



Social support and stress management of selected teacher education students: basis for guidance and counselling intervention program

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Article Info

ISSN (online): 2582-7138

Volume: 04

Issue: 04

July-August 2023

Received: 15-06-2023

Accepted: 03-07-2023

Page No: 650-656

Abstract

Social support helps students to handle stress effectively. This paper determines the relationship between the profile, the level of social support and the stress management of the respondents. The descriptive – correlational method was used in this study. Three hundred ninety-two respondents answered the test questionnaire. The respondents were the randomly selected fourth year teacher education students in Mindoro State University. Result showed that the average age of the respondents were 22 years old, the majority of them were female and belonged to a poor family. Result also showed that the level of social support of the respondents were on a high level across indicators: Family Support; Peer/Friend Support; and Teacher Support. Moreover, the extent of the stress management of the respondents were on a high extent across indicators: Active Coping; Planning; Suppression of Competing Activities; Restraint; Use of Instrumental Social Support; Use of Emotional Social Support; Positive Reinterpretation; Acceptance; and Displacement. Meanwhile, the extent of stress management in terms of Religious Coping was on a very high extent. Furthermore, the result connoted that the age as well as the socioeconomic of the respondents had no direct correlation to all indicators of the extent of stress management. It was also revealed that the sex of the respondents had no significant causation across indicators of the extent of stress management except in terms of planning and restraint. Lastly, a significant association was found in all indicators of the level of social support and the extent of stress management of the respondents.

Keywords: profile, social support, stress management of the respondents, selected teacher education students and intervention program

Introduction

The Philippine government has given its best to address mental health issues through awareness. The government should now provide appropriate funds for organizations that have been involved in the formulation, development and execution of mental health policies and legislation for the Filipino citizens.

The World Health Organization clearly defines mental health as a state of well-being wherein the individual knows their capabilities and uses them effectively and productively for their respective communities. This definition emphasizes that mental health is not simply the absence of a mental disorder or illness, but a positive state of well-being. Having a good mental health helps a person associate with others, make healthy decisions, and particularly handle stress.

Scott (2020) ^[20] explicitly defines stress as any type of physical, emotional, or psychological change (stressors) which strain person's ability to cope effectively. It is the negative feelings and beliefs that arise when people are unable to cope with demands from their environment. There are numerous factors in life that can cause stress. Work, finances, relationships, parenting, and day-to-day inconveniences are some of the main sources of stress. Beyond unreasonable doubt, everyone experiences stress. The way a person responds to stress, however, differs individually.

Stress has become part of students' daily life. Consequently, students who suffer from stress reduce their quality of life such as academic achievement, physical and psychological health, and satisfaction with the college experiences. These issues can have long - term effects to them, affecting their study, future employment, and overall health and well - being. Also, the researcher himself experiences stress in his life. Being a teacher is loaded with clerical demands such as passing the modules, preparation of exams, computation of grades, etc. before their deadlines.

Stress management is the student's ability to deal with struggles and crisis situations in different ways. One of the best ways to handle stress is to have social support. Strong social support aids someone in times of stress and tough times. It reduces physical, psychological, academic and social distress and promotes adjustments that counteract high stress events. It provides the comfort of knowing and feeling that someone is there to support. According to Cherry the benefits of social support include the following: healthy choices and behaviors, ability to cope with stress, and improvement of motivation. Therefore, supportive people around them most especially family, peers/friends and teachers play an important part of everyone's life particularly students' life.

Given these realities, the efforts of the government to give mental health awareness, the stressful situations of teacher education students, the experiences of teachers and the researcher himself, and few studies about social support as determinants for stress management, the researcher is motivated to conduct this study to give importance of social support. An image of a smiling students does not correspond to a happy person because stressed students know also how to smile.

