



# MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT OF THE COVID – 19 PANDEMIC ON JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OF ESPERENZA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL: BASIS FOR PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL PROGRAM

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**MENTAL HEALTH IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON JUNIOR  
HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS OF ESPERANZA NATIONAL HIGH  
SCHOOL: BASIS FOR PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL PROGRAM**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study is a descriptive-correlational research conducted to determine the impact of COVID-19 towards mental health of junior high school students of Esperanza National High School as a basis for psychoeducational program. There were 385 students who responded to the online survey questionnaire. Findings showed that psychological distress is felt by junior high school students. They are distressed due to internet connectivity but still eager to continue their studies. Moreover, students utilized coping mechanisms which they think can help them cope with distress. However, high positive correlation was found out between psychological distress and coping mechanisms which further revealed that coping didn't lessen the level distress for the reason that not all coping mechanisms utilized by students are positive or adaptive. Listening to music and praying which are frequently used by students are the only two positive coping mechanisms that can reduce distress. Based on these findings of the study, psychoeducational program during pandemic is prepared.

Keywords: *Mental health, psychological distress, coping mechanisms, COVID-19 Pandemic, psychoeducational program*

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## **I. CONTEXT AND RATIONALE**

The emergence of the novel coronavirus disease 2019 known as COVID-19 has created a public health emergency crisis. It has spread across the world and galvanized global action which resulted in a pandemic that has impacted not only the economy but also the well-being of the people (Galea et al., 2020). Many are facing challenges and difficulties during the pandemic. These can be overwhelming, stressful and can cause strong emotions. Wang et al. (2020) reported moderate-to-severe distress construct in the general population during the pandemic that substantially established that a disease outbreak such as COVID-19 can negatively affect the mental health.

This pandemic has particularly impacted the mental well-being of the students. It increases their academic and life difficulties which in turn result in worsening their mental health. Aiyer et al. (2020) stated that COVID-19 pandemic had affected students' mental health and this was due to several factors including cancellation of school classes, having to adjust to online learning, worrying about the future and prolonged social isolation. These factors have likely led to significant feeling of worry, stress and psychological distress.

As the world grapples with the effect of COVID-19 pandemic, Philippines is also battling its impact. Malindog-Uy (2020) presented the report of National Center for Mental Health which showed that there was a spike in the number of Filipinos who face mental health problems during the pandemic. From the average of 13 to 15 daily calls before the pandemic, mental health providers were receiving 32 to 37 calls which showed that more Filipinos are experiencing mental health condition such as



psychological distress during the pandemic. Moreover, the pandemic in particular is also distressing to students. Bautista and Manuel (2020) stated that fear and worry about the new disease and what could happen can overwhelm the students especially the females who were likely to report emotional symptoms and those who were struggling with financial problem.

As response to the threat to students' mental health, psychological readiness and emotional preparedness through the series of activities in Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services have been devised and Remote Psychological First Aid is conducted (Department of Education, 2020). However, a case of suicide death of student in Region XII which has relation with the impact of COVID-19 on mental health (Fernandez, 2020) showed that there is a need for a more concrete mental health care program that can aid students deal and cope with the psychological distress.

In line with the challenge posed by the COVID-19 pandemic particularly on the mental health, the researchers were prompted and motivated to conduct this study to assess the impact of pandemic on the mental health status of public high school students who are said to be one of the vulnerable populations. Additionally, a guidance program was prepared which can be utilized in a secondary school even there is no licensed guidance counselor.

## **Literature Review**

This highlights the different literatures which have significant bearing on the variables included in the research. The literatures come from books, journals, articles and electronic materials which are believed to be useful in the advancement of awareness concerning the study.

## **Mental Health**

Herman and Jané-Llopis (2012) highlighted the importance of mental health in the global public health. As stated by them, mental health is commonly referred as the state of well-being in which the individual can use one's own abilities and is able to cope with the normal stresses of life. It is important in all stages of life particularly during the period of adolescence. However, the mental health of adolescents is characterized by a roller coaster of emotions and mental imbalances. Based on the report of WHO (2019), 10-20% of adolescents are experiencing mental health issues. They exhibited disruptions in their daily functioning at home, school or community. Most of them always bear the burden resulting to developing mental health condition such as psychological distress.

## **Psychological Distress**

When the individual faces stressor and is unable to cope with it, psychological distress happens. The feeling of being overwhelmed of the unpleasant emotions affect the way of living as well as the manner of reacting to other people. This is in accordance with Wheaton (2007). He stated that psychological distress is viewed as an emotional disturbance that has an impact on the level of functioning specifically social functioning

and to the day-to-day living. Adolescents are most prone to experience psychological distress.

While, Faubion (2021) referred psychological distress as mental distress. It can accompany mental illness however experiencing psychological distress does not automatically indicate the presence of mental disorder. It is rather described as serious emotional disturbance. He also added that the causes of psychological distress differ widely. It can be that the distress is due to traumatic experiences, major life events and everyday stressors. The pandemic is a global health issue that cause psychological distress.

Moreover, according to Kane (2019), the common signs of psychological distress include sleep disturbances, fluctuation in weight with eating pattern changes, physical changes that are unexplained including headaches, constipation, diarrhea, chronic pain and rumbling stomach, easily to get angry, developing obsessive and compulsive behaviors, chronic fatigue, forgetfulness, social withdrawal, frequent mood swings and erratic behavior. These signs vary from one person to another but the presence of these indicate that psychological distress is possibly experienced.

### **Demographic Profile**

The identification of demographic profile is important during the adaptation process. The characteristics in the profile might have an effect on how the individual views life (Schlossberg, 1981 cited in Musamili, 2018). This means that the perception of the situation and the handling of problems are greatly influenced by the individual's characteristics. The

demographic profile includes the personal and background information such as age, gender and socioeconomic status.

### **Age**

Mental health condition may occur at younger age. The WHO (2019) reported that one in six people who experienced mental health conditions are aged 10-19 years and account for the 16% of the global burden of disease and injury. Those included in this age bracket are the adolescents who experience a crucial period of development. Due to exposure to external risk factors and facing adverse events, adolescents become vulnerable to mental health condition such as psychological distress (Marsh, et al. 2018). They experience difficulties and pressures that are beyond their capacity to handle and cope. This is usually experience by the high school students as they face the critical development of adolescence stage.

### **Gender**

One of the powerful indicators of psychological distress is the gender. Gender is synonymous with sex but these two terms are actually different concepts. Sex refers to the biological differences between male and female including differences in genitalia and genetics whereas, gender can be referred to the role of a male or female in a society (Newman, 2018). Gender affects every aspects of life including health specifically mental health.

