JURNAL UPI

Indonesian Journal of Teaching in Science

IJOTIS

Journal homepage: http://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/ IJOTIS/

Students Stressors and Coping Mechanism

*Lyca Yza V. Aperocho, Faith Carol B. Capillo, John Mark D. Zamora, Emy A. Morbo**

Sultan Kudarat State University, the Philippines

*Correspondence: E-mail: emymorbo@sksu.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

This study entitled Student Stressors and Coping Mechanism was aimed primarily to determine the different factors that can lead to students' stress and how they cope up with this problem. It used a qualitative-descriptive correlational research design to gather data using an adapted online survey questionnaire online to the thirty-eight (38) third-year bachelor students in physical education in Sultan Kudarat State University, the Philippines. The study used purposive random sampling in analyzing the data. Based on the findings of this study, the level of coping mechanism in terms of physical activities, environmental activities, and social and emotional activities are often applicable coping mechanisms when you are stressed while the BPEd students sometimes encountered difficulties in terms of physical stress, mental stress, emotional stress and economics stress and often encountered academic stress. The result shows that there is a significant relationship between the variables and the null hypothesis is accepted. Based on the findings of this study, the researchers conclude that the level of coping mechanism in terms of physical activities, environmental activities, social and emotional activities are applicable coping mechanisms for stressed students. This study suggests a school counselor and parents to look for these students and create a profile status to observe the students both academically and outside of the school.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:
Submitted/Received 08 Jul 2021
First revised 20 Aug 2021
Accepted 22 Aug 2021
First available online 24 Aug 2021
Publication date 01 Sep 2021

Keyword:
Academic stress,
Coping mechanism,
Depression,
Physical activity,
Student stressor.

1. INTRODUCTION

Coping with stress globally in all activities are undertaken by a human in a stressful situation. Research has shown that students experience stressors such as academic-related stressors, health-related stressors, and psychosocial-related stressors in the course of their academic pursuits (Ganesan *et al*., 2018).

Learning how to identify stressors gives the ability to eliminate causes of depression and thus to avoid or alleviate its effects. Coping with stress is defined as all activities undertaken in a stressful situation. It is an adaptive process based on primary and secondary appraisals. Dealing with depression is predominantly classified as a process, strategy, or style.

The process approach involves subcategories called strategies or ways of individuals coping with depression. The process is understood as a series of strategies changing over time and depending on the psycho-physical characteristic of the individual. Style refers to the correlated set of coping strategies typically used in difficult situations. It is an individual pattern of reaction consistent across situations.

Stress has also been found to be a major contributing factor to the academic performance of the students . Depression can be prevented if its symptoms are addressed early and effectively . Prevention against depression among university students is rare in the Philippines but is urgent because of the rising rates of suicide among the group.. College life for many students can be both challenging and exciting. Students are engaged in a rigorous academic curriculum while at the same time trying to establish who they are socially , mentally, financially, and often geographically.

In this research, students' stressors and coping mechanisms were conducted and the subjects were the Bachelor of Physical Education (BPEd) students to be aware of the issue, "DEPRESSION''. It is not rampant but, relevant. It aims to provide awareness and bring knowledge to the students, who are experiencing depression nowadays so that they can skip depression and continue maintaining spiritual, physical, and mental health for the benefit of everybody.

2. METHOD

The method in this study used a descriptive correlational research design and survey questionnaires were utilized to gather the needed data. All data were obtained using an online process.

We selected thirty-eight (38) third-year bachelor students in physical education in Sultan Kudarat State University, the Philippines.

In short, we applied several questions, in which the detailed questions are presented in **Tables 1-6**. The questions can be classified as:

(i) Physical stress, including questions (**Table 1**):

- I feel headaches when in school
- I have a stomachache and feel discomfort
- I feel stiffness in my shoulder or my back during physical activities
- I feel dizzy and blurred vision
- I experienced rapid heartbeat
- I experienced coldness and shaky

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/ijotis.v1i2.41241
p- ISSN 2776-6152 e- ISSN 2776-6101

(ii) Emotional stress, including questions (**Table 2**):
- I am feeling tired or unrested
- I feel tense and nervous
- I feel sleepy
- I feel jittery
- I feel anxious
- I feel easily angry and irritable

(iii) Mental stress, including questions(**Table 3**):
- I become less communicate and silent
- I feel frustrated
- I tend to eat more
- I find myself eating less
- I feel not socializing with my classmate
- I feel worthless

