

ON BEING A STUDENT IN THE NEW NORMAL: STRUGGLES AND COPING STRATEGIES

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced educational institutions around the world to transition to remote learning, resulting in a “new normal” for students. This sudden shift from traditional classroom settings to online education has presented numerous challenges for students. The struggles they face in adapting to this new mode of learning are diverse and require coping strategies to overcome. The study aims to determine the struggles and coping strategies of the students towards online learning in the new normal. A descriptive research design was used in this study to assess respondents online learning struggles and coping strategies. The survey method was used to gather information from the participants using a designed survey questionnaire. The results of the study revealed that unstable connectivity and unscheduled power outages stand out as major concerns, limiting students’ ability to fully participate in online class. The need for a stable internet connection and an uninterrupted power supply becomes critical in ensuring a smooth learning experience. Furthermore, the study also revealed that students have a relatively positive attitude toward implementing coping strategies to deal with the challenges of online learning in the new normal.

Keywords: COVID-19, new normal, online learning, struggles, coping strategies

INTRODUCTION

The “new normal” brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted students worldwide, introducing various struggles and challenges to their educational journey. The transition to remote or hybrid learning has been a major adjustment for students. The absence of face-to-face interactions with teachers and peers can lead to feelings of isolation and disconnection. Additionally, the shift to online platforms and virtual classrooms requires students to adapt to new technology and self-regulate their learning, which can be overwhelming for some. Through our research, we’ve seen clearly that online technology alone doesn’t inherently beget a quality education. When implemented poorly, online learning distracts students, crowds out high-quality, teacher-led instruction, and makes teaching more complicated (T. Arnette, 2021).

Another significant struggle is the blurring of boundaries between school and home. With remote learning, students often find it challenging to establish a clear separation between their academic responsibilities and personal life. The lack of structure and routine may lead to difficulties in managing time effectively and maintaining focus on schoolwork. Even though some students favor online learning, research is indicating that students are having a difficult time adjusting to remote instruction during the pandemic particularly in the context of following guidelines, struggle with deadlines, lack of interest, and expectation for speedy replies from instructors at odd hours (Mladenova et al, 2020).

Furthermore, the reduced socialization opportunities and limited extracurricular activities can impact students' emotional well-being. Many miss the social interactions, friendships, and support networks that were once readily available in a traditional school setting. The lack of physical activity and outdoor experiences may also contribute to feelings of restlessness or reduced motivation. Emerging research is magnifying the mental health struggles that are negatively impacting the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of college students worldwide as they navigate online learning during the pandemic (Aucejo, et al.,2020; Chen, et al.,2020; Hasan & Bao, 2020; Kapasia et al., 2020; Palgi et al., 2020; Shahzad, et al., 2020; Son et al., 2020). To cope with these challenges, students have developed various strategies. They have embraced technology as a means to connect with teachers and classmates through virtual meetings and online collaboration tools. Students have also learned to navigate different online platforms for learning, accessing educational resources, and submitting assignments. Many studies are documenting the acceptance of students to the online medium. University students' acceptance of eLearning was positively correlated with subjective ease, perceived ease of use, and perceived usefulness (Al-Okaily et al., 2020).

To maintain a sense of structure and routine, students have developed personalized schedules and study plans. They set clear boundaries between school and personal life by designating specific spaces for learning and establishing regular breaks of relaxation or engagement in hobbies. They seek support from family members or create virtual study groups to foster accountability and mutual assistance.

In terms of emotional well-being, students have sought alternative ways to stay connected with friends, such as virtual hangouts or online gaming platforms. They have explored hobbies and engaged in activities that bring them joy and relaxation, such as art, music, or physical exercise. Many students have also actively sought support from school, counselors, therapists, or online mental health resources to address their emotional needs. Moreover, taking care of one's body and spirit help reducing anxiety and bring peace of mind which can be done with healthy meal, good sleep, exercise, yoga and "mindful breathing meditation". Further, following hobby brings joy, hence, one can keep up their hobby. Furthermore, being creative reduces stress hence make activity fun, painting and other creative work is helpful. Further, staying connected with family, friends and loved one's is very important in order to deal with emotions (Devi, 2020). In conclusion, the new normal has presented students with a range of struggles, from adapting to remote learning to managing the merging of school and home life. However, students have demonstrated resilience by employing coping strategies to navigate these challenges. By leveraging technology, establishing routines, seeking support, and nurturing their well-being, students continue to strive for academic success and personal growth during these unprecedented times.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Generally, the study aims to determine student's struggles and coping strategies. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following research problems:

