



# American Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation (AJMRI)

ISSN: 2158-8155 (Online), 2832-4854 (Print)

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 3 (2024)



PUBLISHED BY: E-PALLI PUBLISHER, DELAWARE, USA

## Hope as Moderator of Academic Stress and Coping Mechanisms among College Students in Time of Covid-19 Pandemic

Cyrem F. Decena<sup>1\*</sup>, Girlie Jessica A. Baliscao<sup>1</sup>, Krisha Marie Brioso<sup>1</sup>, Erika C. Cortez<sup>1</sup>, Aven D. Francisco<sup>1</sup>

Rain Coleen D. Sacbikit<sup>1</sup>, Leanne Kaye P. Tadena<sup>1</sup>

### Article Information

**Received:** March 17, 2024

**Accepted:** April 23, 2024

**Published:** April 27, 2024

### Keywords

*Locus-of-Hope, Academic Stress, Coping Mechanism, College Students, COVID-19 Pandemic*

### ABSTRACT

College students are among the most strongly affected by COVID-19 because of uncertainty regarding academic stress, future careers, and social life during college. This study used a descriptive correlational design to examine the influence of hope as a moderator on the relationship between academic stress and coping mechanisms among college students during the COVID-19 pandemic. There were three hundred five (305) college student participants that were selected who are currently enrolled from a Higher Education Institution in Region III, with the age range of eighteen (18) to twenty-two (22). Using moderated regression analysis, results showed that there is a significant influence of hope as a moderator on the relationship between academic stress and coping mechanisms among college students in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Of the four dimensions, none of significantly influenced the relationship between academic stress and coping mechanisms among college students during COVID-19 pandemic. In accordance with this, the researchers suggest expanding the study's scope beyond educational settings. Although the researchers did not include in the objectives to look for the agency and pathways, it is recommended to conduct further study to explore these aspects.

### INTRODUCTION

Many lives drastically changed due to the COVID-19. December 2019 in Wuhan China, the coronavirus was first recognized (Zhou *et al.*, 2020). From that point, it became widespread, and there were numerous casualties. at that point, they considered it a pandemic, which, based on the World Health Organization (2020), is "a plague happening around the world, or over a broad part of regions, crossing universal boundaries and may affect many people". Due to the nature of the infection, especially how it is transmitted, it has modified human behaviors, relations, and ways of life, and had significant impacts on the financial, political, and social scenes of social orders worldwide (Simbulan, 2020). Moreover, Diaz & Decena (2022) revealed that Filipino adolescent students exhibit more Covid-19 stress-related symptoms compared to adult participants.

College understudies are among the foremost emphatically influenced by COVID-19 sense of vulnerability with respect to scholarly victory, future careers, and social life amid college. Hence, numerous feel expanded push levels, uneasiness, and depressive indications due to changed conveyance and vulnerability of college instruction, and innovative concerns of the online courses, (Browning *et al.*, 2021). While it is genuine that online courses can deliver students more free time, a few are utilizing this time to center on things that occupy them from their learning, (Sherren, 2020). Subsequently, Carlson (2016) expressed that when the student is stressed and distracted, it takes over their capacity to center amid lectures or exams. College students who can way better

oversee their stress are more locked in the course, more likely to assimilate what they are learning, and more likely to exceed expectations. Likewise, coping plays a central part in adjustment to upsetting life occasions. Coping techniques are the particular endeavors, both behavioral and mental, that people utilize to ace, endure, decrease, or minimize upsetting occasions (Al-Dubai *et al.*, 2011). Healthy coping abilities can be a key in getting through extreme times, it makes a difference to endure, minimize, and bargain with issues, oversee your stress well, and can assist you physically and mentally with effect in your capacity to perform your best (Amy Morin, LCSW, 2020). Hope and Coping are energetic and complementary; each in turn bolsters and is upheld by the other. This relationship is outlined with two versatile errands common over circumstances that debilitate physical or mental well-being-managing instability and adapting to a changing reality (John Wiley and Sons., 2010). Furthermore, agreeing to Folkman (2013), hope includes a cognitive base that contains data and objectives, generates vitality, is regularly portrayed as will, contains a motivational quality, it has both negative and positive passionate tones due to the plausibility. It permits individuals to recognize income with terms to what is out of control whereas centering on the activities they can take to move forward their lives (HeretoHelp, 2019).