This study sought to determine the following: the profile of the respondents; the level of social support of the respondents; the extent of stress management of the respondents; the significant relationship between the profile and the extent of the stress management of the respondents; the significant relationship between the level of social support and the extent of the stress management of the respondents and guidance and counselling intervention program that may be proposed.

Lastly, the study was anchored on the following theories: philosophy on human nature by Aristotle; psychosocial development by Erik Erickson; Deontological Ethics by Immanuel Kant; General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) by Hans Selye; Stoic Philosophy by Zeno of Citium; Motivational Theory by David Clarence McClelland; the Buffering Hypothesis and the Direct-effects Hypothesis.

Methodology

The descriptive-correlational method of research was employed in this study. The respondents of the study were the randomly selected 392 fourth year teacher education students from MinSU Bongabong Campus, MinSU City Campus, and MinSU Main Campus during the second semester of the academic year 2021 - 2022. The sample size was computed using the G-Power Statistical Package considering the effect size of 0.25, alpha error probability of 0.05 and statistical power of 0.85.

The study utilized a test questionnaire via Google form as the main data gathering instrument. It was composed of three (3) parts. The first part focused on the profile of students in terms of age, sex and socioeconomic status. The second part

concentrated with the level of social support which included family, peer/friend, and teacher support while the third part dealt with the extent of stress management in terms problem - focused coping and emotion - focused coping. The questionnaire was validated through careful analysis of each item by the expertise of the RGC's, Rpm, and LPT. Upon validation, the reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha from the responses of the 10 non-respondents from fourth year BEED students. The result of the reliability of the instrument were all reliable.

In data gathering, approval from the university president of Mindoro State University was sought through a letter. Upon approval, coordination with the subject teachers as well the coordinators of the class was made. Data on the level of social support and extent of stress management of the students were measured using a four-point scale with its numerical scale, statistical limits and verbal description: 3.50 – 4.00: very high; 2.50 – 3.49: high; 1.50 – 2.49: low; 1.00-1.49: very low level. The statistical tools used were Descriptive Statistics: Mean and Rank; Inferential Statistics: Pearson's r and coefficient of determination.

Results and Discussion

The Profile of the Respondents in terms of Age

The finding showed that the mean age of the respondents was 22 years old. This is because in the Philippine education, Kindergarten education is offered to all five (5) - year old Filipino children to sufficiently prepare them for Grade One. This implies that the typical age of the regular fourth year college students will fall under the age of 21 - 22 years old.

The Profile of the Respondents in terms of Sex

One hundred twenty or 31 percent of the respondents were male while female were 272 or 69 percent. This pointed out that the respondents were dominated by female. This means that the education course was chosen more by female students than by male students. This is because respondents are aspiring to become teachers someday. As female teachers, they have a high emotional quotient and are naturally empathetic. They are undoubtedly suited to grasp a child's capacity for rapid learning because they are endowed with these traits. On the other hand, male teachers are equally kind-hearted and affectionate.

The Profile of the Respondents in terms of Socioeconomic Status

The average monthly family income of the respondents was P13708.16. This manifested that the average respondents' monthly family income belonged to the bracket of low-income but not poor. The reason that the majority of the respondents' family belonged to this bracket is because Mindoro State University offers college courses with free tuition. Thus, family who have only enough salary for basic needs tend to enroll their child in this university. Instead of enrolling their child in private colleges, enrolling their children in MinSU will definitely save them enough money for their necessity at home.

The Level of Social Support of the respondents in terms of Family Support

Looking at the overall mean 3.39, the result shows that the respondents have high level of family support. This means that the family is an important part of the respondent's life. There is a healthy relationship between the respondents and

their family. Their family provides them with emotional, tangible, informational support and companionship. This support will aid them as they navigate the stressful stages of students' life.

This can be correlated to what Field (2022) ^[5] stated that the higher social functioning later in life is a direct result of developing strong relationships and feeling taken care of by the support of the family. When the students have strong attachments with their family, it is easier for them to maintain positive relationships as they develop and move through life.