1. What is the profile of the respondents? In terms of:
 - 1.1 Age
 - 1.2 Sex
 - 1.3 Civil status
 - 1.4 Program enrolled
 - 1.5 Year level
 - 1.6 Total units enrolled
 - 1.7 Religion
 - 1.8 Ethnicity
 - 1.9 Highest educational attainment of mother
 - 1.10 Highest educational attainment of father
 - 1.11 Occupation of mother
 - 1.12 Occupation of father
 - 1.13 Number of siblings
 - 1.14 Number of siblings taking online class
 - 1.15 Weekly allowance
 - 1.16 GWA for the Previous Semester
2. How do the students access online class? (Check 1)
 - 1.17 Devices available at home
 - 1.18 Type of internet connectivity
3. What are the struggles of respondents towards online learning in the new normal?
4. What are the coping strategies of the respondents in dealing with online class in the new normal?
5. Is there a significant difference between the mode of accessing online class when grouped according to profile variables?
6. Is there is a significant difference between the coping strategies of the respondents when grouped according to the socio-demographic profile?
7. Is there a significant relationship between the coping strategies of the respondents and the mode of accessing the online class?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design was used in this study to determine students' struggles and coping strategies towards online learning in the new normal. The survey method was used to gather information from the participants using a designed survey questionnaire. Descriptive design as seen to be the most appropriate design utilized in this study since it is the widest and encompassing compared to other methods of investigation.

Frequency counts and percentage distributions were used to profile respondents across variables. This provided a thorough understanding of the sample population.

Frequency counts and ranks assessed respondents' online learning struggles. Frequency counts showed how many participants experienced each struggle, while ranks showed the most and least common struggles.

A weighted mean assessed respondents' coping strategies. This measure assessed online class coping strategies. The weighted mean showed participants' average coping level by weighting response categories.

One-way ANOVA was used to compare profile variables and online class access modes. This statistical test compared means across groups, revealing variations in access mode by profile variable. A one-way ANOVA examined profile-based coping strategies.

Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was used to examine coping strategies and online class access. This statistical measure quantified the strength and direction of the relationship between the two variables, revealing how access mode affects coping strategies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.1: Distribution of the Profile Variables of the Respondents in terms of Age

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
16-18 y/o	136	9.6
19-21 y/o	1032	72.9
22-24 y/o	240	17.0
25-27 y/o	3	.2
28 y/o and above	4	.3
TOTAL	1415	100.0

According to the table, 72.9% of respondents are "19 to 21 years old." This suggests that majority of study participants are younger. The lowest percentage, 0.2%, is among respondents aged "25 to 27 years old." The study sample had few older people. This result implies that the respondents are still in their early middle adulthood stage, a period characterized by Brainkart.Com as a stage of adjustment to new patterns of life and new expectations. Furthermore, the result explains that majority of the respondents are already at the age of majority and that they belong to the age bracket is the teenage years of college life. The result coincides with the article on Philippine educational system wherein college students are usually from 17 to 20 years old and with the adoption of the K-12 curriculum college student age could

start at 17-18.

Table 1.2: Distribution of the Profile Variables of the Respondents in terms of Sex

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Male	295	20.8
Female	1120	79.2
TOTAL	1415	100.0

According to the above table, the variable "Female" has the highest percentage, comprising 72.9% of the total respondents, indicating that a significant majority of the participants identify as female. Respondents who identify as male, on the other hand, have the lowest percentage (20.8%). This data implies that the programs offered by the College are female dominated. This is related to the study conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority on "Education Equality in the Philippines by Patricia Anne R. San Buenaventura where it revealed that female enrollees in HEI's in AY 2017-2018 reached 2.99 million where 55.6% were females and only 44.4% were males. Furthermore, the result generated accords with the 2020 Global Gender Gap Report of the World Economic Forum (WEF) wherein they have found out that by comparison, more females had attained tertiary education compared to males. At the same time, Statista Research Department published in September 2022 found out that in 2017, there were approximately 1.32 females per one male in tertiary education enrolment in the Philippines. The result therefore denotes that college education helps women get a better access to careers where they have a reasonable advantage

Table 1.3: Distribution of the Profile Variables of the Respondents in terms of Civil Status

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Single	1406	99.4
Married	7	.5
Separated/Widowed	2	.1
TOTAL	1415	100.0

