

Assessing Stress Levels and Coping Strategies in the New Normal among Students of Magsaysay College

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of this study was to assess stress levels and analyze coping strategies among Magsaysay College students. Utilizing a descriptive correlational research design, the study explored the relationship between students' demographic profiles, including age, gender, marital status, year level, family income, and reported stress levels. It also examined the correlation between stress levels and the use of coping strategies. The research concluded that demographic factors do not have a significant impact on stress levels among students and that stress is a ubiquitous challenge for students across different backgrounds. Interestingly, there is a slight negative correlation between family income and stress levels among students; this relationship is not statistically significant. This suggests that students show resilience and do not let the challenges of lower family income escalate their stress levels appreciably. A positive correlation was identified between stress levels and the employment of coping strategies, indicating that students tend to rely more on coping mechanisms as stress levels increase. It was recommended that Magsaysay College's Guidance Center enhance its mental health support services by providing more resources, educational programs, and online counseling on effective coping strategies. Local Government Unit (LGU) of Magsaysay and other stakeholders are advised to collaborate on community-based support programs and invest in mental health initiatives to bolster the well-being of the students. Such collaborative efforts could significantly contribute to a more supportive learning environment, fostering students' academic success and personal growth.

KEYWORDS

Stress levels; coping strategies; student well-being; mental health; descriptive correlational design; Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The transition to 'new normal' educational settings, primarily characterized by online learning and pandemic-related stressors, has led to an increased need to understand the stress levels among students and the coping strategies they employ. College life is a pivotal time when students encounter numerous stressors and develop coping strategies to navigate their academic and personal lives (Mulaudzi, 2023). Understanding students' stress levels and coping strategies is crucial for fostering an environment that promotes mental well-being and academic success (Hammoudi Halat et al., 2023). Students report moderate to high-stress levels attributed to academic pressures, future uncertainties, and financial difficulties (Yang & Yang, 2022).

In addition, coping strategies can significantly mediate the relationship between perceived stress and psychological well-being (Asturias et al., 2021). Gustems-Carnicer et al. (2019) suggest that coping partially mediates stress and well-being among teacher-education students, using avoidance-type strategies potentially leading to adaptive difficulties. Stress levels can influence academic performance, and students' coping strategies are diverse and complex (Freire et al., 2020; Shdaifat et al., 2018).

Studies such as Phillips, O. T. (2023) highlighted the differences in stress and coping strategies among students from different countries, suggesting that cultural context might influence the effectiveness of coping mechanisms. Further research could delve into culturally tailored coping strategies and their effectiveness in reducing stress in diverse student populations. Given the dynamic and demanding nature of academic environments, assessing the specific stressors and coping strategies employed by students at Magsaysay College is imperative. This understanding can inform targeted interventions and support systems that address the unique needs of the student body, ultimately contributing to their well-being and educational attainment.

In this study, the researchers aim to assess the stress levels and coping strategies among students at Magsaysay College, drawing insights from recent literature to guide our investigation and interventions to promote a supportive learning environment.

The study was anchored on Lazarus, R. S., & Folkman, S. (1984) Transactional Model of Stress and Coping. This model posits that stress is a transaction between an individual and the environment and is mediated by appraisal and coping. Applying Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (Scott, 2012) to students' experiences, it becomes clear that stress is not just about the challenges faced in the realms of academia, finance, and social life but also how students perceive and respond to these challenges. Academic stress, for instance, emerges when students view their coursework and deadlines as exceeding their coping abilities. Through secondary appraisal, they may employ time management skills and mindfulness techniques to regain control and mitigate stress. Financial stress, too, is significant in students' lives, often appraised as a threat when the cost of education and living expenses seem insurmountable. Adaptive strategies like seeking support systems and carefully budgeting can transform financial challenges into manageable tasks, thereby reducing stress levels. On the other hand, maladaptive coping strategies such as avoidance can exacerbate financial worries in the long run.

Social stress, exacerbated in the new normal by reduced physical contact, can lead to feelings of isolation. However, the model suggests that by appraising their available social resources, students can activate their support systems—relying on friends, family, or counseling services—to navigate these turbulent times. Additionally, relaxation techniques and mindfulness can serve as personal coping resources to manage the emotional toll of social stress. Overall, the model underscores the importance of perception and action, illustrating that while stress is an inherent part of the student experience, its impact is significantly influenced by the coping strategies students perceive as available and effective.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive correlational design to assess students' stress levels and coping strategies. This approach facilitated the exploration of relationships between identified stressors and the coping mechanisms used by students within the 'new normal' educational setting without manipulating the study environment.

Research Local

The research was conducted at Magsaysay College, situated in Misamis Oriental, Philippines. This locale was strategically chosen due to its diverse student population and the implementation of new normal educational practices in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Respondents

The respondents of the study were selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representation across different departments within Magsaysay College. A total of 249 respondents participated in the study, which provided a robust sample for analyzing stress and coping mechanisms.

