



The Lived Experience of Irregular Students with High Levels of Existential Anxiety and Self-Efficacy

Aijim L Balolong ^{1*}, Darylle A Apaya ², Aaron James S Casabella ³, Renz Mark A Tibar ⁴, Analou C Vecina ⁵, Araceli B Paster ⁶

¹ CHMT, CHRA, College of Arts and Sciences City of Cabuyao, Laguna, Philippines

^{2, 4, 5} CHRA College of Arts and Sciences City of Cabuyao, Laguna, Philippines

³ College of Arts and Sciences City of Cabuyao, Laguna, Philippines

⁶ Ph.D., College of Arts and Sciences City of Cabuyao, Laguna, Philippines

* Corresponding Author: Aijim L Balolong

Article Info

ISSN (online): 2582-7138

Volume: 06

Issue: 03

March-April 2025

Received: 05-04-2025

Accepted: 06-05-2025

Page No: 1416-1422

Abstract

This study examines the relationship between existential anxiety and self-efficacy among college students, focusing on their emotional well-being and resilience. Using a phenomenological approach, in-depth interviews and thematic analysis revealed key coping strategies, including mindfulness, physical activities, and social support. Based on these insights, a psychoeducational intervention was developed to enhance self-regulation and equip students with strategies to manage existential concerns. The findings contribute to understanding student well-being and inform mental health interventions.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.54660/IJMRGE.2025.6.3.1416-1422>

Keywords: Existential Anxiety, Self- Efficacy, Coping Strategies, College Students, Emotional Resilience, Phenomenological Approach, Psychoeducational Interventions

Introduction

Throughout life, individuals grapple with profound questions about existence, purpose, and meaning. When they fail to find definitive answers, these uncertainties can lead to existential anxiety—intense fear and dread concerning life, death, and the universe. This anxiety often fosters feelings of isolation and meaninglessness, particularly among college students who face major life transitions, academic pressures, and career uncertainties. As they navigate these challenges, their self-efficacy—the belief in their ability to succeed in specific tasks—becomes a crucial factor in managing stress and maintaining well-being. Self-efficacy influences how individuals approach difficulties, persist in achieving goals, and regulate emotional responses to adversity.

This study explores the intricate relationship between existential anxiety and self-efficacy among college students, investigating how these psychological constructs interact and shape their experiences. By understanding these dynamics, this research aims to highlight universal existential concerns, provide insights into student vulnerabilities, and promote strategies to enhance resilience. Addressing these issues can contribute to more effective interventions, helping students cope with uncertainty and maintain their overall well-being during critical developmental periods.

Methodology

A. Research Design

The study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to investigate the potential association between existential anxiety and self-efficacy among irregular college students at the University of Cabuyao. This method provided an in-depth understanding of the students' lived experiences, allowing researchers to derive meaningful insights from students' complex and personal experiences about these concepts in their daily lives.

B. Research Locale

The study was conducted at the University of Cabuyao, Laguna, focusing on irregular college students, where some may experience existential anxiety during this critical stage of their lives and may experience overwhelming personal decisions. The locale is chosen because it is where the researchers intended to provide psychoeducational intervention for the students.

C. Population and Sampling

The study utilized purposive sampling techniques to intentionally select a subset of participants from the population, focusing on college students at the University of Cabuyao (Pamantasan ng Cabuyao) who met the specific criteria for the study.

Table 1: Cabuyao (Pamantasan ng Cabuyao) who met the specific criteria for the study

Inclusion	Exclusion
Must be studying at the University of Cabuyao (Pamantasan ng Cabuyao) in any program	Students who are not studying at University of Cabuyao (Pamantasan ng Cabuyao)
Must be 1 st year to 4 th year	Students who do not have failed remarks on any courses.
Must have incurred failed remarks on any of their courses	Participants who will score low in Existential Anxiety and score low in Self-Efficacy.
Participants who will score high in Existential Anxiety and score high in Self-Efficacy.	Participants who will score low in Existential Anxiety and score high in Self-Efficacy.
	Participants who will score high in Existential Anxiety and score low in Self-Efficacy.