According to the above table, the variable "Single" has the highest percentage, accounting for 99.4% of the total respondents, indicating that a significant majority of the participants are unmarried. The lowest percentage, at 0.1%, is found among respondents who identify as "Separated/Widowed." The findings support the assertion made by Bread, Selena, and Michael Langlais (2018) that marriage to an undergraduate student is not the norm and that having a spouse may have a negative impact on college students' academic performance as they balance their marital responsibilities with other responsibilities like being a student, which many people view as a barrier to achieving life's goals and objectives. The talk Bella de Paulo gave on psychologytoday.com, which shows that lifelong single people perform better than married people in a variety of unglamorous ways, supports this data. She interprets this to suggest that, compared to married people, single people are better able to preserve their relationships with friends, siblings, parents, neighbors, and coworkers. They go above and beyond in terms of volunteering and aiding those in need, like their ailing parents. They have more freedom and self-determination, as well as more opportunities for personal improvement

Table 1.4: Distribution of the Profile Variables of the Respondents in terms of Program Enrolled

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Bachelor of Science in Accountancy	129	9.1
Bachelor of Science in Legal Management	190	13.4
Bachelor of Science in Entrepreneurship	152	10.7
Bachelor of Science in Business Administration	483	34.1
Bachelor of Science in Accounting and Information System	461	32.6
TOTAL	1415	100.0

According to the above table, the highest percentage, comprising 34.1% of the total respondents, corresponds to the variable "Bachelor of Science in Business Administration," indicating that a significant majority of the participants are pursuing this program. Respondents enrolled in the "Bachelor of Science in Accountancy" program, on the other hand, have the lowest percentage, at 9.1%.

Table 1.5: Distribution of the Profile Variables of the Respondents in terms of Year Level

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
First Year	444	31.4
Second Year	401	28.3
Third Year	265	18.7
Fourth Year	305	21.6
TOTAL	1415	100.0

According to the above table, the highest percentage, comprising 31.4% of the total respondents, corresponds to the variable "First Year," indicating that a significant portion of the participants are in their first year of study. Respondents in their third year, on the other hand, have the lowest percentage (18.7%).

Table 1.6: Distribution of the Profile Variables of the Respondents in terms of Total Units Enrolled

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
3-12 units	237	16.7
15-18 units	649	45.9
28-36 units	529	37.4
TOTAL	1415	100.0

According to the above table, the highest percentage, 45.9% of total respondents, corresponds to the variable "15-18 units," indicating that a significant proportion of participants are enrolled in this range of course units. The lowest percentage, at 16.7%, is found among respondents enrolled in the "3-12 units" range. This data coincides with the allowable regular academic load of students in the College. Such allowable academic load is further mandated in the University Student Manual which was approved by the Board of Regents, the governing board of the University.

Table 1.7: Distribution of the Profile Variables of the Respondents in terms of Religion

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Roman Catholic	1015	71.7
Islam	2	.1
Protestant	307	21.7
Iglesia ni Cristo	63	4.5
Aglipayan	20	1.4
Atheism	1	.1
No Answer	2	.1
None	4	.3
TOTAL	1415	100.0

According to the above table, the variable “Roman Catholic” has the highest percentage, comprising 71.7% of the total respondents, indicating that a significant majority of the participants identify with this religious affiliation. The lowest percentage, at 0.1%, is found among respondents who identify as “Islam,” “Atheism,” or provided “No Answer” when surveyed about their religious beliefs. This data reflects the religious affiliation of the Filipinos that can be traced from the result of the Spanish colonization of the country for more than three centuries where the Spanish government has used Catholicism as a means of connecting with the natives.

Table 1.8: Distribution of the Profile Variables of the Respondents in terms of Civil Status

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Ilocano	752	53.1
Itawes	213	15.1
Ybanag	123	8.7
Tagalog	283	20.0
Isneg	4	.3
Malauog	16	1.1
Ivatan	6	.4
YKalinga	10	.7
Igorot	4	.3
Cancana ey	1	.1
Illongo	1	.1
Maranao	1	.1
Masbateno	1	.1
TOTAL	1415	100.0

According to the above table, the variable “Ilocano” has the highest percentage, comprising 53.1% of the total respondents, indicating that a significant majority of the participants identify with this specific ethnic group. On the other hand, respondents who identify as “Cancana Ey,” “Ilongo,” “Maranao,” or “Masbateo” have the lowest percentage, at 0.1%. This data reflects that the majority of the respondents belonged to the mainland Cagayan as the center of the Ilocano tribes.