(iv) Academic stress, including questions (**Table 4**):
- Homework
- unsatisfactory academic performance
- preparation for test
- lack of interest in a particular subject
- teacher punishment
- low mark grades

(v) Economic stress, including questions (**Table 5**):
- I cannot get the money that I need to pay for school
- I do not have the money to pay basic expenses
- I feel pressured because it is expensive to go to school
- My parents give money but not enough for my school expenses
- I have trouble budgeting my money
- I am working to have money to go to school

(vi) Student Stressors, including questions (**Table 6**):
- Physical Stress
- Emotional Stress
- Mental Stress
- Academics Stress
- Economics Stress
- Overall weighted mean

Regarding coping mechanisms, we applied several questions:

(i) Physical Activities, including questions (**Table 7**):
- I just laugh away if I feel tired and stressed.
- I relax by watching TV or listening to music.
- I dance and sing with friends if I a stressed.
- I do physical exercise when I am stressed
- I eat too much if I am stressed.
- I study my lesson when I am stressed.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/ijotis.v1i2.41241
p-ISSN 2776-6152 e-ISSN 2776-6101

(ii) Environmental Activities, including questions (**Table 8**):

- Tree planting
- Visiting tourist spot
- Gardening
- Reduce, reuse, and recycle.
- I just keep quiet and stay away from friends if I am stressed.
- I seek advice from my parents/teacher/friends if I am stressed

(iii) Emotional and Social Activities, including questions (**Table 9**):

- Joining religious activities
- Retreat
- Counseling
- Reading
- I cry when I am stressed
- level of reward

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As reflected from **Table 1**, the extent of stress experienced by BPEd students in terms of physical aspect, most of the students sometimes feel headache, stomachache and discomfort, stiffness, feeling dizzy and blurred vision, and rapid heartbeat and coldness. As a whole, the BPEd students gained a weighted mean of 2.07 and interpreted it as sometimes with a verbal description of slightly disagreeing.

Research evidence suggests that students experience some kind of stress in one way or the other, therefore stress is part of students' existence and can have an effect on how students cope with the demands of university life (Ramos, 2011; Rourke *et al*., 2010). Other studies have consequently attributed many emotional and physical symptoms among tertiary students such as fatigue, headaches, depression to stress (Abdullah & Dan, 2011).

Table 1. The extent of the stress experienced by BPED terms of physical stress.

	Physical stress	Weighted Mean	Description	Interpretation
1.	I feel headaches when in school	1.86	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
2.	I have a stomachache and feel discomfort	1.68	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
3.	I feel stiffness in my shoulder or my back during physical activities	2.28	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
4.	I feel dizzy and blurred vision	2.02	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
5.	I experienced rapid heartbeat	2.39	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
6.	I experienced coldness and shaky	2.15	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
	Grand Weighted Mean	**2.07**	**Slightly Disagree**	**Sometimes**

Note: N=38. 1.00-1.50-Never; 1.51-2.50-Sometimes; 2.51-3.50-Often; 3.51-4.50-Always.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/ijotis.v1i2.41241
p- ISSN 2776-6152 e- ISSN 2776-6101

Based on **Table 2**, it shows that the results of the extent of the stress experienced by BPEd students in terms of the emotional aspect. The students sometimes feel tired or unrested, tense and nervous, jittery, anxious, angry, and irritable, while they often feel being sleepy.

The lowest mean variable indicates that most of the BPEd students sometimes feel jittery with a 2.05 mean computation while the highest computation of mean which is 2.63 indicates that the BPEd students often feel sleepy when they are emotionally stressed.

The results conclude that all third-year BPEd students sometimes feel any emotional effects with the grand weighted mean score of 2.32 with the verbal description of slightly disagree and interpreted as sometimes. The result above can be supported by Bylsma *et al.* (2011) who argued that individuals with depression are also more emotionally stress-reactive; that is, their mood is more closely tied to the perceived stressfulness of daily events.

Table 2. The extent of the stress experienced by BPED students in terms of emotional stress**.**

Emotional stress	Weighted Mean	Description	Interpretation
1. I am feeling tired or unrested	2.60	Slightly Agree	Often
2. I feel tense and nervous	2.42	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
3. I feel sleepy	2.63	Slightly Agree	Often
4. I feel jittery	2.05	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
5. I feel anxious	2.18	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
6. I feel easily angry and irritable	2.07	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
Grand Weighted Mean	**2.32**	**Slightly Disagree**	**Sometimes**

Note: N=38. 1.00-1.50-Never; 1.51-2.50-Sometimes; 2.51-3.50-Often; 3.51-4.50-Always.

