

LEARNERS STRESSORS AND COPING MECHANISM AMIDST PANDEMIC: A BASIS FOR INTERVENTION PLAN

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Abstract

The emergence of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic disrupted all economic and social activities around the world. Undoubtedly, the period has been stressful for everyone including the learners. This study determined the significant relationship between the learner's stressors and coping mechanisms amidst pandemic of the students of Pulong Sta. Cruz National High School, School Year 2021-2022. Based on the finding of the study, The extent of learner's stressors amidst the pandemic resulted in High. However, the level of their preferred coping mechanism was Low during the pandemic. The relationship between the demographic profile and the coping mechanism was significant. Likewise, the relationship between the learner's stressors and coping mechanisms was substantial. This implies a need for an intervention plan to address the issue regarding the learner's stressor amidst the pandemic. Therefore, the null hypothesis "There is no significant relationship between learner's profile and coping mechanisms" and "There is no significant relationship between learner's stressors and coping mechanisms" is rejected. Thus, this calls for the acceptance of the alternative, which incites that there is a significant relationship between the two. Parents, Teachers, and school administrators may collaborate to provide activities for the learners that will reduce their stress.

Keywords: Learners Stressors, Coping Mechanism, Intervention plan

1. Main Text

Introduction

The emergence of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic put the world in chaos, and everyone became devastated. Moreover, the changes brought by pandemics add up to stressors for everyone. According to Hans Selye, stress is the body's non-specific response to any demand for change. Yasmin, H., Khalil, S., & Mazhar, R. (2020). Stress is inevitable and a normal feeling in life because it is a body's reaction to a challenge or demand that is not limited to adults only. Stress manifests in every individual regardless of age, gender, and circumstances. However, some stress levels can be positive because it helps someone increase productivity, maintain focus, sharpen the mind and reflexes, and promote growth. However, stress that lasts for a long time without the tools to manage the feeling of being stressed can become emotionally and physically toxic and harmful to one's health. Consequently, the manifestations of the situation from the stress are labeled as stressors. Nevertheless, an effective coping mechanism is necessary to help people deal with the stressors that hurt them. Furthermore, it refers to voluntary and mindful utilization of acts that aims to lessen or bear stress. Also, coping mechanism usually helps the individual to adapt to changes that cause stress.

In response to the challenges amidst pandemics, the researcher as an educator comes up with this study that will determine the different stressors encountered by the learners and their coping mechanisms to have a basis for crafting an effective intervention plan to protect their mental health.

Background of the Study

The blowout of COVID-19 disrupted all economic and social activities around the world. Despite the unsurpassed determinations, stress is often a part of life regardless of age, ethnicity, and sex; no one is resistant to the burdens of stress. Unfortunately, younger generations are experiencing a higher level of stress and anxiety than older adults in the year 2020 worldwide. In the Philippines, 57 percent of the young generations are feeling anxious and stressed most of the time due to different stressors amidst pandemics. Furthermore, the learners were exposed to a potential stressed situation due to the expectation of self-efficacy in academic performance. Hence, according to Lee (2020), one of the crucial coping mechanisms for young people nowadays is school activities.

Inclined with this, the department of education (DepEd) crafts a DepEd order relevant to the pandemic we face. According to DepEd order no. 014 series of 2020 "Guidelines on the Required Health Standards in Basic Education Offices and Schools", In the provision of learning opportunities, learners' health and safety are of utmost importance and be protected at all times. Thus, Health refers to a physical and mental condition. Therefore, everyone working in the school community collaborates with parents, guardians, and stakeholders to secure the learner's safety.

Nowadays, some typical indicators that the teachers used to determine those learners experiencing a high level of stress may not be accessible significantly in a distance learning setup since the teacher could not meet their students regularly in person. Thus, most of the learners are having difficulties sharing their struggles when it comes to their stressors. It is very challenging to identify the learners who may need extra support, particularly with anxiety and stress. Furthermore, some cases often go undetected even under the best situations and great effort of the people around them.

Moreover, according to the California Mental Health Services Authority, learners experiencing psychological distress received a lower grade on the examination, essential projects, and academic performance in schools. Likewise, learners with high levels of psychological distress are less academically successful due to test anxiety, less effective time management, and utilization of educational resources. This pandemic is the perfect time to educate learners on how they should overcome and manage the intense sadness, isolation, stress, and anxiety they are feeling. Thus, an effective coping mechanism is needed to address these issues.

In this light, the researcher conducts this study to determine the different stressors encountered by the learners throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and their coping mechanism to craft an intervention plan to help them manage their stress and support the school community in battling the learner's mental health issues. Thus, this study will also help the parents and guardians to understand the learner's struggles amidst pandemics.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping, and Social Readjustment Rating Scale. These theories would enable people to see things from new angles and perspectives to understand more fully based on general principles and notions behind the learner's struggles.

Abraham Maslow, a psychologist developed a hierarchy of needs which states that there are five categories of human needs. Thus, in this theory, the basic principle is that people should meet their needs to be happy and well-adjusted. Basic needs should be the first one that is needed to achieve which is in the lowest order. Basic needs include water, shelter, and food. It also requires that one's body is healthy. Using the Hierarchy of Needs theory, the failure to meet the basic needs can cause stress to the learners.

Moreover, the Transactional Theory of Stress and Coping was developed by Lazarus and Folkman (1966). Their framework illustrates how major life affects human emotion. They also claimed that stress is a product of interactions between a person and their environment. Therefore, sudden changes in the environment due to the widespread of Covid-19 affects the emotion and perspective of the learners.

On the other hand, Holmes, and Raje (1967) created a theory called the Social Readjustment Rating Scale that consists of 42 life events scored according to the estimated degree of adjustment that the learners experience. They also assume that change is naturally stressful and that life events require the same level of adjustment.

Thus, theories supported the aim of the study to identify the learner's stressors and coping mechanisms amidst pandemic to craft an effective intervention plan.