Research Instrument

The study utilized a validated research instrument. The instrument included a series of questions designed to measure students' stress levels, perceived sources of stress, and coping strategies. Its validity was established through a rigorous process involving expert evaluation and pilot testing.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data were collected following the approval of a formal request letter by the Interim President of Magsaysay College and the Mayor of the local government unit (LGU) of Magsaysay. The letter outlined the study's objectives, significance, and methodology, ensuring transparency and institutional support for the research.

Ethical Standards

The research adhered to stringent ethical standards, including securing informed consent from all participants, ensuring the protection of personal data, and maintaining confidentiality. Participants were informed of their right to voluntary participation and were assured that all information gathered would be used solely for research purposes.

Statistical Treatment

For the profiling of respondents, frequency and percentage analyses were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the sample. The weighted mean was employed to determine the average level of stress and the commonality of coping strategies. Pearson's R correlation was utilized to investigate the relationship between stress levels, coping strategies, and demographic profile among the students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Distribution of the Respondents in terms of Age

Age	F	%
17-18 years old	37	14.86
19-20 years old	87	34.94
21-22 years old	65	26.10
23 years old and above	60	24.10
Total	249	100

Table 1. presents the distribution of respondents by age in four categories: 17-18 years old, 19-20 years old, 21-22 years old, and 23 years old and above. The table also provides respondents' frequency (F) and percentage (%) within each age category. There's a total of 249 respondents, and it's evident that the largest age group is the 19-20-year-old category, representing approximately 34.94% of the respondents. This suggests that individuals in the late teen to early adulthood stage are the most represented in the survey.

Table 2. Distribution of the Respondents in terms of Gender

Gender	F	%
Male	105	42.17
Female	144	57.83
Total	249	100

Table 2 provides the distribution of respondents by gender. It shows that out of 249 total respondents, 105 are male, and 144 are female. In terms of percentage, males constitute 42.17%, while females make up a larger proportion at 57.83%.

Gender distribution could also be influenced by the survey subject. Research has suggested that females may be more likely to participate in surveys, particularly those relating to health or social issues, which could result in higher female response rates (Groves et al., 2004).

Table 3. Distribution of the Respondents in terms of Marital Status

Marital Status	F	%
Single	241	96.79
Married	8	3.21
Total	249	100

Table 3 presents the distribution of respondents according to their marital status. It shows that out of the total 249 respondents, 241 are single, making up 96.79% of the sample, while only 8 respondents are married, constituting 3.21%.

This aligns with literature findings that indicate marriage during undergraduate studies is relatively uncommon. For instance:

In a study examining the impact of marital status on academic performance among undergraduates, it was found that only 7% of undergraduate students were married. Marital status was negatively associated with cumulative grade point average (GPA), suggesting that married students may have additional roles and responsibilities that could impact their academic performance (Beard, S., 2018).

Table 4. Distribution of the Respondents in terms of Year Level

Year Level	F	%
1 st Year	104	41.77
2 nd Year	73	29.32
3 rd Year	35	14.06
4 th Year	37	14.85
Total	249	100

Table 4 provides a breakdown of respondents by their academic year level, showing a sample size of 249 students. The majority of participants are in their first year of study, accounting for 41.77% of the total. This suggests that the survey or study may have been

more accessible to or targeted towards those at the beginning of their academic journey. Second-year students also form a significant portion at 29.32%, but there is a marked decrease in participation among third and fourth-year students, each constituting just over 14%.

Table 5. Distribution of the Respondents in terms of Family Income

Family Income	F	%
3,000-5,000 PHP	180	72.29
6,000-8,000 PHP	43	17.27
9,000-11,000 PHP	16	6.43
12,000 PHP and above	10	4.01
Total	249	100

Table 5 shows the distribution of respondents based on family income, categorized into four income ranges measured in Philippine Pesos (PHP). The vast majority, 72.29% of the respondents, fall into the lowest income bracket of 3,000-5,000 PHP. The next income category, 6,000-8,000 PHP, includes 17.27% of the respondents, followed by 6.43% in the 9,000-11,000 PHP range. The smallest group, at 4.01%, reports a family income of 12,000 PHP and above. With a total of 249 respondents, this distribution suggests a predominantly low-income sample.

Education is a significant factor in income disparities in the Philippines, with returns to education increasing monotonically. Workers with tertiary education earn significantly more than those without any education, and education accounts for about 30% of the difference in wages at the national level. The study also notes significant differences across regions and sectors, highlighting education as the most crucial factor contributing to wage differentials (Luo & Terada, 2009).