Table 1.9: Distribution of the Profile Variables of the Respondents in terms of Highest Educational Attainment of Mother

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Elementary Graduate	268	18.9
High School Graduate	487	34.4
College Level	218	15.4
College Graduate	386	27.3
TechVoc graduate	13	.9
Master's Degree Holder	41	2.9
Doctorate Degree Holder	2	.1
TOTAL	1415	100.0

According to the above table, the highest percentage, comprising 34.4% of total respondents, corresponds to the variable "High School Graduate," indicating that a significant portion of the participants' mothers have attained this level of education. The lowest percentage, at 0.1%, is found among respondents whose mothers have a "Doctorate Degree."

Table 1.10: Distribution of the Profile Variables of the Respondents in terms of Highest Educational Attainment of Father

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Elementary Graduate	337	23.8
High School Graduate	435	30.7
College Level	300	21.2
College Graduate	269	19.0
TechVoc graduate	50	3.5
Master's Degree Holder	17	1.2
Doctorate Degree Holder	7	.5
TOTAL	1415	100.0

According to the above table, the highest percentage, 30.7% of total respondents, corresponds to the variable "High School Graduate," indicating that a significant proportion of the respondents' fathers have attained this level of education. The lowest percentage, at 0.5%, is found among respondents whose fathers hold a "Doctorate Degree."

Table 1.11: Distribution of the Profile Variables of the Respondents in terms of Occupation of Mother

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Farmers and Fishermen	10	.7
Professionals	6	.4
Service Industry Workers	28	2.0
Skilled Workers	4	.3
Informal Sector Workers	36	2.5
Government Employees	154	10.9
Private Employees	89	6.3
OFW	127	9.0
Entrepreneurs	27	1.9
Doesn't know the mother	1	.1

None	861	60.8
Deceased	46	3.3
Self-Employed	18	1.3
Pastor	1	.1
Brgy. Worker	7	.5
TOTAL	1415	100.0

According to the above table, the highest percentage, 60.8% of total respondents, corresponds to the variable "None," indicating that the vast majority of the participants' mothers do not have a formal occupation. The lowest percentage, however, is observed among respondents who either "doesn't know the mother's occupation" or have a mother who is a "Pastor."

Table 1.12: Distribution of the Profile Variables of the Respondents in terms of Occupation of Father

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Farmers and Fishermen	518	36.6
Professionals	12	.8
Service Industry Workers	213	15.1
Skilled Workers	132	9.3
Informal Sector Workers	20	1.4
Government Employees	139	9.8
Private Employees	86	6.1
OFW	30	2.1
Entrepreneurs	41	2.9
Doesn't know the father	6	.4
None	83	5.9
Deceased	101	7.1
Self-Employed	16	1.1
Pastor	5	.4
Brgy. Worker	2	.1
Retired Employees	11	.8
TOTAL	1415	100.0

According to the above table, the highest percentage, comprising 36.6% of all respondents, corresponds to the variable "Farmers and Fishermen," indicating that a significant proportion of the participants' fathers work in agricultural or fishing-related occupations. The lowest percentage, at 0.1%, is found among respondents whose fathers work as "Barangay Workers."

Table 1.13: Distribution of the Profile Variables of the Respondents in terms of Number of Siblings

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1-2	753	53.2
3-4	452	31.9
5-6	148	10.5
7 and more	62	4.4
TOTAL	1415	100.0

According to the above table, the highest percentage, comprising 53.2% of all respondents, falls under the variable "1-2," indicating that the vast majority of participants have one or two siblings. Respondents with seven or more siblings, on the other hand, have the lowest percentage, at 4.4%.

Table 1.14: Distribution of the Profile Variables of the Respondents in terms of Weekly Allowance

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
100-500	1086	76.7
501-1000	242	17.1
1001-1500	56	4.0
1501-2000	14	1.0
2001-2500	4	.3
2500-3000	3	.2
above 3000	10	.7
TOTAL	1415	100.0

According to the above table, the highest percentage, comprising 76.7% of all respondents, falls under the variable "P100-P500," indicating that a significant majority of participants receive a weekly allowance in this range. The lowest percentage, however, is observed among respondents whose weekly allowance falls within the "P2500-P3000" category, at 0.2%.