Hope can be seen in an unexpected way in completely different societies such as Collectivist and Individualistic societies (Cherry, 2020). Self-construal alludes to how people see themselves at an essential level; whether they see themselves as basically partitioned from or integrals

<sup>1</sup> President Ramon Magsaysay State University, Zone VI, Iba, Zambales, Philippines

\* Corresponding author's e-mail: [cdecena@prmsu.edu.ph](mailto:cdecena@prmsu.edu.ph)

associated with others (Markus and Kitayama 1991). In spite of the fact that numerous diverse self-construals are conceivable, Markus and Kitayama (1991) recognized two essential sorts: Interdependent and Independent self-construal which allude to diverse cognitive representations of the self that individuals may hold. Those with free self-construal see inner traits, such as characteristics, capacities, values, and demeanors as central to their sense of self. Those with an independent self-construal, in differentiate, see their near connections, social parts, and bunch enrollments as central to their sense of self. (Giacomin and Jordan, 2017). Triandis (1988) expressed that Individualistic societies emphasize the objectives of the person over gathering objectives, though collectivistic societies stress bunch goals over person objectives. Collectivist societies emphasize the wants and objectives of the bunch as an entire over the desires and want of each person. In such societies, connections with other individuals of the bunch and the interconnecting between individuals play a central part in each person's character (Cherry, 2021).

Besides, in these distinctive societies, hope can be seen in an unexpected way in terms of approach. Culture in Eastern nations tends to be collectivists, differentiating Western nations that tend to be individualistic. As expressed by Kim, Sherman, Ko, and Taylor (2006) individuals in collectivist societies tend to be more cautious around sharing their individual issues with their companions. It appears a few of the reasons why they waver to look for social back incorporate concern almost stressing others, disturbing the agreement of the gather, losing confront, and making the issue more regrettable. Instep, individuals regularly lookout for what is known as understood social back. For them, they see that in case they can include investing time with strong individuals without really tending to the source of the push. With this, they can see that hope can show in case you're along with your supporting framework or your social back without really tending to the source of the stress but investing time with steady individuals can make trust more grounded (Kim, Sherman, and Taylor, 2008).

However, collectivist societies, as they practice it, see hope as a basic portion of their lives. Collectivist societies where steady connections are more anticipated, cultivate hope that can influence each individual exclusively. From a perception, social convictions, and values-especially those that are vital and, hence, have constituted each culture's hones, educate, and its ways of life are, by definition, engraved into these practices, teach, and ways of life. These convictions and values are externalized and materialized within the world (D'Andrade, 1995) and, thus, not got to be stuffed within the head of each person part of the social group (Markus and Kitayama, 2010).

By digging hope inside us it eases the stress. Stress causes us to weaken our view and motivation for ourselves, through hoping we become more focused and mindful in solving the crisis or the stressors Frederickson (2001), stated that hope also is seen as an influential and powerful

source in overcoming stressful situations which involve increased motivation. Relatedly, hope was known to be visionary of flexible survival expertise and also correlated to self-care were in every crisis, we motivate ourselves to achieve better soon as we start doing it according to plan, we establish as part of our goal. During tough situations, maximizing hopefulness is needed to divert psychological worries and have a healthy way of coping (Korner, 1970). Hope is not simply wishing to be happy but pursuing ourselves to have a positive clear to finish our goals in mind, by moving forward we establish a concrete action to step in for every piece of dreams we want to achieve. According to author Jerome Groopman (2014), an Oncologist in his book Anatomy of Hope, he emphasizes that, unlike optimism, hope is purely based on reality and delusion has no room for it. Hope qualifies us to undertake action and accomplish by addressing a situation and designing a needed possible allowable answer to solve the crisis without compromising the worth and skills that a person has. Frederick stated in 2001, that hope also guides people to modify their association with their line of thinking and response by heeding in eagerness to make their potential to manage stressful moments better which results in happiness and satisfaction with life.

Moreover, Folkman (2013), claimed that the connection of coping and hope has been spent in several ways in terms of prolonged stress. Thus, cognitive coping processes slightly control the usage of hope during stressful situations and as a result, the person's hope, and capability to cope in intensely stressful situations can affect the desired outcome. By the collaboration of hope and coping mechanisms, it reinforces the understanding of twenty-first-century abilities so that they can interface with the requirements of students' future selves and prepare them with the aptitudes they have to confront the advanced workforce with certainty. Besides, it works out the unused understanding to expand scholastic programs make extra imaginative and strong encounters for students; and construct associations between scholastic and the outside community in ways that may well be commonly useful (Allen, 2014).

Concisely, according to Ang-Manaig *et al.*, (2018), most students find college to be a stressful time in their lives, however, some individuals handle stress better than others. Many students who are able to cope effectively with stress have good stress coping skills. Factors such as social support, self-efficacy, and spirituality contribute to adolescents' development of personal resilience, aiding them in handling distress and coping during the pandemic (Dela Cruz, C. J. B. C., & Girle, . E. A., 2022). When college students are confronted with difficult life situations, they often employ a variety of coping mechanisms. They use a variety of coping strategies at the same time, and their strategies are likely to change over time, depending on how effective the current strategy is. As for these, researchers saw a gap in their study and use Locus-of-Hope as a moderator to two variables.