Table 6. Stress Level among Students of Magsaysay in terms of Academic

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Verbal Interpretation
1. I often feel overwhelmed by the volume of my coursework and assignments.	3.05	Agree	Moderate Level
2. I experience significant anxiety when preparing for and taking exams.	2.96	Agree	Moderate Level
3. Balancing my academic responsibilities with other commitments is a constant source of stress for me.	3.09	Agree	Moderate Level
4. The pressure to maintain high grades frequently contributes to my stress levels.	2.93	Agree	Moderate Level
5. I feel stressed by the competitive atmosphere in my academic environment.	2.82	Agree	Moderate Level
6. I am often stressed due to a lack of adequate resources or support for my studies.	2.98	Agree	Moderate Level

7. Meeting tight deadlines for assignments and projects is a major stressor for me.	3.06	Agree	Moderate Level
8. My own expectations for academic success often cause me stress.	2.87	Agree	Moderate Level
9. I feel stressed due to the expectations and comparisons made by my peers or family regarding academic achievements.	2.89	Agree	Moderate Level
10. Concerns about my future career and educational path often add to my academic stress.	2.97	Agree	Moderate Level
Average Weighted Mean	2.96	Agree	Moderate Level

Table 6 illustrates the levels of stress experienced by students of Magsaysay in relation to various academic factors, with each indicator assigned a weighted mean. The highest weighted mean is observed in statement 3, "Balancing my academic responsibilities with other commitments is a constant source of stress for me," which has a weighted mean of 3.09. This indicator is described verbally as "Agree" and interpreted as a "Moderate Level" of stress. The interpretation of this finding is that students experience a significant challenge in managing their academic workload alongside other life responsibilities, indicating a substantial source of stress that may necessitate interventions aimed at helping students manage their time and commitments better.

Conversely, the lowest weighted mean is for statement 5, "I feel stressed by the competitive atmosphere in my academic environment," with a weighted mean of 2.82, also described as "Agree" and interpreted as a "Moderate Level" of stress. This suggests that while the competitive nature of the academic environment is recognized as a stressor, it is comparatively less impactful on students' stress levels than other factors.

Lastly, the overall average weighted mean for all the stress indicators is 2.96, falling into the "Agree" category with a "Moderate Level" interpretation. This indicates that, on average, students agree that these academic factors contribute to a moderate level of stress. It reflects a broad recognition among students of the presence of stress in their academic lives but suggests that the stress is not typically overwhelming or severe. Understanding these levels can guide the institution in developing targeted support systems to address the most significant stressors while recognizing that the competitive atmosphere may require slightly different approaches or less immediate attention (Alkhazaleh, M. S., & Alomery, M. K., 2023).

Table 7. Stress Level among Students of Magsaysay in terms of Financial

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Verbal Interpretation
1. I frequently worry about how to manage my daily expenses within my budget.	3.38	Agree	Moderate Level
2. The cost of other school fees is a significant source of stress for me.	3.03	Agree	Moderate Level

3. Affording my housing and utility bills is often stressful.	2.94	Agree	Moderate Level
4. The expense of textbooks and academic materials is a financial burden.	2.85	Agree	Moderate Level
5. Juggling a part-time job to make ends meet while studying is a source of stress.	2.77	Agree	Moderate Level
6. The prospect of repaying student loans is a constant concern.	2.68	Agree	Moderate Level
7. I feel stressed by the perceived lack of financial aid or scholarships available to me.	3.09	Agree	Moderate Level
8. Covering my day-to-day expenses, like food and transport, is a major stressor.	3.18	Agree	Moderate Level
9. The absence of an emergency fund for unforeseen expenses worries me.	3.08	Agree	Moderate Level
10. I am often preoccupied with thoughts about my financial security after I finish my studies.	3.10	Agree	Moderate Level
Average Weighted Mean	3.01	Agree	Moderate Level

Table 7 provides an overview of the stress levels among students of Magsaysay in terms of financial matters, with weighted means indicating the level of agreement and perceived stress. The statement with the highest weighted mean is "I frequently worry about managing my daily expenses within my budget," with a weighted mean of 3.38. This suggests that managing daily expenses within a budget is a significant source of stress, and students agree about its impact. The verbal description "Agree" paired with the verbal interpretation of a "Moderate Level" indicates that financial management is a common and notable concern among students, which can affect their daily lives and academic performance.

Conversely, the statement with the lowest weighted mean is "Juggling a part-time job to make ends meet while studying is a source of stress," with a weighted mean of 2.77. Although this is still within the range of "Agree" and is considered a "Moderate Level" of stress, it appears to be a less common or intense source of stress than other financial concerns.

The average weighted mean for all the financial indicators is 3.01, which also falls under the "Agree" category with a "Moderate Level" interpretation. This indicates that students experience a moderate level of stress related to financial issues. The consistent "Agree" response across the board suggests that financial stress is a widespread concern among the student body, potentially affecting a significant aspect of their overall well-being and academic focus. Institutions may benefit from recognizing these financial stressors and possibly offering more robust financial support systems, counseling, and planning resources to assist students (Scherer, L. A., & Leshner, A. I. Eds., 2021).