Table 1.15: Distribution of the Profile Variables of the Respondents in terms of General Weighted Average for the Previous Semester

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
90-100 (Excellent)	565	39.9
85-89 (Very Good)	516	36.5
80-84 (Good)	100	7.1
75-79 (Fair)	3	.2
Unknown	231	16.3
TOTAL	1415	100.0

According to the above table, the highest percentage, 39.9%, fell into the category "90-100 (Excellent)," indicating that a significant proportion of the participants had an excellent GWA in the previous semester. The lowest percentage, 0.2%, was found in the category "75-79 (Fair)," indicating that very few respondents had a fair GWA. This distribution of GWAs among participants has a number of implications. Firstly, the high percentage of students who achieve an excellent GWA reflects their dedication and academic competence, which can be viewed as a positive outcome of the online learning experience.

It implies that many students were able to adjust to the new normal while still maintaining their academic performance. The low percentage of respondents with a fair GWA, on the other hand, highlights the potential challenges and struggles that a minority of students may face when adjusting to online classes. It implies that some students may have encountered difficulties that affected their academic performance, possibly as a result of a variety of factors such as technological issues, a lack of resources, or difficulties adapting to a new learning environment.

Such finding is supported as mentioned where accelerating academic achievement is crucial for both adolescents and young adults, say Negru-Subtirica & Pop (2016) and Van der Aar et al. (2019), because academic success has a significant impact on future job development (Negru-Subtirica & Pop, 2016; Van der Aar et al., 2019).

Academic performance is the extent to which a student, teacher, or institution has attained their short- or long-term educational goals, and is assessed either by continuous assessment or cumulative grade point average, according to Talib and Sansgiry (2012). As seen on the table, respondents garnering an average of 85-87 or a descriptive average of good got the highest frequency of 131 or 38.1 percent while very outstanding or those who got an average between 94 to 96 got the lowest frequency of 1 or .3 percent. With a general weighted mean of 85.82, the result implies that respondents generally made good in their performance, quizzes, assignments, activities, outputs and major examinations.

Table 2.1: Distribution of the mode of accessing online class in terms of devices available at home

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Smartphone	1204	85.1
Laptop	184	13.0
Tablet	8	.6
Desktop	19	1.3
TOTAL	1415	100.0

According to the above table, the highest percentage, 85.1% of total respondents, falls under the variable "smartphone," indicating that a significant majority of the respondents have access to smartphones as a device for their educational needs. Respondents who have tablets at home, on the other hand, have the lowest percentage, at 0.6%. Android or smart phones are the main gadgets employed by the majority of the respondents. Aside from the fact that mobile phones can be utilized as a means to communicate, the consideration of the price made it accessible for the students to own as a tool in online modular classes.

IPad and laptops are also among the gadgets utilized by the other respondents in accessing to their course modules. According to the findings of Dayagbil et al, majority of the students used mobile phones for online learning which is not capable of addressing online tasks and submission of requirements. In a similar study of Shy (2010) says that no one can deny the fact that gadgets have not only simplified the lives of people but also made them more comfortable and luxurious. Indeed, these gadgets really made a huge impact in people's lives and became part of it. This finding is supported by Agustin, C.P. et al (2020) who asserted that with the utilization of mobile devices such as laptops and tablet computers, the learning process for the students become more fun and conducive due to the user-interactivity and appealing visuals present in these learning tools.

To further explain the significance of the smartphones and android phones, Fawareh and Jusoh (2017) postulated that having a smartphone is like having a tiny computer in a pocket. It is blatant that, the potency of smartphone is not only meant for placing of calls and receiving of calls. Usually, there are amazing features such as for browsing, checking health status, sending

and receiving emails, watching videos, listening to music, chatting, sharing photos, videos and other documents, to mention but a few. No wonder there is an exponential use of social media as a result of the emergence of the smartphone. More sophisticated mobile phones, also known as smartphones, can be used to assist students in accessing information from the web, transforming it, transferring it, collaborating with students and also creating a more media-rich approach to instruction (Ferry, 2009).

Table 2.2: Distribution of the mode of accessing online class in terms of type of internet connectivity

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Mobile Data	705	49.8
Broadband (Postpaid)	223	15.8
Broadband (Prepaid)	208	14.7
Mobile data and Broadband	239	16.9
PisoNet	11	.8
Hotspot	27	1.9
Free Community Internet Access	2	.1
TOTAL	1415	100.0

According to the above table, the highest percentage, 49.8% of total respondents, falls under the variable "Mobile Data," indicating that a significant majority of participants rely on mobile data as their primary means of internet access. The lowest percentage, at 0.1%, is found among respondents who have access to "Free Community Internet." According to the data, the vast majority of respondents have limited access to internet connectivity, making the course module inaccessible to them.