The researchers mentioned hope, which is used as a

moderating variable of the study and thus, as stated by Hefner (2017), moderating variable is a variable that can weaken, strengthen, or even alter the connection between dependent and independent variables. Barron and Kenny (1986), states that moderation suggests that the relationship between two variables can change because of the moderator variable. It will be better if the dependent variable and independent variable are not correlated with the moderator variable to have a clearer interpretation of their interaction. Wherein in this study, the hope serves as the moderator of academic stress (independent variable) and coping mechanisms (dependent variable) among college students in times of coronavirus pandemic. The goal of the study is to examine how hope as a moderator can influence the relationship between the academic stress and coping mechanisms of college students in times of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The generalization of the study would contribute to a vast knowledge in relation to hope as a moderator in psychological research and studies, and also to the relationship of coping mechanisms and academic stress. The vital results of the study could be extremely beneficial and significant because for students it would help them to assess and identify their own coping strategies for this pandemic; thus, they will be able to know their coping strengths and weaknesses. In attaining these, they can think of ways how to be adaptive to the different academic stress they might encounter. The need to create fresh approaches for socializing due to this Corona Virus Pandemic which could negatively affect their academic achievement and their health. This would also help guide to boosting the coping mechanisms and their hope to become more proficient. Moreover, in order to achieve better quality education, this is to assess the adaptation to the said new normal form of learning, from face-to-face classes to synchronous or asynchronous mode of gaining the knowledge needed in the curriculum to produce more competent students who are responsive to the needs of society.

### Objectives

With this research study, the researchers aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between academic stress and coping mechanisms among college students in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What is the relationship between academic stress and coping mechanisms with the influence of hope as the moderator among college students in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. Which among the 4 dimensions of locus-of-hope greatly influence the relationship of academic stress and coping mechanisms?
  - a. Internal
  - b. External-Family
  - c. External-Peer
  - d. External-Spiritual
4. How does hope as a moderator influence the

direction of the relationship of academic stress and coping mechanisms among college students in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic?

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Design

The researchers utilized a descriptive correlational design that as stated by Creswell (2002) is formed from the Descriptive research approach that refers to the identification of features of a specific phenomenon based on observation, or exploration of the correlation between two or more phenomena, and of Correlational research method that has the purpose to establish whether two or more variables are associated. This method helped the researchers to examine the influence of hope as a moderator in the relationship between Academic Stress and Coping Mechanisms among college students in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, McCombes (2019) defined a correlational research design as a kind of descriptive research that calculates the degree of relationship between two variables without manipulating any of the variables. This design wants to achieve the goal of finding out whether there is a positive correlation, wherein both of the said variables will change in the same direction; or a negative correlation, wherein the said variables will change in opposite directions; or zero correlation that indicates that there is no relationship found between the said variables.

### Respondents and Location

There were three hundred five (305) college student participants that were selected who are currently enrolled from a Higher Education Institution in Region III, with the age range of eighteen (18) to twenty-two (22). To be qualified as participants of the study, students must be single, must be legitimate students from Higher Education Institution, must be active Facebook users who use their real names on Facebook. However, working students were disqualified, as well as the irregular students, graduate students, in a relationship and familial. The student participants who were selected as the respondents of the study will be determined using the Simple Random Sampling Technique.

Simple Random Sampling Technique is a probability sampling technique that has no particular order used in the actual selection of samples to erase any bias in the selection of participants. This sampling technique indicates that every case of the population has an equal chance of being selected as a sample (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2005).

### Research Instrument

With the phenomenon of pandemic that the world is currently experiencing right now, in collecting the necessary data, the researchers utilized an online survey using Google forms to avoid close contact with people. The online survey consists of two (2) parts: (1) tool for demographic profile, and (2) three different scales that

are relevant to the variables of the study. Two out of three of the scales namely The Perception of Academic Stress Scale (PAS) by Bedewy and Gabriel (2015), and The Brief-COPE (Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced) Scale by Carver (1997) are not designed for the phenomenon of COVID-19 pandemic so that the researchers included this as limitations of their study.