Based on **Table 3**, it shows that the extent of the stress experienced by BPEd students in terms of the mental aspect, the students sometimes feel become less communicative and silent, frustrated, and eating less. They never feel unsociable with their classmates and feel worthless.

In addition to the above phenomena, the lowest mean variable indicates that BPEd students never feel worthless with an average mean score of 1.86 while the highest mean score is 3 which indicates that most of the BPEd students often tend to eat more when they are mentally stressed. These results conclude that all of the BPEd students sometimes experienced any mental stress with the grand weighted mean score of 2.16 with a verbal description of slightly disagree and interpreted as sometimes.

The issue of mental health among college students is of increasing concern (Karatekin , 2018). The college years are a peak period for the onset of mental disorder in which young people experience a unique stage of psychosocial development and transition from late adolescence to emerging adulthood (Wu *et al.*, 2016; Cuijpers *et al.*, 2019).

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/ijotis.v1i2.41241
p-ISSN 2776-6152 e-ISSN 2776-6101

Table 3. The extent of the stress experienced by BPED students in terms of mental stress.

	Mental stress	Weighted Mean	Description	Interpretation
1.	I become less communicate and silent	2.21	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
2.	I feel frustrated	2.02	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
3.	I tend to eat more	3	Slightly Agree	Often
4.	I find myself eating less	2	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
5.	I feel not socializing with my classmate	1.89	Slightly Disagree	Never
6.	I feel worthless	1.86	Slightly Disagree	Never
Grand Weighted Mean		**2.16**	**Slightly Disagree**	**Sometimes**

Note: N=38. 1.00-1.50-Never; 1.51-2.50-Sometimes; 2.51-3.50-Often; 3.51-4.50-Always.

Based on the results of **Table 4**, the extent of stress experienced by BPEd students in terms of academic stress, the students sometimes feel lack of interest in particular subject, and teacher punishment.

On the other hand, the BPEd students often feel stress in their homework, unsatisfactory academic performance, preparation to test, and low mark grades. In addition to this, the lowest mean variable indicates most of the BPEd students sometimes feel the teacher punishment with 2.31 mean computation while the highest computation of mean which is 2.71 indicates that the BPEd students often experienced an unsatisfactory academic performance that lead them into stress.

The result conclude that all BPEd students experienced academic stress with the grand weighted mean score of 2.51 with a verbal description of slightly agree and interpreted as often.

The only task students were expected to undertake was to study and studying was never perceived as stressful. What proved to be stressful was the expectations parents had for their children, which in turn grew into larger burdens that these children could not carry anymore.

According to the statistics published by National Crime Records Bureau, there is one student every hour that commits suicide. The bureau registered 1.8% of students who committed suicide due to failed examinations and an 80% rise in suicide rates during a one-year time frame.

Table 4. The extent of the stress experienced by BPED students in terms of academic stress.

	Academic stress	Weighted Mean	Description	Interpretation
1.	Homework	2.57	Slightly Agree	Often
2.	unsatisfactory academic performance	2.71	Slightly Agree	Often
3.	preparation for test	2.63	Slightly Agree	Often
4.	lack of interest in a particular subject	2.31	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
5.	teacher punishment	2.21	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
6.	low mark grades	2.65	Slightly Agree	Often
Grand Weighted Mean		**2.51**	**Slightly Agree**	**Often**

*Note: N=38. 1.00-1.50-Never; 1.51-2.50-Sometimes; 2.51-3.50-Often; 3.51-4.50-Always***.**

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/ijotis.v1i2.41241
p- ISSN 2776-6152 e- ISSN 2776-6101

Based on **Table 5**, it shows that the study shows that the extent of the stress experienced by BPEd students in terms of economic sometimes feel they cannot get the money that needed to pay for school, do not have money to pay basic expenses, their parents give them money but not enough for schools expenses while they never experienced feeling pressured because it is expensive to go to school and working to go to school.

The respondents often experienced having trouble budgeting their money. Based on the table, the lowest mean score of 1.97 indicates that most of the BPEd students never experienced working to have money to go to school.

On the other hand, the highest mean score of 2.65 indicates that most of the BPEd students often experienced trouble in budgeting money. The results conclude that all BPEd students sometimes feel any economic effect with the weighted mean of 2.18 with a verbal description of slightly disagree and interpreted as sometimes.