This is especially true considering that the data they used was either pre-paid or purchased from a store. This finding is similar to the finding of the study conducted by Af'idatul Husniyah titled "Blended Learning in EFL Classrooms with slow Internet" where it revealed limited internet access had affected the completion of class activity of the students. In a similar survey conducted by the Department of Education, 6.9 million parents and guardians have shared that unstable mobile or internet connection was the most challenging problem that may affect their child's learning process.

Table 3: Rank Distribution of the Struggles of Respondents towards Online Learning in the New Normal

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	RANK
Unstable connectivity	1228	1
Lack of available gadgets	574	9
Insufficient load or data allowance	759	7
Unscheduled power interruptions	1142	2
Difficulty in understanding the lesson	761	6
Availability of the teacher when needed	287	13
Distraction from social media	783	5
Noise from community/neighbor	1011	3
Conflict with other activities (household chores, rearing with siblings)	964	4
Support from family members	191	15
High electric consumption	237	14
Conflict with employment	44	16
Health status (Physical, mental, etc)	494	12
Low self esteem	581	8
Sleep disorder	546	10
Adapting to online class	535	11

According to the above table, the most common struggle reported by respondents is "Unstable connectivity," with a frequency of 1228, ranking it first. This suggests that a sizable number of students face difficulties as a result of unreliable internet connections, causing disruptions in their online learning experience. The second most common issue is "Unscheduled power interruptions" (frequency: 1142), which highlights the impact of power outages on students' ability to consistently engage in online classes.

Other difficulties reported by respondents include "noise from community/neighbor" (frequency: 1011), "conflict with other activities (household chores, rearing with siblings)" (frequency: 964), "distraction from social media" (frequency: 783), "difficulty in understanding the lesson" (frequency: 759), "low self-esteem" (frequency: 581), and "lack of available gadgets" (frequency: 574).

These rankings shed light on the numerous challenges that students face when adapting to online learning in the new normal. Unstable connectivity and unscheduled power outages stand out as major concerns, limiting students' ability to fully participate in online classes. The need for a stable internet connection and an uninterrupted power supply becomes critical in ensuring a smooth learning experience.

Furthermore, the presence of environmental factors such as community/neighbor noise and competing activities such as household chores and raising siblings suggests the need for conducive learning environments at home. Giving students a dedicated study space and minimizing distractions can help them focus and engage in online classes.

The difficulties with understanding the lesson, the insufficient load or data allowance, and the lack of available gadgets highlight the importance of equitable access to resources for all students.

Furthermore, the presence of mental health issues, such as low self-esteem and sleep disorders, emphasizes the importance of providing students with holistic support.

The elimination of glitches or problems in any undertaking or activity has always been the desire of a well-prepared activity; nonetheless, inevitable events may arise along the road that prevent the accomplishment of such goals and obstruct the seamless completion of the activity's objectives. This finding has also been presented in the study conducted by Lapitan, Lorico DS Jr et al. which revealed that students have technical and personal constraints that may prevent them from online learning during the lockdown, such as lack of computers/laptops or other gadgets, lack of stable internet access, power interruptions, lack of quiet and isolated room to study, slow and old computers, non-academic responsibilities within the family, and some students may need necessary medical appointments. Consistent with other studies (e.g. see Bao, 2020; Henaku, 2020; Entsie, 2020; Wisconsin, 2020; and Baticulon et al., 2020), the participants of this research similarly voiced out unstable internet connectivity as one of the main difficulties they encounter in the practice of remote learning

Table 4: Assessment of the Respondents in the Coping Strategies of the respondents in dealing with Online Class in the New Normal

STATEMENTS	MEAN	DESCRIPTION
Follow strict personal protective measures (e.g., Mask, handwashing, etc.)	3.78	ALWAYS
Read about COVID 19, its prevention and mechanism for transmission	3.27	ALWAYS
Avoid getting out in public places to minimize exposure from COVID 19.	3.39	ALWAYS
Do relaxation activities, for example, involved in meditation, sports, exercise, music, etc.	2.74	OFTEN
Praying, worshipping and Bible study.	3.18	OFTEN
Chat with family and friends to relieve stress and obtain support.	3.10	OFTEN
Use social media and social networks such as Facebooks, Twitter, Tiktok, Youtube, etc.	3.61	ALWAYS
Play online games and computer games.	2.02	SOMETIMES
Talk and motivate myself to face COVID 19 with a positive attitude.	3.04	OFTEN
Get help from family physicians or other doctors to reduce my stress and get reassurance	1.56	NEVER
Try to be busy at home in activities that would keep my mind away from COVID 19.	2.93	OFTEN
Avoid media about COVID 19 and related fatalities.	2.07	SOMETIMES
Vent emotions by crying, screaming, etc.	2.42	SOMETIMES
Online shopping/selling	2.55	OFTEN
Watching k-drama	2.36	SOMETIMES
Engaging in new hobbies (Gardening, cooking, baking, painting, rhinestone arts, etc)	2.55	OFTEN
Sleeping more than 8 hours	2.30	SOMETIMES
Binge eating	2.44	SOMETIMES
Drinking Alcohol	1.42	NEVER
Smoking	1.03	NEVER
CATEGORICAL MEAN	2.59	OFTEN