The first part of the online survey, which consists of the tool for demographic profile was created by the researchers and used to determine the name of the participants (optional), college department, age, and gender. The three different scales for the second part of the online survey are described as follows: The first scale to be used that will determine the level of academic stress of college students during the COVID-19 pandemic is The Perception of Academic Stress Scale (PAS) by Dalia Bedewy and Adel Gabriel (2015). It is consisting of an 18-item scale that was developed to measure the perception of academic stress and its sources among university students. The said instrument has internal consistency reliability of  $0.7\alpha$ , there was evidence for content validity, and its factor analysis was reported that results in four correlated and theoretically significant factors. Next, the second scale to be used that will determine the coping mechanism of college students to academic stress during the COVID-19 pandemic is The Brief-COPE (Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced) Scale by Charles Carver (1997). It is consisting of a 28-item self-report questionnaire designed to quantify effective and ineffective ways to cope with stressful life events. The reliability and validity of the scale indicated a high Cronbach's alpha values for some domains such as Religion ( $\alpha=0.82$ ) and Substance use ( $\alpha=0.90$ ). Other domains indicated acceptable values of Cronbach's alpha. They are Active coping ( $\alpha=0.68$ ), Planning ( $\alpha=0.73$ ), Positive Reframing ( $\alpha=0.64$ ), Acceptance ( $\alpha=0.57$ ), Humor ( $\alpha=0.73$ ), Using Emotional Support ( $\alpha=0.71$ ), Using Instrumental Support ( $\alpha=0.64$ ), Self-distraction ( $\alpha=0.71$ ), Denial ( $\alpha=0.54$ ), Venting ( $\alpha=0.50$ ), Behavioral disengagement ( $\alpha=0.65$ ) and Self-blame ( $\alpha=0.69$ ) Using a 168-participant community who had been impacted by a hurricane, the Brief-cope scale was initially validated (Carver, 1997) and was found to have acceptable factor structure. Lastly, the third scale is the State Locus-of-Hope Scale Filipino by Bernardo and Mendoza (2020). This scale is an 8-item scale adapted by researchers from the Locus-of-Hope Short Form in Filipino (Bernardo and Estrellado 2014) using the adaptation procedures described by Snyder *et al.* The eight items in the scale comprised two items for each of the four locus-of-hope dimensions: internal, external-family, external-peer, and external spiritual; the items were arranged in one fixed random order. According to Bernardo and Mendoza (2020), using data from 3128 respondents, confirmatory factor analysis indicated a good fit between the four-factor model (compared to one-factor and two-factor models), supporting the scale's structural validity. There was also good evidence for the subscales' convergent validity and

discriminant validity, and by examining correlations with well-being and anxiety, preliminary evidence for construct criterion validity was demonstrated.

### Data Collection

In gathering the necessary data, the researchers used an online survey that was created through Google forms. The instrument contains an appended informed consent, participants' demographic information, and three scales relevant to the variables.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), survey design provides a quantitative or numeric description of data about a population, or tests for associations among variables of a population, by studying a sample of that population. Additionally, survey designs help researchers to answer three types of questions:

- (a) Descriptive questions,
- (b) Questions about the relationships between variables, and
- (c) Questions about predictive relationships between variables over time.

### Data Analysis

The researchers administered preliminary analyses prior to conducting the moderation analyses, the model fit of the Locus-of-Hope Scale (Bernardo, 2020) was tested through Confirmatory Factor Analysis. Results of the first-order model suggested adequate model fit ( $\chi^2 = 227.39$ ,  $df = 98$ ,  $CFI = .95$ ,  $TLI = .94$ ,  $RMSEA = .066$  [.055, .077],  $SRMR = .049$ ). A higher order model was also tested, which yielded adequate model fit ( $\chi^2 = 233.43$ ,  $df = 98$ ,  $CFI = .95$ ,  $TLI = .94$ ,  $RMSEA = .066$  [.055, .077],  $SRMR = .053$ ). Since the higher order model was supported, researchers used the total score of the instrument in the moderation analysis.

The researchers used moderated regression analysis in the free-trial version of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Moderated regression analysis is a regression-based technique used to identify whether the relationship between two variables depends on or is moderated by the value of a third variable (Moderator Analysis, 2018).

Creswell and Creswell (2018) constructed the six steps for doing data analysis. The first step is to report information about the number of participants in the sample who did and did not return the survey. In the second step, discuss the method by which response bias will be determined. The third step, discuss a plan to provide a descriptive analysis of data for all independent and dependent variables in the study. The means, standard deviations, and range of scores for these variables should be included in this study. The fourth step, if the proposal contains an instrument with multi-item scales or a plan to develop scales, first evaluate whether it will be necessary to reverse-score items, and then how total scale scores will be calculated. The fifth step, identify the statistics and the statistical computer program for testing the major inferential research questions or hypotheses in

the proposed study. Lastly, present the results in tables or figures and interpret the results from the statistical test (p. 218-219).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The description of the demographic information of the

participants is presented in Table 1. It shows that mostly they were female (n = 232, 76.07%) aged 18 years old (n = 101, 33.1%) who were studying from Satellite Campuses (n = 162, 53.11%). The study gathered a total of three hundred five (305) respondents from Higher Education Institutions in Region III.