The gender difference or gap in mental health is attributed to different factors. Nolen-Hoeksema (2001) stated that females are more

psychologically distressed than males because they are more vulnerable and are more exposed to everyday risks given their relative position in society. Females are more stressed, more emotional and with less rational coping. She also added that the gender difference starts when the girl reaches puberty stage. They respond more to psychological distress as a result of hormonal changes which can affect the mood. Hence, both biological and social factors are said to contribute to the gender differences in terms of mental health and females are more prone to developing mental health issues than males.

### **Socioeconomic Status**

There is a clear link that exists between economic status and mental health. The measure of one's combined economic and social status is called the 'socioeconomic status or SES' (Baker, 2014). In adolescents, the primary source of their socioeconomic status comes from their family income. Mental health is said to have social gradient which means that the higher the level of income inequality, the higher the prevalence of mental health issues. According to Silva, Loureiro and Cardoso (2016), the experience of socioeconomic disadvantage that include low income, poverty, debt, poor housing and unemployment is associated to poor mental health. The financial problem which caused the inability to support one's need resulted to students to become psychologically distressed as he or she is unable to provide for one's own necessities.

### **Coping Mechanisms**

Coping mechanism is a vital part of human behavior. It usually includes ways which can be used in dealing with stressors. Coping is

usually positive however, there are forms of coping that may have negative consequences on the person. Ainslie-Wallace (2019), differentiated between positive and negative coping. She stated that positive coping is called adaptive coping that can be of great help during stressful times. This includes solving a problem, using humor, exercising and others. Adaptive coping is positive because it doesn't harm the person using it or other people. While, negative coping is called maladaptive coping which are usually counterproductive. It can only work in a short term but it actually causes trouble in the long run. This includes drinking, drugs, binge-eating, impulsive decisions, self-harm and others.

Adaptive coping is referred as approach coping and maladaptive coping is the avoidant coping. According to Roth and Lawrence (1986) cited in Dubow and Rubinlicht (2011), there are two types of coping based on the direction of response. Approach coping refers to any behavioral, cognitive or emotional activity that is directed toward a threat while, avoidant coping is any activity that is directed away from a threat.

Coping mechanisms are further divided into four categories based on Folkman and Moskowitz (2004). The first category is problem-focused coping which include active coping, planning, restraint coping and suppression of competing activities. The second is emotion-focused coping which includes positive reframing, acceptance, turning to religion and humor. The other two coping categories are meaning-focused coping which derive and manage the meaning of the situation and social support which seek emotional or instrumental support from the community.

The classification of coping mechanism based on the strategies employed in dealing with the stressor gives clear picture of how the

individual effectively adjust and adapt to the new situation especially by adolescents who are overwhelmed by the drastic changes and presence of new events that affect their psychological well-being.

### **Psychoeducational Program**

The effectiveness of psychoeducational program relies on the fact that providing information on the mental health condition and ways to cope will help the individual get through with the condition, be able to function well and live one's life. According to Lukens (2015), the term 'psychoeducation' is a strength-based approach that incorporates both educational and therapeutic techniques. Its educational component offers key information about the life challenges and strategies on how to deal with these and the psychotherapeutic component offers a safety environment and time for the individual to absorb information. Psychoeducational program therefore combines both education and other activities such as supportive interventions.

The roots of psychoeducation can be traced back as an intervention for treating schizophrenia. But, around 1970s with the current models which blend developmental, cognitive and learning theories, psychoeducation is utilized effectively even in school setting. In the classroom, teacher used psychoeducation to modify troubled behaviors and to develop the social and emotional skills that are lacking to students. It was also been utilized to topics on resiliency, decision-making, social problem-solving and self-management of emotions (Reyes, 2010). As the approach evolves over time, range of topics have been incorporated in psychoeducation.

Moreover, psychoeducation as combination of education and therapeutic techniques has goals that purposely guide the practitioner on how to conduct the program. Drake (2020) listed four goals of psychoeducation. These are (1) giving information about the condition and the factors that might contribute to the cause of condition, (2) allowing the release of emotions, (3) supporting treatment and (4) assistance toward self-help through condition management training, problem-solving training, communication training or assertiveness training. Through these four goals, the individual is assisted to resolve one's difficulty and is learning to cope better.

Psychoeducation is therefore by far the preferred intervention may it in clinical or educational setting. Informing the individual about his or her condition and assist on the ways of dealing with it make the psychoeducational program move out from its complex and technical roots and utilize more education in its process.

Moreover, this portion primarily presents the different researches from foreign to local sources that focuses on several aspects that helps in the development of this study. Information included in this part serves as the foundation of the study.

### **Psychological Distress during the COVID-19 Pandemic**

One of the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic is directed towards the mental health. There are various psychological problems and consequences that have appeared progressively due to the pandemic (Serafini et al., 2000). These include a wide range of mental health



conditions such psychological distress which are experienced by people around the world.

Xiong et al. (2020) conducted a systematic review that examined and summarized existing studies on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on mental health in the general population in eight countries which included China, Spain, Italy, Iran, US, Turkey, Nepal and Denmark. It was revealed on their findings that there were relatively high rates of those experiencing symptoms of psychological distress which was measured from 34.43% to 38%. The highly significant level of psychological distress was found to be related to the pandemic which implied that pandemic has hazardous effect on mental health.

A research study by Gautama et al. (2020) supported these findings of systematic review. In their study conducted to 2082 Nepalese between April 23 to May 3, 2020, it was revealed that half of the respondents were suffering from at least one symptom of psychological distress and 32% were suffering from two or more symptoms 2 weeks preceding the schedule of the survey. The symptoms of psychological distress were fearfulness, restlessness, anxiety, worry and sadness. From the results and findings, it was confirmed that there was high prevalence of psychological distress during pandemic and symptoms can be manifested by the individual experiencing psychological distress.

For children and adolescents, Qin et al. (2021) conducted a study on the prevalence of psychological distress in Guandong, China from March 8 to 30, 2020. Based on the results of their study, out of 1,199,320 students, 126, 355 (10.5%) are reported experiencing psychological distress and compared with the primary school, high school students had

showed an increase risk of developing the condition. These results supported the systematic review and add that high school students are vulnerable to psychological distress during the pandemic.

The research studies established the fact that in COVID-19 pandemic, people in different countries were experiencing a high level of psychological distress which were manifested by psychological symptoms and difficulties in functioning. In addition, this impact of pandemic on mental health was not only felt by the adult but also of the adolescents particularly by the high school students.

### **Factors associated with Psychological Distress**

Several factors are associated with psychological distress during the COVID-19 pandemic. The impact towards mental health is greater with the group of people with the same demographic characteristics. Thus, research findings from the association of psychological distress with specific demographic profile are presented to identify the factors that might correlate with the mental health condition.