The Level of Social Support of the respondents in terms of Peer/Friend Support

With an overall mean 3.45 described as high level, this implies that peers

/friends are essential part of respondents' life. Students typically spend more time with their peers and friends than they do with their family. Peers and friends provide emotional, tangible, informational support and companionship. Social support from peers and friends will help them cope with stressful events throughout their life as students.

According to Lam (2019) ^[8], psychologists have discovered that people tend to form strong and stable interpersonal relationships with others. The need to belong is an innate psychological process that plays a central role in human motivation.

The Level of Social Support of the respondents in terms of Teacher Support

Looking at the overall mean 3.36, the finding of this study further illustrates the key role of teachers and the emotional, tangible, informational support and companionship they provide to students. Improving student-teacher relationships has important, positive, and long-term implications for students' academic and social development especially in dealing with stress.

This supports Lam (2019) ^[8] who stated that teacher support has been encouraged by researchers as it is known to improve student educational outcomes.

The Extent of Stress Management of the Respondents in terms of Active Coping

Looking at the overall mean 3.31, the result shows that the respondents react directly to control their stress through appropriately behavior and accepts the responsibility of resolving the situation using available internal resources.

The result shows that when the respondents experience stressful events in their life, they exerted effort to solve the problem. This means that solving problems means making choices. Effective problem-solving skills lead to happier, more confident, and more independent individuals. When they solve problems alone or in groups, they become resilient. This supports Holahan, Ragan and Moos (2017) ^[7]. According to them, people who rely on active coping strategies such as problem-solving and information seeking tend to adapt better to the stressors of life.

The Extent of Stress Management of the Respondents in terms of Planning

Looking at the overall mean 3.32, the result shows that the respondents decide in details how to get through their problems before they actually solve it.

The result reveals that when the respondents experience stressful events in their life, they think first the best solution

to solve the problem. This is because planning helps them to clearly define their goals. It makes them decide explicitly and specifically what they need to do to. This helps them make sure they all understand their goals and what they need to do to solve their problems. This supports Norman and Conner (2017) ^[13] who both agreed that a coping plan refers to making a concrete plan to overcome possible obstacles that may prevent an individual from fulfilling his or her intentions.

The Extent of Stress Management of the Respondents in terms of Suppression of Competing Activities

Looking at the overall mean, 3.07, the result shows that the respondents put aside other activities unrelated to the current problem to better focus to the problem and solve it.

The result shows that when the respondents experience stressful events in their life, they prioritize to solve the urgent and bigger problems. This is because multitasking slows them down. On the other hand, the single task is more likely to put them in a deep focus. Thus, solving their problem in an effective way. It supports Nortje (2022) ^[14] who stated that suppression is the conscious effort to avoid certain thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, or not be aware of them. By removing thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and memories from consciousness, a person is protected from emotional and psychological distress.

The Extent of Stress Management of the Respondents in terms of Restraint

Looking at the overall mean 3.16, the result shows that the respondents restrain from making action to solve problems quickly in order to prevent harmful or undesirable consequences.

The result reveals that when the respondents experience stressful events in their life, they wait for the right moment to act to solve the problems. This is because timing is an important aspect of stress management to avoid unwanted consequences. Good timing can help them in all areas of their life, whether at school or at home, and allows them to solve their problems effectively. This affirms the findings of Corbina, Farmer and Hoekesma (2012) ^[2] which states that restraint moderated the effects of stress.

The Extent of Stress Management of the Respondents in terms of Use of Instrumental Social Support

Looking at the overall mean, 3.09, the result shows that the respondents seek help and assistance in a tangible way from others who had similar experience with them to better solve their problem.

The result shows that when the respondents experience stressful events in their life, they solve the problem by seeking advice from persons who experienced the same. This is because instrumental social support creates a sense of belonging and reduces isolation. Helping others is said to be one of the best ways to create, maintain and strengthen their social connections particularly in handling their stress. It backs up Morin (2021) ^[12] who suggests to ask a friend or an expert for help to eliminate the cause of stress.