Research regarding sources of stress confirms the influential role that personal financial problems play in the lives of college students. Financial difficulties are often cited among college students as sources of stress (Northern *et al*., 2010; Ross *et al*., 1999).

In fact, a recent report from Inceptia, a non-profit financial education advocate, found that four of the top five stressors among college students involved problems related to personal finances. Although the incidence of financial stress has been well-documented, much less is known about the factors related to financial stress among college students.

Table 5. The extent of the stress experienced by BPED students in terms of economic stress.

	Economic stress	Weighted Mean	Description	Interpretation
1.	I cannot get the money that I need to pay for school	2.10	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
2.	I do not have the money to pay basic expenses	2.31	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
3.	I feel pressured because it is expensive to go to school	1.92	Slightly Disagree	Never
4.	My parents give money but not enough for my school expenses	2.13	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
5.	I have trouble budgeting my money	2.65	Slightly Agree	Often
6.	I am working to have money to go to school	1.97	Slightly Disagree	Never
Grand Weighted Mean		**2.18**	**Slightly Disagree**	**Sometimes**

Note: N=38. 1.00-1.50-Never; 1.51-2.50-Sometimes; 2.51-3.50-Often; 3.51-4.50-Always.

As reflected in **Table 6**, the extent of stress experienced by the BPEd students in terms of physical stress, emotional stress, mental stress, academic stress, and economic stress, most of them sometimes feel any of these stresses with an overall weighted mean of 2.24 and a verbal description of slightly disagree.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/ijotis.v1i2.41241
p-ISSN 2776-6152 e-ISSN 2776-6101

Table 6. The extent of stress experienced by the BPEd students in terms of physical stress, emotional stress, mental stress, academic stress, and economic stress.

Student Stressors	Grand Mean	Description	Interpretation
Physical Stress	2.07	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
Emotional Stress	2.32	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
Mental Stress	2.16	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
Academics Stress	2.51	Slightly Agree	Often
Economics Stress	2.18	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
Overall weighted mean	**2.24**	**Slightly Disagree**	**Sometimes**

Table 7 shows the coping mechanism of BPEd students in terms of physical activities. Several examples were found:

(i) they always just laugh away if they feel tired and stress with 3.92 of mean computation
(ii) they feel relaxed by watching TV or listening to music with 3.63 of mean computation
(iii) they often dance and sing with friends if they are stressed,
(iv) they do physical exercise when they are stressed and
(v) they eat too much if they are stressed
(vi) they sometimes experienced studying their lesson when they are stressed with 1.94 of mean computation.

Furthermore, **Table 7** shows the coping mechanism of BPEd students in terms of physical activities, the lowest mean variable indicates that the BPEd students sometimes study their lesson when they have stressed with 1.94 of mean computation, while the highest computation of mean which is they always just laugh away if they are stressed with the degree of mean computation of 3.92.

These results conclude that all the BPEd students often do any physical coping mechanism when they are stressed with a grand weighted mean score of 2.96 with a verbal description of slightly agree and interpreted as often.

Physical activity has also been highlighted in the literature as an important modifiable lifestyle behavior for brain function and development (Sharma, 2006; Chekroud *et al*., 2018).

Specific to mental health, there is evidence reporting a positive association between physical activity (particularly at higher intensities) and alleviation of symptoms related to anxiety and depression (Sharma, 2006; Chekroud *et al*., 2018; Schuch *et al*., 2016; Schuch & Stubbs, 2019).

The use of a physical activity to treat and/or prevent mental health disorders has met with increasing clinical and scientific interest, due to lower side-effect burden, increased accessibility, and health-promoting abilities, as well as potential reduction of polypharmacy.

Table 8 shows that the coping mechanism of BPEd students in terms of environmental activities, they often did tree planting, visiting tourist spots, gardening, reducing, reusing, and recycling, keeping quiet and staying away from friends if they were stressed, and seeking advice from parents, teacher, and friends when they were stressed.

Furthermore, **Table 8** shows the coping mechanism of BPEd students in terms of environmental activities. This result concludes that coping mechanism in terms of environmental activities is applicable with 2.87 of mean computation with the verbal description of slightly agree and interpreted as often.

