



BURDEN AND DISTRESS OF COLLEGIATE STUDENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CRISIS LOCKDOWN

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Article history:	Abstract:
<p>Received: 20th June 2021 Accepted: 6th July 2021 Published: 3rd August 2021</p>	<p>This paper looked upon the 277 collegiate students burden and distress in Zambales, Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown through the COVID-19 Pandemic Mental Health Questionnaire (CoPaQ). The respondent's reported distress during lockdown resulted to avoidance of the external reminders on the experiences of the covid-19 pandemic (e.g. People, places, conversations, objects, activities, or situations) (WM=2.73; SD= .821) and sleep problems (WM=2.71; SD=1.020). Added to this, the majority strongly agreed that they were burdened and had fears of what the future will bring, or that they won't be able to cope with everything (WM=3.19; SD= .863) and also had burdens regarding their concerns for the integrity of family members or friends (WM=3.18; SD=.814). Ultimately, the result expresses that the COVID-19 pandemic crisis lockdown caused burden and distress among the collegiate student of Zambales, Philippines. The distress was identified as external reminders on the experiences of the covid-19 pandemic (e.g. People, places, conversations, objects, activities, or situations), sleep and rest; whereas the identified burdens were fears about the future and integrity for family members or friends. This study recommends that results be made aware to all collegiate student so as to let them know the types of distress and burdens that were commonly reported during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. Educational institutions may implement programs that promotes calmness and activities for managing anxiety and fear among collegiate students. The study recommends also for further studies since this maybe an eye-opener to implement specific counselling services and programs that are tailor-fitted to the needs of collegiate students within the Philippines. It may further assess the impact of the pandemic crisis lockdown to the mental health of students by using the identified types of distress and burdens as the impact constructs.</p>

Keywords: Collegiate, COVID-19, Mental Health, Pandemic..

1. INTRODUCTION

(The COVID-19 pandemic introduced many new sources of stress, and all of these stressful normative transitions are referred to as COVID-19-related stressors: concerns about one's own and loved ones' health risks, abnormally reduced social contacts with others, separation from friends and family, loss of freedom, university closures, online education, and so on. They appear to be linked to feelings of frustration and insecurity, as well as having a detrimental effect on mental health and well-being [1].

Even if everyone in the house is healthy, the pandemic is a major stressor. The forced isolation of quarantine, as well as the forced proximity of family members with tenuous relationships, can add to the stress. Furthermore, preliminary COVID-19 research suggests that pandemic stressors may undermine traditional protective factors [2].

Numerous nations have employed a variety of measures aimed at disease prevention, including severe social segregation and obligatory order of lockdown or stay-at-home, in an attempt to limit coronavirus transmission [3].

The government of the Philippines enacted a national compulsory lockdown, sometimes known as a "community quarantine," on March of 2020, ordering residents to remain at home and prohibiting all bodily and social activity outside the house, with the exception of frontline and critical employees [4].

Additionally, schools were physically closed in mid-March 2020 and have remained closed as of this writing, with online teaching and learning environments being used in lieu of traditional classroom instruction serving as a temporary alternative. These approaches, when combined with other disease prevention efforts, which were discovered to significantly reduce the amount of people of confirmed cases and fatalities linked with COVID-19 both in the nation and in other countries [5].

College students are particularly sensitive to the negative mental and psychological health consequences of stay-at-home orders or lockdown tactics, because they may jeopardize their physical, mental, and emotional health, as well as their academic and developmental progress, as a result of these orders or lockdown tactics.[6].

However, due to the rarity of worldwide pandemics, there is a knowledge vacuum on the forms of anxiety and pressures faced by college students, particularly in the Philippines. Previous study on the consequences of natural disasters and other crises was done largely in Western nations and other areas of Southeast Asia (for example, China), and it indicated additional potential COVID-19 implications [7]. Hence, there is a wide gap and lack of analysis on the burdens and distress of collegiate students in Zambales, Philippines during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis lockdown. This is the gap that the study has addressed.

The outcome of this study can be used for further studies since this maybe an eye-opener to implement specific counselling services and programs that are tailor-fitted to the needs of collegiate students within the Philippines. It may further assess the impact of the pandemic crisis lockdown to the mental health of students by using the identified types of distress and burdens as the impact constructs.

This paper sought to look upon the collegiate student's burdens and distress as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic quarantine in Zambales, Philippines. It specifically aimed to determine and describe the type of distress and burden as reported by the students through an adapted survey "The COVID-19 Pandemic Mental Health Questionnaire (CoPaQ)" [7] that were administered online via google forms.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used quantitative descriptive approach to inquiry. The researcher used this method as it is the most appropriate method in addressing the needs of the studies.

