, which the College of Business Administration follows with 75 respondents or 11.10%

Results

The findings of the processing and analysis of the data gathered are presented in this section. The different subscales of the Psychological Well-being Scale will also be discussed. The internal and external challenges faced by the respondents during online distance learning (ODL) and the coping strategies were also identified.

Challenges Faced

The transition to online distance learning (ODL) during the COVID-19 epidemic has posed many challenges for learners and teachers. One of the most prevalent issues raised by respondents was connectivity issues. According to 84.89 % of respondents, this is the most pervasive internal challenge. This can be attributed to the limitations in the Philippines' fixed broadband infrastructure, which ranks 64th out of 180 countries in terms of internet access performance (Barrot et al., 2021; Mollenkopf et al., 2020).

Aside from connectivity problems, respondents cited challenges related to internet access (26.91%) and power outages (23.45%), which were the top two external challenges encountered. These structural barriers have significantly impacted the quality of the learning experience, as highlighted by research conducted during the pandemic. (Barrot et al., 2021)

Interestingly, the challenges extended beyond technological constraints, as respondents also grappled with mental health concerns (17.55%), time management (10.07%), communication issues (9.06%), and distractions (8.20%). These findings align with studies that have emphasized the adverse effects of the pandemic on the physical, mental, and social well-being of students (Abdul-Hamid & Hamzah, 2021).

Table 1
Challenges Faced in Online Distance Learning, N=676

Challenges					
Internal	*f*	%	External	*f*	%
Interest Concerns	187	26.91	Connectivity Concerns	590	84.89
Mental Health Concerns	122	17.55	Power Concerns	163	23.45
Time Management	70	10.07	Discussions & Lessons	138	19.86
Communication Concerns	63	9.06	Financial Concerns	105	15.11
Distractions	57	8.20	Learning Environment	76	10. 94
Engagement & Interactions	46	6.62	Gadgets & Resources	63	9.06
Eye Problems	37	5.32	Academic Related	58	8.35
			COVID-19 Infection	32	4.60
Physical Exhaustion	16	2.30	Online Platform Concerns	16	2.30
			Family Problems	10	1.44
Eating Concerns	5	0.72	Post-typhoon Issue	5	0.72

Note: Multiple responses

Coping Strategies

Table 2 presents the primary ways students cope with online distance learning. Most respondents indicated 57 coping strategies in the Problem-Focused Coping category, accounting for 8.2% of 1,148 multiple responses. These strategies were further categorized into five distinct approaches: seeking support, utilizing technology, engaging in academic-related coping strategies, making plans, and practicing effective time management.

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Table 2

Coping Strategies in Online Distance Learning, N=676.

Coping Strategies	*f*	%
Meaning-Making/ Religious	124	18.3
Problem-focused	57	8.4
Emotion-focused	48	7.1
Others	43	6.4

Note: Multiple responses

The majority of the respondents (18.3%) were found to have resorted to meaning-making or religious coping. The more frequent responses were adapting to a new environment (30), praying (17), self-motivation/rewarding the self (16), being patient, calm, and understanding (17), accepting the situation and enduring (15), practicing prioritizing/organizing (15), and having a positive mindset (14), among others. This was evident in the longitudinal study by Yang, Ji et al. (2021) on meaning-making as a coping technique in unfavorable situations. Findings revealed that respondents showed a high inclination to meaning-making in negative situations during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to before the pandemic.

Problem-focused coping ranked second (8.4) as the most frequently used strategy by the participants. This included communicating with teachers for clarifications or assistance (129), ensuring backup data for internet connections (99), finding a location with better Wi-Fi connections (88), communicating with classmates (56), and creating a schedule or plan of action. These problem-focused coping strategies were basically strategies used by participants to address the root cause of their stress.

The third most frequent coping strategies were emotion-focused, which were considered active and adaptive. Examples were engaging in activities that distract them from stressful situations and make them feel good about themselves (193), mindfulness (187), doing self-care (46), psychological distancing (24), selective attention and reframing (12), emotional disclosure (11), and seeking comfort from others (11).

