

Stress and coping strategies of senior high school students: basis for action plan

Estresse e estratégias de enfrentamento de alunos do último ano do ensino médio: base para plano de ação

Estrategias de afrontamiento y estrés de los estudiantes de secundaria: bases para un plan de acción

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ABSTRACT

This study specifically aimed to make a plan of action on how to reduce the stress level of the Senior High School Students. In order to make a feasible action plan, the researchers determined the stress level and the coping strategies of the male and female students respectively. The researchers used the descriptive method of research. A total of 82 students were the respondents of the study. Adopted questionnaires were utilized in measuring the perceived level of stress and sources of stress of the students. Results showed that both male and female students had an average level of stress. The level of stress of both female and male students is average for academic and financial sources. Moreover, the female students had low level of stress for psychological and health related stressors while the male students had average level for the said stressors. In addition, the results revealed that male and female students had different coping strategies in dealing with stress. Female students always employed spending time with friends, listening to music, eating a lot, going to some places and keeping their faith to their God as coping strategies. On the other hand, male students did not always employ coping strategies when they are stressed. Both male and female students never isolate themselves when are stressed.

Keywords: Stress, Academic Stress, Financial Stress, Psychosocial Stress, Health-related stress, Stress Coping Strategies

RESUMEN

Este estudio tuvo como objetivo específico hacer un plan de acción sobre cómo reducir el nivel de estrés de los estudiantes de secundaria. Con el fin de hacer un plan de acción factible, los investigadores determinaron el nivel de estrés y las estrategias de afrontamiento de los alumnos y alumnas, respectivamente. Los investigadores utilizaron el método de investigación descriptivo. Un total de 82 estudiantes fueron los encuestados del estudio. Los cuestionarios adoptados se utilizaron para medir el nivel de estrés percibido y las fuentes de estrés de los estudiantes. Los resultados mostraron que tanto los estudiantes masculinos como femeninos tenían un nivel promedio de estrés. El nivel de estrés de los estudiantes tanto femeninos como masculinos es promedio para las fuentes académicas y financieras. Además, las estudiantes mujeres tenían un bajo nivel de estrés por factores estresantes psicológicos y relacionados con la salud, mientras que los estudiantes varones tenían un nivel medio para dichos factores estresantes. Además, los resultados revelaron que los estudiantes masculinos y femeninos tenían diferentes estrategias de afrontamiento para lidiar con el estrés. Las estudiantes siempre emplearon pasar tiempo con amigos, escuchar música, comer mucho, ir a algunos lugares y mantener su fe en Dios como estrategias de afrontamiento. Por otro lado, los estudiantes varones no siempre emplearon estrategias de afrontamiento cuando estaban estresados. Tanto los estudiantes hombres como las mujeres nunca se aíslan cuando están estresados.

Palabras clave: Estrés, Estrés académico, Estrés financiero, Estrés psicosocial, Estrés relacionado con la salud, Estrategias de afrontamiento del estrés

RESUMO

Este estudo teve como objetivo específico traçar um plano de ação sobre como reduzir o nível de estresse de Alunos do Ensino Médio. Para viabilizar um plano de ação, os pesquisadores determinaram o nível de estresse e as estratégias de enfrentamento dos alunos e alunas, respectivamente. Os pesquisadores utilizaram o método descritivo de pesquisa. Um total de 82 alunos foram os respondentes do estudo. Questionários adotados foram utilizados para medir o nível percebido de estresse e as fontes de estresse dos alunos. Os resultados mostraram que os alunos do sexo masculino e feminino apresentaram um nível médio de estresse. O nível de estresse de alunos do sexo feminino e masculino é médio para fontes acadêmicas e financeiras. Além disso, os alunos do sexo feminino apresentaram baixo nível de estresse para estressores psicológicos e de saúde, enquanto os alunos do sexo masculino apresentaram nível médio para os referidos estressores. Além disso, os resultados revelaram que os alunos do sexo masculino e feminino apresentaram diferentes estratégias de enfrentamento para lidar com o estresse. As alunas sempre se empenharam em conviver com os amigos, ouvir música, comer muito, ir a alguns lugares e manter a fé em Deus como estratégias de enfrentamento. Por outro lado, os alunos do sexo masculino nem sempre empregam estratégias de enfrentamento quando estão estressados. Estudantes do sexo masculino e feminino nunca se isolam quando estão estressados.