**Table 1:** Demographic Profile of the Respondents (N = 305)

	n	%
<b>Age</b>		
18 years old	101	33.1
19 years old	720	23.6
20 years old	35	11.5
21 years old	63	20.7
22 years old	34	11.1
Mean, (SD)	19.53, (1.41)	
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	70	22.95
Female	232	76.07
LGBTQi+	2	0.98
Mean, (SD)	19.53, (1.41)	
<b>Campuses</b>		
Main Campus	143	46.89
Satellite Campus	162	53.11

Meanwhile, to examine the relationship between Academic Stress and Coping Mechanisms among college students in time of COVID-19 Pandemic, a Pearson correlation coefficient was performed. Results of the Academic Stress and Coping Mechanism were computed

and shown in Table 2. Pearson correlation coefficient, (r = .139) of the Academic Stress and Coping Mechanism indicates a positive correlation between them, meaning as the level of Academic Stress of students increases, the level of its Coping Mechanism also increases.

**Table 2:** Pearson Correlation of Academic Stress and Coping Mechanism (N = 305)

<b>Correlation</b>			
	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Academic Stress and Coping Mechanisms	.139*	.015	305

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

In addition, Table 3 described the partial results of testing the effects of Academic Stress and Locus-of-Hope on Coping Mechanism. The Regression coefficient value of Academic Stress was positive value (B = 0.057). Thus, results showed that Academic Stress had a positive effect on Coping Mechanism (p = 0.050 < 0.05). The statistic results explained that Academic Stress had a significant

effect on Coping Mechanisms. Meanwhile, the result of the Regression coefficient from Locus-of-Hope was also positive value (B = 0.063). The results show that Locus-of-Hope has a positive effect on Coping Mechanism (p = 0.032 < 0.05). The statistic results elaborated that the Locus-of-Hope had a significant effect on Coping Mechanism.

**Table 3:** Locus-of-Hope as Moderator Variable to Academic Stress and Coping Mechanism (N = 305)

<b>Coefficients</b>					
Model	B	Std. Error	β	t	Sig.
(Constant)	2.776	0.29		97.125	.000
Locus of Hope	.063	.029	.123	2.160	.032
Academic Stress	.057	.029	.111	1.967	.050
Interaction	-.061	.024	-.142	-2.511	.013

a. Dependent Variable: Coping Mechanism, (p = 0.013 < 0.05)

In addition to Table 3, it also presents the moderator results test from the Locus-of-Hope variable to moderate the relationship between Academic Stress and Coping Mechanism. Based on the results of regression, the coefficient value of the interaction of the standardized value of Locus-of-Hope and Academic Stress shows negative value ( $B = -0.061$ ) and statistically significant value ( $p = 0.013 < 0.05$ ).

The result showed that the role of Locus-of-Hope as a moderator has a significant effect on the Academic Stress and Coping Mechanism, which was found to be statistically significant rejecting Null Hypothesis 1. The result following the statement was that a variable was

supposed to be a moderate independent variable if the regression coefficient variable depended on a negative value and was significant (Hair, 2010).

Prediction of the negative value indicated that the effect of moderation was negative. The result showed that the Locus-of-Hope could reduce the effect of Academic Stress on Coping Mechanism of students amidst COVID-19 Pandemic. The results test indicated that the role of Locus-of-Hope as independent and moderator variables had significance concurrently. Thus, the conclusion was that Locus-of-Hope variable as a quasi-moderator variable meant the variable could be used as independent variable and as moderator variable.

**Table 4:** Four Dimensions of Locus-of-Hope as Moderator Variable to Academic Stress and Coping Mechanism (N = 305)

Coefficients					
Model	B	Std. Error	$\beta$	t	Sig.
Locus of Hope- Internal	.023	.029	.045	.779	.437
External- Family	.034	.029	.067	1.153	.250
External-Peer	.007	.029	.015	.251	.802
External-Spiritual	.033	.030	.065	1.113	.267

a. *Dependent Variable: Coping Mechanism, (p = 0.05)*

On the other hand, Table 4 shows the Four Dimensions of Locus-of-Hope i.e., Internal ( $p = .437$ ), External-Family ( $p = .250$ ), External-Peer ( $p = .802$ ), External-Spiritual ( $p = .267$ ) which were greater than p-value of 0.05, was found to be non-significant. Hence, researchers accepted Null Hypothesis 2, 3, 4, and 5.

### The Relationship between Academic Stress and Coping Mechanisms

The researchers found out that there is a relationship between Academic Stress and Coping Mechanism without the influence of Hope. Therefore, without hope, the relationship between Academic Stress and Coping Mechanism indicates a positive correlation, meaning as the level of Academic Stress of students increases, the level of its Coping Mechanism also increases. According to Yang *et al.*, (2021), they showed that coping has an important role in people experiencing stress. People with high coping mechanisms are more likely to adapt to stressful situations. In a study conducted on students by Sucan (2019), it was said that the low level of hope increased the education stress.