Table 8. Stress Level among Students of Magsaysay in terms of Social

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Verbal Interpretation
1. I feel pressure to keep up with my peers socially, which causes me stress.	2.82	Agree	Moderate Level
2. Social interactions often drain my energy and increase my stress levels.	2.78	Agree	Moderate Level

3. I get anxious thinking about participating in group activities or social events.	2.80	Agree	Moderate Level
4. The need to maintain a presence on social media is a significant stressor for me.	2.71	Agree	Moderate Level
5. I am concerned about forming and maintaining friendships, and this concern is stressful.	2.71	Agree	Moderate Level
6. Balancing my social life with academic and personal responsibilities is challenging and stressful.	2.96	Agree	Moderate Level
7. I worry about being judged or excluded by others, adding to my stress.	3.03	Agree	Moderate Level
8. Finding time to engage in social activities without compromising my studies causes me stress.	2.87	Agree	Moderate Level
9. The expectations to attend social gatherings, even when I'm not up to it, is a source of stress.	2.82	Agree	Moderate Level
10. I often feel overwhelmed by trying to meet the social demands of being a student.	2.91	Agree	Moderate Level
Average Weighted Mean	2.84	Agree	Moderate Level

Table 8 displays the weighted means of social indicators that contribute to the stress level among students of Magsaysay. Each indicator is accompanied by a verbal description and interpretation that classifies the stress level as "Moderate" and the agreement level as "Agree."

The indicator with the highest weighted mean is item 7: "I worry about being judged or excluded by others, adding to my stress," with a weighted mean of 3.03. This suggests that social judgment and exclusion are particularly significant concerns for the students, impacting their stress levels more than other social factors. The "Agree" description and "Moderate Level" interpretation indicate that while it is a common stressor, it may not be severe for all students but is still a notable issue.

On the lower end, the indicator with the lowest weighted mean is item 4: "The need to maintain a presence on social media is a significant stressor for me," with a weighted mean of 2.71. Although students agree that it's a source of stress, it's perceived as less stressful compared to other social aspects. This suggests that while social media is a factor in students' stress, it's not as pressing as other social challenges they face.

The average weighted mean across all social indicators is 2.84, which falls within the "Agree" range and is described as a "Moderate Level" of stress. This average indicates that overall, the students surveyed experience a moderate level of stress due to social factors. These findings could be significant for institutions in understanding the social dynamics of their student population and could inform initiatives to promote a more supportive and less stressful social environment (Elmer et al., 2020).

Table 9. Summary of Stress Level among Students of Magsaysay

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Verbal Interpretation
Academic	2.96	Agree	Moderate Level
Financial	3.01	Agree	Moderate Level
Social	2.84	Agree	Moderate Level
Average Weighted Mean	2.94	Agree	Moderate Level

Table 9 summarizes the stress levels among students of Magsaysay across three different categories: Academic, Financial, and Social. Each category has a weighted mean that indicates the level of stress experienced by students, along with a verbal description and interpretation.

For the Academic indicators, the weighted mean is 2.96, which the students have agreed upon, translating to a moderate level of stress. This suggests that academic-related stressors, such as coursework and exam preparation, are significant but not overwhelming for most students.

Financial stressors have a slightly higher weighted mean of 3.01, also with an agreement of moderate stress. This indicates that financial issues, possibly including managing daily expenses and concerns about student loans, weigh somewhat more heavily on the students than academic stressors.

Social indicators have the lowest weighted mean of 2.84, which still falls within the 'Agree' range for a moderate level of stress. This reflects the social pressures students face, such as maintaining relationships and balancing social life with academic responsibilities, though these are slightly less pressing than academic and financial concerns.

The overall average weighted mean across all indicators is 2.94, which aligns with the 'Agree' verbal description and signifies a moderate level of stress. This average suggests that while students are experiencing stress in all surveyed areas, the intensity is considered moderate. This could imply that the students, on average, are facing stressors that are manageable to some extent. However, the fact that the stress is moderate across all areas also indicates that there may be no specific area where students are completely relieved from stress, potentially leading to a cumulative effect that could have significant implications for student well-being and support services. Educational institutions could use this information to develop targeted strategies to help reduce stress levels in each of the specific areas (Karyotaki et al., 2020).

Table 10. Extent of the Coping Strategies among students of Magsaysay College in terms of Time Management Skills

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Verbal Interpretation
1. I regularly use tools like calendars or apps to keep track of important deadlines and appointments.	3.04	Often	Moderate Extent
2. I prioritize tasks based on urgency and importance to ensure I meet my academic obligations.	3.17	Often	Moderate Extent
3. I break down large projects into smaller, manageable tasks to avoid last-minute stress.	3.03	Often	Moderate Extent

4. I actively seek ways to improve my concentration and reduce distractions when studying.	3.14	Often	Moderate Extent
5. I give myself regular short breaks to avoid burnout during long study periods.	3.16	Often	Moderate Extent
6. I review my time management strategies periodically to make necessary adjustments.	3.01	Often	Moderate Extent
7. I delegate non-essential tasks and responsibilities when my academic workload becomes too heavy.	2.91	Often	Moderate Extent
8. I maintain a balance between my academic duties and leisure time to ensure personal well-being.	3.05	Often	Moderate Extent
9. I regularly use tools like calendars or apps to keep track of important deadlines and appointments.	3.01	Often	Moderate Extent
10. I prioritize tasks based on urgency and importance to ensure I meet my academic obligations.	3.08	Often	Moderate Extent
Average Weighted Mean	3.06	Often	Moderate Extent

Table 10 reflects the extent of coping strategies among students of Magsaysay College regarding their time management skills, with each indicator scored by a weighted mean and given a verbal description and interpretation.

