STUDENTS' ADVERSITIES, COPING, AND ANXIETY ON LEARNING IN THE NEW NORMAL

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed significant challenges to the educational sector, resulting in school closures due to lockdown measures. In response to this unprecedented situation, educational institutions swiftly transitioned to alternative learning modes. A new standard educational system emerged after the pandemic, necessitating significant modifications in students' learning processes. This study examined students' adversities, coping mechanisms, and anxiety levels in the context of the new normal while also comparing these variables across different demographic profiles, namely sex and age. A cross-sectional comparative non-experimental quantitative research design was employed to address these questions. Data were collected using the Adversities Questionnaire developed by Musingafi et al. (2015), the Brief COPE Questionnaire by Carver (1997), and W. K. Zung's self-rating scale (William, 1971) among third-year Bachelor of Elementary Education students at a State University in Cagayan Valley. The results indicate that students generally experience low levels of adversities in learning during the new normal. Moreover, students' coping strategies in this environment are predominantly adaptive, while anxiety levels related to learning are notably high. Furthermore, irrespective of students' sex and age, similar patterns of adversities, coping strategies, and anxiety levels in learning during the new normal were observed.

Keywords: *student adversities, coping, anxiety, new normal*

INTRODUCTION

Corona Virus Disease, or COVID-19, was one of the most serious global health threats, posing challenges to various infected countries worldwide (World Health Organization, 2020). It belongs to a large family of viruses that cause diseases ranging from the common cold or flu to more severe infections, and these can be passed from person to person, typically through direct contact, via droplets, and fomites (Department of Health, 2020). Tarkar (2020) found that the COVID-19 pandemic caused disturbances in the educational system because all school systems, including higher education institutions, had to close down to mitigate the spread of the virus. Furthermore, on May 24, 2020, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) issued CHED COVID ADVISORY No. 7, a memorandum on the guidelines for the prevention, control, and mitigation of the spread of Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in HEIs. This suspended face-to-face or in-person classes, resulting in the transition towards the new normal, where the educational system shifted to learning modalities beyond traditional face-to-face instruction. This significantly disrupted every area of human existence, including the education sector, because this pandemic dramatically affects students' learning and well-being, and it can substantially expand the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged learners in their access to inclusive and quality education (Dawadi et al., 2020).

Flexible learning is how the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) describes learning in the new normal. According to CHED Memorandum Order (CMO) No. 4 s. 2020, implementing flexible learning in all public and private Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) is effective beginning Academic Year 2020-2021 as a part of shifting the learning modalities towards the new normal. It is defined as a pedagogical strategy that allows for time, place, and audience flexibility, including but not limited to using technology when traditional learning techniques are unavailable. In times of mass emergencies such as the pandemic, this ensures continuous access to inclusive and quality education. Furthermore, to meet the learner's individual needs in terms of place, pace, method, and product of learning, synchronous and asynchronous classes are considered a new model of instruction as a part of flexible learning in the

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new normal education (Commission on Higher Education, 2020). Under synchronous learning, learners and educators interact in real time, usually through virtual platforms provided by communication technologies such as video conferencing, teleconferencing, live chatting, live streaming, and other similar methods. On the other hand, asynchronous learning is a method of delivering lessons in which teachers and learners do not interact in real-time, usually through self-paced learning modules, recorded video and audio content, uploaded lecture notes, and similar methods (CHED, 2020). These new modes of instruction assist learners and educators in accessing quality education while ensuring their safety against the virus.

The abrupt changes in learning modalities in the educational system require learners to adjust to these new modes of instruction; thus, students face learning adversities. Students' learning adversities are the typical hardships they encounter in the specific area of instruction (Perkins, 2007), and, as a result, a disturbing number of students have highly negative and sad classroom experiences (Prior, 1996). It is also defined as a state of hardship, difficulty, or misfortune that students must endure while learning (Fort Behavioral Health, 2021). Adversities in learning are an unavoidable but necessary part of the learning process. Hacimustafaoglu (2020) found that students who have been absent from school due to the pandemic over an extended period face more problems adapting to learning. Poor study habits cause difficulty absorbing course information and trouble planning and organizing tasks.

