Mental Health Of High School Students In The New Normal Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a critical effect on students' mental health. This study determined the mental health conditions of the high school students of Bantayan National High School, Cebu, Philippines, during the new normal education amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. It employed a descriptive correlation design using survey questionnaires to 2,759 high school students who were chosen randomly. The collected data were treated using descriptive and inferential statistics. Results showed that most of the high school students are within the appropriate high school age and are primarily females; they have combined monthly income classification as poor and low-income families. Also, the findings revealed that the students are generally sometimes mentally well as they are sometimes anxious and stressed. Students' well-being was significantly yet negatively associated with their anxiety and stress. In conclusion, the current condition of the student's mental health is sometimes well but improved due to their coping mechanisms. Parents' and teachers' follow-up on their well-being and adoption of the proposed mental health program are recommended.

Keywords: mental health, COVID-19, new normal.

INTRODUCTION

Mental health is one of the health issues that people have given attention to in recent years. People are aware that mental health is a vital component of well-being that enables them to realize their abilities and cope with everyday daily stresses to work productively and contribute to their communities. However, taking care of mental health becomes a problem among groups of people in the community. Inability to balance and control the mental faculties leads to specific problems, such as depression—the leading cause of disability worldwide. Mental health concerns have been highlighted again due to the ongoing coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. COVID-19 is the health crisis of the times because the disease's transmission is high. It has negative consequences for the elderly and those with co-morbidities. Furthermore, it negatively affects people's mental health due to the new realities in recent months.

COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented consequences on the mental health of the people. Studies found that anxiety, depression, self-reported stress, disturbed sleep, frustration, and uncertainty have been observed among people at significant levels. In the Philippines, the health department noted a significant increase of crisis calls concerning mental health that needs help. In addition, people in COVID-stricken areas are experiencing anxiety, depression, hopelessness, isolation, and suicidal tendencies. These mental health issues arise because many have lost their jobs, are unable to work, have difficulty going back to their provinces, and are affected by the loss of loved ones. Due to this, COVID-19-

related mental problems affect the general population, patients, close contacts, the elderly, children, and health professionals alike. Students across levels have also been seen to have their mental health affected due to several factors, including the shift from face-to-face delivery to the new education delivery.

Educational systems worldwide adapted to the current pandemic to continue students' learning. Education ministries shifted their education to synchronous, asynchronous, and remote learning deliveries. In the Philippines, the Department of Education ramps up its adaptation to the new normal education by implementing online and modular learning deliveries. The result of these new normal deliveries was not felt until the classes in public schools started last October 2020. Parents and their children (students) were faced with several daily activities that shocked the type of homeschooling they are in; this may be a modular or online learning mode. Posts on social media platforms showed several instances where students break down, are exhausted, and even commit suicide. This only shows that the sudden shift to new normal education has caused consequences for students' health, particularly their mental health.

The shift to new normal education has caused effects on the mental health of students as their daily lives have been disrupted by the current health crisis. The pandemic has made children and adolescents vulnerable to mental health problems (mild or severe) because of the combination of the public health crisis, social isolation, and economic recession. Filipino students, exceptionally high school students, face health, social, and economic consequences that may have affected their mental health amidst public COVID-19 scare, new normal education, and extended home quarantines. Therefore, it is essential to look into the mental health conditions of Filipino high school students as they are exposed to abrupt changes in their environment. The study aims to determine the level of mental health of these students in certain aspects that could have affected their personal life and their undertaking to continue learning despite the severe crisis times. Challenges and their opportunities to cope with these challenges are also explored in this timely study.

The study results are essential in understanding students' mental health while learning, studying, and doing school activities. This addresses their constraints during quarantine, such as low internet connection, limited social interaction, and non-physical meetings with the teachers. The study answers the question of the times, "How are the students during this new mode of learning?" that calls for immediate solutions. Hence, the conduct of this study.

FRAMEWORK

The study was anchored on two prime theories: PERMA Theory of Well-being (Seligman, 2011) and Self-directed Learning Theory (Knowles, 1984), and one legal basis: Republic Act 11036, also known as The Mental Health Act. The abovementioned theories and legal basis governed the study because these connect to students' mental health, the right of Filipinos to mental health care and its services, and the independent learning schools do during the pandemic.

Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (PERMA) theory of well-being is one of the theories in positive psychology that states that certain aspects of life can help people work towards a life of fulfillment, happiness, and meaning (Seligman, 2011). There are five aspects. First, positive emotion represents the ability to remain optimistic and has a constructive perspective. Second, engagement can be present and engage in calm, focused, and festive activities. Third, relationships create relationships and connections with other people that promote love, intimacy, and positive interactions. Fourth, meaning is another aspect that refers to the ability to derive meaning from what you do. Lastly, accomplishments highlight the ability to achieve goals and ambitions in life. In totality, this theory

examines the positive well-being of people. Hence, this theory anchors the study as PERMA explores whether people have positive well-being in these trying times due to the health crisis brought about by COVID-19.

Republic Act 1103 also governs the study. This law realizes the natural right to mental health and mental health services as the Mental Health Act. Furthermore, it aims to implement research-based policies, strategies, programs, and regulations relating to mental health. It also safeguards the rights and liberties of people suffering from mental illnesses. Moreover, it strengthens information dissemination and integrates mental health promotion strategies in schools, workplaces, and communities. This republic act is crucial during the pandemic because this calls for the government to act on the mental health needs of the Filipinos amidst the health crisis. Therefore, these studies are anchors to the results of this paper and can serve as research evidence for further intervention the people, especially those troubled students, due to the consequences of COVID-19.

The third theory dwells on the nature of the new normal education. Self-directed learning theory emphasizes the self-learning, self-determination, and self-motivation of the learners toward learning. In the new normal education, the students are given modules or distant learning classes, decreasing their interaction with the teacher. In this way, they are learning on their own and doing their tasks independently. This could also affect their mental health as they are not used to doing things independently.

The study's three theories and legal bases noted three critical phenomena that the study wants to conceptualize—mental health, good for mental health and independent learning. The study investigated the mental health of Bantayan National High School students in Ticad, Bantayan, just off the coast of northern Cebu.

The study employed a non-experimental quantitative study (specifically, survey design) to derive the mental health of high school Bantayanon students. First, their demographic profiles were obtained. The interest profiles included age, gender, parents' combined income, and the number of siblings and schooling siblings in the family. The study focused on the other two sets of variables. These were the levels of well-being (positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments) and the levels of anxiety and stress students experienced during this new normal education amidst the pandemic. Since the study wanted to give mental health the total picture, the research included the challenges and opportunities to solve these problems. These two crucial pieces of information gave ideas on what is happening during the new normal education, may this be modular or online classes. Once all of these data were analyzed and interpreted, the findings would guide the researcher to propose a mental health program for high school students that focuses on debriefing on events caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the educational consequences of the health crises.

According to WHO (2020), mental health is the well-being of individuals who realize their abilities. The individual also can cope with the everyday stresses of life, work fruitfully and productively, and contribute to the community. Mental health is an individual's ability to interact with others and the environment (Guo et al., 2020). This interaction promotes subjective well-being by promoting the optimal development and use of cognitive, affective, and relational abilities, as well as achieving individual and collective goals consistent with justice." As a result, these two definitions complement one another and can co-exist (Sultana et al., 2021).

A new definition for mental health that moves away from the simple absence of mental illness was proposed (Hernández-Torrano et al., 2020). Their definition states that mental health is a dynamic and balanced internal condition that enables people to use their abilities to achieve social harmony. Skills such as basic cognitive and social skills, flexible coping skills, and harmonious relational skills

represent essential aspects of mental health that affect the said internal equilibrium. This definition is compatible with other definitions. It transcends the absence of mental illness, is determined by socioeconomic and environmental factors, is linked to behavior, and is enhanced by effective public health interventions.

A six-factor psychological well-being model was formulated to address the neglected aspects of positive functioning in society (Shubina, 2017). This model revolves around mental health, wherein the factors are considered critical elements of psychological or mental health: self-acceptance (awareness of personal limitations), personal growth (use of talents and potentials), purpose in life (meaning, purpose, and direction in life), environmental mastery (management of life situations), autonomy (living with own convictions), and positive relations with others (connection and ties with significant others).

