

Mental Health of Students in the Philippines during Pandemic: An assessment

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Abstract— This research was made to assess the mental health and psychological wellness during the community quarantine of the 500 selected students from the College of Management and Business Technology (CMBT), of Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST). The CMBT was located at Sumacab, Cabanatuan City, Philippines.

The outcomes of the present study will be beneficial and valuable to the following: To the students. The result of this study will provide necessary pieces of information of the mental health of the student which could be a great help to the respondents in understanding themselves. It can also help them to be more aware about mental and psychological health through the help of the recommendation of the researchers; To the Parents. The results of this study will be beneficial to the parents having children who have the same age bracket as the respondents. The recommendations will help them in dealing with the problems with their children's mental health issues which is not easy to know. To the School. The results of this study can help the school as well as the guidance counselors to know what the main problem of the students is and immediately formulate actions to avoid possible negative effects that can harm the well-being of the students under their supervision. To the Philippine Mental Health Association, Inc. The results of this study will strengthen their promotion of mental health and the prevention of mental health disorders. Lastly, this will also be beneficial to future researchers to draw pertinent results to their studies.

The researchers used a set of a survey questionnaire in gathering pertinent data. The questionnaires were disseminated via an online Google form survey sent to the respondents. After all the data needed were gathered, the frequencies of answers in each question were tallied and their percentage was obtained. Through these, the researchers obtained well conclusions and suitable recommendations.

Keywords— Mental Health, Corona Virus, Pandemic, Community Quarantine, NEUST.

I. INTRODUCTION

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.

Over the course of your life, if you experience mental health problems, thinking, mood, and behavior could be affected. Many factors contribute to mental health problems, including:

- Biological factors, such as genes or brain chemistry
- Life experiences, such as trauma or abuse
- Family history of mental health problems

Mental health problems are common but help is available. People with mental health problems can get better and many recover completely. (mentalhealth.gov)

The whole world is currently suffering into coronavirus pandemic, no one was ready and it affects everyone's mental health. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a communicable virus caused by a new strain of coronavirus. This new disease was strange before the epidemic began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

The Philippine Department of Health informed the public about the first case of COVID-19 in the country on 30 January 2020. A 38-year-old woman from China. On 7 March, the first local transmission of COVID-19 was confirmed. The following week, March 17, 2020, the Philippine government

started to lack-down the whole island of Luzon and other provinces in Visayas and Mindanao and imposed the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ). ECQ is the strictest measure of quarantine. Areas under an enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) were ordered to remain at home, with its people were restricted from traveling to other cities or barangays. The Bayanihan to Heal as One Act also provides measures related to the ECQ, such as: Limitations on all forms of transportation; Work suspensions and the setting up of alternative working arrangements such as teleworking; Ensuring the supply of food and medical products; Measures against profiteering and hoarding of essential goods; Provision allowing a 30-day grace period for loan and rental payments during the quarantine period. (M.Limos, 2020).

Due to this quarantine imposed by the government as a great measure of protecting its people, many have stayed at home together with their families. Some were happy at first but it turned otherwise the following week because of different problems that affect their mental health.

The problem which the researcher wishes to study is about the condition of selected students from the College of Management and Business Technology, of Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, about their mental health and to assess their psychological wellness that affects their everyday living during the community quarantine.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted to determine the mental health problems of the selected students in the College of Management and Business Technology, of Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology.

Specifically, it sought to know the sources of the student's mental health problem during the quarantine period.