The highest weighted mean is for indicator 2: "I prioritize tasks based on urgency and importance to ensure I meet my academic obligations," with a score of 3.17, described as "Often" and interpreted as a "Moderate Extent." This suggests that students are generally proactive in organizing their tasks, which is a key component of effective time management.

The lowest weighted mean is found in indicator 7: "I delegate non-essential tasks and responsibilities when my academic workload becomes too heavy," with a score of 2.91, which still falls under "Often" and is interpreted as a "Moderate Extent." This implies that delegation is a strategy used by students, but perhaps less frequently or effectively than other time management practices.

Overall, the average weighted mean is 3.06, indicating that on average, the students often engage in time management behaviors to a moderate extent. The consistent "Often" description across all indicators points to a regular application of these strategies among the student body. However, the designation of "Moderate Extent" for all suggests that while these strategies are used, there may still be room for further development and refinement. This information could guide the college in providing additional time management training and resources to help students enhance their coping mechanisms (Hsu, J. L., & Goldsmith, G. R. (2021).

Table 11. Extent of the Coping Strategies among students of Magsaysay College in terms of Support System Utilization

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Verbal Interpretation
1. I reach out to friends or family to talk about my academic stress when I need support.	2.84	Often	Moderate Extent

2. I make use of counseling services provided by my institution to help manage stress.	2.43	Sometimes	Less Extent
3. I actively participate in study groups to enhance my learning and reduce academic pressure.	2.77	Often	Moderate Extent
4. I seek feedback and guidance from my instructors to better handle my coursework.	2.75	Often	Moderate Extent
5. I utilize financial aid resources, such as scholarships and grants, to alleviate financial stress.	2.67	Often	Moderate Extent
6. I engage in peer mentorship programs to strengthen my academic and social support network.	2.67	Often	Moderate Extent
7. I attend workshops or seminars on stress management offered by my school.	2.95	Often	Moderate Extent
8. I ask for assistance from academic advisors to plan my course load and manage my schedule.	2.63	Often	Moderate Extent
9. I take part in extracurricular activities to build a supportive community within my college.	2.74	Often	Moderate Extent
10. I explore community resources, such as online forums or local organizations, for additional support.	2.63	Often	Moderate Extent
Average Weighted Mean	2.71	Often	Moderate Extent

Table 11 showcases the extent of coping strategies utilized by Magsaysay College students, focusing on their support system. The table includes a range of indicators, each with a corresponding weighted mean that signifies how frequently students engage in each activity and a verbal description and interpretation of their extent.

The indicator with the highest weighted mean is number 7: "I attend workshops or seminars on stress management offered by my school," with a score of 2.95. This is categorized as "Often" and interpreted as a "Moderate Extent," indicating that attending such workshops or seminars is a common and moderately effective coping strategy among students.

The indicator with the lowest weighted mean is number 2: "I make use of counseling services provided by my institution to help manage stress," with a score of 2.43. This falls under the "Sometimes" category and is interpreted as a "Less Extent," suggesting that while some students do utilize counseling services, it is not as frequent or considered as effective as other support systems.

The overall average weighted mean is 2.71, which falls into the "Often" verbal description and "Moderate Extent" interpretation. This average points to a general trend among students to regularly make use of their support systems to cope with stress to a moderate degree. The consistency in the "Often" category across most indicators implies that while the support systems are utilized to some extent, there may be opportunities to increase their usage and effectiveness. These insights could be helpful for the college to identify which support systems are underused and could be improved or promoted more actively to enhance student well-being (Bladek, 2021).

Table 12. Extent of the Coping Strategies among students of Magsaysay College in terms of Adaptive and Maladapted Coping

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Verbal Interpretation
1. I approach challenging situations with problem-solving strategies to find practical solutions.	2.98	Often	Moderate Extent
2. I maintain a positive attitude and view stressful situations as opportunities for growth.	3.06	Often	Moderate Extent
3. When stressed, I engage in physical activity or exercise to help manage my feelings.	2.90	Often	Moderate Extent
4. I practice relaxation techniques such as deep breathing or meditation to cope with anxiety.	2.97	Often	Moderate Extent
5. I ensure I get enough sleep and maintain a healthy diet to support my overall well-being.	2.91	Often	Moderate Extent
6. I avoid using alcohol or drugs as a way to cope with my academic stress.	3.14	Often	Moderate Extent
7. I seek social support and talk about my problems with trusted individuals.	2.92	Often	Moderate Extent
8. I refrain from procrastinating and tackle my tasks promptly to avoid additional stress.	2.86	Often	Moderate Extent
9. I recognize when I am overwhelmed and take steps to reduce my workload when necessary.	2.96	Often	Moderate Extent
10. I avoid dwelling on past mistakes and instead focus on what I can do better moving forward.	3.00	Often	Moderate Extent
Average Weighted Mean	2.97	Often	Moderate Extent

Table 12 evaluates the coping strategies of students at Magsaysay College in terms of adaptive and maladaptive behaviors, providing a weighted mean for each strategy along with a verbal description and interpretation of their frequency and effectiveness.