In a systematic review and meta-analysis conducted by Wang et al. (2020) from 68 studies across 19 countries which included countries of Western Pacific Region, China, Japan, Vietnam, European region, region of America, Eastern Mediterranean Region and African Region, it was revealed that the factors associated with psychological distress among respondents in the general population were gender, age and socioeconomic status. It was reported in 50 studies with 82 data points that there was an association between women and higher odds of psychological distress as

most of the studies had reported more than one indicator or symptom of psychological distress. While from 37 studies, it was revealed that there was an association between age and higher odds of psychological distress with 62 data points. Younger age individuals which is less than 35 years old have high risk of experiencing psychological distress. In terms of socioeconomic status, individuals who are included in the lower socioeconomic status (SES) are found to be vulnerable with psychological distress. These data came from 30 studies with 48 data points. The results of the systematic review and meta-analysis of collected studies showed that psychological distress is most likely to be experienced by those with younger age, women and included in the bracket of lower socioeconomic status.

Moreover, the study of Gray et al. (2020) confirmed the findings on age and gender. Based on the results of their study, it was found out that high level of psychological distress during the COVID-19 is apparent in younger people where around 1/3 of the respondents reported severe level of psychological distress. The reason for the greater effect of pandemic on mental health of younger people is still unknown. However, it was implied that the loss of social interactions outside the family and restrictions from forming and developing friendship caused stress and psychological difficulty. Their study also revealed that psychological distress is higher to women. The data showed that 47.4% of men and 58.6% of women were significantly experiencing psychological distress, with around 17.0% of men and 20.9% of women reported with severe psychological distress. The discrepancy on the two gender is also still unknown however, the study implied that women need mental health intervention more than men. The

results of the study established the claim that younger age and female gender are characteristics which are vulnerable to psychological distress during the pandemic.

The studies presented that demographic profile which included age, gender and socioeconomic status were found to be highly associated with psychological distress which indicated that psychological distress is most likely to be experienced and felt by the younger people, women and those belonged in lower socioeconomic status. Individuals with this profile are prone to psychological distress than others.

### **Psychological Distress and Coping**

The responses towards the pandemic can range in intensity and the overwhelmed feelings can cause psychological distress which in turn affects on how people live their lives and do their function. Thus, a number of coping mechanisms are employed in relation to the increased level of mental health problems caused by pandemic.

In Australia, Gurvich et al. (2020) conducted a research study to sample of 1,495 residing in the country between April 3 and May 3, 2020. Their study showed that 47% of the respondents were experiencing some degree of psychological distress. It was also found out that coping strategies associated with their poorer mental health were self-blame, venting, behavioral disengagement and self-distraction while those that were associated with better mental health were positive reframing, acceptance and humor. The findings implied that to cope better with the difficulty is to try to look for positive and reframing the current situation in a positive way. Encouraging individuals to accept their current situation

and use humor to cope with stress are also suggested. More so, their study emphasized that maladaptive coping such as venting and self-blame should be strongly discouraged among the people who are experiencing psychological distress. Their study therefore showed that individuals with psychological distress used negative coping which should be changed into adaptive coping strategies to cope effectively and to have a better mental health.

While the study conducted by Yu et al. (2020) to 1588 respondents through online survey in mainland China revealed that nearly one quarter or 22.8% had high levels of psychological distress. Respondents with higher level of psychological distress reported less social support while those with decreased psychological distress reported increased social support and utilized active coping strategies. It was suggested that because feeling lonely and isolated from others is a common feeling during the pandemic, regular communication with friends and family through video call or phone calls can improve social support. Furthermore, the findings of the study suggested that individuals can prepare daily schedules in which they can ensure variety in work, leisure, exercise and learning. Also, starting new activities such as home-based 'exergames' can greatly help individuals with psychological distress. This study therefore emphasized that social support and active coping strategies can lower down psychological distress.

Moreover, coping was specifically studied by Liang et al. (2020) among youth aged 14-35. Based on the results of their study, mental health problems such as psychological distress remain a serious problem among the most of youth group during the public health emergency with

approximately 40.4% showed a tendency to have psychological problems. Also, negative coping styles and avoidance-focused coping were also found to be linked to mental health issues and strong predictors of youth psychological problems. Youth's mental health was found to be affected by the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, thus their study recommended to take appropriate mental health interventions that would help the youth to cope positively and better with their psychological problems. It is in their study which showed that mental health of younger age individuals is considerably dependent on coping they utilized.

The researches proved that maladaptive coping was associated with higher level of psychological distress while adaptive coping was linked to lower level of psychological distress. Hence, adaptive coping strategies that would benefit individuals specifically adolescents in the long run were suggested to be utilized.

### **Psychoeducation as Intervention**

The effectiveness of psychoeducational program has been proven both in clinical and educational settings. The objectives which are to inform the individuals and assist them to cope with their mental health problems are the core of this program. For this reason, it is preferred by educators to be employed at school as mental health intervention.

The study of Elemo (2019), supported the claim that psychoeducational intervention did help in coping with the distress. His study which is specified on the psychological distress of 18 international students along with the adjustment and coping self-efficacy, evidently showed through a 2x3 controlled quasi-experimental group that eight

weekly sessions of psychoeducation had significant effect on reducing distress levels. The psychoeducational program which was designed as cognitive behavioral in nature was contained every session with one and a half hours for eight consecutive weeks. The findings implied that psychoeducational intervention can be used as a psychological support service that would assist students on their adjustment and coping.

Furthermore, in the meta-analysis of Donker et al. (2009) in 32 papers, it was proven that the brief, inexpensive and passive psychoeducational interventions are effective in reducing the symptoms of psychological distress and other psychological impact. It showed that there was a small but significant effect ( $d=0.20$ ) on psychological distress in the intervention groups compared to the control group. The passive psychoeducational intervention is conducted through non-guided, with single to six sessions of psychoeducation and disseminated topics through leaflets. The study also emphasized that the passive psychoeducational intervention cannot replace active psychoeducational intervention. However, if the aim is to reach a large number of people at relatively low cost, passive psychoeducation can be given to help individuals deal and cope with the psychological distress.

Research studies conducted on psychoeducation recognized and proved the effectiveness of psychoeducation as mental health intervention in school setting. The procedures of conducting it varied however the core of psychoeducation which are to inform and assist in coping made psychoeducation a program that can greatly help students with mental health problems.

## **Psychological Distress, Associated Factors and Coping Mechanisms of Filipinos**

As the virus is spreading across the globe along with its impact, Philippines is not an exemption. Based on the study conducted by De Guzman et al. (2020), students reported experiencing psychological disturbances and stress that affect their studies, their way of living and relationship with other people. In their qualitative study, students responded that COVID-19 pandemic made them stressed which was caused by being idle in educational work and socialization. The feelings of worrying and isolation troubled the students and their inability to express negative sentiments about the adverse situations made their mental health worse during the pandemic. The findings of their study revealed that Filipino students' mental health are affected by the impact of pandemic as manifested by disturbances and distressed feelings.