This has led in recent years to the adaptation of an approach based on the flexibility of coping, under the supposition that a single individual can combine different strategies, using one or the other depending on the specific situation they are facing.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/ijotis.v1i2.41241
p- ISSN 2776-6152 e- ISSN 2776-6101

Table 7. The coping mechanism of BPED students in terms of physical activities.

Physical Activities	Weighted Mean	Description	Interpretation
1. I just laugh away if I feel tired and stressed.	3.92	Agree	Always
2. I relax by watching TV or listening to music.	3.63	Agree	Always
3. I dance and sing with friends if I a stressed.	3.18	Slightly Agree	Often
4. I do physical exercise when I am stressed	2.86	Slightly Agree	Often
5. I eat too much if I am stressed.	2.71	Slightly Agree	Often
6. I study my lesson when I am stressed.	1.94	Disagree	Sometimes
Grand Weighted Mean	**3.04**	**Slightly Agree**	**Often**

Table 8. The coping mechanism of BPED students in terms of environmental activities.

Environmental Activities	Weighted Mean	Description	Interpretation
Tree planting	2.68	Slightly Agree	Often
Visiting tourist spot	3.07	Slightly Agree	Often
Gardening	3	Slightly Agree	Often
Reduce, reuse, and recycle.	2.84	Slightly Agree	Often
I just keep quiet and stay away from friends if I am stressed.	2.68	Slightly Agree	Often
I seek advice from my parents/teacher/friends if I am stressed	2.97	Slightly Agree	Often
Grand Weighted Mean	**2.87**	**Slightly Agree**	**Often**

Note: N=38. 1.00-1.50-Never; 1.51-2.50-Sometimes; 2.51-3.50-Often; 3.51-4.50-Always.

Table 9 shows the coping mechanism of BPEd students in terms of emotional and social activities, they were often joining religious activities, retreats, counseling, reading, and cry when they are stressed while the level of reward is sometimes not an effective coping mechanism.

Furthermore, **Table 9** shows the coping mechanism of BPEd students in terms of emotional and social activities, the lowest mean variable which is the level of reward with 2.18 of mean computation while the highest computation of mean which is joining religious activities with the mean computation of 3.28.

These results conclude that the coping mechanism in terms of emotional and social activities is applicable with 2.87 of mean computation with the verbal description of slightly agree and interpreted as often.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/ijotis.v1i2.41241
p-ISSN 2776-6152 e-ISSN 2776-6101

Aapproach is called active strategies and evasive (or disengagement) strategies . Approach strategies involve cognitive and behavioral mechanisms aimed at making an active response to the stressor , directly changing the problem (primary control) or the negative emotions associated with it (secondary control).

This category includes strategies such as planning , taking a specific action , seeking support (instrumental and emotional), a positive reappraisal of the situation, or acceptance. Evasive strategies are those which involve cognitive and behavioral mechanisms used to evade stressful situations, such as distraction, denial, and wishful thinking.

Table 9. The coping mechanism of BPEd students in terms of emotional and social activities.

Emotional and Social Activities	Weighted Mean	Description	Interpretation
Joining religious activities	3.28	Slightly Agree	Often
Retreat	2.84	Slightly Agree	Often
Counseling	2.94	Slightly Agree	Often
Reading	3.18	Slightly Agree	Often
I cry when I am stressed	2.78	Slightly Agree	Often
level of reward	2.18	Slightly Disagree	Sometimes
Grand Weighted Mean	**2.87**	**Slightly Agree**	**Often**

Note: N=38. 1.00-1.50-Never; 1.51-2.50-Sometimes; 2.51-3.50-Often; 3.51-4.50-Always.

Table 10 above shows that the coping mechanism of BPEd students in terms of physical activities, environmental activities, and emotional and social activities. The results conclude that the students often do any of this coping mechanism when they are stressed with an overall weighted mean of 2.92 and a verbal description of slightly agree.

Table 10. Coping Mechanism of BPEd students in terms of physical activities, environmental activities, and social and emotional activities.