Purposive sampling was utilized and the surveyed respondents were 277 in total. These were the enrolled collegiate students of the President Ramon Magsaysay State University Castillejos Campus for the SY 2020-2021.

To identify the burden and distress of the college students while the COVID-19 pandemic catastrophe is in full swing, the COVID-19 Pandemic Mental Health Questionnaire (CoPaQ) was used in an online survey structured via Google Forms and administered from October 4-6, 2020. An entirely new and a very detailed and thorough self-report assessment of the personal and societal repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic, with a worldwide application scope, has been developed and is now available for use. Several other well-validated measures are used in combination with the CoPaQ questionnaire to assess the following domains: depressive symptoms; anxiety; stress; paranoia; quality of life; rumination; loneliness; the size of one's social network; childhood trauma; and resilience., among other things. The questionnaire covers a broad range of topics that are relevant to those who are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. A combined effort between the Ludwig Maximilian University Munich (GER) and the University of Oxford (UK) resulted in the development of the CoPaQ [8].

The research study observed the protection of the rights of subjects. Informed consent was the primary mechanism for safeguarding study subjects' rights. The informed consent was written and given to the respondents before the main online survey. If any concerns about the subject's confidentiality were raised, the researcher assured and reiterated that everything stated in the informed consent was strictly followed, including the purpose of the research; data collection activities and devices; anonymity by not associating any subject with the data they provide; and that participation is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time.

SPSS was used to analyze the data, and descriptive statistics such as the weighted mean and standard deviation were utilized to process it..

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During collegiate years, students experience first-time incidence, including finding new friends, roommates, and exposure to new culture and experiences. Students experience struggle in managing these firsts, and if not prepared to cope up with new situations, these can make students susceptible to anxiety and depressive disorders. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought the mental health of various vulnerable groups to the forefront. It is generally recognized that epidemics intensify or create new stressors, such as dread and worry for oneself or loved ones, physical and social limits due to quarantine, and rapid and extreme lifestyle changes.

In line with the current study, the collegiate individual's reported type of burden and distress during the Covid-19 pandemic crisis lockdown were explored. The data are presented in the next sections of this paper.

Table 1. Reported Distress of Collegiate Students during the Covid-19 Pandemic Crisis Lockdown

Reported Distress	Mean	Std. Deviation
Have had upsetting dreams that replay part of the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic or are clearly related to it.	2.54	0.814
Have had powerful images or memories that sometimes come into my mind in which I feel the experience of the COVID-19 pandemic is happening again in the here and now.	2.6	0.831
Have avoided internal reminders of the experience of the covid-19 pandemic (e.g. Thoughts, feeling, or physical sensations).	2.63	0.8
Have avoided external reminders of the experience of the covid-19 pandemic (e.g. People, places, conversations, objects, activities, or situations).	2.73	0.821
Have been feeling jumpy or easily startled	2.43	0.872
Have suffered from unforeseeable severe anxiety attacks(panic) with physical symptoms (e.g. Palpitations, chest pain, dizziness)	2.38	0.972
Have suffered from sleep problems	2.71	1.02
Felt or behaved in a more irritable, rageful, Angry	2.38	0.907
Have consumed substantially more alcohol than usual	1.68	0.978
Have smoked considerably more cigarettes than usual.	1.4	0.826

Have consumed considerably more drugs (e.g. Tranquilizers. sleeping pills or stimulants) than usual.	1.4	0.827
Have felt a strong desire to consume addictive substances (alcohol. cigarettes. drugs).	1.5	1.072
Have not been able to control my use of addictive substances (alcohol. cigarettes. drugs).	1.38	0.828

Adolescents are a vulnerable population going through a challenging transition period [9]. The COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown may have a number of negative consequences for adolescents' lives, including chronic and acute stress, worry about their families, unexpected bereavements, abrupt school breaks and home confinement in a number of countries, increased time spent on the internet and social media, and concern about their family's and country's economic future. Stressors such as infection worries, dissatisfaction, boredom, insufficient resources, insufficient information, financial loss, and stigma were identified in a recent assessment of virus outbreaks and pandemics [10].

Table 1 shows the identified distress as reported by the collegiate students during the pandemic crisis lockdown. The item with the highest weighted means reveal that majority agreed to have distress over external reminders of the experience of the covid-19 pandemic (e.g. People, places, conversations, objects, activities, or situations) (WM=2.73; SD= .821). Hence, it was avoided. They also identified sleep as a type of distress (WM=2.71; SD=1.020). Hence, they had issues and suffered from sleep problems. Whereas, the items with the lowest weighted means reveal that majority strongly disagree to identify vice as a type of distress. Thus, they have reported that they did not smoke considerably more cigarettes than usual (WM=1.40; SD=.826), and also strong disagree that they have not been able to control my use of addictive substances (alcohol, cigarettes, drugs) (WM=1.38; SD=.828).