Statement of the Problem

The focus of this study is to determine the learner's stressors and coping mechanisms of the learners amidst pandemic.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of;
 - 1.1 Age;
 - 1.2 Sex;
 - 1.3 Grade Level; and
 - 1.4 Socio-economic status
2. What is the extent of learner's stressors amidst the pandemic in terms of;
 - 2.1 Social Isolation;
 - 2.2 Health Condition;
 - 2.3 Financial Instability; and
 - 2.4 Academic requirements?
3. What is the level of preferred coping mechanism for learners in terms of;
 - 3.1 Relaxation;
 - 3.2 Support;
 - 3.3 Humor; and
 - 3.4 Physical Activities?
4. Is there a significant relationship between learners' demographic profile and coping mechanism?
5. Is there a significant relationship between learner's stressors and coping mechanisms?

Research Methodology

Research Design

The researcher employed a descriptive method to determine the learner's stressors and coping mechanisms amidst pandemics.

The investigator utilized the descriptive method to gather information about the present existing condition. It allows the researcher to describe the nature of the situation as it exists at the same thing in the same study, and it also explores the cause of the particular phenomena. (Sevila 1998). It also attempts to gather quantifiable information that can be used statistically to analyze a target audience or a specific subject. It is also used to observe and describe a research subject or problem without influencing or manipulating the variables. By using descriptive research, the researcher can effectively design a pre-structured questionnaire.

Population and Sampling Technique

The study respondents were composed of 473 respondents or 20% of the total enrollment of Pulong Sta. Cruz National High School (PSCNHS) in the Division of Santa Rosa, City; (111) students from grade 7, (118) students from grade 8, (136) students from grade 9, and (108) students from grade 10. In the conduct of this study, random sampling will be utilized. According to Bock (2020), the most straightforward approach is random sampling to get a random sample. It requires picking the desired sample size and selecting observations from a population so that each interpretation has an equal chance of selection until the desired sample size is achieved.

Research Procedure

As indicated above, the study presented in the research is descriptive research. The research procedure began with reading books, published/unpublished, thesis/dissertation, articles, magazines, journals, and surfing the internet was done to conceptualize the ideas needed in developing the study.

The researcher proposed (3) three titles approved by their professor before presenting them to the assigned Thesis Adviser. After the approval, the thesis adviser chose one of the titles that seemed best suited for the researcher's study to be conducted. The formulation in Chapters one, two, and three was done and checked by their thesis adviser and other specialist consultants regarding the study.

Before the conduct, the researcher secures a written letter of approval from the Division of Santa Rosa for conducting the researcher's study. The principal signed the letter, granting permission to conduct a study in their school. The adviser, subject specialist, Coordinator of GSAR (Graduate Studies and Applied Research), and Dean of the College of Teacher Education (CTE) signed a letter of the request, giving the researcher consent to gather data using necessary research instruments. A questionnaire validated by the subject specialist and other panelists was administered to assess the students in the process.

During the conduct of the study, a survey checklist was distributed to the respondents for the study.

In addition, a survey checklist was used to evaluate the learner's stressors and coping mechanisms amidst the pandemic. Thus, questions will be sent through google Forms because face-to-face distribution of questionnaires is restricted due to the continuing epidemic.

Research Instrument

The researcher will gather data through a survey checklist questionnaire for the students. The survey questionnaire includes questions that will determine the Learner's stressors amidst the pandemic and their coping mechanism. Specifically, it has two parts. The first part is composed of questions to assess the Learner's stressors. The last part is dedicated to the Learner's coping mechanism. Furthermore, the researcher utilized a numerical rating from 1 to 5, with 5 as the highest rating. The levels (or scale) used to differentiate between Very High, High, Moderate, Low and Very Low. Each level is accompanied by a criterion, or set of criteria, that specifies what is needed to reach that level of quality.

Rating	Scale	Remarks	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Always	Very High
4	3.41-4.20	Often	High
3	2.61-3.40	Sometimes	Moderate
2	1.81-2.60	Rarely	Low
1	1.00-1.80	Never	Very Low

Statistical Treatment of Data

The study will utilize the quantitative method since the data will be treated with statistical techniques. The result from the survey will be treated using appropriate statistical tools such as Mean, SD, and Pearson r Correlation for reliability and significant difference.

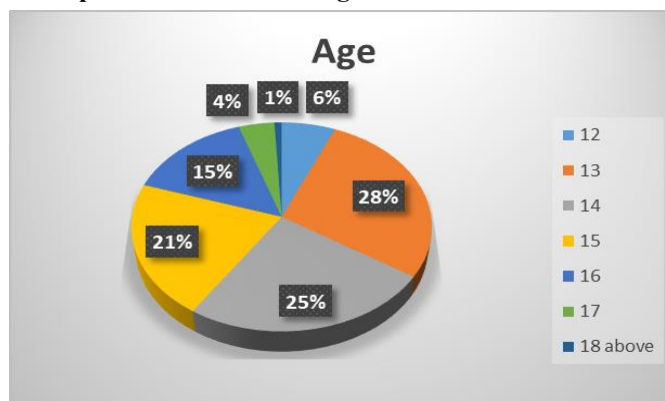
Once the measuring instruments have been retrieved, the researcher processed the raw data into quantitative forms. Data processing involves input; this involves the responses to the measuring instrument of the subjects of the study.

The frequency distribution was employed in the study to identify the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, grade level, and socio-economic status.

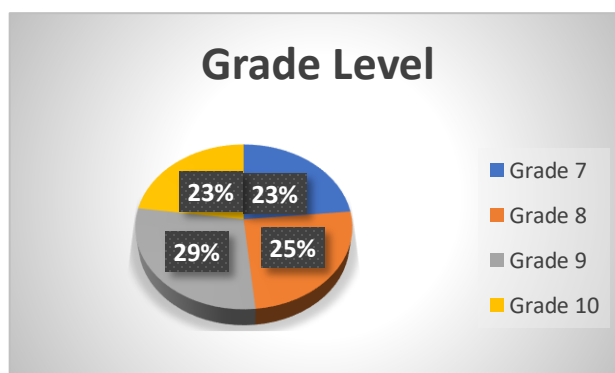
Furthermore, Mean and Standard Deviation were used to determine the extent of learner's stressors amidst the pandemic in terms of social isolation, health condition, financial instability and academic requirements. Thus, it also used to determine the level of preferred coping mechanism for learners in terms of relaxation, support, humor, and physical activities.