Palavras-chave: Estresse, Estresse acadêmico, Estresse financeiro, Estresse psicossocial, Estresse relacionado à saúde, Estratégias de enfrentamento do estresse

1 INTRODUCTION

The existence of human beings is always associated with stress that are related to both minor and major events in life.

A well-known researcher on stress, Selye (1976), defined stress as a reaction to any pleasant or not pleasant conditions. He added that stress depends on how the person perceives it. It depends upon how a person will react and interpret stressors. Stress is the reaction of the individual's body and mind to some stimulus that cause a change in balance. It resulted to different emotions like anxiety, anger, fear, worry, frustration, sadness and despair. It can also affect the physical body of an individual as well as the mental health. Reducing this stress is one of the major concerns of the students. Stress can affect mental health and it is deemed necessary to continually assess the mental health of the students (Beiter, et al, 2015).

The young student population became vulnerable to stress because of the stressful life condition most especially if they are in a highly competitive school and it was reported in the study of Deb, Strodl & Sun (2015) that two thirds of the High School students in their research locale is affected by academic stress. This report was supported by the idea of Graham, Rogers and Yassin (2003) and Hirsch & Ellis (1996) that students are prone to stress because of their academic pursuits. They are pressured by the difficulties in academics like getting higher grades and achieving academic success. Family problems became a source of stress too.

Stress is inevitable in the Senior High School education setting since it is the stage that determines the future planning of an individual's life. It is the turning point where every individual has to make his career and life choices. Towbes and Cohen (1996) mentioned that due to the transitional nature of college life, college students particularly freshmen, are a group particularly prone to stress (D' Zurilla & Sheedy, 1991). The age of the Senior High School students is comparable to the freshmen in college.

It is very true in our country today and more specifically in our school since the K-12 program moved its way to Grade 11. The Senior High School students encountered different sources of stress because they were the first batch of students who are expected to finish the course.

It is also reported that when the students are facing with stress, they reverted into different coping strategies. Activities during leisure time, good interaction with the professors, guidance counselling and peer counselling are significant means to reduce the level of stress of the students (Shaikh, et al, 2004).

Thus, this study looked into the level of perceived stress of male and female Senior High School students, sources of stress as well as their coping strategies adopted to deal with stresses. The realities mentioned prompted and motivated the researchers to conduct this study. Furthermore, as the result of this study, the researchers will develop an action plan which will be employed to the senior high school students in dealing with stress.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to find out the stress and coping strategies of the Senior High School students of Federico Yap National High School. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of perceived stress of male and female Senior High School Students?
2. What is the level of stress among students in terms of:
 - a. academic Stress;
 - b. financial Stress;
 - c. psychosocial Stress;
 - d. health- related Stress?
3. How often do these students employ the following stress coping strategies:
 - 3.1 spending Time with Friends;
 - 3.2 sleeping;
 - 3.3 listening to music;
 - 3.4 eating a lot;
 - 3.5 playing their favorite sports;
 - 3.6 watching movies;
 - 3.7 spending time in social media;
 - 3.8 going to some places;
 - 3.9 isolating theirselves;
 - 3.10 keeping their faith/religion;
 - 3.11 studying?

2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This study was anchored to Selye's Stress theory (1976) who noted that a person reacts to any pleasant or unpelasant conditions. Furthermore, the transactional theory of stress and coping of Folkman & Lazarus (1984) was employed in the study which emphasized that stress happens as a reaction to varied events between the person, enwvironment and situation that he is into. They believed that a person has cognitive and behavioral coping strategies to manage stress.

3 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This chapter presents the design, sampling method, instrument, procedures and data analysis of the study.

3.1 Research Design

The researchers used the descriptive method of research in this particular study to identify the level of stress, sources of stress and coping strategies of the senior high school students.

3.2 Respondents and Sampling

The Senior High School students who were officially enrolled for School Year 2016-2017 were the respondents of this study. The researchers randomly chose 50% of male respondents and 50% of female respondents from the total population for every section. The researchers used the drawing of lots in getting the respondents. There was a total of 82 student- respondents for this study. The table below shows the distribution of the respondents of the study.

Table 1. Respondents of the study

Section	Male Population	Female Population	Male (50%)	Female (50%)
Aristotle	32	18	16	9
Democritus	41	5	21	3
Plato	22	8	11	4
Socrates	8	28	4	14
Total	103	59	52	30

3.3 Research Instrument

The questionnaire were divided into three (3) parts. The researchers utilized the adopted Questionnaires from the study of Shah, et. al. (2010) which was used to answer SOP 1 and SOP 2 and Shaikh, et al. (2004) for the SOP 3. It was modified to fit in the actual setting of the students. The first part of the questionnaire was the perceived level of stress by male and female students. The second part was for the sources of stress among students and the last part was for the stress-coping strategies of the learners.