Furthermore, rebuilding relationships with their instructors on a virtual platform adds to the burden of students' learning (Kobylarek, 2021). The ability to effectively deal with learning adversities is a big help in decreasing the pressure brought on by the pandemic in the educational system. Thus, building supportive relationships in the classroom, generating safe spaces, and maximizing strengths by encouraging self-regulation are all important ways of reducing student adversity in teaching and learning (Jennings, 2019). Thus, it is critical to investigate learning adversities to meet student's needs and provide an effective teaching and learning environment. Furthermore, Pratt (2014) found that these learning adversities among students are interrelated with the occurrence of learning anxiety because as the level of adversities they encounter increases, learning anxiety levels also grow.

College students are experiencing high levels of anxiety as the educational system evolves into the new normal (Puswiartika et al., 2021). Learning anxiety is defined as the fear of trying something new because we believe it will be too difficult or that we will fail miserably (Jegede & Kirkwood, 1994). It is a persistent, hidden condition that affects learning (Russel & Topham, 2012), and educational success declines in both male and female students as anxiety levels rise (Nadeem et al., 2012). Hashempour and Mehrad (2014) also found that when students have intense worry about the future and recent occurrences, they suffer from learning anxiety. In addition, having a high level of anxiety can threaten self-esteem and, in extreme cases, even one's identity (Coutu, 2002).

In contrast, less stressed students do better (Rosenfeld, 2020). Savitsky et al. (2020) also state that fear of infection was sustainably associated with higher anxiety in the post-pandemic period. Previous studies have found that academic workload and an absence of participation in social activities, especially during exam season, are possible causes of students' learning anxiety and that a lack of balance between personal and academic life also contributes to learning anxiety formation among students (Sprung & Rogers, 2021). It was also found that male students experienced more anxiety than female students (Ajmal & Ahmad, 2019).

Considering those mentioned above, there is a need to strengthen the relationship between learners and educators in providing quality education and preventing learners from experiencing learning anxiety (Alindao et al., 2022). Furthermore, it is critical to assess the level of anxiety among students to reduce the likelihood of its occurrence and its impact on the learning process. According to Tuncay et al. (2008), coping was linked to emotion management, specifically anxiety. In contrast, emotion-based coping was linked to higher anxiety, while problem-based coping was linked to lower anxiety.

As previously stated, learning adversities and anxiety harm students' learning; thus, coping with this new mode of instruction is vital for students to adapt to these new learning modalities in the new normal education to become effective learners. Coping among students in the new normal consists of the continually changing cognitive and behavioral strategies they use to maintain specific external or internal learning needs that are regarded as challenging or surpassing the student's resources (Ryan, 2013). It is also described as a psychological process that seeks to mitigate or minimize students' stress in the classroom (Olila, 2021). Even after experiencing a traumatic event, time management and optimism can assist them in becoming effective learners. Students who manage their time more productively and efficiently reduce stress and frustration, develop confidence, and feel better (Mancini, 2007). It matters because you feel empowered by completing tasks and having the time to enjoy life's basic joys rather than rushing around in a flurry (Seaward, 2011). Staying optimistic is also one of the techniques for coping. Majrashi et al. (2021)

reveal that staying optimistic, seeking information and consultation, and transference are effective strategies for dealing with this learning modality in the post-pandemic.

Furthermore, employing coping strategies in learning helps students increase their learning performances. Previous researchers have found that "active coping" and "positive reinterpretation and growth" are the two most prevalent problem-focused and emotion-focused coping styles (Esia-Donhoh et al., 2011). Other factors contribute to effective learning coping, such as creating new learning styles and behavioral patterns, utilizing technology to support teaching and learning, and committing oneself to discipline, commitment, and purpose (Olila, 2021).