1. Social as a factor that affects the student's mental health:
 - 1.1 Social Media
 - 1.2 Neighbors
 - 1.3 Classmates
 - 1.4 Friends
2. Family as a factor that affects the student's mental health:
 - 2.1 Parents
 - 2.2 Siblings
 - 2.3 Relatives

3. Finances as a factor that affects the student's mental health:
 - 3.1 Money
 - 3.2 Budgeting
4. Psychological as a factor that affects the student's mental health:
 - 4.1 COVID-Pandemic Issues
 - 4.2 Home Quarantine
5. The top 10 factors that affect the mental health of the students.
6. Impact of the study of the student's mental health to the following:
 - 6.1 Students
 - 6.2 Family

II. METHODOLOGY

The researcher used the Descriptive Survey Method of research. The study wishes to find out and describe the present profile of the selected students from the College of Management and Business Technology, of the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, located at Sumacab, Cabanatuan City, Philippines. This method was also used in assessing the mental health and psychological wellness of the students such as Social, Family, Finance, and Psychological Issues during community home quarantine which was started from March 16, 2020. The quarantine period which the researchers delimit the study was from March 16 to July 31, 2020.

The study involved 500 selected students from the College of Management and Business Technology, of the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology. Respondents were randomly selected from 1st year, 2nd year, 3rd year, and 4th year level of the said college.

The researchers constructed the questionnaire after understanding the current scenario in the student's mental health and decided to come up with a reliable instrument in the form of a questionnaire, and informal interviews. Brainstorming between the researchers was done to come up with the best questions that will suit to the respondent's experiences during community quarantine. The questionnaires were revised based on the suggestion of the researchers for the betterment of the instrument. The distribution of the questionnaires was done via a google survey form. Google survey form is the most useful way to gather data due to the avoidance of physical contact and social distancing which is

very important nowadays. The data gathered through questionnaires were used only for the study and treated with the greatest confidentiality.

The researchers measured the reliability and validity of the instrument by sending the questionnaires to the individual for trial. Scouting was also done to ensure that the population being studied was counted accurately.

The respondents were randomly selected to give each student the equal opportunity of being selected. Thus, the results would be more reliable with the above-mentioned activities being done before the actual gathering of data.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the result of the online survey conducted with the 500 students from the College of Management and Business Technology, of Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, the following outcomes are:

3.1 PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Table 1 Age of the Respondents

| AGE | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| 17 | 13 | 3% |
| 18 | 91 | 18% |
| 19 | 138 | 28% |
| 20 | 112 | 22% |
| 21 | 49 | 10% |
| 22 | 34 | 7% |
| 23 | 21 | 4% |
| 24 | 10 | 2% |
| 25 and above | 32 | 6% |
| Total | 500 | 100% |

Table 1 shows that the majority of the respondents' age is 19 years old which is 28% of the total respondents, followed by 20 years old which is 22% of the total respondents.

Table 2 Gender of the Respondents

| GENDER | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------|-----------|------------|
| Male | 153 | 30.60% |
| Female | 347 | 69.00% |
| Other | 2 | 0.40% |

| | | |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Total | 500 | 100% |
|--------------|------------|-------------|

Most of the respondents were female, it composes of 69% or over 2 out of 3 respondents, only 30.60% were male and .40% were from another gender.

Table 3 Year Level

| YEAR LEVEL | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| 1st Year | 137 | 27% |
| 2nd Year | 143 | 29% |
| 3rd Year | 115 | 23% |
| 4th Year | 105 | 21% |
| Total | 500 | 100% |

Out of 500 total respondents, Table 3 shows that 29% or the majority came from the 2nd year level, followed by the 1st year students which is 27%.

Table 4 Number of Siblings

| NO. OF SIBLINGS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------|------------|-------------|
| 0 | 32 | 6% |
| 1 | 88 | 18% |
| 2 | 119 | 24% |
| 3 | 123 | 25% |
| 4 | 71 | 14% |
| 5 | 30 | 6% |
| 6 and above | 37 | 7% |
| Total | 500 | 100% |

The number of siblings of the respondents which is shown in Table 4 means 25% have 3 siblings, followed by 24% of the total respondents who have 2 siblings.

Table 5 Number of Household Members

| NO. OF HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 2 | 16 | 3% |
| 3 | 70 | 14% |

| | | |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| 4 | 99 | 20% |
| 5 | 118 | 24% |
| 6 | 92 | 18% |
| 7 | 53 | 11% |
| 8 | 18 | 4% |
| 9 | 20 | 4% |
| 10 and above | 14 | 3% |
| Total | 500 | 100% |

The number of people living in one house is shown in Table 5. The majority of the respondents which is composed of 118 out of 500 have 5 total number of household members living in the same house. The minority has 2 members including the respondents and it represents 3% of the total respondents.