Lastly, Pearson r Correlation was utilized to reveal the significant relationship between the learner's demographic profile and coping mechanism. Hence, it also used to reveal relationship between Learner's stressors and coping mechanism.

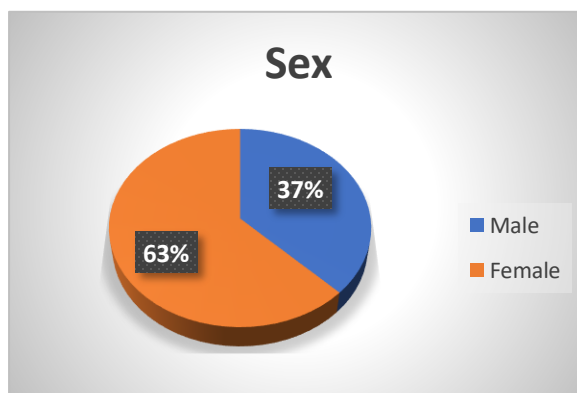
Results and Discussion

Figure 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Age

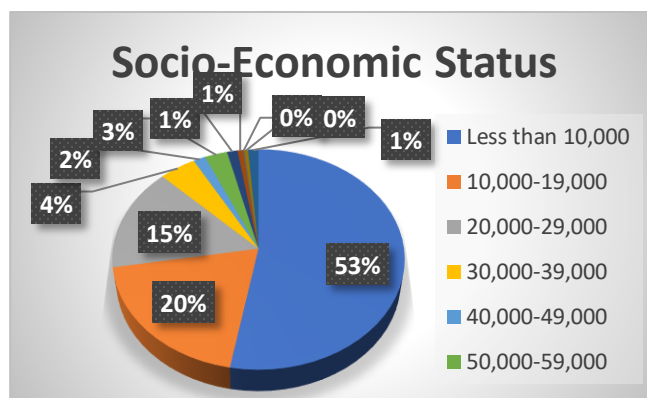
Out of four hundred thirty-seven (437) respondents, one hundred thirty-two (132) or 28% of the population were identified to be 13 years old. This is seconded by those who are aged 14 years with one hundred eighteen (118) respondents or 25% of the population identified as such. On the other hand, there were four (4) respondents for the age 18 and above which account for 1% of the total population. From the information above, it can be stated that most of the respondents at the time of the study were in their early teens. Learners usually start their junior high school in their early teens, according to the record of Pulong Sta. Cruz National High School, most of their enrolled learners, are early teens.

Figure2. Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Grade Level

Out of four hundred thirty-seven (473) respondents, one hundred thirty-six (136) or 29% of the population were identified to be Grade 9. This is seconded by those who are Grade 8 with one hundred eighteen (118) respondents or 25% of the population identified as such. On the other hand, there were one hundred eight (108) respondents from Grade 10 which account to 23% of the total population. From the above findings, it can be stated that at the time of the study, there is an almost equal distribution of respondents among junior high school.

Figure 3. Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Sex

Out of four hundred thirty-seven (437) respondents, two hundred ninety-six (296) or 63% of the population were identified to be Female. On the other hand, there were one hundred seventy-seven (177) respondents that were Males which account for 23% of the total population. We can infer from the above data that there is a higher frequency of female JHS students than males during the study time. Female learners are more engaged in answering surveys than male learners. Similarly, females are usually more likely to contribute to survey responses is good. Women tend to be highly involved participants, Genovese (2020).

Figure 4. Demographic Profile of the Respondents in terms of Socio-Economic Status

The demographic profile of the respondents as to socio-economic status. Out of four hundred thirty-seven (473) respondents, two hundred fifty (250) or 53% of the population were identified to have a household income of less than 10,000.

This is seconded by those who have an income of 10,000 to 19,000 with ninety-two (92) respondents or 19% of the population identified as such. On the other hand, there was one (1) respondent that stated an income of 80,000-89,999 which account to 0.21% of the total population. From the above information, it can be concluded there is a higher population of those who are of the lower-class household. Parallel to the findings of Subramani (2017) that most students in government schools are from poor socioeconomic backgrounds and illiterate families.

Table 1. Extent of Learners' Stressors Amidst the Pandemic in terms of Social Isolation

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
I have few social relations.	4.04	0.96	Often
I have few people to interact with due to safety protocol.	4.06	1.06	Often
It is difficult for me to share my feelings with others.	4.02	1.06	Often
I lack support from family and friends.	4.01	0.90	Often
I distance myself from others.	4.01	0.98	Often

Overall Mean = 4.03

Standard Deviation = 0.99

Verbal Interpretation = High

Legend:

Rating	Scale	Remarks	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Always	Very High
4	3.41-4.20	Often	High
3	2.61-3.40	Sometimes	Moderate
2	1.81-2.60	Rarely	Low
1	1.00-1.80	Never	Very Low

Table 1 illustrates the extent of learners' stressors amidst the pandemic in terms of social isolation. Among the statements above, "I have few people to interact with due to safety protocol" yielded the highest mean score ($M=4.06$, $SD=1.06$) and was remarked as Often. This is followed by "I have few social relations" with a mean score ($M=4.04$, $SD=0.96$) and was also remarked as Often. On the other hand, the statement "I lack support from family and friends" and "I distance myself from others" received the lowest mean score of responses with ($M=4.01$, $SD=0.90$) and ($M=4.01$, $SD=0.98$) yet were also remarked Often.

Overall, the extent of learners' stressors amidst the pandemic in terms of social isolation attained a mean score of 4.03 and a standard deviation of 0.99 and was High among the students. The results above revealed that the socialization of the learners is affected by the enforced social isolation that leads to loneliness and boredom because the learners have few people to interact with due to safety protocol. Moreover, they lack social relations and support from the people around them. Therefore, it contributes to the stressors of the students amidst a pandemic.

The government imposed social or physical distancing to avoid the rapid spread of coronavirus disease. However, social isolation caused by the safety protocol harms the learners. Previous studies provide evidence that during and after the imposed social isolation, most teenagers and adolescents are more likely to go through high rates of stress, according to Dclysy et al. (2020). also, Gordon (2021) learned that being physically separated from others due to social isolation, especially during a pandemic, can lead to loneliness and increased stress. Therefore, socializing is an essential human experience and part of human needs. Thus, social distancing hinders it, which causes learners to be stressed.

