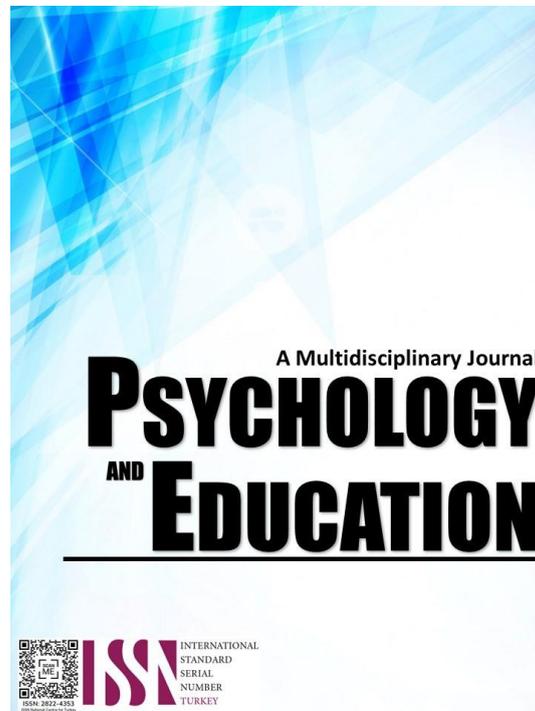


**EXPLORING STRESS AND COPING MECHANISM IN
PHYSICAL EDUCATION: A CASE WEST VISAYAS
STATE UNIVERSITY, ILOILO, PHILIPPINES**



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Exploring Stress and Coping Mechanism in Physical Education: A Case West Visayas State University, Iloilo, Philippines

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Abstract

Physical Education is a subject that helps students to become active and improve their well-being. This study aims to identify the level of stress and coping mechanism of 1st year & 2nd-year students learning Physical Education at West Visayas State University (WVSU), Pototan campus, Iloilo, Philippines, academic year (AY) 2022-2023. This study used a descriptive survey with a research-made questionnaire validated by experts. The respondents are 136 students of WVSU, Pototan Campus, Iloilo, Philippines, academic year (AY) 2022-2023 taking up Bachelor of Science in Information and Communication Technology (BS Info Tech), Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM), and Bachelor of Science in Information Systems (BSIS). The statistical tools were mean, standard deviation, T-test, One-Way Anova, and Pearson r. The results of the study showed the total mean score of the three courses was 1.91 with SD = .27 and described as “Moderate” for all the courses. In terms of the level of coping mechanisms, the total mean for the level of coping mechanisms of 1st-year and 2nd-year students learning PE was 2.67, with SD = .30, and interpreted as “Average Coping.” The inferential results of the study in terms of stress level confirmed an F of 2.71 with Sig. = .07 and interpreted as no significant difference because it’s lower than .05. But in coping level, the F = 3.77, Sig. 0.25 which is higher than .05; thus, the interpretation was there is a level of significant difference. The results showed no relationship between the level of stress and the level of coping mechanisms in studying Physical Education. In line with the results, this study concluded that college students know what is going on in their lives. A crisis like the pandemic could not hinder students’ interest in learning Physical Education. However, the administration should always encourage faculty to make sure learning takes place properly.

Keywords: *stress, coping mechanism, physical education, college students*

Introduction

At the beginning of the 21st century, subjects like Physical Education (PE) also evolved as an integrated curriculum. Experts, practitioners, and academicians gathered to improve the content and significance of PE through health-related fitness and the progress of physical competency. Thus, PE programs focus on health benefits and leisure to prepare oneself for the demand of daily activities (Serrano and De la Cruz, 2022). Students who enjoyed physical activities in PE are those who gained meaningful lessons and resulting in positive attitudes (Cruz et al., 2021). Thus, PE is one of the significant disciplines in the curriculum because it helps the wholeness of students. The current PE curriculum allows students to move at their own pace that fits them individually (Estella, 2020). The current curriculum of PE is a significant part of students’ well-being. It has a positive impact on a healthy lifestyle (Akhter and Ahmed, 2021). As a subject, PE is always crucial because it helps students to remain healthy, discover solidarity, and have fun. Physical education classes act a crucial role in getting active and establishing healthy routines. But during the pandemic, students were disturbed due to the interruption of normal traditional physical

education. During this crisis, PE remains valuable for the physical condition and safety of students (The Hunt Institute, 2021). However, teachers have difficulty assessing students’ performance. Face-to-face is prohibited since the start of the pandemic in 2019. Thus, schools worldwide have created tools on how to evaluate students’ learning in PE during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teachers’ ratings were based on the design composed of the usability, accessibility, equitability, and formal assessment capabilities of an online physical education tool (D’Agostino et al., 2021). It’s always highlighted that health is important during the pandemic.