The factors of age and gender which were found to be associated with the psychological impact of COVID-19 pandemic in many countries, were also confirmed by a research in the Philippine setting. Based on the study conducted by Tee et al. (2020) in general population, their findings revealed that female gender and youth age of 12-21 were associated with a greater psychological impact of pandemic and higher level of stress. Male respondents were significantly lower in stress ( $p=0.018$ ) compared to female while students in younger age bracket reported to manifest symptoms of mental health impact than those employed. The study pinpointed that the demographic profile of age and gender have something to do with experiencing mental health problems during the pandemic.



Moreover, the study conducted by Baloran (2020) to 530 students in Davao del Sur, Southern Philippines revealed that several coping strategies were utilized by students during the pandemic. Aside from following the COVID-19 health protocols, students also responded in the online questionnaire the coping strategies which included using social media and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Tiktok and Youtube (58.87%), chatting with family and friends (48.87%) and trying to be busy at home in activities that would keep mind away from COVID-19 (46.60%). These findings implied that there was a great need for a program or approach to address the mental health issues of Filipino students during the pandemic through utilizing adaptive coping.

The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on mental health is a global concern. It is experienced by people of different countries specifically by the students. The literature and studies have significant relationship with the present study. It presented the prevalence of psychological distress, associated factors and coping mechanisms during the pandemic in several countries and in the Philippines. Additionally, utilization of psychoeducational program is also presented. From the information and findings of literature and studies, it showed that mental health should be prioritized these times especially among the students and with that, there is a need for the preparation of mental health intervention such as psychoeducational program that would help students cope with distress and to have a better mental health.

## **II. INNOVATION, INTERVENTION AND STRATEGY**

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, lives of people around the world specifically the students have been affected. Shah et al. (2020) stated that the transition away from physical classes as a result of the preventive measures such as school closures, cancellation of classes and home-based or online learning has an impact on the student. It poses a potential risk to their mental health. With this, a psychoeducational program which can be implemented through the collaboration of administration, guidance office, teachers and parents is in need to be prepared. The following are the research innovation, intervention and strategy of psychoeducational program in order to help the students cope with the psychological distress during the pandemic: (1) educating students about the common signs of psychological distress during the pandemic and ways to cope through pamphlets and through digital forms; (2) delivering mental health topics through radio-based instruction and multimedia platforms (3) promulgating division memorandum to include the orientation to teachers and parents about how to identify a distressed student and ways to best help the student; (4) requesting the mental health division to create a mental health hotline for those students who are seeking for mental health assistance.

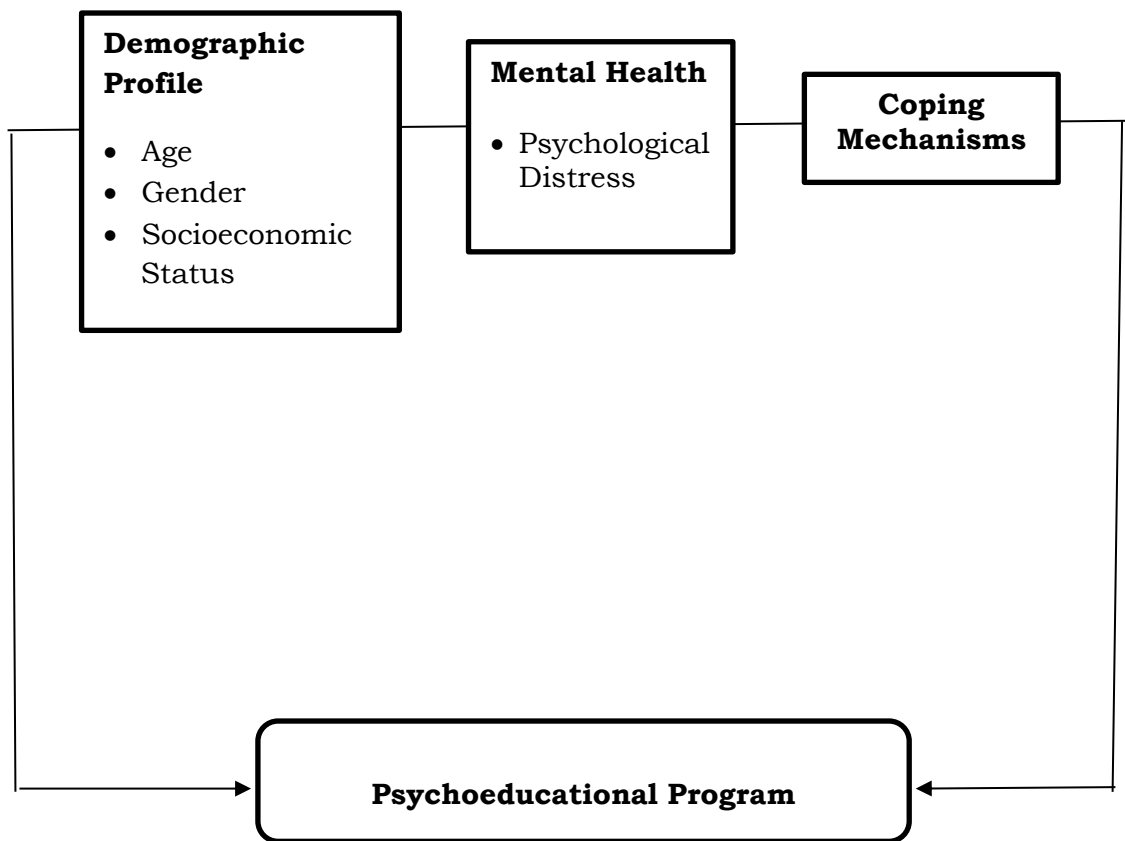
### **Conceptual Framework of the Study**

The COVID-19 pandemic has a major effect on the lives of people particularly on mental health. The changes brought by this pandemic caused distressed feelings to the students who experience difficulties

adjusting to the new normal. The researchers consider the preparation of a program as a possible remedy to help students in their transition problem.

The conceptual framework showed the concept structure of the study which presents the relationship among the variables (Figure 1). The study aims to investigate the impact of COVID-19 towards mental health specifically to students who are said to be one of the affected groups during the pandemic. The influencing factor of this vulnerability of the students to psychological distress is said to be due to demographic profile that includes their age, gender and socioeconomic status. Students who belonged to certain demographic profile are in risk to experience higher psychological distress compare with others. Furthermore, the kind of coping mechanism employed during the pandemic is valuable in understanding how the students manage their distressed feelings.