D. Research Participants

This study focuses on college students from University of Cabuyao who have previously failed a course. The researchers aim to examine existential anxiety among these students as they face major academic and career-related decisions. The pressure to choose a clear future direction and the fear of making incorrect choices can lead to feelings of uncertainty and doubt.

E. Research Instrumentation

The researchers used the Existential Anxiety Questionnaire (EAQ) and the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) as screening tools to select the desired sample participants. Following the screening, a self-made questionnaire will be utilized for conducting in-depth interviews.

F. Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers used Existential Anxiety Questionnaire (EAQ) and the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) as a screening tool to identify students with high existential anxiety and low self-efficacy for qualitative interviews. Semi-structured interviews examining the relationship between existential anxiety and self-efficacy. To guarantee privacy, pseudonyms and symbols replaced names, and all data was kept confidential and securely disposed of after the study.

G. Ethical Consideration

The researchers used an informed consent form (ICF) to ensure the participants' permission, ensure voluntary participation, and examine the purpose of the study. Personal information remained confidential in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Researchers explained data retention and disposal procedures, provided support, and tackled potential risks, and ensured that a psychologist was

available for immediate intervention if necessary.

3. Results and Discussion

Table 2: Annotated Exemplars on the Students' Experiences on Existential Anxiety and Self-Efficacy.

PARTICIPANTS	RESPONSES	RESEARCHER OBSERVATION
Participant 2	Ah, para sa akin kasi, <i>first time</i> kong na-encounter yung existential nung high school. Nung time na yun kasi, puro drama yung nangyayari. So, siguro, nakaka-apecto siya kapag may pinagdadaan yung tao ng mabigat.	The participant's answer indicates that existential anxiety always arises when they face major challenges, such as bullying and family conflicts, that often result in questioning themselves and their purpose.
Participant 3	Nagiging reason kasi yung financial struggles ko. Namin, ng family. Tapos naisip ko yun. Tapos parang nangyayari is kakaworry ko or kaka over-analyze ko. Parang naisip ko yun. Anong nangyayari sa future ko? Ayan.	Regarding the participant's response it shows worries and overthinking, these are triggered by past experiences, especially financial problems. These problems become their major source of worry and overthinking, that leads to existential anxiety, with the fear of uncertainty that something might happen.

The participants highlight the impact of existential anxiety on their daily lives and their coping strategies. Participant 1 experiences existential anxiety in their third year, leading to burnout. Participant 2 attributes their anxiety to past bullying and family issues, emphasizing its long-lasting effects on mental well-being. Participant 3 struggles with worry and overthinking, often triggered by financial problems. Similarly, Participant 4 fears the future, with quiet moments causing emotional breakdowns, and being an irregular student intensifies their anxiety. Lastly, Participant 5 copes by isolating themselves to gain mental clarity.

Table 3: Annotated Exemplars on the Students' Experience on Morality

PARTICIPANTS	RESPONSES	RESEARCHER'S OBSERVATION
Participant 2	"Ang naisip ko lang kapag... Anong...ano, dun ko sya palaging...masyadong naisip, 'pag masaya na... kasi mamaya paano pagkatapos ng masaya mo, bigla ka na lang malungkot ta's dun papasok 'yung death. nung may namatay din sa'min. 'Yung pagkamatay ni mama, ayun. Do'n ko lang masyadong... hindi naman ako masyadong takot sa <i>idea ng death</i> . Takot kung paano... nangyari sa'yo 'yung pagkamatay mo."	The participants thinking about death are triggered when they experience happiness, followed by fears of unavoidable sadness and the death of a loved one, which causes them anxiety about the process of dying rather than the concept of death itself.
Participant 4	Nakakaiyak naman 'yan so ano, pag ganyan ah... kasi nag-nag wo-work ako, nag-aaral ako, tapos sa magulang ko syempre nag-aabot ako, kahit-kahit ano na 'yung natitira sakin onti na, tapos nasusumbatan pa ako, parang-parang ayun parang ayaw ko na nakakapagod, nakakapagod sya tapos nakakadrain.	The participant shows feelings of pressure from balancing work, studies, and the expectations of the family, which lead to physical and emotional exhaustion, as well as a sense of being unappreciated and drained.