But in 2022, the Philippine national government urges the education sector to implement the new educational policy, part of that is the full face-to-face implementation. Blended learning is also adopted to redesign the PE curriculum in post-pandemic (Blain et al., 2022). At West Visayas State University (WVSU), Pototan Campus, Iloilo, Philippines, the back-to-normal concept was adopted. Hence, this study was formulated to determine the experiences directed at the level of stress and coping mechanisms of college students during the new normal. Students were feeling excited to experience normal schooling. Therefore, the

concept of the study is to know the level of stress and coping mechanisms of students enrolled in Physical Education at WVSU. The concept is about events dubbed negatively can be stressful. Thus, conflict with classmates and peers may affect self-esteem. In this theory, an individual's cognitions is a crucial role in the growth and repair of behavioral responses to life events (Scaufeli, 2015). Emotions, reflections, actions, and body sensations are linked with what people think and feel but can be changeable but cannot be manipulated (Parvez, 2021). In addition, CBT helps eradicate negative behaviors that cause stress. Stress means any changes that result in physical, emotional, and psychological tension that requires immediate action. Stress is normal but your responses make a big difference to total well-being. The best way to respond to stress is to change the current situation (Scott, 2022). Being positive is the best strategy. Simply, social interaction has been cut down due to the pandemic (Usher et al., 2020). People's relationships and interactions with others are always important as a member of society.

During a pandemic, according to the study of Lakhan et al., (2020), out of 113, 285 respondents from China, Spain, Italy, and Iran, 53% experienced stress. Also, one study revealed that stress level was associated with gender and family loss. University life's social, academic, and physical were affected due to the crisis (Durbas et al., 2022). But one study expressed a low level of stress experienced by teachers in Physical Education (Pagulong et al., 2022). But in 2019 stress was higher compared to 2022 according to the results conducted at German University (Votmer et al., 2021). Most students experienced low stress worldwide during the pandemic. But the application of social distancing in the public also adds to making the community safer during the crisis (Levkovich and Shinan-Altman, 2021). No studies conducted related to the level of stress during post-pandemic in PE. Therefore, the research was motivated to engage in the concepts. In addition, a coping mechanism is also utilized in this research. This is to determine the coping mechanisms of students toward stress they experience during the post-pandemic. Coping is about how the management of individuals toward internal and external stress. There are four coping categories; these are problem-focused, emotion-focused, meaning-focused, and social coping. Many studies showed that coping mechanisms are useful in certain situations (Algorani and Gupta, 2022). As a result, physically, mentally, and emotionally people were disturbed by the pandemic, it is essential to enhance coping mechanisms to be able to survive the challenging time and live normally. Instructors in PE revealed that

active participation in different activities and recreations reduces stress (Gunlao, 2022). A study about stress and coping mechanisms discovered a significant relationship in learning the Physical Education curriculum (Pagulong et al., 2022). Further,

PE students have different strategies to cope with negative situations. They are equipped with the necessary approaches to be able to survive adverse situations (Sjåstad Åsebø and Løvoll, 2021). "There is no significant relationship between the stress management and coping mechanism and teaching efficacy of Physical Education in Online Teaching" (Gunlao, 2022).

Research Objective:

This study aims to identify the level of stress and coping mechanism of 1st year and 2nd -year students learning Physical Education at West Visayas State University, Pototan Campus, Iloilo, Philippines, academic year (AY) 2022-2023.

Methodology

This study utilized a descriptive correlational survey. A research-made survey questionnaire was used as an instrument to measure the level of stress and coping mechanisms of 1st -year students taking up Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM), and 2nd-year students taking up Bachelor of Science in Information System (BSIS), and Bachelor of Science in Information and Communication Technology (BS Info Tech). The survey questionnaire is composed of three parts; Part 1 is about the course, Part 2 is about the level of stress, and Part 3 is related to the level of coping mechanism. The researcher purposively selected 136 students as respondents to this study. This method was employed because during the first meeting of the researcher a total of 25, 53, 58, BSIS, BSHM, and BS Info Tech), respectively were present. This self-funded study was formulated due to the interest of the faculty to engage in research. During the first meeting, the researcher explains to the student- respondents her plan and they agreed to participate in the study. For statistical analysis, mean, standard deviation, t-test, One-way ANOVA, and Pearson's r were utilized.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 represents the stress level of 1st year and 2nd-year students in their subject Physical Education (PE) of WVSU – Pototan Campus, Iloilo, Philippines.