Several respondents (6.4) reported that they did not have coping strategies or that it did not apply to them (30), had a hard time coping (12), and resorted to self-destructive coping (1). These may seem trivial, but they still need to be investigated to fill the gap in helping respondents be equipped with positive coping strategies to deal with their stressors.

Psychological Well-being

The Psychological Well-being Scale is a multifaceted assessment tool that examines various aspects of an individual's psychological state. This research paper examines the insights gained from analyzing the subscales of this measure, which are essential for understanding the respondents' levels of psychological well-being.

Positive Relations

The positive relations subscale provides a glimpse into the quality of an individual's interpersonal connections. Respondents who scored high on this subscale, representing only 12 of the sample, exhibited characteristics such as warm, fulfilling, and trustworthy relationships with others, a strong sense of empathy and affection, and a deep understanding of the reciprocal nature of human interactions. In contrast, those who scored low or very low, comprising 19 of the respondents, struggled to maintain intimate and trusting relationships, could not be kind and concerned for others, and felt isolated and dissatisfied in social situations (Wood et al., 2008) (Agarwal, 2021).

Table 3
Psychological Well-being, N=676

Subscale	Functioning level	f	%
	Very High	65	10
	High	81	12
Positive relations	Average	400	59
	Low	61	9
	Very Low	69	10
Total		676	100
	Very High	54	8
	High	110	16
Self-acceptance	Average	396	59
	Low	62	9
	Very Low	54	8
Total		676	100
Autonomy	Very High	35	5
	High	114	17

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	Average	375	55
	Low	126	19
	Very Low	26	4
Total		676	100
Personal growth	Very High	4	1
	High	194	29
	Average	305	45
	Low	123	18
	Very Low	50	7
Total		676	100
Environmental mastery	Very High	30	4
	High	153	23
	Average	374	55
	Low	63	9
	Very Low	56	8
Total		676	100
Purpose	Very High	63	9
	High	83	12
	Average	384	57
	Low	74	11
	Very Low	72	11
Total		676	100
Overall	Very High	50	7
	High	109	16
	Average	339	50
	Low	104	15
	Very Low	74	11
		676	100

Self-Acceptance

The self-acceptance subscale reflects an individual's self-perception and attitude towards life experiences. Only 18respondents achieved a very high score on this subscale, indicating a positive outlook on their past and an acceptance of both their strengths and weaknesses. (Wissing & Eeden, 2002)(Wood et al., 2008)(Wissing & Eeden, 2002)(Wood et al., 2008). On the other hand, 19 respondents scored low or very low, expressing dissatisfaction with themselves, disappointment in their past, and a desire to change who they are. However, the majority of respondents (59) fell within the average range on this subscale (Agarwal, 2021; Wissing & Eeden, 2002; Wood et al., 2008).

Autonomy

The autonomy subscale offers insights into an individual's degree of independence and self-determination. At (19), some respondents scored low on this subscale, suggesting that they frequently worry about others' opinions, rely heavily on external validation, and may succumb to peer pressure when making important decisions (Kobau et al., 2010).

The insights gleaned from analyzing the subscales of the psychological well-being scale offer a nuanced understanding of the respondents' overall psychological state. Understanding these subscales can inform targeted interventions and support strategies to enhance the well-being of individuals.

Personal Growth

It was also shown that several respondents scored high in Personal growth. Personal growth is defined as experiencing a state of constant development, perceiving oneself as growing and changing, being receptive to new experiences, feeling as though one has reached one's full potential, witnessing gradual improvements in one's behavior and self, and evolving in ways that demonstrate increased efficacy and self-awareness. On the other hand, some respondents scored low (19), which suggests that they frequently feel as though they are stagnating personally, do not feel as though they are growing or improving over time, are uninspired and uninterested in life, and find it challenging to adopt new attitudes or behaviors.