The participants describe their experiences with existential anxiety, highlighting its triggers and emotional effects. Participant 1 feels anxiety from low exam scores and family problems. Participant 2 fears that happiness will be followed by sadness or death. Participant 3's anxiety increases when reminiscing about past mistakes and feeling overwhelmed in the present. Despite struggles with thoughts of death, they have learned to embrace the present. Participant 4 experiences exhaustion, emotional strain, and burnout from balancing work, studies, and financial obligations. Lastly, Participant 5 struggles with the impact of parental separation, leading to despair and thoughts of self-harm as an escape.

Table 4: Annotated Exemplars on the Influence of Guilt on the Students' Self-perception

PARTICIPANTS	RESPONSES	RESEARCHER'S OBSERVATION
Participant 2	"Ang naisip ko lang kapag... Anong...ano, dun ko sya palaging...masyadong naisip, 'pag masaya na... kasi mamaya paano pagkatapos ng masaya mo, bigla ka na lang malungkot ta's dun papasok 'yung death. nung may namatay din sa'min. 'Yung pagkamatay ni mama, ayun. Do'n ko lang masyadong... hindi naman ako masyadong takot sa <i>idea ng death</i> . Takot kung paano... nangyari sa'yo 'yung pagkamatay mo."	The participants thinking about death are triggered when they experience happiness, followed by fears of unavoidable sadness and the death of a loved one, which causes them anxiety about the process of dying rather than the concept of death itself.
Participant 4	Nakakaiyak naman 'yan so ano, pag ganyan ah... kasi nag-nag wo-work ako, nag-aaral ako, tapos sa magulang ko syempre nag-aabot ako, kahit-kahit ano na 'yung natitira sakin onti na, tapos nasusumbatan pa ako, parang-parang ayun parang ayaw ko na nakakapagod, nakakapagod sya tapos nakakadrain.	The participant shows feelings of pressure from balancing work, studies, and the expectations of the family, which lead to physical and emotional exhaustion, as well as a sense of being unappreciated and drained.

The participants felt guilty specifically in situations where they act against their beliefs, sometimes struggling with

societal standards. However, one stood out—assertive, confident, and unafraid to be themselves despite outside pressure.

Table 5: Annotated Exemplars on the Influence of Guilt on the Students' Self-perception

PARTICIPANTS	RESPONSES	RESEARCHER'S OBSERVATION
Participant 1	Kapag hindi ko nagagawa 'yung tama pakiramdam ko parang uhm parang kinakain ako ng <i>guilt</i> na dapat kaya ko naman 'yun sabihin pero bakit parang iniisip ko na 'huwag nalang makisali or huwag nalang sabihin 'yung tama or 'yung totoo,' parang gano'n.	The participant was not hesitant to answer the question and share their experiences on what is going on in their classroom during examinations.
Participant 5	Ahh, oo nakokonsensya naman ng malala. <i>Especially</i> kapag, may times kasi na alam ko na mali... <i>I mean</i> alam ko na 'yung tama pero gagawin ko pa rin 'yung mali. Parang ayon 'yung pinakamahirap na nagagawa ko. <i>Like</i> , doon ako sobrang nakokonsensya minsan. Kapag may alam- alam ko na 'yung tama tapos gagawin ko pa rin 'yung mali parang ang hirap parang, <i>after</i> mangyari ng ginawa ko parang... sobrang pagsisisi ko lalo kapag sobrang laki ng naging epekto.	The participant shares feelings of intense guilt and regret when choosing to act against their personal belief of what they know is right.

The participants express their challenges of being an irregular student intertwined with a search for meaning, often questioning their circumstances and purpose. As stated, financial stability contributes to their stress, making their journey even more difficult. Regardless of these struggles, they strongly desire to understand their experiences and find direction amidst uncertainty.