Adversities, coping, and anxiety have a significant impact on students' learning in the new normal. Based on the previous studies discussed, students face a variety of adversities while learning, resulting in the development of a high level of anxiety among them. However, coping with this new mode of instruction by employing various techniques reduces the probability of anxiety among them. It assists them in overcoming adversities, thereby becoming effective learners in the new normal education. Fritzgerald and Konrad (2021), Cao et al. (2021), and Leamy et al. (2021) recently conducted studies that determined the adversities, coping strategies, and anxiety of students in the new normal, focusing on the transition from traditional face-to-face classes to online courses. These studies are primarily conducted in foreign countries.

This study then aimed to determine the learning adversities and the prevalence of anxiety among students, as well as the practical techniques they employed to cope with the flexible learning classes in the post-pandemic. It was conducted in a local setting, particularly in a state university in the northern province of the Philippines. The study aimed to describe the adversities, coping strategies, and anxiety of students in the new normal, as well as the differences between these variables, to assist school administrators in planning to address the needs of learners based on the learning adversities among students revealed in this study. It was also of great assistance to learners by providing them with effective coping techniques for dealing with this new learning modality and lessening the occurrence of learning anxiety among students by employing these practical coping methods.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a Cross-sectional Comparative Non-experimental Quantitative Research Design. This design utilized a Non-experimental Quantitative approach, where the researcher examined differences between research variables without manipulating them. Specifically, a Comparative Design was employed to compare the adversities, coping strategies, and anxiety levels of students across different groupings based on sex and age. The Cross-sectional aspect provided a temporal dimension, with data collected at a single point in time, allowing respondents to report their current adversities, coping mechanisms, and anxiety related to learning in the new normal.

The study involved college students at the third-year level enrolled in the Bachelor of Elementary Education program at a state university in Cagayan Valley. Respondents were selected using a simple random sampling method. According to Tabachnick and Fidell's Rule of Thumb (8 × 3 (number of variables) + 50 = 74 respondents), a minimum of 74 respondents was required based on the study's variables. However, to ensure robust data, 101 respondents were included in the study to achieve a normal distribution in the data analysis.

Research Instrument

The instrument Musingafi et al. developed in 2015 was adopted to measure the students' adversities in learning in the new normal. This instrument has three categories, namely, individual-related adversities, instructional-related adversities, and institutional-related adversities. There are eight items for individual-related adversities, six for instructional-related adversities, and six for institutional-related adversities.

Carver's instrument, "Brief COPE," was developed in 1997 and adopted to measure the students' coping with learning in the new normal. This instrument has three categories, namely Problem-based Coping, Emotion-based Coping, and Avoidant Coping. This questionnaire consists of 28 items to measure effective and ineffective coping methods. Emotion-Focused Coping for items 5,9,13,15,18,20,21,22,24,26,27 and 28. Problem-Focused Coping for items 2,7,10,12,14,17,23 and 25. Lastly, Avoidant Coping for items 1,3,4,6,8,1,1,16, and 19.

Anxiety

To measure the students' anxiety level in learning in the new normal, William's (1971) instrument was named W. K Zung's Self-Rating Scale was adapted. This questionnaire has two categories, namely Emotional Pointers and

Physical Symptoms. This questionnaire consists of 20 items. Questions 1-5 characterized the emotional pointers of anxiety, while questions 6-10 signify the physical symptoms of anxiety.

Statistical Treatment of Data

Several statistical methods were employed to analyze the data. Firstly, frequency and Percentage were utilized to establish the students' profile, providing a comprehensive overview of their demographic characteristics. Secondly, Mean and Standard Deviation were calculated to describe the extent of respondents' challenges, coping strategies, and anxiety levels related to learning in the new normal. This approach allowed for a quantitative understanding of the average experiences and variability among the respondents.