The indicator with the highest weighted mean is number 6, "I avoid using alcohol or drugs as a way to cope with my academic stress," with a score of 3.14. This is described as "Often" and interpreted as a "Moderate Extent," indicating that students frequently employ the healthy coping mechanism of avoiding substance use to deal with stress.

Conversely, the lowest weighted mean is for indicator 8, "I refrain from procrastinating and tackle my tasks promptly to avoid additional stress," with a score of 2.86. While still falling within the "Often" category and considered a "Moderate Extent," it suggests that students might occasionally struggle with procrastination, which could be an area for improvement in their coping strategies.

Overall, the average weighted mean for all indicators is 2.97, which also indicates an "Often" usage of coping strategies to a "Moderate Extent." This overall score reflects a general tendency among the students to engage regularly in adaptive coping behaviors. The consistent use of these strategies suggests that while there's a moderate level of implementation, there may still be room for further development and support from the

college to enhance students' coping skills. These findings could help inform the college's support services to bolster areas where students may be facing challenges, like procrastination, and reinforce positive behaviors such as avoiding substance use (Li, K., Wang, H., Siu, O. L., & Yu, H., 2024).

Table 13. Extent of the Coping Strategies among students of Magsaysay College in terms of Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Verbal Interpretation
1. I practice mindfulness exercises regularly to stay focused and reduce stress.	3.00	Often	Moderate Extent
2. I use deep breathing techniques to calm myself when I feel overwhelmed.	3.11	Often	Moderate Extent
3. I allocate time for relaxation activities like reading or listening to music to unwind.	3.12	Often	Moderate Extent
4. I engage in yoga or meditation to help manage my stress levels.	2.53	Often	Moderate Extent
5. I take mindful walks to clear my mind and relieve tension.	2.92	Often	Moderate Extent
6. I ensure to have quiet time each day for reflection and self-care.	2.96	Often	Moderate Extent
7. I use guided imagery or visualization techniques to relax before stressful events.	2.85	Often	Moderate Extent
8. I participate in progressive muscle relaxation exercises to release physical stress.	2.75	Often	Moderate Extent
9. I maintain a gratitude journal to focus on positive aspects of my life.	2.90	Often	Moderate Extent
10. I attend mindfulness or stress reduction workshops to learn new coping strategies.	2.82	Often	Moderate Extent
Average Weighted Mean	2.89	Often	Moderate Extent

Table 13 displays the extent to which students at Magsaysay College utilize mindfulness and relaxation techniques as coping strategies, detailing the frequency and extent to which these strategies are employed, as indicated by the weighted means.

The highest weighted mean is tied between indicators 2 and 3, both scoring 3.12: "I use deep breathing techniques to calm myself when I feel overwhelmed," and "I allocate time for relaxation activities like reading or listening to music to unwind." Both these strategies are used "Often" and to a "Moderate Extent," signifying that students regularly engage in these activities to manage stress, recognizing their importance in maintaining mental health.

The indicator with the lowest weighted mean is number 4: "I engage in yoga or meditation to help manage my stress levels," with a score of 2.53. Although still categorized as "Often" and a "Moderate Extent," it implies that while students are aware of and do engage in yoga or meditation, it might not be as prevalent or as consistently practiced as other relaxation techniques.

With an average weighted mean of 2.89, the overall utilization of mindfulness and relaxation techniques is considered to occur "Often" and to a "Moderate Extent." This

average suggests that while the student body actively employs a variety of mindfulness strategies, there is potential to increase both the frequency and the range of techniques used. The consistent "Often" rating across the board indicates a good foundation but also highlights the opportunity for the college to promote and provide further support in this area, such as offering more workshops or resources dedicated to mindfulness and relaxation techniques.

Table 14. Summary of the Extent of the Coping Strategies among Students of Magsaysay College

Indicators	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description	Verbal Interpretation
Time Management Skills	3.06	Often	Moderate Extent
Support System Utilization	2.71	Often	Moderate Extent
Adaptive and Maladapted Coping	2.97	Often	Moderate Extent
Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques	2.89	Often	Moderate Extent
Average Weighted Mean	2.91	Often	Moderate Extent

Table 14 compiles a summary of the coping strategies used by students at Magsaysay College, covering various aspects of coping mechanisms. Each category has a weighted mean, a verbal description indicating the frequency of use, and a verbal interpretation of the extent to which these strategies are applied.