According to the above table, respondents reported a categorical mean of 2.59, indicating that they frequently use coping strategies to navigate the challenges of online learning.

Among the coping strategies evaluated, the statement "Follow strict personal protective measures (e.g., Mask, handwashing, etc.)" received the highest mean score of 3.78, categorized as "always." This suggests that the majority of respondents follow health protocols consistently to ensure their safety and well-being while taking online classes. This finding is consistent with the global emphasis on personal protective measures as an important component of mitigating the spread of infectious diseases such as COVID-19.

The coping strategy with the lowest mean score of 1.03, described as "never," was linked to the statement "Smoking." This implies that a large majority of respondents never used smoking as a coping mechanism while dealing with the challenges of online classes. This is a promising finding because smoking can be harmful to both physical and mental health, and avoiding such coping mechanisms is critical for overall well-being.

Overall, the data suggests that respondents have a relatively positive attitude toward implementing coping strategies to deal with the challenges of online learning in the new normal. Following personal protective measures has a high mean score, indicating a responsible and health-conscious approach, whereas smoking has a low mean score, indicating a healthy behavior choice.

Table 5: Difference in the mode of accessing Online Class as to their Profile Variables

VARIABLES	MODE OF ACCESSING ONLINE CLASS		
		Devices Available At Home	Type Of Internet Connectivity
AGE	f/t - value	.311	2.548
	p - value	.871	.038
SEX	f/t - value	.856	.126
	p - value	.392	.900
CIVIL STATUS	f/t - value	.620	.650
	p - value	.538	.522
PROGRAM ENROLLED	f/t - value	11.240	1.767
	p - value	.000	.133
YEAR LEVEL	f/t - value	.279	5.470
	p - value	.840	.001
TOTAL UNITS ENROLLED	f/t - value	2.358	1.267
	p - value	.095	.282
RELIGION	f/t - value	1.221	.613
	p - value	.288	.745
ETHNICITY	f/t - value	.567	1.172
	p - value	.870	.298
HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF MOTHER	f/t - value	11.380	2.179
	p - value	.000	.042
HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF FATHER	f/t - value	7.748	2.699
	p - value	.000	.013

OCCUPATION OF MOTHER	f/t - value	3.754	1.829
	p - value	.000	.030
OCCUPATION OF FATHER	f/t - value	4.291	1.296
	p - value	.000	.196
NUMBER OF SIBLINGS	f/t - value	3.529	1.242
	p - value	.014	.293
WEEKLY ALLOWANCE	f/t - value	11.290	4.687
	p - value	.000	.000
GWA FOR THE PREVIOUS SEMESTER	f/t - value	.689	.904
	p - value	.599	.461

According to the above table, several profile variables show significant differences in the mode of accessing online classes. First, when the respondents' devices at home were grouped according to the program in which they were enrolled, a significant difference was found (F-value = 11.240, p-value = .000). This suggests that the type of program in which students enroll influences the availability of devices used for online learning. The difference in device availability may have an impact on students' online learning experiences and their ability to fully engage in remote education.

Similarly, significant differences in internet connectivity type were found when age (F-value = 2.548, p-value = .038), year level (F-value = 5.470, p-value = .001), highest educational attainment of mother (F-value = 2.179, p-value = .049), highest educational attainment of father (F-value = 2.699, p-value = .013), occupation of mother (F-value = 1.829, p-value = .030). These findings suggest that age, parental educational attainment, parental occupation, and financial resources all have an impact on the type of internet connectivity available to students.

The existence of educational inequalities and disparities among students in the new normal is highlighted by these significant differences in the mode of accessing online classes based on profile variables. It emphasizes the importance of targeted interventions and support in order to bridge the digital divide and provide equal access to online education for all students. Furthermore, initiatives such as the DepEd's "Brigada Eskwela" program and collaborations with telecommunications companies can help improve digital access in marginalized communities.