The study utilized specific scales to interpret the data effectively. For assessing respondents' adversities, coping strategies, and anxiety levels, a 5-point scale was employed, ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree" for adversities and from "Never" to "Always" for coping strategies and anxiety levels. Additionally, scales such as the General Adversities Description Scale, General Coping Description Scale, and General Anxiety Description Scale were used to categorize overall trends. These scales classified data into high or low categories based on predetermined ranges of scores.

Lastly, the independent-sample t-test was conducted to determine significant differences between respondents' challenges, coping strategies, and anxiety levels concerning learning in the new normal. This statistical test provided insights into whether these variables varied significantly between different groups of respondents, such as based on demographic factors like sex or age.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As shown in Table 1, eighty-four (84) or 83.2% of respondents are aged 20 and below, while 17 or 16.8% are aged 21 and above, implying that most respondents are aged 20 and below.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Profile Variables		f n=101	% 100%
Age			
	20 and Below	84	83.2%
	21 and Above	17	16.8%
Sex			
	Male	14	13.9%
	Female	87	86.1%

The items presented in Table 2 elicit the respondents' adversities in learning in the new normal. As obtained from the table under the category of individual-related adversities, the majority of the items were rated as "Neutral," and the remaining 1 item (4), which is *"lack of support from family, friends, etc.",* was rated "Disagree." The respondents generally reported low levels of individual-related adversities in learning in the new normal (M=2.87, SD=0.64). Students experience low levels of adversities in learning because they are given a solid foundation to build a strong relationship with their family and friends for learning. According to Cabrera and Padilla (2016), students credit their families' encouragement and drive to do well in school to succeed in their academic performances.

Then, under the category of instructional-related adversities, five items (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) were rated "Neutral," while the remaining 1 item (6) which is "*Unhelpful course information and lack of direction*," was rated "Disagree." Respondents generally have low instructional-related adversities in learning in the new normal (M=2.63, SD=0.83). Students face low levels of instructional-related adversities because teachers provide adequate learning materials and other resources that aid in learning. It is supported by the study of Manaig et al. (2022) that teachers and school heads demonstrated exceptional new normal leadership skills in terms of adaptation, decision-making, planning, and implementation to meet the needs of students in learning.

Table 2. Adversities Experienced by the Respondents on Learning in the New Normal

Statements	M	SD	Descriptive Interpretation
Individual-Related Adversities			
Lack of sufficient time for study	2.81	1.05	Neutral
Distance from home to school	3.42	1.24	Neutral
Financial constraints	3.24	1.03	Neutral
Lack of support from family, friends, etc.	2.41	1.23	Disagree
The unfavorable home learning environment	2.70	0.88	Neutral
Difficulties in learning technically demanding material	2.91	0.90	Neutral
Lack of experience and or training with instructional technologies	2.82	1.00	Neutral
Conflicts between family and study schedule	2.64	1.15	Neutral
Composite Mean	2.87	0.64	Low level of adversities
Instructional-Related Adversities			
Delayed/ ineffective feedback from the instructors	2.70	0.99	Neutral
Lack of instructor contact and inadequate academic support	2.70	1.01	Neutral
Difficulty in attending face-to-face	2.69	1.12	Neutral
Difficulty in attending laboratory practical	2.69	1.11	Neutral
Poor course material design/ inappropriate learning materials	2.56	1.13	Neutral
Unhelpful course information and lack of direction	2.43	1.10	Disagree
Composite Mean	2.63	0.83	Low level of adversities
Institutional-Related Adversities			
Difficulty in administrative services such as registering and paying the fee	2.80	1 .06	Neutral
Lack of appropriate advice provided under the umbrella of the student service support	2.76	1.01	Neutral
Lack of an effective institutional network of technical assistance	2.55	0.88	Neutral
Lack/ delay of important information	2.59	0.97	Neutral
Composite Mean	2.68	0.79	Low level of adversities
Grand Mean	**2.73**	**0.64**	**Low level of adversities**

All items under the category of institutional-related adversities obtained the rating “Neutral.” According to the general adversities’ description scale, the respondents generally experience low-level institutional-related learning adversities (M= 2.68, SD= 0.79). Students have low levels of institutional-related adversities because different administrative services in school are very accessible to them. The institution provides good services like an accessible Facebook page and University Portal wherein they can see their learning progress and updates regarding learning. The study of (Garcia 2018) claimed that having access to learning resources like books and other references drives to provide learners the correct information and support for their studies.