Time Management Skills have the highest weighted mean at 3.06, described as "Often" used and to a "Moderate Extent." This suggests that students frequently employ time management strategies as a part of their coping repertoire, understanding its importance in managing academic stress.

Support System Utilization has the lowest weighted mean of 2.71, but still falls under the "Often" category and is considered to be of "Moderate Extent." Although it is the lowest, it indicates that students regularly reach out to their social support networks, albeit to a slightly lesser degree than other strategies.

Adaptive and Maladapted Coping strategies are used with a weighted mean of 2.97, implying that students are generally employing healthy coping mechanisms often and to a moderate degree. This points towards a proactive approach in managing stress through adaptive behaviors.

Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques have a weighted mean of 2.89, which indicates these strategies are also used "Often" and to a "Moderate Extent," suggesting students are turning to mindfulness and relaxation to cope with stress.

The overall Average Weighted Mean across all indicators is 2.91, categorized as "Often" and a "Moderate Extent." This indicates that, on average, students regularly utilize a range of coping strategies with a moderate level of application. This consistent use of different coping strategies underscores the importance of these skills in students' lives as they navigate the stressors associated with college life. It also highlights potential areas where the college might enhance support and training for students, particularly in the area of Support System Utilization, which has the lowest average but is still used frequently (Levin et al., 2018).

Table 15. Test on a Significant Impact on the Demographic Profile and the Stress Level among Magsaysay Students

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlation Coefficient	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Age	Stress Level among Magsaysay College Students	-.067	.294	Accept H_o	There is no significant impact on the demographic profile of the respondents and the stress level among Magsaysay College Students.
Gender		.124	.050	Accept H_o	
Marital Status		.019	.762	Accept H_o	
Year Level		-.051	.421	Accept H_o	
Family Income		-.120	.059	Accept H_o	

Table 15 shows the correlation between demographic profile of the respondents and the stress level among Magsaysay College students. The correlation between age and stress level among Magsaysay College students has a correlational coefficient of $-.067$ (moderate negative correlation) with a significance of $.294$ ($p\text{-value} > 0.05$), whereas gender and the stress level among Magsaysay College students has a correlational coefficient of $.124$ (negligible correlation) with a significance of $.050$ ($p\text{-value} \geq 0.05$), the marital status and the stress level among Magsaysay College students has a correlational coefficient of $.019$ (negligible correlation) with a significance of $.762$ ($p\text{-value} > 0.05$), the year level and the stress level among Magsaysay College students has a correlational coefficient of $-.051$ (moderate negative correlation) with a significance of $.421$ ($p\text{-value} > 0.05$), and the family income and the stress level among Magsaysay College students has a correlational coefficient of $-.120$ (negligible correlation) with a significance of $.059$ ($p\text{-value} > 0.05$).

Since all of the correlations between the demographic profile of the respondents and the stress level among Magsaysay College students have a p-value greater than the significance of proportional to equals 0.05 , which accepts the null hypothesis, there is no significant impact on the demographic profile of the respondents and the stress level among Magsaysay College Students.

It is interesting to note that there is a slight negative correlation between family income and stress levels among Magsaysay College students, this relationship is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). This suggests that students show resilience and do not let the challenges of lower family income escalate their stress levels appreciably. It indicates that other factors may be at play in determining stress levels or that students may possess or have developed coping mechanisms that mitigate potential stress related to financial constraints."

Table 16. Test on a Significant Relationship between the Stress Level and Coping Strategies among students of Magsaysay College

Variable 1	Variable 2	Correlation Coefficient	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Stress Level among Magsaysay College Students	Coping Strategies among students of Magsaysay College	.197	.002	Accept H_o	There is a significant relationship between the stress level and coping strategies among students of Magsaysay College.

Table 16 shows the correlation of the stress level and coping strategies among students of Magsaysay College. The correlation of stress level and coping strategies among students of Magsaysay College students has a correlational coefficient of .197 (negligible correlation) with a significance of .002 (p-value < 0.05).

Since all of the correlations between stress level and coping strategies among Magsaysay College students have a p-value lesser than the significance of proportional to equals 0.05, which rejects the null hypothesis, there is a significant relationship between stress level and coping strategies among Magsaysay College students.

Intervention Program: Addressing Stress and Coping in the New Normal

Title: "Resilience in Academia: Evaluating Stress and Coping Mechanisms Among Students at Magsaysay College in the New Era of Education"

Rationale: The 'new normal' in education has introduced unique stressors for students. Providing supportive measures and resources to manage stress and develop effective coping strategies is essential for student well-being and academic success.

Introduction: Adjusting to the new normal in education can be challenging for students. This intervention aims to understand and mitigate the stress experienced by students through accessible counseling services and coping strategy development.

Objective: To assess students' stress levels and enhance their coping mechanisms through a blended approach of face-to-face and online counseling services.