Table 6: Difference in the Coping Strategies of the Respondents as to their Profile Variables

VARIABLES		COPING STRATEGIES
AGE	f/t - value	1.817
	p - value	.123
SEX	f/t - value	1.077
	p - value	.282
CIVIL STATUS	f/t - value	1.200
	p - value	.301
PROGRAM ENROLLED	f/t - value	9.761
	p - value	.000
YEAR LEVEL	f/t - value	1.327
	p - value	.264

TOTAL UNITS ENROLLED	f/t - value	6.988
	p - value	.001
RELIGION	f/t - value	1.900
	p - value	.066
ETHNICITY	f/t - value	1.770
	p - value	.048
HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF MOTHER	f/t - value	2.464
	p - value	.022
HIGHEST EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF FATHER	f/t - value	2.306
	p - value	.032
OCCUPATION OF MOTHER	f/t - value	1.605
	p - value	.071
OCCUPATION OF FATHER	f/t - value	1.235
	p - value	.238
NUMBER OF SIBLINGS	f/t - value	2.592
	p - value	.051
WEEKLY ALLOWANCE	f/t - value	2.638
	p - value	.015
GWA FOR THE PREVIOUS SEMESTER	f/t - value	1.823
	p - value	.122

The above table shows that the significant difference reveals significant differences in the respondents' coping strategies based on their profile variables. These variables include the respondents' program enrollment, total units enrolled, ethnicity, mother's highest educational attainment, and father's highest educational attainment.

A significant difference was found when the coping strategies were grouped according to the respondents' program enrollment (F-value = 9.761, p-value = .000). This suggests that the type of program in which students enroll influences their coping strategies for dealing with the challenges of the new normal.

Furthermore, when the total number of units enrolled was considered, a significant difference in coping strategies was observed (F-value = 6.988, p-value = .001). This implies that students' coping strategies are influenced by their workload or academic demands.

Furthermore, significant differences in coping strategies were found based on ethnicity (F-value = 1.770, p-value = .048), mother's highest educational attainment (F-value = 2.464, p-value = .022), and father's highest educational attainment (F-value = 2.306, p-value = .032). These findings imply that students' coping strategies are influenced by their cultural and educational backgrounds.

The significant differences in coping strategies based on profile variables highlight the importance of designing effective support systems for students in the new normal while taking individual and contextual factors into consideration.

Table 7: Relationship between the Coping Strategies of the Respondents and the mode of accessing the online class

VARIABLES		COPING STRATEGIES
DEVICES AVAILABLE AT HOME	r - value	.117**
	p - value	.000
TYPE OF INTERNET CONNECTIVITY	r - value	.044
	p - value	.097

The above table shows a significant relationship between coping strategies and home-based devices (r -value = 0.117, p -value = .000). This suggests that the type of device students have at home influences their coping strategies when dealing with the challenges of online classes. Students with more advanced devices, such as laptops or desktop computers, may find it easier to navigate online platforms, participate in virtual discussions, and submit assignments, potentially leading to more effective coping strategies. Students with limited access to devices, such as smartphones or tablets, may face additional challenges in adapting to the new learning environment.

CONCLUSION

The findings provide valuable insights into the respondent profile, their struggles with online learning, coping strategies used, and the relationships between these variables. The study emphasizes the importance of understanding the various challenges that students face, such as unstable connectivity, a lack of available gadgets, and unscheduled power outages, among others. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of positive coping strategies such as seeking support from family members, managing social media distractions, and dealing with noise disturbances. In addition, the study reveals significant differences in coping strategies and access to online classes across various profile variables.

RECOMMENDATIONS

First, educational institutions must provide support and resources to ensure consistent internet connectivity and access to necessary devices. Efforts should be made to bridge the digital divide by providing students who lack access with devices and internet connectivity. Additionally, institutions can explore collaborations with internet service providers to provide students with affordable and reliable internet options. Second, there is a need to improve students' coping strategies. This can be achieved by promoting mental health and well-being through counseling services, peer support programs, and stress management workshops. Educational institutions should also encourage the adoption of healthy lifestyle practices such as regular exercise, adequate rest, and a well-balanced diet. Furthermore, collaboration between teachers and students is critical in developing effective strategies for online learning. Teachers should provide clear instructions and guidelines while remaining accessible to address students' questions and concerns. Finally, it is critical to continuously assess and evaluate the effectiveness of online learning platforms, as well as adapt them to meet the changing needs of students.

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