### The Relationship between Academic Stress and Coping Mechanism with the Influence of Hope as the Moderator

With the influence of hope as a moderator, academic stress weakens whereas coping mechanism strengthens. The researchers, therefore, rejected the Null Hypothesis 1. Coping strategies are the specific efforts, both behavioral and psychological, that individuals employ to master, tolerate, reduce, or minimize stressful events (Al-Dubai *et al.*, 2011). With the influence of hope in the relationship

between academic stress and coping mechanisms, hope can sustain coping, when the individual moves forward to deal with the demands of his or her new reality. Furthermore, students who are optimists rather than pessimists when facing academic stress achieve and cope better and are more successful in both the long and the short term (Carifio and Rhodes, 2002). Whereas Sucan (2019) conversely stated that people with high hopes have lower stress and are more likely satisfied with their lives.

### The Four Dimensions of Locus-of-Hope Does Not Greatly Influence the Relationship between Academic Stress and Coping Mechanisms, (Internal; External-Family; External-Peer; External-Spiritual)

None of the four dimensions of locus-of-hope does influence the relationship between academic stress and coping mechanisms. In the internal agent, according to Mushtaq *et.al.*, 2014, lack of social relationships can lead to an increase in academic stress, which can lead to depression; extreme loneliness and isolation can have serious negative consequences for an individual's mental and physical well-being. For the external-family agent, all families experience stress; however, they cope in different ways; some stop communicating altogether, while others communicate by fighting. As a result, the external-family locus-of-hope had no significant effect on academic stress and coping mechanisms. When it comes to external-peer agents, Filipinos were told to stay at home due to the increased community quarantine. Most Filipinos live at home with their families, avoiding direct contact with their classmates and friends, therefore external-peer agents do not influence the relationship between academic stress and coping mechanisms of college students. As for

external-spiritual agents, the finding was supported by Hall's (2020) study, which found that people in spiritual distress frequently do not believe the world is safe. With that, they may lose hope and struggle to find meaning and purpose in their circumstances. Therefore, the researchers accepted the Null Hypothesis 2, 3, 4, and 5.

### Hope as a Moderator Influence the Direction of the Relationship of Academic Stress and Coping Mechanisms

Hope as moderator influence the high and low relationship of academic stress and coping mechanisms. In connection with this, when hope as moderator was present, academic stress decreases, whereas coping mechanisms increases. As claimed by Barron and Kenny in 1986, The moderator variable can affect the connection between two variables, according to the moderation concept. To have a clearer view of their interaction, the dependent and independent variables should not be associated with the moderator variable.

### CONCLUSION

Upon accomplishing the gathered data, therefore, researchers conclude that there is a significant influence of hope as a moderator on the relationship of academic stress and coping mechanisms among college students in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. On the other hand, there is no significant influence of hope as an internal agent, external peer, external family, and external agencies as moderators on the relationship between academic stress and coping mechanisms among college students during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions and results presented, the researchers recommend that future researchers conduct a study regarding hope as a moderator to identify which among the four dimensions of locus-of-hope by Alan B.I. Bernardo greatly influenced the relationship between academic stress and coping mechanisms. Second, the researchers recommend expanding the location so that the data will not be saturated. In line with that, the researchers suggest broadening the scope of the study and not limiting it in educational settings. Moreover, since this research is mostly applicable for those who are in a collectivist culture or other Asian countries, it would be better if it can also be applied to those who are in individualistic cultures. Although the researchers did not include in the objectives to look for the agency and pathways, however, researchers recommend a further study to determine the agency and pathways of locus-of-hope.

### REFERENCES

Al-Dubai, S., Al-Naggar, R., Rampal K. (2011). Stress and coping strategies of students in a medical faculty in Malaysia. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3216229/>

Allen, G., (2014). The Skills Students Need to Survive and Thrive. <https://www.gettingsmart.com/2014/11/skills-students-need-survive-thrive/>

Asian Association of Social Psychology. (n.d.). Professor Allan B. I. Bernardo. <https://asiansocialpsych.org/professor%20allan%20b%20i%20bernardo>

Baron, R. and Kenny, D. (1986). The moderator-mediator variable distinction in social psychological research: Conceptual, strategic, and statistical considerations. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/281274059>

Bautista, A. G. M., & Manuel, E. S. (2020). Mental Health of Students in the Philippines during Pandemic: An assessment. *Journal of Humanities and Education Development (JHED)*, 2(5), 316–323. <https://theshillonga.com/index.php/jhed/article/view/121>