Generally, the respondents experience low levels of learning in the new normal regarding individual-related, instructional-related, and institutional-related adversities (M= 2.73, SD= 0.64). According to this study's findings, they managed their school adversities with support from their family and friends, who encouraged them and gave them the necessary knowledge and guidance in studying. It was supported by the study of Paclikova et al. (2019), which indicates that family support and communication were strongly connected with a lower score in emotional and behavioral adversities of students in learning.

Table 3. Coping Strategies of the Respondents on Learning in the New Normal

Statements	M	SD	Descriptive Interpretation
Problem-focused Coping			
I have been concentrating my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in	3.63	1.15	Often
I have been taking action to try to make the situation better	3.68	1.27	Often
I have been getting help and advice from other people	3.19	1.23	Sometimes
I have been trying to see it in a different light to make it seem more positive	3.26	1.19	Sometimes
I have been trying to come up with a strategy about what to do	3.41	1.15	Sometimes
I have been looking for something good in what is happening	3.54	1.12	Often
I have been trying to get advice or help from other people about what	3.33	1.17	Sometimes
I have been thinking hard about what steps to take	3.41	1.25	Sometimes
Composite Mean	3.43	0.78	Adaptive coping
Emotion-focused Coping			
I Have been getting emotional support from others.	3.07	1.11	Sometimes
I have been saying things to let my unpleasant feelings escape.	3.12	1.03	Sometimes
I have been criticizing myself.	3.10	1.00	Sometimes
I have been getting comfort and understanding from someone.	3.29	1.11	Sometimes
I have been making jokes about it.	3.06	1.01	Sometimes
I have been accepting the reality of the fact that it has happened.	3.49	1.14	Sometimes
I have been expressing my negative feelings.	3.05	1.11	Sometimes
I have been trying to find comfort in my religion or spiritual beliefs.	3.58	1.23	Often
I have been learning to live with it.	3.53	1.18	Often
I have been blaming myself for things that happened.	3.10	1.23	Sometimes
I have been praying or meditating.	3.62	1.51	Often
I have been making fun of the situation.	3.15	1.20	Sometimes
Composite Mean	3.26	0.66	Adaptive coping
Avoidant-Coping			
I have been turning to work or other activities to take my mind off things.	3.16	0.91	Sometimes
I have been saying to myself, "This isn't real".	2.82	0.95	Sometimes
I have been using alcohol or other drugs to make myself feel better.	1.95	1.48	Rarely
I have been trying to give up trying to deal with it.	2.77	1.16	Sometimes
I have been refusing to believe that it has happened.	2.86	1.01	Sometimes
I have been using alcohol or other drugs to help me get through it.	2.03	1.43	Rarely
I have been giving up to attempt to cope.	2.63	1.01	Sometimes
I have been doing something to think about it less, such as going to movies, watching TV, reading, daydreaming, sleeping, or shopping.	3.45	1.22	Sometimes
Composite Mean	2.71	0.63	Maladaptive coping
Grand Mean	**3.33**	**0.47**	**Adaptive coping**
General Coping Description Scale			
3.00– 5.00	Adaptive		
1.00 – 2.99	Maladaptive		