3.4 Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers asked permission form the Division Schools Superintendent before the conduct of the study. They also asked permission from the School Principal. After the approval, they distributed the questionnaires to the respondents by section. The researchers also explained to the learners on how to answer the questionnaires. It was also explained to them their important role for this study especially on crafting the plan of action. The researchers immediately retrieved the questionnaires from the students after they had answered.

3.5 Data Analysis

To get the level of stress, source of stress and the coping strategies of the students, the researchers used the mean.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The level of perceived stress of the senior high school students both male and female is average as shown in Table 2. This means that male and female respectively had the same level of perceived stress. The result of this research did not adhere to the study of Shaikh, et al. (2004) who revealed that females have high level of stress.

Table 2. Perceived Level of Stress

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Level of Stress	Average	Average

In Table 3, the level of stress of both female and male students is average for academic and financial sources. Moreover, the female students had low level of stress for psychological and health related stressors while the male students had an average level for the said stressors. This means that male students considered the four causes as their stressors. The result does not support the study of Shah, et al. (2010) which reported that there was a higher level of stress revealed by the students and the main causes of the stress were academic and psychosocial aspects.

Table 3. Level of Stress of the Respondents

Sources of Stress	Female	Male
Academic	Average	Average
Financial	Average	Average
Psychosocial	Low	Average
Health Related	Low	Average

Table 4 shows the coping strategies of the students, the female students had five coping strategies that they do when they are stressed. Females always spend time with friends, listen to music, eat a lot go to some place and keep their faith/religion as their coping mechanisms. For the male students, they sometimes spend time with friends, eat a lot, play with their favorite sports, watch movies, spend time in social media, go to some place, keep their faith/religion and study the lesson. It is also noted that both male and females students never isolate themselves when they are stressed.

Furthermore, based on the results of the study, it revealed that females always have their coping strategies in dealing with stress.

Table 4. Coping Strategies of the Respondents

Coping Strategies	Female	Male
Spending Time with Friends	Always	Almost Never
Sleeping	Often	Sometimes
Listening to Music	Always	Almost Never
Eating a Lot	Always	Sometimes
Playing their Favorite Sports	Sometimes	Sometimes
Watching Movies	Sometimes	Sometimes
Spending Time in Social Media	Sometimes	Sometimes
Going to Some Places	Always	Sometimes
Isolating Theirselves	Never	Almost Never
Keeping their faith/Religion	Always	Sometimes

Studying the Lesson

Almost Never

Sometimes

4 CONCLUSION

Senior high school life is challenging since this was the transition period from the junior high school and this was the first batch of the students under the K to 12 curriculum. They felt the pressure of this transition and the pressure caused stress. Academic, financial, psychosocial and health-related causes of stress affected these students. Although they answered that they had different mechanisms to deal with stress, the researchers deemed it necessary that the school should have a plan of action for stress management. If students' stress are not effectively managed and assessed, this may lead to worst situations like they will be feeling lonely, nervous and worries. These will impact students' performance in school.

This study was only limited to four causes of stress; academic, financial, psychosocial and health-related causes. The researchers suggest for another research to be conducted to explore other causes of stress in order to formulate a doable plan for stress coping mechanisms.

Based on the results, the researchers proposed this Action Plan:

PLAN OF ACTION

Action Description	Time Frame	Person/s Responsible	Resources/Materials Needed	Constraints/Possible Challenges	Monitoring Plan (How to review if the plan of action is achieved or not)
	Date to Begin				
There is a need to request for a registered guidance counselor to be assigned solely in the Senior High School	June 2017	Principal PTA officers	Financial Resources Manpower	There was no item for a registered Guidance Counsellor. The school will send a request letter for this matter.	DepEd Officials
The need to put up a better counselling facility.	June 2018 April 2021	Principal PTA officers Parents External Stakeholders	Financial Resources Manpower	There is no budget for this counselling facility. However, soliciting funds for this can be an option.	DepEd Officials
Conduct of stress management seminar every semester.	June 2017	Advisers Registered Guidance Counsellor	Financial Resources Manpower		Principal

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