Table 17. Matrix of Intervention Plan

Area to Address	Intervention Objectives	Core Components	Intervention Intensity & Length	In-Charge	Fund Resources	Outcomes
Stress Assessment	Evaluate the current stress levels of students	Surveys and questionnaires via Google Forms	Start of the academic year	Guidance office Research office	College wellness program budget	Improved well-being, tailored coping strategies
Face-to-Face Counseling	Provide personalized counseling support	Scheduled in-person sessions	As needed, throughout the school year	Guidance Counselor Guidance in-charge	Student services funds	Improved well-being, tailored coping strategies
Online Counseling Registration	Facilitate easy access to counseling services	Google Form registration for counseling slots	Ongoing, as requested by students	IT Department, Guidance Counselor Guidance in-charge	Technology funds Guidance office funds	Efficient scheduling, increased counseling access
Online Counseling Services	Offer flexible counseling support	Real-time online counseling sessions	Weekly available hours, throughout the school year	Guidance Counselor	College wellness program budget	Enhanced accessibility, stress management skills
Coping Strategy Workshops	Educate students on effective coping strategies	Workshops on stress management and coping skills	Bi-weekly workshops, throughout the school year	Peer Counselor Guidance Counselor	Departmental Funds Guidance office funds	Expanded coping toolkit, reduced stress levels

				Guidance in-charge		
Monitoring and Continuous Support	Ongoing evaluation and adjustment of strategies	Regular follow-ups and support group meetings	Monthly meetings, throughout the school year	Guidance Counselor, Peer Support Groups Guidance in-charge College Nurse	Student services funds	Sustained engagement, adaptability to student needs

Professional Development for Counselors:

- Training on remote counseling techniques.
- Workshops on stress management and resilience coaching.

Research Component:

- Pre- and post-intervention surveys to monitor changes in stress levels and coping efficacy.
- Analysis of counseling session outcomes to tailor future interventions.

Evaluation:

- Monthly reviews of counseling service usage and student feedback.
- Comparative analysis of stress levels and coping strategies at the beginning and end of the academic year.

Timeframe:

- Preparatory training and survey distribution at the start of the academic year.
- Implementation of counseling services throughout the academic year with semester evaluations.

Face-to-Face and Online Counseling Implementation:

- Set up a Google Form for students to indicate their preference for counseling mode and available times.
- Train counselors on the hybrid model of counseling to provide consistent support across both platforms.
- Establish a regular schedule for face-to-face counseling while keeping flexible hours for online counseling to cater to different student needs.

This plan ensures a comprehensive approach to student mental health, providing multiple access points for support and encouraging the development of robust coping strategies.

CONCLUSION

The study conducted at Magsaysay College aimed to assess stress levels and coping strategies among its students. It resulted in several noteworthy conclusions. Firstly, the research demonstrated that demographic factors such as age, gender, marital status, year level, and family income have no significant impact on the stress levels of students, indicating that stress is a universal challenge across the student body regardless of these variables. Despite this, there is a significant positive correlation between stress levels and the use of coping strategies, suggesting that students are likely to engage in various coping mechanisms as their stress levels increase.

Time management skills emerged as a frequently used coping method, often employed to a moderate extent. This suggests that students recognize the importance of managing their time effectively to reduce stress. Mindfulness and relaxation techniques are also common among students, pointing to a proactive approach to stress management focusing on mental and emotional well-being.

However, the moderate extent to which these strategies are used suggests there is room for improvement. The college has the opportunity to enhance its support services by offering more comprehensive resources and programs focused on effective stress management and coping skills education. Workshops, seminars, and counseling services could be strengthened or expanded to give students the tools and knowledge to manage their stress better and maintain their well-being.

The study is supported by Lazarus and Folkman's Transactional Model of Stress and Coping, which demonstrates how stress and coping are intertwined processes that significantly impact students' well-being. The study underscores the importance of perception in the stress experience and highlights the critical role of coping strategies in managing stress, aligning with the model's foundational principles.

Recommendations

In response to the study findings on the stress levels and coping strategies among students at Magsaysay College, it is recommended that the college's guidance center should intensify its efforts in providing resources for stress management and coping strategy enhancement. Educational programs on time management, relaxation techniques, and mindfulness should be expanded, equipping students with the tools to navigate academic pressures effectively. Additionally, the guidance center could benefit from increasing accessibility to individuals to offer online counseling and peer support networks, creating a nurturing environment for students to discuss and manage stress openly.

Local government units (LGUs) have a significant role to play. They can allocate resources to support mental health initiatives at educational institutions and develop community-based programs that extend beyond the campus. This could include funding local centers where students can engage in stress-relief activities and providing grants for mental health research that can shape future educational policies and community support programs.

External stakeholders, such as mental health nonprofits and tech companies, can collaborate with educational institutions to create a multifaceted support system. By introducing innovative tools like stress management apps and fostering partnerships for program development, these stakeholders can aid in creating a robust framework to support students' mental health needs.

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