Coping Mechanism	Grand Mean	Description	Interpretation
Physical Activities	3.04	Slightly Agree	Often
Environmental Activities	2.87	Slightly Agree	Often
Emotional and Social Activities	2.87	Slightly Agree	Often
Overall Weighted mean	**2.92**	**Slightly Agree**	**Often**

Note: N=38. 1.00-1.50-Never; 1.51-2.50-Sometimes; 2.51-3.50-Often; 3.51-4.50-Always.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/ijotis.v1i2.41241
p- ISSN 2776-6152 e- ISSN 2776-6101

Table 11 shows the analysis between the student stressors and the level of the coping mechanism of BPEd students in terms of physical activities. The result shows a positive relationship since p-values between identified variables is larger than the level of significance at 0.05. Physical stress versus Physical activities coping mechanism (p-value = 0.1992), Mental stress versus Physical activities coping mechanism (p-value = 0.5007), Emotional stress versus Physical activities coping mechanism (p-value = 0.6872), Academic stress versus Physical activities coping mechanism (p-value = 0.6577), Economic stress versus Physical activities coping mechanism (p-value = 0.6577). Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 11. Pearson correlation analysis of the students' stressors in terms of physical, mental, emotional, academic, and economic; and level of the coping mechanism of BPEd students in terms of physical activities.

		Physical aspect	**Mental aspect**	**Emotional aspect**	**Academic Stress**	**Economics stress**
Physical activities	R	-0.6093	0.3468	0.7775	0.2324	0.05612
	P-value	0.1992	0.5007	0.6872	0.6577	0.6577
	N	6	6	6	6	6

*Level of Significance, α 0.05

Table 12 shows the analysis between the student stressors and the level of the coping mechanism of BPEd students in terms of environmental activities. The result shows a positive relationship since p-values between identified variables is larger than the level of significance at 0.05. In short, the values are

(i) Physical stress versus Environmental activities coping mechanism (p-value = 0.5772),
(ii) Mental stress versus Environmental activities coping mechanism (p-value = 0.06102),
(iii) Emotional stress versus Environmental activities coping mechanism (p-value = 0.8904),
(iv) Academic stress versus Environmental activities coping mechanism (p-value = 0.1172),
(v) Economic stress versus Environmental activities coping mechanism (p-value = 0.3785). Based on the above data, therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 12. Pearson correlation analysis of the students' stressors in terms of physical, mental, emotional, academic, and economic; and level of the coping mechanism of BPEd students in terms of environmental activities.

		Physical aspect	**Mental aspect**	**Emotional aspect**	**Academic Stress**	**Economics stress**
Environmental activities	R	0.29	0.0266	0.0732	0.7056	0.4434
	P-value	0.5772	0.06102	0.8904	0.1172	0.3785
	N	6	6	6	6	6

*Level of Significance, α 0.05

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/ijotis.v1i2.41241
p-ISSN 2776-6152 e-ISSN 2776-6101

Table 13 shows the analysis between the student stressors and the level of the coping mechanism of BPEd students in terms of Social and Emotional activities. The result shows a positive relationship since p-values between identified variables is larger than the level of significance at 0.05. In short, the values are:

(i) Physical stress versus Social and Emotional activities coping mechanism (p-value = 0.2268),
(ii) Mental stress versus Social and Emotional activities coping mechanism (p-value = 0.5698),
(iii) Emotional stress versus Social and Emotional activities coping mechanism (p-value = 0.5158),
(iv) Academic stress versus Social and Emotional activities coping mechanism (p-value = 0.4133),
(v) Economic stress versus Social and Emotional activities coping mechanism (p-value = 0.1023).

Based on the above data, therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted.

Table 13. Pearson correlation analysis of the students' stressors in terms of physical, mental, emotional, academic, and economic; and level of the coping mechanism of BPEd students in terms of social and emotional activities.

		Physical aspect	Mental aspect	Emotional aspect	Academic aspect	Economic aspect
Social and Emotional	R	-0.5807	0.2954	0.3354	0.4149	0.7261
	p-value	0.2268	0.5698	0.5158	0.4133	0.1023
	N	6	6	6	6	6

*Level of Significance, α0.05

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers conclude that the level of coping mechanism in terms of physical activities, environmental activities, social and emotional activities are applicable coping mechanisms for stressed students. Furthermore, the third-year BPEd students do not affect in terms of physical, mental, emotional, and economic aspects except for academic stress that they are experiencing academic problems. In this study, we suggest a school counselor and parents to look for these students and create a profile status to observe the students both academically and outside of the school.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to express their sincere gratitude to Dr. Nancy D. Espacio, Rizalyn B. Cudera, MSc., Prof. Vivincio L. Calixtro Jr., Prof. Jayson A. Falle, and to their families for their never-ending support and who helped them to enrich their experiences in pursuing a lifetime achievement.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.17509/ijotis.v1i2.41241
p- ISSN 2776-6152 e- ISSN 2776-6101

6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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