Table 6 Income of the family during Quarantine

| INCOME OF THE FAMILY DURING QUARANTINE (Php) | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--|------------|-------------|
| 0-5,000 | 240 | 48% |
| 5,001-10,000 | 154 | 31% |
| 10,001-20,000 | 67 | 13% |
| 20,001-30,000 | 24 | 5% |
| 30,001-40,000 | 9 | 2% |
| 40,001-50,000 | 1 | 0% |
| 50,001 and above | 5 | 1% |
| Total | 500 | 100% |

Table 6 shows that 48% or almost half of the total respondents have answered their family has a monthly income of 0-P5,000, followed by respondents who have a monthly family income of P5,001-P10,000.

3.2. FACTORS THAT AFFECT MENTAL HEALTH:

3.3.2.1. SOCIAL FACTORS

Table 7 Social Media

| SOCIAL MEDIA | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Never | 123 | 25% |
| Seldom | 56 | 11% |
| Sometimes | 292 | 58% |
| Always | 29 | 6% |
| Total | 500 | 100% |

Social media makes us happy and sad at the same time, and because using social media is now part of our daily lives it affects our mental health. Thus, Table 7 shows that the majority of the respondent answered they were Sometimes affected by social media.

Table 8 Classmates

| CLASSMATES | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|------------|------------|-------------|
| Never | 296 | 59% |
| Seldom | 86 | 17% |
| Sometimes | 110 | 22% |
| Always | 8 | 2% |
| Total | 500 | 100% |

Table 8 shows that most of the respondents were not of Never affected by their classmates during community quarantine. It's because schools and universities were closed during that time.

Table 9 Neighbors

| NEIGHBORS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Never | 229 | 46% |
| Seldom | 90 | 18% |
| Sometimes | 164 | 33% |
| Always | 17 | 3% |
| Total | 500 | 100% |

Table 9 shows that most of the respondents were not or Never affected by their neighbors during community quarantine.

Table 10 Friends

| FRIENDS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---------|-----------|------------|
|---------|-----------|------------|

| | | |
|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Never | 275 | 55% |
| Seldom | 64 | 13% |
| Sometimes | 136 | 27% |
| Always | 26 | 5% |
| Total | 501 | 100% |

Table 10 shows that the majority of the respondents answered they were not or Never affected by their friends, it is composed of 55% of the total respondents, followed by respondents who were answered their mental health was Sometimes affected by their friends.

3.2.2. FAMILY

Table 11 Parents

| PARENTS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Never | 253 | 51% |
| Seldom | 64 | 13% |
| Sometimes | 139 | 28% |
| Always | 44 | 9% |
| Total | 500 | 100% |

Table 11 represents the majority of the respondents is not problematic with their parents during the community quarantine, it has a percentage of 51% or 253 out of the total respondents.

Table 12 Siblings

| SIBLINGS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Never | 261 | 52% |
| Seldom | 78 | 16% |
| Sometimes | 131 | 26% |
| Always | 30 | 6% |
| Total | 500 | 100% |

Table 12 shows that the majority of the respondents were not affected by their siblings during the quarantine period. It represents 52% or 261 out of 500 total respondents.

Table 13 Relatives

| RELATIVES | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Never | 219 | 44% |

| | | |
|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Seldom | 102 | 20% |
| Sometimes | 155 | 31% |
| Always | 24 | 5% |
| Total | 500 | 100% |

Table 13 shows that most of the respondents were not affected by their relatives during the quarantine period. It represents 44% or 219 out of 500 total respondents.

3.2.3. FINACIAL

Table 14 Money

| MONEY | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Never | 83 | 17% |
| Seldom | 89 | 18% |
| Sometimes | 224 | 45% |
| Always | 104 | 21% |
| Total | 500 | 100% |

With regards to Financial Factor, Table 14 shows that money was Sometimes the problem that affects the respondents. It represents 45% of 224 out of 500 total respondents. 21% of the respondents answered: Money is Always part of their problem during community quarantine.