Table 3 reveals how the students cope with learning in the new normal. Under the category of problem-focused coping, five items (10,12,14,23 and 25) obtained a "Sometimes" rating, while the remaining three items, which is "*I have been concentrating my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in," "I have been taking action to try to make the situation better," and "I have been looking for something good in what is happening*," obtained an "Often" rating. The respondents have an adaptive coping strategy to the new normal, on the whole (M= 3.43, SD= 0.78). Respondents reported adaptive problem-focused coping with learning in the new normal because they approach the challenges they face in learning positively by taking action to try to improve the situation. According to Bhujade (2017), typical strategies are used to deal with difficulties in learning at different adjustment levels. Problem-focused strategies such as positive thinking have improved students' social interactions and physical and mental health. It also naturally starts upward cycles of progress. In addition to expanding thought-action repertoires, positive emotions like happiness help all of us develop our intellectual, physical, social, and psychological capacities to combat the adverse effects of their adversities in learning.

Then, under the category of emotion-focused coping, nine items were rated "Sometimes." The remaining three items (22,24,27), which are *"I have been trying to find comfort in my religion or spiritual belief," "I have been learning to live with it," and "I have been praying or meditating,"* were rated "Often." Respondents' adaptive coping on learning in the new normal is generally positive (M= 3.26, SD= 0.66). Learners experience adaptive emotion-focused coping when learning in the new normal because they can manage how they learn through the support they receive from their religion or spiritual belief and learn to live with it. As a result, they became more empowered to learn. Spiritual-based coping, according to Ozcan et al. (2021), helped learners feel grounded, calm, resilient, and present in the learning environment.

Lastly, six items were rated "Sometimes " under the category of avoidant coping." The remaining two items (4 and 11), which are *"I have been using alcohol or other drugs to make myself feel better" and "I have been using alcohol or other drugs to help me get through it,"* were rated "Rarely." Generally, students sometimes employ avoidant coping (M= 2.71, SD= 0.63) because they want to skip themselves from the pressure they get from their studies and maintain their well-being as they go to school. It was supported by the study of Chao (2012), which indicates that it plays an essential role in developing how students process social support and manage stress and well-being.

Using the overall general coping description scale, students' coping on learning in the new normal is adaptive regarding problem-focused, emotion-based, and avoidant-coping (M= 3.33, SD= 0.47). Students have adaptive coping strategies for learning in the new normal because they promote positive learning behavior. It is supported by the study of Monroy et al. (2021), indicating that positive emotions were linked to effective adaptive coping, which was connected to students' involvement and improved day-to-day well-being.

The items included in Table 4 reveal the students' level of anxiety toward learning in the New Normal. All items were rated as "Sometimes" for the emotional pointer of the anxiety category, which implies that the respondents are generally highly anxious about learning in the new normal (M=3.08, SD= 0.66). Due to their fear of trying something new because they think it will be too difficult or that they will fail miserably, they exhibit high levels of emotional pointer anxiety. College students experience emotional anxiety, according to Khoshaim et al. (2020), because of worries about the future, academic pressure from handling challenging activities and assignments, and the desire to enhance their academic performance.

Second, all items under the category of physical signs of anxiety received the same rating of "Sometimes," which implies that the responders are generally very anxious about learning in the new normal (M= 2.97, SD= 0.49). The quick learning environment transition caused by the pandemic harmed students, causing them to feel overwhelmed and anxious and manifest physical symptoms, including headaches, back pain, and weariness. As a result, students' physical anxiety is high. Basday et al. (2016) state that student health, particularly headaches, may affect academic performance. Headache sufferers have trouble concentrating because their pain worsens during tests or exams. It was discovered that headaches impacted students' study, sleep habits, and attention span during lectures.