Table 6: Annotated Exemplars of Challenges Successfully Overcome by Students

Participants	Responses	Researchers' Observation
Participant 1	"Yung death nung, paukangalax, nung Tatay ko kasi is sudden event siga sa life namin and then akala ko after that, that day bindi na ako makakapag-continue sa kung apong gusto kong gawin pero na-overcome ko naman siga and I'm still here."	The participant exhibited positivity, evident in her tone of voice, despite the struggles she has faced.
Participant 5	"Kasi tapiurea ako sa Organic Chem last year na Second Sem Second Year. 'Kahit tiga lang tatapogapin ko,' tapos pagulati ako nung final grades na bindi lang tesa yung nakuhia ko sa kanya kaya sobrang sagap sa pakirandaro na makita ko yung grades ko, sabi ko 'Okay kaya po paja,' kaya ngayong second segn ng third year. Ha-take ko uili yung biogarak ko like. Kung ano na lang yung ginawa ko nung Biochem, Uulitin ko na lang sa Organic para makapajaa ako."	The participant reflects on their academic struggles, particularly with a challenging course. Despite facing setbacks and low expectations, they were pleasantly surprised by their performance, which boosted their confidence. This experience motivated them to retake the course, applying lessons learned from past difficulties to improve their future performance, demonstrating persistence and growth in overcoming academic challenges.

The participants shared deeply personal struggles, including financial difficulties affecting academics and the emotional toll of losing a loved one. Despite these hardships, they highlighted resilience, emphasizing the importance of moving forward. Others reflected on personal growth, turning challenges into opportunities for self-awareness and achievement.

Table 7: Annotated Exemplars of Impact of Emotional States on Academic Performance.

Participant	Verbatim Responses	Researcher's Observation
Participant 1	"Uhm kappa kasi masvado akong malurokot or distracted biogiako nakakappa-focus sa exams ko, sa lung axoag ginagawa ko sa papassapot. kapap masvado nanano masaya nakakappa-decide ako ng bagay pa biogi ko pa siza nanagawa kapan pa sa normal thinking pa ako."	The participant's response indicates that emotional extremes significantly impact academic decision-making, with sadness hindering focus and excessive happiness leading to impulsivity. This underscores the critical role of emotional regulation in supporting students' cognitive and academic performance.
Participant 4	"Nakakaiyak naman 'yan so ano, pag ganyan ahh.... kasi nag-nag wo-work ako, nag-airai ako, tapos sa magulang ko syempre nag-aabot ako, kahit-kahit ano na 'yung nalitira sa kinabuhay ko, tapos nasusumbatan pa ako, parang-parang ayun parang ayaw ko na nakakapagod, nakakapagod sya tapos nakakadrain."	The participant shows feelings of pressure from balancing work, studies, and family expectations, which lead to physical/emotional exhaustion and a sense of being unappreciated. The response reveals significant caregiver burnout and financial stress impacting academic engagement.

The participants highlighted the strong connection between emotional well-being and academic performance. Many shared that emotions like stress and anxiety affected their focus and consistency, while a positive mindset enhanced motivation and discipline. Some also noted that over time, they developed resilience, allowing them to maintain academic performance despite emotional challenges.

Table 8: Annotated Exemplars on the Influence of Existential Anxiety on the Students' Confidence in Achieving Goals

PARTICIPANTS	RESPONSES	RESEARCHER'S OBSERVATION
Participant 1	"kapag patuloy kang bumabagsak...parang nagkakaroon ka ng doubt sa sarili mo na parang hindi mo naman dapat tinahak 'yung bagay na 'to'"	The participant experiences self-doubt whenever fails in a subject.
Participant 4	"Mahirap s'ya.. sobrang hirap, ah 'di ko na din alam, 'di ko na din sya especially ngayon di ko na alam, di ko alam kung mararating ko yun."	They express a sense of being overwhelmed by the challenges they face and a lack of clarity about whether they will achieve their goals.