Table 2. The extent of Learners' Stressors Amidst the Pandemic in terms of Health Condition

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
I am worried to acquire a disease, illness, and virus.	4.31	0.83	Always
I constantly worry for my family members to have contagious diseases.	4.47	0.78	Always

I experience extreme mood swings	3.80	1.15	Often	1012
My sleep routine changes. Either I have trouble sleeping or sleeping much more than usual.	4.11	0.88	Often	
I experience malnutrition	3.78	1.16	Often	

Overall Mean = 4.09

Standard Deviation = 1.01

Verbal Interpretation = High

Legend:

Rating	Scale	Remarks	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Always	Very High
4	3.41-4.20	Often	High
3	2.61-3.40	Sometimes	Moderate
2	1.81-2.60	Rarely	Low
1	1.00-1.80	Never	Very Low

Table 2 illustrates the extent of learners' stressors amidst the pandemic in terms of health condition. Among the statements above, "I constantly worry for my family members to have contagious diseases" yielded the highest mean score ($M=4.47$, $SD=0.78$) and was remarked as Always. This is followed by "I am worried to acquire a disease, illness and virus" with a mean score ($M=4.31$, $SD=0.83$) and was also remarked as Always. On the other hand, the statement "I experience malnutrition (Insufficient food intake or unbalanced diet)" received the lowest mean score of responses with ($M=3.78$, $SD=1.16$) yet was remarked Often.

Overall, the extent of learners' stressors amidst the pandemic in terms of health conditions attained a mean score of 4.09 and a standard deviation of 1.01 and was High among the students. At this time, when the COVID-19 is widely spread, most learners are experiencing fear and worries because of uncertainty, like who might be a carrier spreading the virus to others without knowing it. Thus, it implies that the students' stressors increased because they were worried that their family, loved ones, and even them would get infected by the virus. Likewise, the Canadian Mental Health Association (2021) proved that the spread out of COVID-19 makes learners stressed due to the constant worry about their health and the health of their loved ones, both here and abroad.

Moreover, during the pandemic, some learners experience an unbalanced diet caused by continuous lockdown that affects their health. Therefore, this pandemic is a stressful time for everyone. This confirmed the study of Ong et al. (2020) that during the implementation of lockdowns, many households rely on food aid in food packs that do not contain the required nutrients to promote and sustain good health but only address hunger.

Table 3 illustrates the extent of learners' stressors amidst the pandemic in terms of financial instability. Among the statements above, "I am worried about regards to monetary or financial support due to my parent's income amidst pandemic" yielded the highest mean score ($M=4.07$, $SD=0.91$) and was remarked as Often. This is followed by "I am having difficulties for day-to-day expenditures" with a mean score ($M=4.05$, $SD=0.96$) and was also remarked as Often. On the other hand, the statement "I don't have sufficient funds for school-related matters such as internet allowance and devices for distance learning" and "I fear being unable to meet my basic needs" received the lowest mean score of responses with ($M=4.01$, $SD=1.18$) and ($M=4.01$, $SD=1.17$) yet were also remarked Often.

Table 3. Extent of Learners' Stressors Amidst the Pandemic in terms of Financial Instability

Statement	Mean	SD	Remarks
I am worried with regards to monetary or financial support due to my parent's income amidst pandemic.	4.07	0.91	Often
I am having difficulties for day-to-day expenditures.	4.05	0.96	Often
I don't have sufficient fund for school-related matters such as internet allowance and devices for distance learning.	4.01	1.18	Often
I am not able to buy the things I want.	4.03	1.03	Often
I fear being unable to meet my basic needs.	4.01	1.17	Often

Overall Mean = 4.03

Standard Deviation = 1.06

Verbal Interpretation = High

Legend:

Rating	Scale	Remarks	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Always	Very High
4	3.41-4.20	Often	High
3	2.61-3.40	Sometimes	Moderate
2	1.81-2.60	Rarely	Low
1	1.00-1.80	Never	Very Low

Overall, the extent of learners' stressors amidst the pandemic in terms of financial instability attained a mean score of 4.03 and a standard deviation of 1.06 and was High among the students. Economic damage due to COVID-19 is severe that negatively affects many people around the world. Moreover, most of the learners encounter difficulties regards with the financial aspects that make it a common stressor for them. Thus, the distance learning modality adds up to the learner's burden because it requires funds for school-related matters such as internet allowance and devices that will use by the learners.

This confirmed the research of Li (2020), who found out that many adolescents feel high levels of stress, and money is at the top of their worries. In addition, the concerns regarding the financial aspect contribute significantly to the high rates of anxiety and despair among students, according to Meenan (2020).

Table 4. Extent of Learners' Stressors Amidst the Pandemic in terms of Academic Requirements

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
I am having difficulties in self-paced learning.	4.03	1.02	Often
I struggled with the required projects, activities, and other school matters.	4.05	0.96	Often
I am worried about my grades and scores.	4.15	1.07	Often
I struggle to meet academic standards and parental pressures.	4.13	1.04	Often
I cannot balance my leisure time with school activities.	4.03	1.00	Often

*Overall Mean = 4.08**Standard Deviation = 1.02**Verbal Interpretation = High***Legend:**

Rating	Scale	Remarks	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Always	Very High
4	3.41-4.20	Often	High
3	2.61-3.40	Sometimes	Moderate
2	1.81-2.60	Rarely	Low
1	1.00-1.80	Never	Very Low

Table 4 illustrates the extent of learners' stressors amidst the pandemic in terms of academic requirements. Among the statements above, "I am worried about my grades and scores" yielded the highest mean score ($M=4.15$, $SD=1.07$) and was remarked as Often. This is followed by "I struggle to meet academic standards and parental pressures" with a mean score ($M=4.13$, $SD=1.04$) and was also remarked as Often. On the other hand, the statement "I am having difficulties in self-paced learning" and "I cannot balance my leisure time with school activities" received the lowest mean score of responses with ($M=4.03$, $SD=1.01$) and ($M=4.03$, $SD=1.00$) yet were also remarked Often.