The information obtained from this investigation will help in coming up with the psychoeducational program that would help students adapt to the changes and transition caused by the pandemic.



**Figure 1. Research Paradigm**

### **III. ACTION RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This study aimed at investigating the impact of COVID-19 towards mental health of junior high school students of Esperanza National High School as a basis for psychoeducational program.

Specifically, the study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
  - 1.1 age;
  - 1.2 gender; and
  - 1.3 socioeconomic status?
2. What is the level of psychological distress of the respondents caused by COVID-19 pandemic?
3. What are the coping mechanisms of respondents in alleviating the impact of the pandemic?
4. Is there a significant relationship between the psychological distress and coping mechanisms of the respondents?
5. Based on the result of the study, what psychoeducational program can be prepared to address the impact of pandemic?

#### **Significance of the Study**

The results of this action research were beneficial to the school administrators, guidance counselor, teachers, parents as well as to students. This provided a guide on how to conduct an intervention program that will help on reducing psychological distress by the utilization of several coping mechanisms. This also provided deeper insights regarding the experiences of students during pandemic.

**Scope and Limitation**

The general intent of this study focused on investigating the impact of COVID-19 towards mental health of junior high school students as a basis for psychoeducational program. This study mainly assessed the level of psychological distress of students during the pandemic along with their coping mechanisms. Also, this study considered every aspect of students' personal information that affect their level of psychological distress such as age, gender and socioeconomic status.

Moreover, this study was conducted at Esperanza National High School located at Mabolo Street, Poblacion, Esperanza, Sultan Kudarat during the Academic year 2021-2022. The respondents of the study were taken from the school and delimited to randomly selected junior high school students from Grade 7 to 10.

#### **IV. ACTION RESEARCH METHODS**

This section presented and discussed the structure of the study in terms of research design, research locale, respondents of the study, data gathering procedure and instrumentation. The data analysis which showed an organized way of solving the stated problems in this study is also presented. These help the researcher in formulating significant conclusions and recommendations.

##### **Research Design**

This study employed a descriptive-correlational design. In descriptive-correlational design, variables are described and relationship that occur between and among them are assessed (Sousa, et al. 2007). Through descriptive-correlational design, demographic profile was described as well as determining the level of psychological distress and coping mechanisms. Additionally, it determined the significant relationship of psychological distress and coping mechanisms. The findings of this study became the basis for preparing a psychoeducational program.

##### **Locale of the Study**

This study was conducted in Esperanza National High School. This DepEd school is located at Esperanza, in the province of Sultan Kudarat and had passed the Level 3 of School-Based Management Evaluation. ENHS has stood as a hallmark and became the education hub in Sultan Kudarat, holding the banner as one of the Most Effective Public Secondary Schools in Region XII garnering numerous awards and recognition in various competitions in the division, regional and national levels.

However, the students of ENHS were facing difficulty in adjusting to changes caused by the pandemic. Their social interactions were limited and they resort in using gadgets to stay connected with others. Their typical school routine was also interrupted. From face-to-face learning, they were abruptly shifted into blended approach. Additionally, these students were experiencing uncertainty if they can still continue their studies. Their families cannot anymore sustain their needs in the new normal mode of learning. Hence, students' mental health were affected and they were feeling distressed.

In response to this pressing problem concerning the mental health of students, the guidance office had assessed that students' mental health got worsened during the pandemic but has no means to mitigate the concern. This result to ENHS to struggle as many students were unable to cope up with their studies and some decided to stop their schooling.

### **Respondents of the Study**

The respondents of the study were 385 junior high school students from grade 7 to 10 who were enrolled for the school year 2021-2022. Students who fulfilled the inclusion criteria which include age range from 13 to 16 years old and have online access were included in the study population. Respondents were determined through simple random sampling. Junior high school students were selected as respondents of the study for the reason that they undergo the drastic changes of adolescence period which gets worsened during the pandemic. Adolescence is a transitional period from childhood to adulthood which is marked by conflicts, challenges and difficulty in adjustment. Junior high school



students belonging to this adolescence period experience both the difficulties of growing up and problem on adaptation caused by the pandemic.

### **Sampling Technique**

Simple random sampling was used to identify the respondents. This was done by determining the total number of enrollees. There were 3,596 students enrolled for the school year 2021-2022. To compute and get the sample size, Cochran's formula is utilized. This formula is appropriate in calculating an ideal sample size in situation with larger population (Statistics How To, 2021). Using the Cochran's formula, the computed sample size was 385 respondents who were taken from 75 sections.

After sample size was determined, respondents were randomly selected through lottery method.

### **Data Gathering Instrument**

This study made use of a 3-part researcher-made questionnaire. Part 1 dealt with the Demographic Profile. This portion of the instrument focused on the profile of the respondents which included age, gender and socioeconomic status.

Part 2 dealt with the level of psychological distress of the respondents. This part of the instrument was designed to gather information and examine the degree or level of psychological distress of the respondents caused by the pandemic. And Part 3 dealt with coping mechanisms which is designed to identify the strategies which they used to cope with the impact of pandemic. The draft of the items in this

questionnaire was drawn out based on the responses of students during rapid field survey.

The questionnaire utilized Filipino medium and this underwent validation process before these were laid on to the study. Validity of the questionnaire was checked by a panel of experts. Likert scale was applied. The choices presented in the questionnaire was interpreted as follows: 5 = Palagi, 4 = Madalas, 3 = Paminsan-minsan, 2 = Bihira and 1 = Hindi.

### **Data Gathering Methods**

The researcher utilized the following steps to gather the necessary data for the study. Permission to conduct the rapid field survey was obtained from the principal of Esperanza National High School. Upon approval of the principal, this study was conducted.

A rapid field survey was conducted to generate information about the students' experiences during the pandemic. The gathered information from the rapid field survey was used in drafting the researcher-made questionnaires which underwent validation process.

After the questionnaire was made and validated, the researcher sought the permission from the curriculum chairman of every grade level and from the teachers where the data was collected. This was followed by determining the respondents of the study using simple random sampling technique. Consent for the identified respondents to join the study was obtained from their parents or guardians.

The researchers began to gather the data by distributing the online survey questionnaires using Google Form. Upon clicking the link and entering the password given by the researcher, the respondents was

directed to the information about the study. General purpose and significance of the study was briefed to the respondents. They were instructed on how to fill out the forms. Names were optionally type in the questionnaire for the purpose of anonymity and respondents were assured that their responses were treated confidentially. After filling out the basic information, this were followed by answering sets of questions which appeared consecutively.

The first part of the questionnaire asked for the demographic profile of the respondents. Responses on age, gender and socioeconomic status were identified. This was followed by the items on the level of psychological distress and coping mechanisms.