The Extent of Stress Management of the Respondents in terms of Use of Emotional Social Support

Looking at the overall mean 2.96, the result shows that the respondents receive care and compassion from the person they trust. Thus, it helps them to cope with their negative

emotions and experiences and that they are not alone. The result reveals that when the respondents experience stressful events in their life, they express their problem on someone they trust and get empathy from them. This is because emotional support is an important protective factor in coping with life's difficulties. Having a strong social network of family, friends and teachers improves their ability to cope with life's stressors on their own. The finding affirms the findings of Mai *et al.* (2021) ^[9] which reveals that students with high levels of emotional support from family and friends can have greater chances of establishing positive strategies to cope with difficulties.

The Extent of Stress Management of the Respondents in terms of Positive Reinterpretation and Growth

Looking at the overall mean 3.46, the result shows that the respondents have the ability to reassess the stressful situation for a positive perspective. They find something good in their painful experiences. In this way, the meaning of the event is redefined so that they can feel positive emotions and happiness.

The result shows that when the respondents experience stressful events in their life, they take the opportunity to learn from their experience and they do not overthink their problems. This is because Filipinos are known for their ability to overcome difficulties and find something to laugh at even in difficult times. They have the ability to remain cheerful and upbeat no matter the circumstances are. The finding verifies the claim of Milanlioglu *et al.* (2014) ^[11] that positive reinterpretation and growth is the process of selecting positive emotions from stimuli in the environment, applying them to perceptions and beliefs, and creating perspectives that transform them into new or better realities.

The Extent of Stress Management of the Respondents in terms of Acceptance

Looking at the overall mean, 3.44, the result shows that the respondents positively embrace their experience, particularly painful ones. They recognize the idea that problems come in people's lives and no one can evade it.

The result displays that when the respondents experience stressful events in their life, they are aware that it is part of their life and they will encounter it sooner or later. This demonstrates a fatalistic mindset of the respondents. This is because Filipinos typically accept their own and other

people's fates. This does not imply that they are apathetic, either. Instead, they work hard and frequently go above and beyond to support themselves and their families. It corroborates the statements of Ollvo (2015) ^[15] that acceptance helps reduce stress because it helps a person manages his/her emotions. The real source of stress in life is not what he/she thinks causes stress, but the emotions it evokes in them.

The Extent of Stress Management of the Respondents in terms of Religious Coping

Looking at the overall mean, 3.66, the result shows that the respondents understand and deal the negative life events with the help of their religion and God.

The result shows that when the respondents experience stressful events in their life, they trust in God that He will help them on their problems. This is because it is typical for Filipinos, particularly those who are devoted to their religion, to give their concerns and problems to a higher power, most often God. This favors the statement of Park and Slattery (2013) ^[16] that religion is also a spring of social support, good state of mind and health.

The Extent of Stress Management of the Respondents in terms of Displacement

Looking at the overall mean, 3.07, the result shows that the respondents positively redirect their stress by doing the things they enjoy without harming others. This is because when displacement is used by the respondents negatively, it can lead to harmful consequences such as redirecting negative emotions to other things or people. Thus, instead of solving the main problem, it increases the level of stress of the respondents when they handle it.

The result reveals that when the respondents experience stressful events in their life, they redirect their stress by doing something they love and letting it out through writing, etc. This is because according to Rilveria (2018) ^[18], Filipino cope up with highly stressful situations by using cognitive reappraisal, problem-solving, religiosity, tolerance, social support, emotional release, over-activity, and particularly relaxation or recreation. The finding is in contrast with Cherry (2022) ^[1] who claims that relying too much on this as a way to deal with negative feelings can be wasteful and even destructive, especially if a person vents his/her frustrations on helpless people.