Table 2. Reported Burden of Collegiate Students during the Covid-19 Pandemic Crisis Lockdown

Reported Burden	Mean	Std. Deviation
A) the current pandemic	2.92	0.856
B) living in a small accommodation.	2.44	0.869
C) being in quarantine.	2.85	0.899
D) childcare.	2.33	0.891
E) taking over school lessons.	2.97	0.805
F) the curfew	2.55	0.983
G) worries about my health	3.16	0.902
H) worries of not being able to get medical care	2.82	0.952

I) worries about being sick with COVID-19 when I noticed first signs of symptoms such as fever. dry cough. breathing problems. sore throat. loss of smell/taste. headache or diarrhea.	2.82	0.974
J) increased conflicts with people close to me.	2.48	0.883
K) financial worries.	3.09	0.934
L) uncertainties regarding my studies or school.	3.14	0.736
M) concerns for my own personal safety.	3.15	0.823
N) concerns for the integrity of family members or friends.	3.18	0.814
O) fears of what the future will bring. or that I won't be able to cope with everything.	3.19	0.863
P) thoughts that it would be better to be dead.	1.94	1.051

The National Center for Mental Health released a report in August 2020 a substantial spike when it comes to suicide calls to their hotline, From January to March 2020, there were an average of 33 calls each month, rising to 66, 80, 112, and 115 calls per month in April, May, June, and July of that year. Due to an upsurge in suicide-related calls as a result of the Covid-19 epidemic, legislators are demanding a P1 billion increase in funding for the National Mental Health Program [11].

Table 2 shows the identified burden as reported by the collegiate students during the pandemic crisis lockdown. The item with the highest weighted means reveal that majority strongly agreed to have burden over fears of what the future will bring, or that they won't be able to cope with everything (WM=3.19; SD= .863) and also strongly agreed to have burden which concerns the integrity of family members or friends (WM=3.18; SD=.814). Whereas, the items with the lowest weighted means reveal that majority agree to be burdened about the stress and childcare (WM=2.33; SD=.891), and also agree that they were burdened to have thoughts that it would be better to be dead (WM=1.94; SD=1.051).

Generally, in terms of distress, the results indicate that majority agreed to have distress over external reminders of the experience of the covid-19 pandemic (e.g. People, places, conversations, objects, activities, or situations) (WM=2.73; SD= .821). Hence, it was avoided. They also identified sleep as a type of distress (WM=2.71; SD=1.020). Hence, they had issues and suffered from sleep problems. In terms of the identified burdens, majority strongly agreed to have burden over fears of what the future will bring, or that they won't be able to cope with everything (WM=3.19; SD= .863) and also strongly agreed to have burden which concerns the integrity of family members or friends (WM=3.18; SD=.814).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Through the CoPaQ, this paper looked upon the 277 collegiate students burden and distress in Zambales, Philippines during the epidemic of COVID-19 lockdown. Based on the result of the study it mainly and reported the burden and distress of the respondents.

The respondent’s reported distress during lockdown resulted to avoidance of the external reminders on the experiences of the covid-19 pandemic (WM=2.73; SD= .821) and sleep problems (WM=2.71; SD=1.020). Added to this, the majority strongly agreed that they were burdened and had fears of what the future will bring, or that they won't be able to cope with everything (WM=3.19; SD= .863) and also had burdens regarding their concerns for the integrity of family members or friends (WM=3.18; SD=.814). Generally, the result expresses that the COVID-19

pandemic crisis lockdown caused burden and distress among the collegiate student of Zambales, Philippines. The distress was identified as external reminders on the experiences of the covid-19 pandemic (e.g. People, places, conversations, objects, activities, or situations), sleep and rest; whereas the identified burdens were fears about the future and integrity for family members or friends.

Ultimately, the result expresses that the COVID-19 pandemic crisis lockdown caused burden and distress among the collegiate student of Zambales, Philippines. The distress was identified as external reminders on the experiences of the covid-19 pandemic (e.g. People, places, conversations, objects, activities, or situations), sleep and rest; whereas the identified burdens were fears about the future and integrity for family members or friends.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Furthermore, this study recommends that results be made aware to all collegiate student so as to let them know the types of distress and burdens that were commonly reported during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. Educational institutions may implement programs that promotes calmness and activities for managing anxiety and fear among collegiate students.
2. The study recommends also for further studies since this maybe an eye-opener to implement specific counselling services and programs that are tailor-fitted to the needs of collegiate students within the Philippines.
3. It may further assess the impact of the pandemic crisis lockdown to the mental health of students by using the identified types of distress and burdens as the impact constructs.

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