Overall, the extent of learners' stressors amidst the pandemic in terms of academic requirements attained a mean score of 4.08 and a standard deviation of 1.02 and was High among the students. The study revealed that the learners are very much concerned about their grades and scores to meet the academic standards and parental expectations amidst the pandemic. In addition, due to distance learning, some of them have difficulties studying alone and cannot balance their leisure time with the activities in school.

This proved the study of Subramani (2017) which reported that learners are frustrated with their academics due to the pressure from parents and school to get higher grades. Thus, learners struggle a lot to accomplish their basic academic activities, and these factors would have caused them stress. Besides, Menon and Thattil (2018) proved that the parents' expectation to their children is stressful, which grew into more immense burdens that the children could not carry to any further extent.

Table 5. Level of Preferred Coping Mechanism for Learners in terms of Relaxation

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
I engage myself in music and arts activities.	1.88	1.10	Rarely
I enjoy playing board games.	1.78	1.00	Never
I enjoy reading books.	1.52	0.73	Never
I enjoy playing mobile/online games.	2.31	1.40	Rarely
I like chatting with family, friends and neighbors.	1.88	1.18	Rarely

*Overall Mean = 1.97**Standard Deviation = 1.19**Verbal Interpretation = Low***Legend:**

Rating	Scale	Remarks	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Always	Very High
4	3.41-4.20	Often	High
3	2.61-3.40	Sometimes	Moderate
2	1.81-2.60	Rarely	Low
1	1.00-1.80	Never	Very Low

Table 5 illustrates the preferred coping mechanism for learners in terms of relaxation. Among the statements above, "I enjoy playing mobile/online games" yielded the highest mean score ($M=2.31$, $SD=1.40$) and was remarked as Rarely. This is followed by "I engage myself in music and arts activities" and "I like chatting with family, friends and neighbors" with a mean score ($M=1.88$, $SD=1.10$) and ($M=1.88$, $SD=1.18$) and were also remarked as Rarely. On the other hand, the statement "I enjoy reading books" received the lowest mean score of responses with ($M=1.52$, $SD=0.73$) and was remarked Never.

Overall, the preferred coping mechanism for learners in terms of relaxation attained a mean score of 1.97 and a standard deviation of 1.19 and was Low among the students. Amidst the pandemic, learners experience a high level of stress due to various stressors. However, their means of stress relief are inadequate due to safety protocols implemented by the government. Given the limitation, indoor activities in the form of relaxation can be their outlet to cope with their stressors.

The result above is comparable to the findings of the study by Russoniello, O'Brien, & Parks (2020) that gaming may be utilized as a way of distraction to lessen stress. However, gaming may be an adaptive coping tactic in the short term. Hence, gaming has become more frequent during the COVID-19 outbreak because many relaxation techniques have become impractical. However, despite the constraints brought by the pandemic, relaxation is vital to the learners. Clarabut (2015) confirmed that doing 'relaxation' is paramount

to managing stress. Besides, being relaxed help the learners to be energized and be able to have a calmer and clearer mind and get rid of the negative thoughts that can contribute to their stressors.

Table 6. Level of Preferred Coping Mechanism for Learners in terms of Support

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
I share my problem with others.	1.58	0.88	Never
I seek Professional Help such as counseling.	1.78	0.95	Never
I create a circle of supportive friends.	1.65	0.97	Never
I strengthen my relationship with my family and friends.	1.97	1.27	Rarely
I engage myself in a romantic relationship.	1.70	0.99	Never

Overall Mean = 1.74

Standard Deviation = 1.03

Verbal Interpretation = Very Low

Legend:

Rating	Scale	Remarks	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Always	Very High
4	3.41-4.20	Often	High
3	2.61-3.40	Sometimes	Moderate
2	1.81-2.60	Rarely	Low
1	1.00-1.80	Never	Very Low

Table 6 illustrates the preferred coping mechanism for learners in terms of support. Among the statements above, “I strengthen my relationship with my family and friends” yielded the highest mean score ($M=1.97$, $SD=1.27$) and was remarked as Rarely. This is followed by “I seek Professional Help such as counseling” with a mean score ($M=1.78$, $SD=0.95$) and was remarked as Never. On the other hand, the statement “I share my problem with others” received the lowest mean score of responses with ($M=1.58$, $SD=0.88$) and was also remarked Never.

Overall, the preferred coping mechanism for learners in terms of support attained a mean score of 1.74 and a standard deviation of 1.03 and was Very Low among the students. During the pandemic, many learners lost their support system due to the implementation of the safety protocol, especially physical/social distancing. Parallel to the study of Filho et al. (2021), learners suffered from a lack of social interaction and communication during the implementation of social distancing. In addition, World Health Organization (WHO) stated that home-schooling of children and lack of physical contact with other family members and friends could be challenging.

However, results revealed that “I strengthen my relationship with my family and friends” yielded the highest mean score. The learners must receive support from the people around them because it is a great help. After all, having strong support can make people more able to cope with problems independently by improving their self-esteem and sense of autonomy, according to the American Psychological Association (2019). Furthermore, Bakken (2016) proves that support is a lifesaver. Learners supported by friends, family, fellow members of the church, or other support groups are less exposed to stressors and can manage their stressors better.

Table 7. Level of Preferred Coping Mechanism for Learners in terms of Humor

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
I start my day with a smile.	1.82	0.99	Rarely
I go with cheerful friends.	1.96	1.17	Rarely
I watch funny shows and movies.	1.93	1.09	Rarely
I read comic books.	1.75	1.10	Never
I think of funny or happy thoughts to entertain myself.	1.77	1.05	Never

Overall Mean = 1.85

Standard Deviation = 1.08

Verbal Interpretation = Low

Legend:

Rating	Scale	Remarks	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Always	Very High
4	3.41-4.20	Often	High
3	2.61-3.40	Sometimes	Moderate
2	1.81-2.60	Rarely	Low
1	1.00-1.80	Never	Very Low

Table 7 illustrates the preferred coping mechanism for learners in terms of humor. Among the statements above, “I go with cheerful friends” yielded the highest mean score ($M=1.96$, $SD=1.17$) and was remarked as Rarely. This is followed by “I watch funny shows and movies” with a mean score ($M=1.93$, $SD=1.09$) and was also remarked as Rarely. On the other hand, the statement “I read comic books” received the lowest mean score of responses with ($M=1.75$, $SD=1.05$) and was remarked Never.