Data were collected through downloading the responses from Google Form into a spreadsheet format. These were stored on an external drive and kept secured. After data were collected, the researcher utilized statistical tools of frequency counts, mean and Pearson r correlation coefficient to scrutinize the findings. Based on the results of the study, psychoeducational program was prepared. The researcher formulated conclusions and suggested possible recommendations.

### **Ethical Issues**

Creswell (2009) stated that it is crucial for the researcher to anticipate the ethical issues that may arise in conducting a study. However, it is the duty of the researcher to ensure that identity and personal information of the respondents will be kept and that their rights during the process of research are protected. Given that the respondents of the study are junior high school students, researcher sought the

permission of their parents or guardians through a consent form before the conduct of the research. The consent form articulates the general information about the study, the right of the child to withdraw and the security of child's information.

Moreover, due to the fact that the distribution of questionnaires was done using online platform specifically Google Form, the researcher adhered to the ethical guidelines stated by Gupta (2017). To ensure that only the identified respondents answered the questionnaire, password identity system was used. This was to secure the truthfulness of the responses and the authenticity of the respondents. Additionally, privacy statement was provided to respondents which explicitly mentioned the purposes for which the data was used and the strategies for maintaining anonymity, confidentiality and data protection using online platform. In support to maintaining anonymity, names were optionally type by the respondents in the questionnaire.

Upon collecting the data, keeping confidential information and data protection were observed. Data were collected from the Google Form and these were transferred into excel file which were stored in external drive. The excel file was protected by a password to ensure that unauthorized person will not be able to access the data. While the google form was permanently deleted in the google drive. The stored excel file in the computer was also deleted as soon as the study was completed. Only the tabulated and analyzed responses were presented in the research study.

## Data Analysis Techniques

This study employed statistical tools in analyzing the data. To determine the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of age, gender and socioeconomic status, responses were tabulated and analyzed using frequency counts. The results presented the typical profile of the respondents. For the identification of the level of psychological distress and coping mechanisms of the respondents, frequency counts and mean were utilized to assess the impact of pandemic on mental health and to determine the typical form of coping among respondents.

Furthermore, for the significant relationship between psychological distress and coping mechanisms, this was analyzed using Pearson r correlation coefficient to determine the association of the level of psychological distress and choice of coping.

The results of data analysis provided the basis for preparing the psychoeducational program.

The following parameters were used to describe the level of psychological distress and the extent of coping mechanism.

**Table 1. Criteria for interpreting the Level of Psychological Distress**

<b>Mean</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
4.50-5.00	Very High Level
3.50-4.49	High Level
2.50-3.49	Moderately High Level
1.50-2.49	Low Level
1.00-1.49	Very Low Level

**Table 2. Criteria for interpreting the Extent of Coping Mechanism**

<b>Mean</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
4.50-5.00	Very High in Extent
3.50-4.49	High in Extent
2.50-3.49	Moderate in Extent
1.50-2.49	Low in Extent
1.00-1.49	Very Low in Extent

## V. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND REFLECTION

This section presented, analyzed and interpreted the data taken from the online survey questionnaire. The presentation of the data followed the order of the action research questions.

### Demographic Profile of the Students

Demographic profile referred to the characteristics that have great influence on how the individual perceives situation and handles problems. The profile in terms of age, gender and socioeconomic status were presented.

**Table 3. Age of Students**

Age (in years)	Number of Students (f)	Percentage (%)
12	22	5.7
13	110	28.6
14	112	29.1
15	97	25.2
16	32	8.3
17	12	3.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 showed the age distribution of respondents enrolled in the school year 2021-2022. The age range was between twelve (12) and seventeen (17) years old. Out of 385 students, 112 students were aged 14, 110 students were aged 13, 97 students were aged 15, 32 students were aged 16, 22 students were aged 12 and 12 students were aged 17. These figures suggested that mental health problems may occur to any student as young as 12 years old.

**Table 4. Gender of Students**

<b>Sex</b>	<b>Number of Students (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Male	105	27.3
Female	280	72.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 showed the distribution of students according to their sex. The results revealed that there were one hundred five (105) males who represented 27.3% of the respondents and two hundred eighty (280) females representing 72.7 % of the respondents who participated in the study. These findings of the study revealed that there were many female respondents than males. This further suggested that there is increasing number of females who need to be assessed during the pandemic.

**Table 5. Socioeconomic Status of Students**

<b>Monthly Family Income</b>	<b>Number of Students (f)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
PHP 10,480.00 pababa	231	60
Nasa sa pagitan ng PHP10,481.00 at PHP 20,962.00	73	19
Nasa pagitan ng 20,962.00 at PHP 41,924.00	51	13.2
Nasa sa pagitan ng 41,924.00 at PHP 73,367.00	12	3.1
Nasa sa pagitan ng 73,367.00 at PHP 125,772.00	4	1
Nasa sa pagitan ng 125,772.00 at PHP 209,620.00	5	1.3
PHP 209,620.00 pataas	9	2.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 presented the classification of junior high school students according to their socioeconomic status. The data showed that 60% of the respondents belonged to the family with monthly income of less than P10,481.00 (*PHP 10,480.00 pababa*) which implied that most of the junior



high school students of Esperanza National High School were included in very low socioeconomic status.

The findings above suggested that there is a need to consider economic aspect as a major factor of psychological distress among students during the pandemic.

### **Level of Psychological Distress of the Students**

Psychological distress happens when the individual faces stressor and is unable to cope with it. It is viewed as an emotional disturbance that has an impact on the level of functioning specifically social functioning and to the day-to-day living (Wheaton, 2007 cited in Deasy et al., 2014). Table 6 presented this level of psychological distress among respondents.

**Table 6. Level of Psychological Distress**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
1. Nakararamdam ako ng pagkainis at pagkabigo dahil sa mahinang koneksiyon ng internet.	3.6	High Level
2. Nakararamdam ako ng pagod dulot ng ubos-lakas na pagsagot sa napakaraming gawain sa mga modyul.	3.3	Moderately High Level
3. Hindi ako nakatutulong nang maayos dahil sa napakaraming bagay ang pumapasok sa aking isipan ngayong panahon ng pandemya.	3.1	Moderately High Level
4. Nakaramdam ako ng lungkot at pag-iisa sapagkat hindi na ako nakapapagliliwaliw kasama ng aking mga kaibigan.	2.9	Moderately High Level
5. Madalas na nanakit ang katawan ko sa hindi malamang dahilan.	2.6	Moderately High Level
6. Nag-aalala ako na baka mawalan ng trabaho ang aking mga magulang.	3.1	Moderately High Level
7. Nawawalan na ako nang ganang magpatuloy ng aking pag-aaral sa bagong normal na klase.	1.9	Low Level
8. Nalilito ako sa palagiang pag-iiba o pagpapalit ng mga proseso ng pagkatuto.	2.8	Moderately High Level
9. Naiisturbo ako ng mga “notifications” ng “social media sites” kaya nahihirapan akong itaon ang pag-iisip sa panahon ng “online class”.	2.8	Moderately High Level
10. Malimit akong nahaharap sa problemang pinansiyal tulad ng kawalan ng “load” para sa “data subscription” o kawalan ng badyet sa pagkuha ng mga module sa paaralan.	2.9	Moderately High Level
<b>Mean</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>Moderately High Level</b>

*“Nakararamdam ako ng pagkainis at pagkabigo dahil sa mahinang koneksiyon ng internet.”* got the highest mean score of 3.6 which was interpreted as high level of psychological distress. Lisher et al. (2021) supported these findings in which they also found out that student’s distress is caused by not stable internet connection. The problem on internet connection caused difficulties and frustration to students. Thereby affecting their mental health.