Bedewy, D. and Gabriel, A. (2015). Examining perceptions of academic stress and its sources among university students: The perception of Academic Stress Scale. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2055102915596714>

Bernardo, ABI and Mendoza, N. (2020). Measuring hope during the COVID-19 outbreak in the Philippines: development and validation of the state locus-of-Hope scale short form in Filipino. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-020-00887-x>

Bernardo, A. B., Yeung, S. S., Resurreccion, K. F., Resurreccion, R. R., & Khan, A. (2018). External locus-of-hope, well-being, and coping of students: A cross-cultural examination within Asia. *Psychology in the Schools*, 55(8), 908-923. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22155>

Bernardo, ABI. (2010). Extending hope theory: Internal and external locus of trait hope. *Personality and Differences*, 49(2010), 944-949. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2010.07.036>

Bhardwaj, P. (2019). Types of Sampling in Research. [https://doi.org/10.4103/jpcs.jpcs\\_62\\_19](https://doi.org/10.4103/jpcs.jpcs_62_19)

Campbell, P. (2019). Why Hope Matters. Imperfect Spirituality. <https://www.google.com/amp/s/www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/imperfectspirituality/201902/why-hope-matters%3famp>

Cloutier, S., Vu, T., Thomsen, J., Reigner, N., Metcalf, E., D'Antonio, A., Helbich, M., Bratman, G., & Alvarez, H. (2021) Psychological impacts from COVID-19 among university students: Risk factors across seven states in the United States. *PLOS ONE*, 16(1), e0245327. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0245327>

Carifio, J. and Rhodes, L. (2002). Construct validities and the empirical relationships between optimism, hope, self-efficacy, and locus of control. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12454445/>

Carlson, D. (2016). 3 Ways stress negatively affects student performance. <https://partners.pennfoster.edu/blog/2016/september/3-ways-stress-negatively-affects-student-performance>

Caven, P. (2014). Confidentiality VS Anonymity – What Difference Does It Make Anyway? <https://>

- www.thoughtexchange.com/blog/confidentiality-vs-anonymity-what-difference-does-it-make-anyway/
- Cherry, K., (2020). Individualistic Cultures and Behavior. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-are-individualistic-cultures2795273#:~:text=In%20individualistic%20cultures%2C%20people%20are,others%20are%20of%20greater%20importance>.
- Cherry, K. (2020). Informed Consent in Psychology. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-informed-consent-2795276>
- Cherry, K. (2021). Understanding collectivist cultures. Very well mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-are-collectivistic-cultures-2794962#:~:text=Collectivist%20cultures%20are%20usually%20contrasted,and%20concerns%20of%20each%20person>
- CMHA BC and Anxiety Canada, (2019). Wellness module 2: Stress and well-being. <https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/wellness-module/wellness-module-2-stress-and-well-being>
- D'Andrade, R.G. (1995). The development of cognitive anthropology. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.
- Diaz, J. P., & Decena, C.F. (2022). Experienced Stress Among Adults, Adolescents, and LGBTQ Students in Time of Covid-19 Pandemic. *American Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation*, 1(4), 204–209. <https://doi.org/10.54536/ajmri.v1i4.625>
- Dela Cruz, C. J. B. C., & Girlie, . E. A. (2022). Social Support, Self-Efficacy, and Spirituality of Adolescents: A Structural Equation Model of Their Personal Resilience During a Pandemic. *American Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Innovation*, 1(4), 180–198. <https://doi.org/10.54536/ajmri.v1i4.592>
- Folkman, S. (2013). Stress, Coping, and Hope. In: Carr B., STEEL J. (eds) *Psychological Aspects of Cancer*. Springer, Boston, MA. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-4866\\_2\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-4866_2_8)
- Frederick, H. (2001). Stress, Coping and Hope: Optimism and Dispositional Hope to Promote College Students' Subjective Well-being in the Context of the COVID-19 Pandemic. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/285690326\\_StressCopingand\\_Hope](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/285690326_StressCopingand_Hope)
- Giacomin M., Jordan C. (2017). Interdependent and Independent Self-Construction. In: Zeigler Hill V., Shackelford T. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences*. Springer, Cham. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-28099-8\\_1136-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-28099-8_1136-1)
- Groopman, J., (2014). The anatomy of hope: How people prevail in the face of illness. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC419499/>
- Gudykunst, W. B., Matsumoto, Y., Ting-Tooney, S., Nishida, T., Kim, K., & Heyman, S. (2006). The influence of cultural individualism-collectivism, self-construals, and individual values on communication styles across cultures. *Human Communication Research*, 22(4), June 1996, Pages 510–543. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2958.1996.tb00377.x>
- Hair, J. F. e. a., 2010. *Multivariate Data Analysis* (7th ed.). New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Hall, E. (2020). The Covid-19 pandemic tests everyone's spiritual wellbeing, atheists and believers alike. <https://www.nbcnews.com/think/opinion/covid-19-pandemic-tests-everyone-s-spiritual-wellbeing-atheists-believers-nca1240613>
- Hefner, V. (2017). Variables, Moderating Types. <https://methods.sagepub.com/reference/the-sage-encyclopedia-of-communication-research-methods/i15449.xml>
- Jeanne S., Melinda S., & Lawrence R. (2020). Stress Management. Quick Stress Relief. <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/quick-stressrelief.htm#:~:text=Yoga%2C%20mindfulness%20meditation%2C%20and%20exercise,or%20take%20a%20long%20walk>
- Kim, H. S., Sherman, D. K., Ko, D., & Taylor, S. E. (2006). Pursuit of comfort and pursuit of harmony: Culture, relationships, and social support seeking. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 32(12), 1595–1607. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167206291991>
- Kim, H. S., Sherman, D. K., & Taylor, S. E. (2008). Culture and social support. *American psychologist*, 63(6), 518. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X>
- Korner, I. N. (1970). Hope as a method of coping. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 34(2), 134–139. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0029004>
- Laerd Statistics (2018). Moderator Analysis with a Dichotomous Moderator using SPSS Statistics. <https://statistics.laerd.com/spss-tutorials/dichotomous-moderator-analysis-using-spss-statistics.php>.
- Marano H.E., (2003). The Dangers of Loneliness. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/articles/200307/the-dangers-loneliness>
- Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (2003). *Models of agency: Sociocultural diversity in the construction of action*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (2010). Cultures and selves: a cycle of mutual constitution. *Perspective on psychological science*. <http://pps.sagepub.com/content/5/4/420>
- McCombes, S. (2020). Correlational Research. Scribbr. <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/correlational-research/>
- Morin, A., (2020). Healthy Coping Skills for Uncomfortable Emotions. <https://www.verywellmind.com/forty-healthy-coping-skills4586742#:~:text=Coping%20skills%20help%20you%20tolerate,coping%20skills%20are%20created%20equal>
- Mushtaq R., Shoib S., & Mushtaq S. (2014). *Journal of Clinical and Diagnostic Research JCDR* <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4225959/#!po=1.19048>
- NovoPsych. (2021). Brief-COPE. <https://novopsych.org/>