Table 15 Budgeting

| BUDGETING | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Never | 86 | 17% |
| Seldom | 89 | 18% |
| Sometimes | 207 | 41% |
| Always | 118 | 24% |
| Total | 500 | 100% |

Budgeting is very important especially for those families who have a small monthly income. Thus, table 15 shows that budgeting is Sometimes the problem of 41% of the total respondents.

3.3.4. PSYCHOLOGICAL

Table 16 COVID 19 Pandemic Issues

| COVID-ISSUES | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| Never | 55 | 11% |
| Seldom | 61 | 12% |
| Sometimes | 207 | 41% |
| Always | 177 | 35% |
| Total | 500 | 100% |

COVID 19 is the main problem of the whole world during that period or even up to this day. Thus, Table 16 shows that the majority of students as respondents answered it is Sometimes affecting their mental health. However, 35% of the respondents answered, it is Always affecting their mental health during the quarantine period.

Table 17 Home Quarantine

| HOME QUARANTINE | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------|------------|-------------|
| Never | 130 | 26% |
| Seldom | 77 | 15% |
| Sometimes | 212 | 42% |
| Always | 81 | 16% |
| Total | 500 | 100% |

Table 17 shows that Home Quarantine Sometimes bothered them, 42% of the total respondents answered it, and 130 out of 500 respondents or 26% were not or Never affected by this matter.

Table 18 Top 10 Factors that affects the students' mental health

| FACTORS | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| COVID19-Issues | 175 | 35% |
| Social Media | 102 | 20% |
| Money | 72 | 14% |
| Home Quarantine | 51 | 10% |
| Budgeting | 25 | 5% |
| Neighbors | 21 | 4% |

| | | |
|-----------|------------|-------------|
| Parents | 18 | 4% |
| Relatives | 14 | 3% |
| Others | 16 | 3% |
| Friends | 6 | 1% |
| Total | 500 | 100% |

Based on the survey conducted by the researchers, Table 18 shows that COVID19 Issues was the main problem that affects the mental health of many students respondents, followed by social media (20%) which was the most accessible medium to be connected with the world.

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic may be stressful for people. Fear and anxiety about a new disease and what could happen can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children. Public health actions, such as social distancing, can make people feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety. However, these actions are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Coping with stress in a healthy way will make you, the people you care about, and your community stronger. Mental health is an important part of overall health and wellbeing. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It may also affect how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices during an emergency. People with pre-existing mental health conditions or substance use disorders may be particularly vulnerable in an emergency. (CDC, 2020)

After a thorough gathering of data on the descriptive investigation, the researchers made an assessment on the Mental Health of the selected students from the College of Management and Business Technology, of Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology. The researchers therefore conclude and recommends the following statements: Most of the respondents were 19 and 20 years old. This age bracket was mostly from 2nd and 3rd year level. They are the most affected because they do not have a choice but to stay at home. According to the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF), even under the most relaxed form of community quarantine which is the Modified General Community Quarantine (MGCQ), those 21 and below, the senior citizens, and expectant mother must stay home but can only leave their residences to obtain essential goods or to work.

Females were the most numbered respondents, it represents 2 out of 3 of the total respondents. According to the American Psychological Association, Women are more likely to report physical and emotional symptoms of stress than men. (APA, 2010). Thus, the researchers highly recommend to have a stress management seminar or webinars for all the students specifically with the female respondents. This seminar can help them to cope up with the current problem about the corona virus while staying at home.

Most of the respondents have 2 to 3 siblings, and the majority of the respondents answered they have a total of 5 household members. These family members are sometimes their companion in every obstacle which was happening during the community quarantine. However, a family can sometimes be a source of stress that affects the mental health of everyone. The researchers recommend that family ties which is common for every Filipino must strengthen especially during this pandemic. The researchers believed that no one will help you to cope up with your stress except your family.