Table 1: Correlational Analysis between the Profile and the Extent of Stress Management of the Respondents

Extent of Stress Management																				
Profile of the Students	Problem-Focused Coping								Emotion-Focused Coping											
	Active Coping		Planning		Suppression of Competing Activities		Restraint		Use of Instrumental Social Support		Use of Emotional Social Support		Positive Reinterpretation and Growth		Acceptance		Religious Coping		Displacement	
	r-value	r ²	r-value	r ²	r-value	r ²	r-value	r ²	r-value	r ²	r-value	r ²	r-value	r ²	r-value	r ²	r-value	r ²	r-value	r ²
Age	-0.0362	0.0013	-0.0364	0.0013	-0.0368	0.0014	-0.0104	0.0001	0.0686	0.0047	-0.0432	0.0019	-0.0356	0.0013	-0.0610	0.0037	-0.0464	0.0021	-0.0882	0.0078
Sex	0.0812	0.0070	0.1191*	0.0142	0.0828	0.0069	0.1097*	0.0120	0.0820	0.0067	0.0873	0.0076	0.0213	0.0005	-0.0304	0.0009	-0.0208	0.0004	0.0412	0.0017
Socioeconomic Status	0.0136	0.0002	0.0823	0.0068	0.0550	0.0030	0.0109	0.0001	0.0833	0.0069	0.0990	0.0098	0.0059	0.00003	0.0120	0.0001	0.0374	0.0014	0.0883	0.0078

Level of Significance: 0.05

Degrees of Freedom: 390 Critical Value: 0.0991

*Significant

As shown in the table, age of the respondents has no correlation to all indicators of stress management. This means that the respondents within the range of 21 - 37 years old can handle stress effectively. This is because majority of the respondents are 22 years old and considered young adult, thus they are physically and mentally strong. Moreover, they are fourth year students and have already experience on how to handle their stress effectively on their lower years as students. This supports Ricciotti & Hur (2018) ^[17]. According to them, stress is easier to manage when the person is younger. The physical body are able to handles stress productively. Furthermore, dealing with stress mentally, a good night's sleep can help reduce stress. As young persons, they are more able to have a good sleep than the older ones. Furthermore, correlational analysis showed that sex does not relate significantly to all indicators of stress management except in terms of planning and restraint. This implies that either male or female respondents can better manage stress in all indicators of stress management except in terms of planning and restraint. This means that male/female

respondents can handle stress better than female/male in terms of planning and restraint. This is because both women and men face problems in life. They may have same stress, but they handle it differently. This finding enforces the result of the study of Graves *et al.* They found out that women reported higher stress levels than men. Gender differences are evident in both aspects of coping and the individual coping strategies used.

Lastly, correlational analysis shows that the socioeconomic status of the respondents does not relate significantly to all indicators of stress management. This implies that whatever socioeconomic status of the respondents they belong, they can handle stress effectively. This is because everyone has problems in life. This finding is in contrast with the finding of Diehl (2014) ^[4] which suggests that people in low-income households often experience high levels of stress on a daily basis. In addition, according to Scott (2020) ^[20], people who are in lower socioeconomic levels experience higher levels of stress and have more stress-related health problems than those who are in higher socioeconomic levels.

Table 2: Correlational analysis between the level of social support and the extent of stress management of the respondents