While, *“Nawawalan na ako nang ganang magpatuloy ng aking pag-aaral sa bagong normal na klase.”* obtained the lowest mean of 1.9 which was interpreted as low level of psychological distress. Despite of the fact that there are many challenges brought by the pandemic, students are still motivated to continue their studies. Ambelu et al. (2021) revealed on their study that low psychological distress may occur specifically to individuals who have better coping. In this case, more students are still driven to continue their schooling despite their struggles during the pandemic.

The other indicators got the mean of 2.50-3.49 which was interpreted as moderate level of psychological distress. Students were feeling distressed but it didn’t impair their functioning and daily living.

### **Coping Mechanisms of the Students**

Coping mechanisms include ways which can be used in dealing with stressors. These are consisted of different strategies which do help the individual handles mental health problem specifically psychological distress. The extent of different coping mechanisms of students during the pandemic are presented.

**Table 7. Coping Mechanisms in alleviating the impact of pandemic**

Indicators	Mean	Interpretation
Inaaliw ko ang sarili sa pamamagitan ng pagdarasal at pagninilay.	4.04	High in Extent
Nakikinig ako ng musika upang marelaks ang aking isip at katawan.	4.25	High in Extent
Ibinabaling ko ang aking atensiyon sa ibang gawain upang maalis sa isip ko ang mga bagay-bagay.	3.71	High in Extent
Nakikipag-usap ako sa aking mga kaibigan sa pamamagitan ng "video calling" at "chatting".	3.29	Moderate in Extent
Sinasagutan ko lamang ang mga nauunawaan kong mga gawain sa modules.	2.51	Moderate in Extent
Humihingi ako ng tulong sa iba para sa mga araling nahihirapan ako.	2.96	Moderate in Extent
Maraming oras ang ginugol ko sa paglalaro ng "online games" upang malabanan ko ang lungkot at pag-iisa.	2.19	Low in Extent
Di ako nagpapaapekto sa mga kinakaharap kong problemang may kaugnayan sa mga "subjects" at "grades" ko.	2.04	Low in Extent
Gumawa ako ng estratehiya sa pamamahala ng aking oras sa paglalaro, pag-aaral at pagsasagawa ng mga gawaing bahay.	3.41	Moderate in Extent
Ayaw kong tanggapin ang new normal at ninanais ko pa ring bumalik sa buhay bago ang pandemya.	3.10	Moderate in Extent
<b>Mean</b>	<b>3.15</b>	<b>Moderate in Extent</b>

*"Nakikinig ako ng musika upang marelaks ang aking isip at katawan."* got the highest mean of 4.25 which was interpreted as high in extent coping mechanism. For the students, music is a great way to cope with the distressed feelings. According to Misic and Arandjelovic (2011), there are many benefits of music to adolescents that is why they are hook to it. These include emotional, social and daily life benefits which they can further used to relieve from stress and effectively used for relaxation.

*"Inaaliw ko ang sarili sa pamamagitan ng pagdarasal at pagninilay."* followed the above statement with a mean score of 4.04 which was interpreted as high in extent coping mechanism. Based on the categories of coping by Folkman and Moskowitz (2004), turning to religion is one of the strategies in emotion-focused coping. This can be inferred that due to

the overwhelmed feelings which are mostly negative, students usually turn to their faith as coping.

*“Ibinabaling ko ang aking atensiyon sa ibang gawain upang maalis sa isip ko ang mga bagay-bagay.”* was in the third place with a mean of 3.71 which was interpreted as high in extent coping mechanism. This result implied that for the students to cope during the pandemic, they tend to disengage and divert. The students are trying to lessen or remove the negative feelings by moving away and diverting it to other things.

In contrary, *“Maraming oras ang ginugugol ko sa paglalaro ng ‘online games’ upang malabanan ko ang lungkot at pag-iisa”* got the lowest mean of 2.19 which was interpreted as low in extent coping mechanism. Although it was observed that students frequently played online mobile games, it was not found in this study that they utilized it to cope with their distressed feelings.

*“Di ako nagpapaapekto sa mga kinakaharap kong problemang may kaugnayan sa mga “subjects” at “grades” ko.”* also got the lowest mean of 2.04 which was interpreted as low in extent coping mechanism. It was not observed in the study that students showed the tendency to surrender or give up with their academics. They were striving to answer questions and activities in their modules.

Moreover, other indicators got the mean of 2.50-3.49 which was interpreted as moderate in extent. Coping was used in moderation by the students.

From the findings above, it was observed that students utilized varied ways to cope with psychological distress from listening to music, turning into religion and disengagement. Although, disengagement is an

avoidant or maladaptive coping which is directed away from the threat as stated by Roth and Lawrence (1986) cited in Dubow and Rubinlicht (2011), students showed the tendency to use it for they think it can help them cope with distress.

Furthermore, analysis from Table 8 revealed the computation of  $r(383) = .77, p < .001$ , significant if  $p < 0.05$  which indicated that psychological distress and coping mechanisms were found to be significantly correlated or there was a relationship between the variables. The findings also showed a high positive correlation between psychological distress and coping mechanisms which further revealed that as the level of psychological distress increases so do the extent of coping mechanism and vice versa.

**Table 8. Test of Significance of Relationship between Psychological Distress and Coping Mechanism**

	<b>Variables</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>r</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p-value</b>
1	Psychological Distress	385	0.77**	383	0.01
2	Coping Mechanism				

\*\* – Correlation is significant if  $p < 0.05$  (2-tailed)

This unusual result of the study where coping mechanisms was not proven to reduce psychological distress can be accounted to the kind of coping mechanism that the students frequently utilized. Since there was maladaptive coping, the results didn't turn to what is expected. These findings were supported by Liang et al. (2020) where they revealed on their study that coping is linked to psychological distress. It was further found out by them that negative coping style and avoidance-focused coping are

strong predictors of psychological problem. Hence, the level of psychological distress is highly dependent on the type of coping being utilized by students.