The majority of the respondents answered they have 0-P5,000 family income, the researchers concludes that this income is not enough for the whole family for 1 month, however, the local government of each municipality gave their support to each family by giving them relief goods that can help them to be well every day. The National government gave them a Social Amelioration Fund (SAF) amounting to P6,500 each family. The researchers commend this move by the government, however, it is highly recommended to study very well the status of every family so that SAF will be given to the families who are most in need or simply the marginalized people of the society.

There are factors that affect the Mental Health of every respondent such as Social, Family, Financial, and Psychological Factors. In Social Factor which comprises Social Media, Friends, Neighbors, and Classmates, the researchers noted a several answers of Sometimes they were affected by Social Media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tiktok, and many more. The researchers conclude that most of the respondents used and get addicted to social media during the quarantine period. Social media addiction is a term that has become familiar over the past few years, with studies linking increased social media usage to negative consequences on users' mental health and development of coping strategies. (C.Foster, 2020). The researchers

recommend the lessening of the use of social media especially if it gives a negative effect on their mental health. The researchers also recommend reading the article of Simone Castello, entitled Digital Detox: 10 Surprisingly Easy Ways to Kick Social Media Addiction.

Another factor that affects the Mental Health is the Family, it includes the Parents, Siblings, and Relatives. According to the survey conducted, most of the respondents were not affected by their parents, siblings, and relatives during the quarantine. The researcher concludes that most of the family where the respondents belong have a good and harmonious relationship between the members especially these times of trials. Family is considered to be the foundation of social life for most Filipinos. The nuclear family is the core family unit, however bonds are often tight knit among extended family members. Indeed, people may be encouraged to have a relationship with their aunts and uncles that is just as strong as the relationship with their parents. (The Cultural Atlas, 2020). The researchers recommend that family must continue their good behavior towards other members to strengthen the love, positivity, and sound mental health. Parents must be the role models in getting their children in the righteous path.

Not only during the pandemic, money is always the problem of the people in the society. A financial problem like budgeting is not easy to solve knowing that most of the respondents belong to the marginalized family. The researchers conclude that respondents who belong to this kind of family sometimes or mostly always have a problem in money, but because the government gave them SAF and relief goods, the burden of having a problem was lessened than expected. However, while people are on quarantine, it may be an opportune time to reflect in terms of the way forward in personal finance. Taking stock of the financial situation and planning for the future are key to sustained personal finance recovery. (G.Lontoc, 2020). The researcher recommends to budget their money and prioritized to buy essential need like foods and vitamins. Thus, it is also recommended to read articles of Chinkee Tan's books: Diary ng Pulubi and My Ipon Diary. The researcher highly recommends to read the articles of different personal finance bloggers. Here's the list of financial gurus and enthusiasts whose blogs are worth bookmarking:

1. Fitz Villafuerte of Ready to Be Rich
2. Tyrone Solee of Millionaire Acts

3. Randell Tionson
4. Chinkee Tan
5. Dr. Pinky De Leon-Intal of My Finance MD
6. Marvin Germa
7. Izza Gline of SavingsPinay
8. Rose Fres Fausto of FQMom
9. Burn Gutierrez of Rock [to](#) Riches
10. Jill Sabitsana of Frugal Honey Final Thoughts (Zoleta, 2020)

COVID 19 is the main problem of the whole world during that period or even up to this day. It was revealed in the survey conducted by the researchers that the majority of students as respondents answered, COVID 19 Pandemic Issues was Sometimes affecting their mental health. However, 35% of the respondents answered, it is Always affecting their mental health just like Home Quarantine which sometimes bothered them too. The researcher concludes that this pandemic and the home quarantines contributed a lot of health anxiety and loneliness to the students. Thus, the researchers recommend to continuously strengthen the support of each member of the family to lessen the negative effect of this pandemic not only physically but also mentally. It is also recommended that guidance coordinators and guidance counselors in Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology to reach the students to address their feelings and to boost their positive mental health.

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