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Environmental Mastery

Additionally, some respondents scored high in Environmental mastery (24), which involves choosing or creating circumstances that suit one's needs and values, feeling competent and in control of a wide range of external activities, and effectively utilizing available opportunities.

Purpose

Moreover, on the subscale Purpose in life, those who scored high at (9) and very high at (11) possess aspirations and objectives for living; they feel a sense of purpose and direction in life; they think both their current and past lives are significant; and they have ambitions and goals for living. In contrast, those respondents who score very low (11 and 11, respectively) lack a sense of direction, few goals or objectives, a sense of meaning in life, an understanding of the purpose of their past lives, and a perspective or set of beliefs that provide meaning to life.

Based on the overall score of all subscales for psychological well-being, it was found that half of the respondents (50) fall under the average or moderate level of psychological well-being. Only 7 seven of the respondents scored very high on the psychological well-being scale. The average rating could indicate that respondents maintained a positive self-perception and mental well-being despite their struggles and difficulties. It could also be because they adapted or practiced positive coping strategies that helped them deal with their stress.

Discussion

Respondents reported difficulties participating in class discussions, understanding lessons, managing finances, and adapting to the learning environment. The stress of issues and academic demands has been highlighted as a concern for college students during the pandemic, emphasizing their diverse obstacles. With the shift to online learning, it is crucial to address these issues by providing students with essential support, resources, and effective approaches to navigate the complexities of remote education (Barot et al., 2021).

The current research aimed to explore the coping strategies employed by students to manage their stressors. As explained by Lazarus and Folkman (Rodríguez et al., 2016), problem-focused coping methods involve

identifying the issue, considering potential solutions, evaluating the pros and cons, and selecting a course of action. In line with this approach, the "seeking support" responses focused on interacting with teachers, family, and peers for clarification, help, and social connections (Rodríguez et al., 2016). Similarly, technology-related coping tactics, such as ensuring access to the internet and backing up data, reflected students' practical steps to handle their responsibilities. Academic-centred coping strategies, such as avoiding procrastination, minimizing distractions, and engaging in learning, highlighted students' proactive measures toward addressing their hurdles. Furthermore, tasks such as making to-do lists, taking up part-time jobs, and utilizing resources demonstrated students' ingenuity in managing their stressors (Rodríguez et al., 2016; Johari, 2020; Rafati et al., 2017; Poudel & Wagle, 2023).

The ways to deal with emotions involve taking breaks, relaxing, sleeping, exercising, playing video games, and breathing exercises. Previous studies have shown that these emotion-focused coping methods are effective in handling stress and difficulties. Psychological theories suggest that strategies for managing emotions play a significant role in shaping an individual's social and emotional well-being (Smith et al., 2022). Moreover, research indicates that coping through processing and expression leads to psychological distress and increased life satisfaction (Compas et al., 2014). Additionally, research highlights the importance of effective coping strategies in reducing work-related stress and enhancing employee well-being (Johari, 2020).

However, it is worth noting that while some coping strategies focused on emotions can be beneficial, others may harm one's health. This is why healthcare students and professionals must be mindful of their coping methods to deal with challenges as it can significantly impact their performance and overall well-being. The study findings discussed here indicate a need to understand coping strategies among the participants (Cavazos et al., 2010). Some individuals mentioned struggling with coping or not having a strategy in place. These minor issues warrant exploration to ensure respondents are equipped with effective and efficient ways to address their stressors.

The findings from this study are consistent with existing literature, indicating that while many individuals use coping strategies, some may face challenges in developing or accessing coping mechanisms (Anuradha et al., 2019). Exploring the factors contributing to these challenges can help shape interventions and support systems to improve individuals' ability to cope with stress and adversity. Research has shown that prioritizing coping

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strategies can enhance well-being and health, particularly in challenging situations (Cortêz et al., 2023). Therefore, exploring the factors that impact individuals' adoption of coping strategies is essential. By addressing these gaps, experts and professionals can create tailored interventions to empower people with the tools and skills to manage their stressors effectively (Anuradha et al., 2019; Collins et al., 1999; Olmedo & Gempes, 2016; Cortêz et al., 2023).