The responses from the participants reveal struggles with confidence in achieving their goals. Participant 1 experiences self-doubt, particularly when facing failures, leading them to question whether they made the right choices. On the other

hand, Participant

4 feels overwhelmed by challenges and expresses uncertainty about their ability to succeed. Both participants struggle with confidence, either due to setbacks or a lack of clarity in their journey toward their goals.

Table 9: Annotated Exemplars on the Students' Coping Strategies

PARTICIPANTS	RESPONSES	RESEARCHER'S OBSERVATION
Participant 1	<i>I tend to isolate myself with the way na nag-de-deactivate ako ng accounts, nag-de-delete ng apps, nag-de-delete ng games, and then babalik nalang ako kapag okay na 'yung pakiramdam ko ganoon."</i>	The participant likes to escape whenever faces struggles.
Participant 2	<i>Nagke-create ako, nagdo-drawing ako, kasi ayun alam ko may meaning kasi ako yung nag-create."</i> <i>"Makinig din ng ano...ng music. Helpful siya."</i>	The participant's main coping strategy is to express creativity through drawings and music.

This table presents different coping strategies used by students when facing struggles. Participant 1 copes by isolating themselves, deactivating accounts, deleting apps and games, and returning once they feel better. This suggests a preference for escapism as a coping mechanism. On the other hand, Participant 2 manages stress through creative outlets such as drawing and listening to music, finding meaning in self-expression. Overall, the participants use different approaches—one through withdrawal and the other through creativity—to cope with challenges.

Table 10: Annotated Exemplars on the Impact of Seeking Support

PARTICIPANTS	RESPONSES	RESEARCHER'S OBSERVATION
Participant 3	"Nakakatulong siya since... yung support from my friends and family is nala-lesser yung burden ba and pag-iisip. Nawawala yung negativity then napasok yung positive uhh factors na. For example is yung pag dedecide ba and pag tiwala sa sarili yun mga advice nila. Kaya believe in yourself. Kaya pinakamahalaga kaya tumataak rin talaga sa sarili ko na kung gusto mo yung isang bagay gawin mo. take a risk. Magtiwala ka sa sarili mo."	Reflects the significance of encouragement and affirmations from others in building self-confidence. The participant's reflections reveal how external validation can reinforce internal self-belief.
Participant 4	"Malaking tulong sya kasi ano , nafi-feel ko na kaya ko" "Ahm, yung jowa ko kanina nag-offer sya na bayaran yung tuition ko, kaya ano parang, ah narelief ako, narelief ko na matutuloy ko tong sem"	Highlights how concrete actions, such as financial aid or emotional reassurance, can significantly alleviate the burden of existential anxiety, providing a sense of security and hope.

The participants shared varied experiences with existential anxiety and support systems. Participant 3 highlighted the role of encouragement in building self-belief, while Participant 4 emphasized the relief from tangible support like financial aid. The study connects these insights to theories on existential anxiety, self-efficacy, and social support, showing how emotional connections, religion, and coping strategies help manage distress and foster resilience.

Table 11: Annotated Exemplars on the Activities that bring fulfillment on the Students

PARTICIPANTS	RESPONSES	RESEARCHER'S OBSERVATION
Participant 1	Hmm, uhhh, ahhh kasi para sa'kin kasi wala akong escape bukod sa sports ko. So, nag-engage ako sa mga teammates ko na nakikipaglaro sa kanila ganyan, kapag problemado na or what. Kasi may napapahunayan ako do'n and nakikilala nila ako do'n. Unlike sa ginagawa ko sa acads (academic) parang hindi ko na kasi nakikita 'yung sarili ko kapag wala 'yung sports na 'yun gano'n.	The participant emphasizes a sense of purpose and validation from engaging in physical activities, which contrasts with feelings of isolation and lack of purpose in academic pursuits. The team setting plays a significant role in alleviating feelings of existential anxiety.
Participant 3	"Iine-enjoy ko lang... Enjoy ko yung moment na yun kasi gustong gusto ko yung bagay na yun. For example, talaga is yung badminton pinakamalaking factor talaga yung pagsali ko ng badminton at pag tryout ko noon. Pinaka fulfilling talaga sa sarili ko yon. Yung na-ano ko yung "wall" ba.	The breakthrough in joining badminton signifies the participant's resilience and personal growth. It underscores the therapeutic effect of engaging in enjoyable and non-judgmental social environments in managing existential anxiety.