Overall, the preferred coping mechanism for learners in terms of humor attained a mean score of 1.85 and a standard deviation of 1.08 and was Low among the students. Learners preferred to go with their cheerful friends; however, social distancing was implemented, which is why coping mechanism in terms of humor during the breakout of COVID-19 is unusual. Thus, the means of communication is similar to the statement of Jonh Tregoning (2021) that the jokes do not work in every situation, especially amidst a pandemic, because it requires a reaction that is completely lacking in virtual communication.

Nevertheless, Humor is a fundamental human need to survive in this stressful time, as supported by the previous studies that provide evidence that Humor is a great way to cope with stress. Akimbekov et al. (2021) confirmed that Humor is a universal non-

pharmacological approach to reducing stress and anxiety and a bona fide coping mechanism, as per Christopher (2015). Besides, Scheel (2017) sees Humor as multidimensional and can be used as a coping strategy.

Table 8. Level of Preferred Coping Mechanism for Learners in terms of Physical Activities

<i>Statement</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Remarks</i>
I enjoy dancing.	1.90	1.01	Rarely
I play sport.	1.99	1.17	Rarely
I engage myself in keeping my body fit.	1.89	1.20	Rarely
I like doing household chores.	1.67	0.81	Never
I walk around to divert myself from thinking negative thoughts.	1.80	1.11	Rarely

Overall Mean = 1.85

Standard Deviation = 1.07

Verbal Interpretation = Low

Legend:

Rating	Scale	Remarks	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21-5.00	Always	Very High
4	3.41-4.20	Often	High
3	2.61-3.40	Sometimes	Moderate
2	1.81-2.60	Rarely	Low
1	1.00-1.80	Never	Very Low

Table 8 illustrates the preferred coping mechanism for learners in terms of physical activities. Among the statements above, “I play sport” yielded the highest mean score ($M=1.99$, $SD=1.17$) and was remarked as Rarely. This is followed by “I enjoy dancing” with a mean score ($M=1.90$, $SD=1.01$) and was also remarked as Rarely. On the other hand, the statement “I like doing household chores” received the lowest mean score of responses with ($M=1.67$, $SD=0.81$) and was remarked Never.

Overall, the preferred coping mechanism for learners in terms of physical activities attained a mean score of 1.85 and a standard deviation of 1.07 and was Low among the students. The result indicates that physical activities decreased during the pandemic. Comparable to Diniz et al.'s (2020) study, the usual daily pattern was affected during the COVID-19 outbreak because physical activities diminished. However, learners need to be encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities such as sports, classified as physical activities, to reduce their stress (Ganesan et al. 2018). Besides, Shahroom et al. (2019) said that the learners could conquer their stress by doing physical activity and exercise.

On the other hand, physical activities like doing household chores do not appease and give enjoyment the learners. Besides, the study of Rende (2015) revealed that the household chore trends are changing noticeably among young generations. Placing some household responsibilities on learners is no longer as prevalent as it once was, and some people choose to abandon chores altogether. In addition, Rinzin (2020) students could not study at home as they were engaged in households' chores during the pandemic.

Table 9. Significant Relationship between Profile of the Respondents and Coping Mechanism

Profile	Coping Mechanism	Computed r value	Strength	Critical r value	p-value	Analysis
Age	Relaxation	0.012	Very Weak	0.09	0.791	Not Significant
	Support	0.024	Very Weak	0.09	0.608	Not Significant
	Humor	0.088	Very Weak	0.09	0.055	Not Significant
	Physical Activities	0.055	Very Weak	0.09	0.234	Not Significant
Grade Level	Relaxation	0.051	Very Weak	0.09	0.272	Not Significant
	Support	0.081	Very Weak	0.09	0.077	Not Significant
	Humor	0.032	Very Weak	0.09	0.483	Not Significant
	Physical Activities	0.004	Very Weak	0.09	0.925	Not Significant
Sex	Relaxation	0.136	Very Weak	0.09	0.003	Significant
	Support	0.159	Very Weak	0.09	0.001	Significant
	Humor	0.116	Very Weak	0.09	0.012	Significant
	Physical Activities	0.094	Very Weak	0.09	0.041	Significant
Socio-Economic Status	Relaxation	0.035	Very Weak	0.09	0.448	Not Significant
	Support	0.104	Very Weak	0.09	0.024	Significant
	Humor	0.039	Very Weak	0.09	0.399	Not Significant
	Physical Activities	0.102	Very Weak	0.09	0.026	Significant

Legend:

Range	Verbal Interpretation
± 0.80 – ± 1.00	Very Strong
± 0.60 – ± 0.79	Strong
± 0.40 – ± 0.59	Moderate
± 0.20 – ± 0.39	Weak
± 0.00 – ± 0.19	Very Weak

Table 9 presents the significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and coping mechanisms. The data were statistically treated using Spearman rho Correlation which revealed the relationship.

Age is observed to have no significant relationship with the coping mechanisms on all descriptors. This is suggested by the computed r values of Relaxation (0.012), Support (0.024), Humor (0.088), and Physical activities (0.055) which are less than the critical value of 0.09. Parallel to the study of McCrae (2015), every individual, regardless of age, can cope in much the same way. However, they employed different mechanisms.

Similarly, Grade Level is observed to have no significant relationship with Relaxation, Support, Humor, and Physical Activities. Computed r values of Relaxation (0.051), Support (0.081), Humor (0.116), and Physical Activities (0.004) were less than the critical value. The calculated p -values were more significant than the significance alpha 0.05. Hence the absence of a significance. The result signifies that the grade level of the learners does not have a connection to how to cope with their stressors. In the study of Shahmohammadi (2015), students from different grade levels can maturely cope with their stressors.

On the other hand, Sex is observed to have a very weak significant relationship with Relaxation (0.136), Support (0.159), Humor (0.116), and Physical Activities (0.094). The values of the tests were well above 0.09, and the p -values were less than 0.05. Sex correlates with the coping mechanism because both sexes use different ways to cope with stress. Comparable to the study of Lynn Rew EdD (2012), females' coping strategies were more effective than males.