- com.au/assessments/formulation/brief-cope/  
Scan Family Program. (2013). Family Stress. <https://scanfamilies.org/resource/family-stress/>
- Sherren, S. (2020). How college students are handling pandemic learning. <https://www.bestcolleges.com/blog/how-college-students-handle-pandemic-learning/>
- Siegle, D. (2019). Research Ethics and Informed Consent. <https://researchbasics.education.uconn.edu/ethics-and-informed-consent/#>
- Simbulan, N. (2020). The Philippines – COVID-19 and its impact on higher education in the Philippines. <https://headfoundation.org/2020/06/04/covid-19-and-its-impact-on-higher-education-in-the-Philippines/>
- Statistics Solutions (2021). Moderator Variable. <https://www.statisticssolutions.com/directory-of-statistical-analyses-general-moderator-variable/>.
- Sucan, S. (2019). The Relationship between Hope and Perceived Stress in Teacher Candidates. <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijhe.v8n2p1>
- The Chamber (2021). Hope Grows. <https://hopegrows.net/news/why-is-hope-so-important>
- The Well-Being Team. (n.d.) How hope can help manage your stress. <https://www.google.com/amp/s/amp-wellbeing.com.au/mind-spirit/mind/holding-on-to-hope.html>
- Visser, P. L., Loess, P., Jeglic, E. L., & Hirsch, J. K. (2013). Hope as a moderator of negative life events and depressive symptoms in a diverse sample. *Stress and Health, 29*(1), 82-88. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.2433>. Epub 2012 May 2. PMID: 22552998.
- Worlds Health Organization. (2020). WHO director-general's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 - 11 March 2020. <https://www.who.int/directorgeneral/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-mediabriefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020>
- Yang, C., Chen, A., & Chen, Y. (2021). College students' stress and health in the COVID-19 pandemic: The role of academic workload, separation from school, and fears of contagion. *PLoS one, 16*(2), e0246676. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0246676>
- Zhou, F., Yu, T., Du, R., Fan, G., Liu, Y., Liu, Z., ... & Cao, B. (2020). Clinical course and risk factors for mortality of adult inpatients with COVID-19 in Wuhan, China: a retrospective cohort study. *The lancet, 395*(10229), 1054-1062. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)30566-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30566-3) pmid:32171076