Understanding a person's emotional well-being involves looking at aspects highlighted in a study by Wissing & Eeden (2002). This study examines components of well-being to gain insight into how individuals perceive their overall well-being. The research paper discusses the findings from analyzing these aspects, which are not explored in other literature, providing a deeper understanding of how students are performing.

One aspect, known as relations, focuses on how individuals connect with others. Only a small percentage (12%) of the participants in the study displayed characteristics of having trustworthy relationships and showing empathy and understanding in their interactions. On the other hand, a higher percentage (19%) struggled with maintaining relationships, felt lonely, and were unsatisfied in social settings, according to Kobau et al. (2010). Another important aspect is self-acceptance, which reflects how individuals see themselves and their life experiences. A small group (8%) of respondents scored highly on this scale, indicating that they have an attitude towards their past and accept their strengths and weaknesses.

However, 19% of the people surveyed expressed dissatisfaction with their past and a desire for change, while the majority, comprising 59%, fell within this category. The autonomy aspect provides insight into how independent and self-determined an individual is. A portion of respondents (19%) scored low on this aspect, indicating that they often worry about what others think and struggle to make independent decisions.

Regarding growth, the findings show that a significant number of respondents (81%) scored high, demonstrating a commitment to development, self-awareness, and reaching their full potential. This suggests that these individuals are open to experiences, see themselves evolving positively over time, and notice enhancements in their behavior and self-understanding. Conversely, a smaller group scored low on growth, which implies they frequently feel stuck or uninspired and have difficulty embracing new perspectives or behaviors.

The research also examined mastery, which refers to the ability to select or create situations, feel capable and in charge of external activities, and effectively utilize available opportunities. Many participants demonstrated

proficiency and control in managing their surroundings to fulfill their needs and values.

Furthermore, the results regarding the purpose in life indicate that a notable number of participants have goals, aims, and a sense of purpose and direction. They believe that their current and past lives hold significance and have a purpose. On the contrary, a smaller group of participants scored low in this area, indicating a lack of direction, limited goals or objectives, and an unclear understanding of the purpose behind their lives.

The outcomes suggest that the participants exhibit varying degrees of well-being, with most falling within the average to moderate range. Only a small proportion achieved scores on the well-being scale. These discoveries underscore the complexity of psychological well-being and emphasize the importance of a comprehensive evaluation to grasp the intricacies of personal experiences (Kobau et al., 2010; Wissing & Eeden, 2002).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study highlights the diverse nature of psychological well-being among the respondents. While a significant portion demonstrated strengths in personal growth, environmental mastery, and purpose in life, a subset grappled with feelings of stagnation, lack of control, and a limited sense of direction (Wissing & Eeden, 2002). These findings underscore the importance of recognizing individual differences in psychological well-being and emphasize the need for tailored interventions to support individuals who are struggling in specific areas. Further research could delve deeper into the factors contributing to these variations and explore potential strategies for enhancing overall well-being.

Wrapping up the transition to learning amid the pandemic has challenged students, impacting their academic journey and overall welfare (Barot et al., 2021). Noteworthy obstacles include limitations in courses and adjusting to new learning settings. Educational institutions need to adopt an approach to supporting students during this transition. This involves offering assistance in creating online learning experiences and providing resources to address the technical and emotional challenges students encounter. By recognizing and addressing these challenges, we can create a supportive and equitable online learning environment for all students.

Exploring coping mechanisms reveals a range of strategies that individuals employ when faced with challenges. While problem-solving coping methods like seeking assistance and managing academic pressures were evident, emotion-focused coping techniques such as relaxation and

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physical activity also played a role (Njoku et al., 2005) (Johari, 2020) (Rafati et al., 2017). This highlights the importance of addressing stressors and handling their impact.