Finally, Socio-Economic Status was observed to have a very weak significant relationship with Support (0.104) and Physical Activities (0.102). Only the descriptors could yield an r value higher than the critical. Socioeconomic status plays a vital role in managing the stress of the learners. This is in parallel with the study results conducted by Roohafza et al. (2019). Coping strategies were highly influenced by socioeconomic status. Furthermore, the result above shows that relaxation and humor have no significant relationship, which contrasts with the findings of Roohafza et al. (2019) that socioeconomic status could increase adaptive coping since, aside from Support and physical activities, relaxation and humor are also considered adaptive coping according to Wallace (2019).

From the findings above, it shows that the demographic profile of the respondents can affect their coping mechanism against their stressors. Thus, it agrees to the study of Austurias et al. (2021) some socio-demographic factors can influence an individual's perceived stress level and choice of coping strategies. Therefore, it can be inferred that at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis "There is no significant relationship between learner's profile and coping mechanisms" is rejected.

Table 10. Significant Relationship between Learners' Stressors and Coping Mechanism

Stressors	Coping Mechanism	Computed r value	Strength	Critical r value	p -value	Analysis
Social Isolation	Relaxation	0.110	Very Weak	0.09	0.017	Significant
	Support	0.013	Very Weak	0.09	0.772	Not Significant
	Humor	0.031	Very Weak	0.09	0.498	Not Significant
	Physical Activities	0.068	Very Weak	0.09	0.142	Not Significant
Health Condition	Relaxation	0.181	Very Weak	0.09	0.000	Significant
	Support	0.113	Very Weak	0.09	0.014	Significant
	Humor	0.190	Very Weak	0.09	0.000	Significant
	Physical Activities	0.147	Very Weak	0.09	0.001	Significant
Financial Instability	Relaxation	0.126	Very Weak	0.09	0.006	Significant
	Support	0.083	Very Weak	0.09	0.072	Not Significant
	Humor	0.103	Very Weak	0.09	0.026	Significant
	Physical Activities	0.120	Very Weak	0.09	0.009	Significant
Academic Requirements	Relaxation	0.061	Very Weak	0.09	0.185	Not Significant
	Support	0.036	Very Weak	0.09	0.432	Not Significant
	Humor	0.043	Very Weak	0.09	0.348	Not Significant
	Physical Activities	0.092	Very Weak	0.09	0.049	Significant

Table 10 presents the significant relationship between the learners' stressors and coping mechanisms. The data were statistically treated using Pearson r Correlation which revealed the relationship between learner's stressors and coping mechanisms.

Social Isolation is observed to have a very weak significant relationship with Relaxation (0.110). This is suggested by the computed r value which is greater than the critical value of 0.09. The stress of being isolated from other people prevents the rapid spread out of the virus. Moreover, relaxation can be used to lessen stress due to social isolation since it is often done alone. Tulane University (2020) states that Social Isolation due to unprecedented safety measures during the COVID-19 pandemic is not necessarily bad since being alone can be relaxing, meditative, and refreshing. However, there is no significant relationship between social isolation and coping mechanisms regarding support, humor, and physical activities. The previous study provides evidence that socially isolated people experience low levels of social support, as per Gable (2022). Hence, with a bit of contact with the outside world, humor is also being refused because it revolves around the same topics, Williams (2020). In addition, physical activities do not amuse learners. Likewise, the physical activity level adopted during social distancing was lower than before the pandemic, Puccinelli et al. (2021), which means being stressed due to social isolation cannot cope using support, humor, and physical activities.

Similarly, Health Condition is observed to have a significant, very weak relationship with Relaxation (0.181), Support (0.113), Humor (0.190), and Physical Activities (0.147). Computed r values for the following tests were all greater than the critical value, and the calculated p -values were less than the significance alpha 0.05 hence the significance. Previous studies prove that Relaxation, Support, humor, and physical activities can help manage stress due to health conditions. As Clarabut (2015), relaxation slows our heart rate, reduces our blood pressure, and relieves tension. It also aids digestion as we absorb essential nutrients more efficiently when relaxed, which helps to fight off disease and infection.

Moreover, Scott (2020) confirmed that Support improved immune, cardiovascular, and neuroendocrine function, positive adjustment to chronic disease, decreased depression and anxiety, and adequate buffering against the adverse effects of stress. Humor is strong medicine because laughter strengthens your immune system, boosts mood, diminishes pain, and protects you from the damaging effects of stress. Lastly, physical activity can help improve sleep. Thus, better sleep means better stress management Ragland (2021).

Furthermore, Financial Stability is also observed to have a very weak significant relationship with Relaxation (0.126), Humor (0.103), and Physical Activities (0.120). The values of the three tests were well above 0.09, and the p -values were less than 0.05. Learners engage in coping mechanisms such as Relaxation, humor, and physical activities to reduce their stress as their attention will be diverted. This is parallel to the finding of Outley et al. (2021) stated that beyond the health impact of COVID-19, this pandemic has contributed to the loss of jobs, economic downturn, and separation from public life. Therefore, while people find the pandemic's unknown future stressful, they seek to adjust to new routines and establish new leisure patterns. Blacks find themselves facing conditions that they've overcome in previous generations. Blacks turn to a familiar practice that is intimate to their history—humor. This humor has and will continue to provide Black people with the distraction, reassurance, and strength needed to face these uncertain times. Moreover, parallel to the findings of Fernandez (2015), The interaction between support and financial crisis was also investigated without finding any statistical involvement.

Finally, Academic Requirements were observed to have a weak significant relationship with Physical Activities (0.092). Only the descriptor was able to yield an r value higher than the critical. Learners can cope using physical activities as it is needed to maintain mental fitness at the same time, reduce stress. Besides, Ganesan et al. (2018) believed that when students cannot cope with stress, they can become a burden. It is recommended that students be encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities such as sports to reduce stress.

From the findings above, it shows that learners stressors require coping mechanism that include greater effort than what is needed in the daily routine of life. Hence, this result is parallel to the study of Thompson et al. (2022) that as stress increased for students, the use of various coping skills also increased. Therefore, it can be inferred that at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis "There is no significant relationship between learner's stressors and coping mechanisms" is rejected.