Table 1. The stress level of 2nd-year students of WVSU-Pototan Campus, Iloilo, Philippines in learning PE

Category	n	Mean	SD	Description
<i>Course</i>				
BSICT	53	1.86	.24	Moderate
BSHM	58	1.97	.27	Moderate
BSIS	25	1.90	.30	Moderate
Total	136	1.91	.27	Moderate

The results of the study showed BSICT has a mean score of 1.86 and SD = .24 and is interpreted as “Moderate.” For the BSHM, the mean score was 1.96 with SD = .27 and described as “Moderate.” And the BSIS, 1.90 was the mean score, SD = .30, and labeled as “Moderate.”

The total mean score of the three courses was 1.91 with SD = .27 and described as “Moderate.” This showed that despite the current events and workloads, they enable them to perform better in school. According to Beeson (2022), moderate levels of stress improved working memory. Furthermore, above-moderate levels of stress cause toxicity in humans.

Filipino students generally have pleasant experiences and feelings toward PE and perceive the subject as valuable. This difference in results may be attributed to the characteristics of the students who likely experienced and enjoyed better PE class and thereby reported higher positive attitudes in all dimensions of PE yielding a higher overall evaluation compared to our findings. (Cruz et al., 2021). Frequent physical activity has been reported to reduce stress. In addition, youth who engaged in sports and other quality experiences are mentally prepared (O’connor, 2021).

The findings signify that college students are already mentally prepared for any crisis or pandemic. Many studies proved that physical activity is a stress reduction tool. Physical education played as a stress mitigation tool. Also, Physical education also acted as social bonding among classmates and peers (Barney et al., 2017).

Table 2. The level of coping mechanism of 2nd-year students in learning physical education.

Table 2. Level of coping mechanisms of 2nd-year Students in Learning PE

Category	N	Mean	SD	Description
<i>Major</i>				
BSICT	53	2.58	.28	Average Coping
BSHM	58	2.73	.30	Average Coping
BSIS	25	2.73	.35	Average Coping
Total	136	2.67	.30	Average Coping

In terms of the level of coping mechanisms, BSICT has a mean score of 2.58 with SD = .28 and is described as “Average Coping.” The BSHM has a mean score of 2.73, SD = .30, and is interpreted as “Average Coping.” And for the BSIS, 2.73 was the mean score, SD = .35, and described as “Average Coping.”

Generally, the total mean for the level of coping mechanisms of 1st Year and 2nd-year students learning PE was 2.67, with SD = .30, and interpreted as “Average Coping.” Mental health in universities is a great issue during the pandemic (Freire et al., 2020).

Physical education students showed coping strategies like self-self-control, effective time management, and the goal to achieve physically active habits. Thus, the results of the study recommend how to uplift healthy lifestyles among students (Mabini et al., 2021).

Table 3 shows the significant difference between stress level and coping level of 2nd-year students learning PE.

Table 3. The significant difference between stress level and coping level of 2nd year in learning PE.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Stress Level	Between Groups	.38	2	.19	2.71	.07
	With groups	9.25	133	.07		
	Total	9.63	135			
Cope Level	Between Groups	.74	2	.37	3.77	0.26
	With groups	13.13	133	.10		
	Total	13.13	135			

The inferential results of the study in terms of stress level confirmed an F of 2.71 with Sig. = .07 and interpreted as no significant difference because it’s lower than .05. But in coping level, the F = 3.77, Sig. 0.25 which is higher than .05; thus, the interpretation was there is a level of significant difference.

Table 4. *The relationship between the level of stress and the level of coping mechanism among 1st & 2nd-year students in learning PE.*

		<i>Level of Stress</i>	<i>Level of Coping Mechanisms</i>
<i>Stress Level</i>	Pearson (Correlation)	1.000	.117
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.174
	N	136	136
<i>Cope Level</i>	Pearson (Correlation)	.117	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.174	
	N	136	136

The results showed no relationship between the level of stress and the level of coping mechanisms in studying Physical Education. The findings indicate that the level of stress among college students in PE is acceptable but if specific negative events occurred coping mechanisms are manageable.

Thus, cognitive-behavioral theory-based training can help college students conquer their level of anxiety. Everyone has cognition whether positive or negative. Positive thinking always has optimistic results. But those who think negatively have a low level of coping strategies (kaya and Avci, 2016).

Conclusion

In line with the results, this study concluded that college students know what is going on in their lives. They are aware of the current situation. Despite the negative events, they were able to survive. A crisis like the pandemic could not hinder students' interest in learning Physical Education. They believe that activities in PE are helpful to make them stress-free from the current situation, and they can perform a given task better. Furthermore, proper training among PE instructions on how to implement physical activities to help mental health and well-being is recommended. Instructors should not only be focused on teaching content but also mental and physical benefits of learning PE.

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