Table 4. Level of Anxiety of the Respondents on Learning in the New Normal

Statements	M	SD	Descriptive Interpretation
Emotional Pointer of Anxiety	3.23	1.08	

I feel more nervous and anxious than usual.			Sometimes
I feel afraid for no reason at all.	3.19	1.00	Sometimes
I get upset easily or feel panicky.	3.17	1.06	Sometimes
I feel like I'm falling apart and going to pieces.	3.14	1.08	Sometimes
I feel that everything is alright and nothing bad will happen.	3.34	1.03	Sometimes
Composite Mean	3.08	0.66	High Anxiety
Physical Symptoms of Anxiety			
My arms and legs shake and tremble.	3.12	1.13	Sometimes
I am bothered by headaches, neck, and back pain.	3.27	1.11	Sometimes
I feel weak and get tired easily.	3.27	0.97	Sometimes
I feel calm and sit still easily.	3.16	1.01	Sometimes
I can feel my heart beating fast.	3.16	1.06	Sometimes
I am bothered by dizzy spells.	3.01	1.18	Sometimes
I am fainting spells or feel like it.	2.97	1.07	Sometimes
I can breathe in and out easily.	3.35	1.14	Sometimes
I get feelings of numbness and tingling in my fingers and toes.	2.90	1.19	Sometimes
I am bothered by stomachaches or indigestion.	2.78	1.21	Sometimes
I have to empty my bladder often.	2.85	1.01	Sometimes
My hands are usually dry and warm.	2.91	1.21	Sometimes
My face gets hot and blushes.	2.91	1.04	Sometimes
I fall asleep easily and get a good night's rest.	3.17	1.29	Sometimes
I have nightmares.	3.13	1.14	Sometimes
Composite Mean	2.97	0.49	Low Anxiety
Grand Mean	**3.03**	**0.50**	**High Anxiety**
General Anxiety Description Scale			
3.00 – 5.00	High Anxiety		
1.00 – 2.99	Low Anxiety		

Generally, the students have a high level of anxiety about learning in the new normal in terms of emotional pointers and physical symptoms of anxiety (M= 3.03, SD= 0.50). They feel quite anxious because the adverse effects of the change in learning modalities on the educational system are causing them to go through difficult situations and display distressing learning behaviors. It was supported by the study of Jiang et al. (2021), which indicated that anxiety was the most significant issue among the learners. Students are at risk of mental health changes during the coronavirus pandemic, likely due to unanticipated life changes. Additionally, before and after the adoption, student anxiety remained "high," reflecting apprehension and confusion about the new standard for instruction (Mamolo, 2022).

Data analysis shows that there is no significant difference in the adversities experienced by the respondents on learning in the new normal when they are grouped according to age ($t(99)=-1.073, p=0.286$), and sex ($t(99)=1.584, p=0.116$). This implies that regardless of their profile, respondents experience the same adversities.

This shows that respondents' profiles do not affect their learning adversities. Therefore, respondents of all ages and genders encounter the same level of adversity. According to Cornista and Macasaet (2013), the level of difficulties the learner experiences is unaffected by the respondent's age and gender as demographic characteristics. It was supported by the study of Aung & San (2020), who stated that there is no significant difference in sex and age when faced with adversities in the classroom. Additionally, Cura & Gozum (2012) noted that the gender of the responder had no bearing on the degree of learning adversities. They encounter the same learning adversities because they share the same learning environment and academic loads. According to Darling-Hammond and Cook-Harvey (2018), a successful educational experience is based on a positive school/learning environment. It establishes the psychological framework for successful learning. Student engagement and learning are compromised without trusting connections and developmental supports.

Table 5. Comparison of Respondents' Adversities when Grouped According to Profile Variables

Profile Variables		M	SD	t	p
Age					
	20 and Below	2.70	0.67	-1.073	0.286
	21 and Above	2.88	0.45		
Sex					
	Male	2.98	0.68	1.584	0.116
	Female	2.69	0.63		

Furthermore, data analysis also shows that there is no significant difference in the coping experienced by the respondents on learning in the new normal when they are grouped according to age (t(99)=-0.754,p=0.452), and sex (t(99)=-0.742,p=0.46). This implies that respondents have the same coping strategies regardless of their profile.