Level of Social Support	Extent of Stress Management																			
	Problem-Focused Coping										Emotion-Focused Coping									
	Active Coping		Planning		Suppression of Competing Activities		Restraint		Use of Instrumental Social Support		Use of Emotional Social Support		Positive Reinforcement and Growth		Acceptance		Religious Coping		Displacement	
	r-value	r ²	r-value	r ²	r-value	r ²	r-value	r ²	r-value	r ²	r-value	r ²	r-value	r ²	r-value	r ²	r-value	r ²	r-value	r ²
Family Support	0.4302*	0.1851	0.3410*	0.1163	0.3028*	0.0917	0.2444*	0.0597	0.3285*	0.1079	0.2716*	0.0738	0.2415*	0.0583	0.1485*	0.0220	0.3199*	0.1023	0.2247*	0.0505
Peer Support	0.3731*	0.1392	0.3684*	0.1357	0.3799*	0.1443	0.3028*	0.0917	0.4630*	0.2143	0.4593*	0.2110	0.3344*	0.1118	0.3348*	0.1121	0.3557*	0.1265	0.3352*	0.1124
Teacher Support	0.4167*	0.1736	0.4028*	0.1622	0.3400*	0.1156	0.3463*	0.1199	0.4296*	0.1846	0.3610*	0.1303	0.4054*	0.1643	0.3626*	0.1315	0.2948*	0.0869	0.3380*	0.1142

Level of Significance: 0.05 Degrees of Freedom: 390 Critical Value: 0.0991

*Significant

Examining the table, it can be deduced that family support is related to all indicators of stress management. This result simply means that family support is one of the most and basic factors to help the member of the family especially students to handle stressful events of their life. This is because Filipinos are renowned for having solid and intimate ties to their families. They hold their family in the highest regard and prioritize them above all else. They put in a full day's work and take all possible step to support and feed their family. This finding is in consonance with the study conducted by Manalo (2015) ^[10]. Her research showed that social support especially family support helped students protect themselves against depression. On the other hand, this means that poor social support is associated with depression and loneliness. Thus, students with high level of social support can handle stress.

When it comes to peer/friend support, the correlational analysis found that it is also related to all the indicators of stress management. This means that peer/friend support offers tangible, emotional, informational aid and companionship that the students need to stay the course of life in times of difficulty. This is because friendship is a type of interaction that occurs in every human community since it is a part of the social character that God provided them with. Other study had also shown a link between social support and

many different aspects of well-being of the students. A survey of 380 students from nine junior high schools in Calapan found that strong social and emotional peer support motivated students to complete tasks (Delos Reyes, 2015) ^[3]. This indicates that social connections help keep students motivated as they try to reach their goals.

Furthermore, teacher support has bearing when paired with all indicators of stress management. The result indicates that teachers help students manage their stress. This is because teachers are responsible for shaping students' future, making them a better human being, in addition to guiding them in academics and extracurricular activities. A teacher instills knowledge, good values, tradition, modern-day challenges, and ways to overcome them in his/her students. The result supports the findings of Wright and Wachs (2022) ^[21]. According to them, with high social support from the teachers to the students, social support buffered against the negative outcomes associated with self-isolation during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, it is concluded that the average age of the fourth year teacher education student-respondents of Mindoro State University Main, Bongabong and City Campus was 22 years old. Majority of them were

female. They belonged to the family who had average monthly income of 13708.16 pesos and were considered low-income but not poor.

Majority of the respondents had high level of social support in terms of family, peer/friend and teacher support as evidenced by the result of the overall mean in all its indicators. On the other hand, majority of the respondents had a high extent of stress management in terms active coping, planning, suppression of competing activities, restraint, use of instrumental social support, use of emotional social support, positive reinterpretation and growth, acceptance and displacement with the exception of religious coping with very high extent description.

Furthermore, the profile of the respondents in terms of age and socioeconomic is not significantly related to the extent of stress management across its indicators. Meanwhile, the profile of the respondents in terms of sex is not also related to all indicators of stress management except in terms of planning and restraint.

Lastly, the level of social support of the fourth year teacher education students in terms of family, peer/friend and teacher support is significantly related to the extent of stress management in terms of active coping, planning, suppression of competing activities, restraint, use of instrumental social support, use of emotional social support, positive reinterpretation and growth, acceptance, religious coping and displacement.

Acknowledgement

I would like to praise and give thanks to God for blessing me with knowledge, perseverance, strength and patience. To God be the highest glory!

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