Participants find fulfillment and cope with existential anxiety through sports, social interactions, and productivity. Existential anxiety, rooted in universal concerns, can cause distress or drive growth (Sherrell, 2022; Binder, 2022) ^[1]. Coping strategies help manage these challenges (Freire *et al.*, 2020) ^[3], while embracing uncertainty fosters self-discovery (Browne & Cropper, 2024) ^[2]. Higher self-efficacy enhances resilience and academic success (Khan, 2023; Chemers *et al.*, 2001) ^[4].

Subthemes

Table 12: External Stressors and Their Impact on Mental Health

SUPERORDINATE THEME	SUBORDINATE THEMES
External Stressors and Their Impact on Mental Health	Impact on daily life and emotional well-being
	Relationship with Family and Social Support

External stressors are factors or events that arise from the environment, social situation, or life circumstances that challenge the mental health well-being of an individual. These stressors can have a major impact on mental health, especially when they are persistent.

Table 13: Psychological and Emotional Struggles Related to Family and Death

SUPERORDINATE THEME	SUBORDINATE THEMES
Psychological and emotional struggles related to family and death	Family conflicts and stress
	Death and Mortality
	Overwhelming emotion and stress

This theme emphasizes the effect of psychological and emotional struggles that are related to family and death on mental health family conflicts, parent separation and the death of loved ones that stimulate grief, fear and existential

anxiety.

Table 14: Superordinate Theme 3. Managing Personal Beliefs and Societal Expectations

SUPERORDINATE THEME	SUBORDINATE THEMES
Managing personal beliefs and societal expectations	Inner conflict and moral dilemma

This theme illustrates the general idea or difficulties. This emphasizes the pressured individuals when they are trying to correlate their personal values, principles, or beliefs with regards to the expectations, norms, or pressures coming from the society in which they reside.

Table 15: Superordinate Theme 4. Overcoming Academic, Personal, and Existential Challenges

SUPERORDINATE THEME	SUBORDINATE THEMES
Overcoming academic, personal, and existential challenges	Academic challenge as an irregular student
	Searching for meaning and purpose in life
	Financial instability

This theme catches the common challenge of facing difficulties in different life domains. This demonstrates the overall experience of handling challenges that may affect an individual's education, personal growth, and sense of purpose.

Table 16: Superordinate Theme 5. Overcoming Personal and Emotional Challenges

SUPERORDINATE THEME	SUBORDINATE THEMES
Overcoming Personal and Emotional Challenges	Coping with Financial Struggles
	Grieving and Accepting the Loss of Loved Ones
	Personal Growth and Overcoming Challenges

This theme highlights the participants' experiences of confronting and overcoming personal and emotional struggles that initially seemed overwhelming. It underscores how these challenges impacted their academic performance and overall well-being.

Table 17: Superordinate Theme 6. Impact of Emotional Well-being on Academic Performance and Adaptation

SUPERORDINATE THEME	SUBORDINATE THEMES
Impact of Emotional Well-being on Academic Performance and Adaptation	Influence on Academic Focus
	Effects on Academic Consistency
	Coping and Growth Through Academic Engagement

This theme encompasses the participants' shared experiences of navigating difficulties rooted in personal and emotional struggles. It captures the various ways emotional states influence academic performance, emphasizing the significant ways in which an individual's emotional condition can affect their ability to perform in academic settings.

Table 18: Navigating Personal and Academic Growth

SUPERORDINATE THEME	SUBORDINATE THEMES
Navigating Personal and Academic Growth	Academic Challenges
	Self-doubt
	Interpersonal Issues and Conflicts
	Delay in doing Tasks due to Emotional Exhaustion

The theme “Navigating Personal and Academic Growth” highlights factors influencing students' self-efficacy, including academic challenges, self-doubt, interpersonal conflicts, and emotional exhaustion. These obstacles shape their personal and academic development, prompting them to adopt coping strategies suited to their needs. Overcoming these challenges fosters resilience, adaptability, and confidence.