It is further suggested that to reduce psychological distress, high in extent coping mechanisms that includes listening to music and praying and meditating which are positive or adaptive will be included in the psychoeducational program.

**Table 9. Psychoeducational Program**

Psychoeducational program relies on the fact that providing information on the mental health condition and ways to cope will help the individual get through with the condition, be able to function well and live one's life.

This was the prepared psychoeducational program based on the results and findings of the study.

Goals	Activity	Month	Person Involved
Give information to students about mental health and how to handle mental health problems	Delivering Mental Health topics through Radio-based Instruction (RBI) and Multimedia Platforms	All year-round	Guidance Counselor, School Mental Health Coordinator, Teachers, Students
Educate students about the common signs of psychological distress during the pandemic and ways to cope	Distributing pamphlets and materials through digital forms	June – October	Guidance Counselors, School Mental Health Coordinator, Students
Orient teachers and parents in identifying distressed students and how to assist them	Promulgating division memorandum to include the orientation to teachers and parents about how to identify a distressed student and ways to best help the student	June – September	Division Superintendent, School principal, School Mental Health Coordinator, Guidance counselor, teachers, students
Setup a communication system to refer highly distressed students	Create a mental health hotline for those students who are seeking for mental health assistance	All year-round	Mental health Division Personnel, Guidance counselor, Students

## **Reflections**

The COVID-19 Pandemic had brought great impact to the lives of students. Since its onset, students are the primary ones to suffer the consequences specifically on their mental health. The health restrictions and protocols had resulted to school closures that compelled the students to stay at their homes and continue their studies through distance learning that utilized both modular and online approaches. With the struggles and challenges in studies and in day-to-day living of students, they were vulnerable to mental health problems such psychological distress. The students were eager to learn with the new learning delivery mode however, they felt distress due to problem on internet connectivity.

To cope with the distressed feelings, students utilized coping mechanisms that they think can help them however in reality, it only offers a temporarily relief such as the coping of disengagement. The coping mechanisms that can best help students are through music and through praying.

## **VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, the following generalizations are made.

1. Most number of students who took part in the study were 14 years old, were female and family with monthly income of less than P10,481.00. It can be concluded therefore that most students who participated in the study are included in the same demographic.
2. It was evident that psychological distress is felt by junior high school students. They are distressed due to internet connectivity but still eager to continue their studies. It is therefore concluded that slow internet connection caused too much distress to students.
3. There are negative coping mechanisms utilized by students that did not alleviate the impact of pandemic on mental health. It is therefore concluded that there is a need to identify between negative and positive coping mechanisms.
4. High positive correlation was found. As the level of psychological distress increases so do the extent of coping mechanism and vice versa. It is therefore concluded that not all coping are positive or adaptive, thus there is a need to incorporate coping that can reduce psychological distress.
5. The gathered findings of the study were utilized in preparing for an intervention program. It can be concluded that psychoeducational program which emphasize the utilization of positive coping can be prepared in lowering down psychological distress during COVID-19 pandemic.



## **Recommendations**

Based from the findings and conclusions of this study, the following are herein recommended:

1. Another similar study will be conducted to senior high school students to get a richer presentation of students' mental health. The wider the population of the study, the more that it can be useful during the pandemic.
2. The school specifically the guidance office through the school mental health will include the implementation of psychoeducational program for distressed students in the annual plan of activities. The inclusion of this intervention will provide strong ground of support from the school's administration, teachers and parents.
3. A study can be conducted on the effectiveness of psychoeducational program after it is being implemented. Revision based on the results of the study can be made to further refined the program and suit to student's need.
4. Future researchers could replicate the study in other school or localization and include other variables not covered in this study.

## **ACTION PLAN DISSEMINATION AND UTILIZATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY**

The following actions and initiatives will be taken to effectively implement the result of this research. These activities will be initiated after the submission and acceptance of the final manuscript in the division and regional offices.

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Persons Involved</b>	<b>Target Date</b>	<b>Possible Result</b>
Orientation with the Schools Division Superintendent and Division Research Coordinator about the Significant Findings of the Study	Researchers, Schools Division Superintendent, Division Research Coordinator	March 2022	The SDS and Division Research Coordinator will be acquainted of the significant findings of the study. They will be informed about the mental health condition of the students and the proposed psychoeducational program as intervention.
Orientation with the Mental Health Division	Researchers, Mental Health Personnel	April 2022	The mental health division will be acquainted with the results of the study.

			They will be informed of their great role to lead the implementation of psychoeducational program among schools to help students cope with their difficulties during the pandemic.
Orientation of the School Head about the significant findings of the study.	Researchers and School Administrator	April 2022	The school head will be acquainted with the results of the study. He will be oriented of the things that can be done to help students cope with their psychological distress during COVID-19 pandemic by supervising the conduct of

			psychoeducational program.
Orientation with the School Guidance Office about the significant findings of the study.	Researchers and Guidance Counselor	April 2022	School Guidance Office will be acquainted with the results of the study. They will take the lead role in conducting the psychoeducational program to help high school students cope with their psychological distress during the pandemic.
Giving of a Hardcopy of Manuscript to school library as well as other secondary schools in Sultan Kudarat	Researchers	April 2022	School Library will have the hard copy of the manuscript. They can use it to replicate studies regarding psychological distress and coping mechanisms of junior high school students

			after exposure to the pandemic.
Submission of the Hardcopy of the Manuscript in the Division Office.	Researchers	April 2022	The Division Office will have the hard copy of the manuscript. They can use it to replicate studies regarding the mental health condition of students in Sultan Kudarat during the pandemic.
Submission of the Hardcopy and Softcopy of the Manuscript in the Regional Office	Researchers	May 2022	The Regional Office will have the hard copy of the manuscript. They can use it to replicate studies regarding the mental health condition of students during the pandemic in the region.
Using the significant findings	Researchers	May 2022	The school administrators will be

of the study during the Division Management Committee (MANCOM) Meeting			aware of the current mental health status of junior high school students. They will be encouraged to adapt the psychoeducational program.
Using the significant findings of the study during faculty meetings and other conferences	Researchers	June 2022 to April 2023	The teachers will be aware of the difficulties experienced by the students during the pandemic and will be involved in the conduct of psychoeducational program.
Joining the research conferences as per approval of the BERF 2021	Researchers	June 2022 to April 2023	Teachers from other divisions will be aware of the mental health condition of junior high school students during the pandemic as well as

			the proposed psychoeducational program.
Online Publication of the Manuscript as per approved by BERF COMMITTEE	Researchers and BERF Committee	June 2022 to April 2023	Significant findings as well as the methodology of the research can be accessed online.

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