Table 6. Comparison of Respondents' Coping Strategies when Grouped According to Profile Variables

Profile Variables		M	SD	t	P
Age					
	20 and Below	3.34	0.50	0.754	0.452
	21 and Above	3.25	0.34		
Sex					
	Male	3.24	0.40	-0.742	0.46
	Female	3.34	0.48		

The coping mechanisms male and female responders use to adapt to learning in the new normal are the same through the use of adaptive reasoning, which tends to be functional or active (i.e., concentration, self-escape, and taking action), significant differences between coping strategies of different types were not found. Since Students face the same adversities in learning, they use the exact coping mechanisms to adapt to the new learning environment. Support came from the study of (Farzana et al., 2015), which indicated that there was no significant relationship between the profile of respondents and their use of coping mechanisms as they dealt with various difficulties while adjusting to the new normal.

Table 7. Comparison of Respondents' Level of Anxiety when Grouped According to Profile Variables

Profile Variables		M	SD	t	P
Age					
	20 and Below	3.02	0.51	-0.353	0.725
	21 and Above	3.06	0.49		
Sex					
	Male	2.90	0.58	-0.99	0.325
	Female	3.05	0.49		

Data analysis also shows that there is no significant difference in the level of anxiety experienced by the respondents on learning in the new normal when they are grouped according to age (t(99)=-0.353,p=0.725), and sex (t(99)=-0.99,p=0.325). This implies that regardless of their profile, respondents experience the same level of anxiety.

Respondents in both genders and all ages experience the same level of anxiety. Considering that they are in the same institution, they have the same academic burdens that may contribute to their anxiety level. Based on the study of Gopang et al. (2018), it was found that no significant difference in anxiety levels among students also supported by the study of Pelucio et al. (2022), in which they stated that there were no significant differences in the levels of anxiety between the genders.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The study reveals that in terms of individual-related, instructional-related, and institutional-related adversities to learning, students experience a low level of adversities under the new normal because the result of this study shows that they were able to deal with the adversities they had at school due to the encouragement and support of their friends and family, who provided them with the advice and guidance they needed to succeed in their studies. Moreover, through promoting positive learning behavior, students' problem-focused, emotion-based, and avoidant-coping strategies are adaptive when learning in the new normal. Furthermore, students have a high level of anxiety about learning in the new normal in terms of emotional and physical anxiety symptoms. The adverse effects of the change in learning modalities on the educational system are causing them to encounter difficult situations and exhibit distressing learning behaviors. In determining the difference in adversities, coping, and anxiety of students on learning in the new normal, it was found that students experience the same adversities, coping, and anxiety on learning when grouped by sex and age. The respondents of all ages and genders face the same level of adversity because they are in the same year level, implying that they have the same academic load and learning environment. In addition, regardless of their profile, respondents use the same coping strategies because they experience the same learning adversities, which necessitates using the same coping strategy. Further to that, regardless of their profile, respondents experience the same level of anxiety as they all attend the same institution and encounter the same academic burden.

The study highlighted significant findings regarding students' experiences in the new normal learning environment, shedding light on various aspects that influence their academic journey. One key observation was the relatively low level of adversity students faced, partly attributed to parental solid relationships—a factor identified by researchers as pivotal in mitigating challenges during this period. This underscores the importance of nurturing supportive home environments to enhance students' resilience in adapting to new learning modalities. Moreover, the research identified adaptive coping mechanisms among students, emphasizing the benefit of maintaining an optimistic outlook and actively seeking improvement in their learning experiences. This proactive approach was found to positively impact student's ability to navigate the challenges of the new normal.

Conversely, the study also revealed a heightened level of anxiety among students, often manifesting in physical symptoms like back pain and headaches. To address this, researchers recommended fostering a supportive learning environment and encouraging adaptive adjustments to alleviate anxiety and promote well-being. Looking ahead, the study proposes further exploration into the intricate relationships between students' adversities, coping strategies, and academic performance within the context of the new normal. Future research endeavors could illuminate how these factors interact and influence students' educational outcomes, offering valuable insights for enhancing support systems and academic practices in similar settings.

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