It is important to understand that not all coping strategies are equally effective. While some strategies mentioned here can promote well-being, others may have effects.

This underscores the importance of encouraging effective coping methods and assisting individuals who may be resorting to unhealthy coping mechanisms, especially vulnerable populations such as healthcare students and professionals. It is crucial to research the intricacies of coping strategies, including those that may seem insignificant or counterproductive, in order to create targeted interventions and cultivate resilience in various situations.

Exploring the aspects of well-being provides a nuanced insight into individual experiences. While a few survey participants exhibited high levels of relationships and self-acceptance, a considerable percentage reported difficulties in interpersonal relationships, self-image, and independence (Wissing & Eeden, 2002). These results underscore the complexity of well-being. Stress the significance of considering its diverse dimensions. Further research is needed to understand the factors that influence these variations and to devise interventions that promote well-being throughout life.

To summarize, this study sheds light on the nature of well-being among the respondents. While many showed strengths in development, environmental competence, and finding purpose in life, some struggled with feelings of stagnation, a lack of Autonomy, and a sense of aimlessness (Wissing & Eeden, 2002).

The results highlight the importance of acknowledging the aspects of health and emphasizing the necessity of personalized interventions to support individuals facing challenges. Future studies could investigate the underlying reasons for these differences. Consider methods to further improve well-being through post-pandemic education that balances flexibility with equity, mental health with academic rigor, and technological innovation with human-centered design. Moreover, a unique contribution of the study is that it can help thriving students identify strategies that promote well-being, such as peer mentoring or flexible pacing, and provide actionable answers rather than simply documenting challenges.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the researchers therefore recommend that it builds upon the need for a holistic approach:

1. To effectively tackle the learning challenges, the University is advised to establish a Student Online Learning Support Center. This center would serve as a hub, offering various services tailored to meet the needs of students. The key roles of this center should encompass providing comprehensive support to address platform, software, and internet connectivity issues. Educating students on online learning techniques, time management skills, and digital literacy through workshops and personalized sessions. Creating environments and activities fosters a sense of community and belonging among learners. Establishing an Online Learning Support Center showcases a dedication to ensuring student success in the demanding landscape of online education.

2. To promote coping strategies, it is recommended that coping skills training be integrated into guidance and counseling services. This could involve offering workshops and courses on stress management, emotional regulation, and positive coping strategies as part of student programs. Particularly beneficial for students who lack effective coping mechanisms, this initiative emphasizes recognizing signs of burnout, practicing self-care, and accessing support resources. Developing approaches for addressing coping behaviors is crucial. Evaluate strategies based on research findings, such as behavioral therapy and mindfulness practices tailored to address specific unhelpful coping behaviors. Ensure these strategies are easily accessible and culturally sensitive to meet the needs of individuals struggling with coping methods. By empowering individuals with the knowledge and skills to effectively navigate challenges, we can enhance resilience, support emotional well-being, and mitigate the impacts of maladaptive coping mechanisms.

3. To cater to a spectrum of well-being needs identified in the study, it is advisable to implement the following interventions: (a) Personalized Interventions; Training in intrapersonal skills; Execute programs to enhance social interactions, communication skills, assertiveness, self-esteem, and emotional regulation. These programs should be tailored to address the needs highlighted in the research, such as improving relationships and fostering self-acceptance. Tailored Support for Specific Areas; (b) Offer individualized counseling and group support initiatives targeting challenges related to development, environmental adaptation, and finding purpose in life. This targeted approach ensures individuals receive help where they need it most. Promote holistic well-being programs, community engagement initiatives, and outreach efforts in

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communities to foster connections, offer opportunities for personal growth, and cultivate a sense of belonging. By combining targeted actions with programs focused on enhancing well-being, we can create a supportive environment that empowers individuals to thrive in all aspects of their lives.

Acknowledgement

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