Summary of Findings

This chapter includes the presentation of a summary, findings, conclusion based on the hypothesis, and the corresponding recommendations.

Summary

This study determined the learner's stressors and coping mechanism amidst pandemic of the students of Pulong Sta. Cruz National High School, School Year 2021-2022.

The statistical treatment of data was used to compute then analyze and interpret the data given by the respondents. After administering the questionnaire to the respondents, all the data were gathered, analyzed, and interpreted.

Electronic forms and spreadsheet applications were used in tabulating and computing and validating the results. The majority of the respondents at the time of the study were in their early teens. Moreover, there is an almost equal distribution of respondents among junior high school. However, the frequency of female JHS students is higher than males and there is a higher population of those who are of the lower-class household.

Extent of Learners' Stressors Amidst the Pandemic in terms of Social Isolation

The extent of learners' stressors amidst the pandemic in terms of social isolation attained a mean score of 4.03 and a standard deviation of 0.99 and was High among the students. The results above revealed that the socialization of the learners is affected by the enforced social isolation that leads to loneliness and boredom because the learners have few people to interact with due to safety protocol. Moreover, they lack social relations and support from the people around them. Therefore, it contributes to the stressors of the students amidst a pandemic.

The extent of Learners' Stressors Amidst the Pandemic in terms of Health Condition

The extent of learners' stressors amidst the pandemic in terms of health conditions was High among the students. Learners are experiencing fear and worries because of uncertainty like who might be a carrier spreading the virus to others without knowing it. Thus, it implies that the stressors of the students increased because they were worried about their family, loved ones, and their health conditions and afraid to be infected with the coronavirus disease.

At this time, when the COVID-19 is widely spread, most learners are experiencing fear and worries because of uncertainty, like who might be a carrier spreading the virus to others without knowing it. Thus, it implies that the students' stressors increased because they were worried that their family, loved ones, and even them would get infected by the virus.

Extent of Learners' Stressors Amidst the Pandemic in terms of Financial Instability

The extent of learners' stressors amidst the pandemic in terms of financial instability was High among the students. Economic damage due to COVID-19 is severe that negatively affects many people around the world. Moreover, most of the learners encounter difficulties regards with the financial aspects that make it a common stressor for them. Thus, the distance learning modality adds up to

the learner's burden because it requires funds for school-related matters such as internet allowance and devices that will use by the learners.

Extent of Learners' Stressors Amidst the Pandemic in terms of Academic Requirements

The extent of learners' stressors amidst the pandemic in terms of academic requirements was High among the students. The study revealed that the learners are very much concerned about their grades and scores to meet the academic standards and parental expectations amidst the pandemic. In addition, due to distance learning, some of them have difficulties studying alone and cannot balance their leisure time with the activities in school.

Level of Preferred Coping Mechanism for Learners in terms of Relaxation

The preferred coping mechanism for learners in terms of relaxation attained a mean score of 1.97 and a standard deviation of 1.19 and was Low among the students. Amidst the pandemic, learners experience a high level of stress due to various stressors. However, their means of stress relief are inadequate due to safety protocols implemented by the government. Given the limitation, indoor activities in the form of relaxation can be their outlet to cope with their stressors.

Level of Preferred Coping Mechanism for Learners in terms of Support

The preferred coping mechanism for learners in terms of support was Very Low among the students. During the pandemic, many learners lost their support system due to the implementation of the safety protocol, especially physical/social distancing.

Level of Preferred Coping Mechanism for Learners in terms of Humor

The preferred coping mechanism for learners in terms of humor was Low among the students. Learners preferred to go with their cheerful friends; however, social distancing was implemented, which is why coping mechanism in terms of humor during the breakout of COVID-19 is unusual.

Level of Preferred Coping Mechanism for Learners in terms of Physical Activities

The preferred coping mechanism for learners in terms of physical activities and was Low among the students. The result indicates that physical activities decreased during the pandemic.

Significant relationship between the profile of the respondents and coping mechanism.

Age and grade level is observed to have no significant relationship with the coping mechanisms on all descriptors. On the other hand, Sex is observed to have a very weak significant relationship with Relaxation, Support, Humor, and Physical Activities. Finally, Socio-Economic Status was observed to have a very weak significant relationship with Support and Physical Activities. From the findings above, the null hypothesis "There is no significant relationship between learner's profile and coping mechanisms" is rejected. Thus, this calls for the acceptance of the alternative, which incites that there is a significant relationship between the two.

Significant Relationship between Learners' Stressors and Coping Mechanism

Social Isolation is observed to have a very weak significant relationship with Relaxation. Similarly, Health Condition is observed to have a significant, very weak relationship with Relaxation, Support, Humor, and Physical Activities. Furthermore, Financial Stability is also observed to have a very weak significant relationship with Relaxation, Humor, and Physical Activities. Finally, Academic Requirements were observed to have a weak significant relationship with Physical Activities. From the findings, the null hypothesis "There is no significant relationship between learner's stressors and coping mechanisms" is rejected. Thus, this calls for the acceptance of the alternative which incites that there is a significant relationship between the two.

Conclusion

Based on the finding of the study, the following conclusions were drawn (1) The extent of learner's stressors amidst the pandemic resulted in High. However, the level of their preferred coping mechanism was Low during the pandemic. (2) The relationship between the demographic profile and the coping mechanism was significant. Likewise, the relationship between the learner's stressors and coping mechanisms was substantial. Hence, the null hypothesis "There is no significant relationship between learner's profile and coping mechanisms" and "There is no significant relationship between learner's stressors and coping mechanisms" is rejected. This implies a need for an intervention plan to address the issue regarding the learner's stressor amidst the pandemic.

Recommendations

Based on the results and conclusion posted in the study, the following recommendation was formulated to the following.

1. Disaster Risk Reduction and Management coordinator should poster school environment that can empower students and reduce anxiety.
2. Schools must balance the educational, social, and emotional needs of students along with their health and safety.
3. Supreme Student Government should conduct activities that can stimulate socialization.
4. School Heads may conduct training for students that will develop effective time management and appropriate study habits.
5. School Mental Health Coordinator should conduct a seminar regarding stress management and mental health training for the students.

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