Table 19: Pathways to Emotional Regulation and Coping Mechanisms

SUPERORDINATE THEME	SUBORDINATE THEMES
Pathways to Emotional Regulation and Coping Mechanisms	Isolation
	Doing Leisure Activities as a Relaxation
	External Engagement Strategies
	Social Support from Friends, Family and Significant Other

The theme “Pathways to Emotional Regulation and Coping Mechanisms” explores strategies students use to manage emotions, including isolation, leisure activities, external engagement, and social support. These mechanisms help them navigate emotional challenges and maintain well-being.

Table 20: Superordinate Themes 9. Transformative Power of and Dynamic Influence of Support in Navigating Existential Anxiety

SUPERORDINATE THEME	SUBORDINATE THEMES
Transformative Power of and Dynamic Influence of Support in Navigating Existential Anxiety	The Variability of Support and the Influence of Expectations
	Healing Power of Trusted Relationships and Peer Engagement
	Tangible and Unexpected Support as Emotional Relief

This theme explores how support systems, meaningful activities, and intrinsic motivation help individuals transform existential anxiety into growth and resilience. It highlights the balance between external support (e.g., relationships and social groups) and internal factors (e.g., self-efficacy) in managing uncertainty and finding purpose. Engaging in affirming experiences fosters emotional well-being and a sense of accomplishment.

Table 21: Superordinate 10. Overcoming Existential Anxiety through Connection, Empowerment, and Adaptability

SUPERORDINATE THEME	SUBORDINATE THEMES
Overcoming Existential Anxiety Through Connection, Empowerment, and Adaptability	The Role of Physical, Social, and Personal Engagement in Finding Purpose and Healing Through Connection
	The Empowering Effect of Small Actions and Risk-Taking in Restoring Confidence and Overcoming Fear
	Struggles with Unmet Expectations and Role Frustrations

This theme explores how connection, empowerment, and adaptability help individuals overcome existential anxiety. It emphasizes the role of meaningful activities, supportive relationships, and personal effort in fostering resilience. Engaging in social, physical, and personal experiences provides purpose, while small actions and risk-taking restore confidence. However, struggles with unmet expectations and role frustrations highlight the complexities of navigating existential challenges.

KAULAYAW: Peer Companionship and Counseling for Emotional Well-being

The KAULAYAW program is designed to help students cope with existential anxiety by creating a supportive community where they feel understood and less alone. It aims to boost their confidence and skills in handling academic, personal, and social challenges, making them more resilient. The program provides counseling, meaningful connections, and activities that promote emotional well-being. Its main goals include offering a safe space for students to express their feelings, training them in stress management and emotional control, and encouraging peer support through buddy systems and counseling. Additionally, KAULAYAW helps students understand and manage their emotions while promoting overall well-being through recreational and educational activities that strengthen their sense of community and personal growth.

Discussion

The findings of this study reveal the intricate relationship between existential anxiety and self-efficacy among college students, particularly those classified as irregular students. Participants reported heightened anxiety stemming from uncertainties about their academic future, career prospects, and personal purpose. Their experiences highlight how existential concerns manifest through overthinking, self-doubt, and emotional distress. In response, participants employed various coping strategies, including isolation, creative expression, introspection, and social support. These findings align with previous research suggesting that existential anxiety, when unaddressed, can lead to depressive symptoms, academic struggles, and difficulty in decision-making.

The study also underscores the role of self-efficacy in mitigating existential anxiety. Participants who demonstrated a strong sense of self-efficacy reported greater resilience in handling challenges, emphasizing the importance of positive reinforcement, goal-setting, and social interactions in

strengthening their confidence. The results suggest that fostering self-efficacy through psychoeducational interventions may help students navigate existential distress more effectively. By providing structured support systems, universities and mental health professionals can promote emotional resilience and equip students with strategies to manage anxiety, ultimately enhancing their academic and personal well-being.

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