Shepell (2019) enumerate the four pillars of mental health or fitness. As compared to physical fitness, the four pillars include the Emotional pillar (self-acceptance, esteem, resilience, and ability to manage strong emotions), the Social pillar (friendship and companionship), the Financial pillar (financial control, handling, and tracking), and Physical pillar (reduction of stress, anxiety, etc. through physical activities). Psychological and Behavioral Consultants (2020) also recognize three pillars of mental health, but these pillars lead to positive mental health. These pillars are mental flexibility (ability to adjust thinking and behavior quickly to deal with particular circumstances), mindfulness (ability to focus one's awareness on the present moment), and resilience (capacity to recover swiftly from difficult situations. With these pillars, people can build a positive and healthy mind.

However, issues concerning mental health have been talked about in society. These issues are not accorded well compared to physical health; these concerns have been largely ignored or neglected (WHO, 2020). Hence, mental health problems are a growing

public health concern (Mental Health Foundation, 2015). Mental problems or disorders are behavioral or psychological, of clinical significance, accompanied by simultaneous distress and raised risk of death or a significant loss of freedom, and involve an unexpected cultural response to any situation (WHO, 2020).

Mental health problems usually occur during puberty or adolescence and young adulthood (Graber et al., 2004). In adolescents, common mental health problems include depression, anxiety, attention-deficit/ hyperactivity disorder, eating disorders, conduct disorder, and substance misuse disorder (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2020; Mind, 2017). Due to several factors, many have different views about mental problems and illnesses, leading to societal stigma. Explanations of this stigma of mental illness include dangerousness, attribution of responsibility, belief that mental illness is chronic with a poor prognosis, and disruption of everyday social interactions based on social rules. Other ideas on this stigma dwell on the view that mental illness results from poor genetic choices concerning reproductive potential and a possible threat to the safety of the individual. It is the result of people's view of survival that tends to not respond to them due to possible threats. These explanations provoke personal fear in others and threaten to upset the status quo (Oudejans et al., 2021).

Mental health among children, adolescents, and young adults is defined in the context of childhood development (Sultana et al., 2021). Its definition refers to the ability to develop psychologically, emotionally, creatively, intellectually, and spiritually. It also initiates, develops, and sustains mutually satisfying personal relationships and uses and enjoys solitude. Furthermore, it becomes aware of others, empathizes, plays, and learns with them. Lastly, it develops a sense of right and wrong, resolves problems and setbacks, and learns from them (Assor et al., 2021). Hence, schools also have the task of supporting

children's mentally healthy development while growing (Goodcase et al., 2021).

Recent studies were also done to characterize the mental health of high school students. Joseph (2016) determined the mental health of high school students. His study disclosed that high school students' mental health level is moderate. Gender has a significant relationship with mental health, but location and family type do not have significant relationships with mental health.

Engelhardt (2016) examined the role of schools in supporting students' mental health. His study found schools to have an active role in supporting students' mental health by providing trained personnel and educational programming to do more than break down the stigma associated with mental health. Another beneficial intervention includes providing students with adequate coping strategies to deal with the challenges that cause them mental distress.

Subramani and Kadhiravan (2017) explored academic stress and its relationship with mental health among high school students. Their study revealed that students from private schools experienced higher academic stress than public schools, and those from private schools had higher mental health status than their counterparts. Academic stress had a significant relationship with high school students' mental health.

Bashir and Puju (2018) investigated the mental health of senior secondary school students concerning life skills and self-efficacy. Their study revealed that the mental health between boys and girls is significantly complex. However, a positive relationship exists between mental health, life skills, and self-efficacy. COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented consequences on the mental health of the people. It has alarming implications for individual and collective health and emotional and social functioning (Pfefferbaum & North, 2020). Due to this, many students were conducted concerning the effect of the pandemic on mental health of people.

Rajkumar (2020) did a systematic review to characterize mental health amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. Anxiety, depression, and self-reported stress are the common psychological reactions to the pandemic and may be associated with disturbed sleep. In the end, the study recommended accounting for the needs of the concerned people and the necessary preventive guidelines.

Costa et al. (2020) did another systematic review of mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. Their review pointed out a high incidence of anxiety, depression, and insomnia among people. In addition, symptoms related to increased stress, sensitivity to social risks, and horror sensation were observed. Thus, the COVID-19 crisis has direct impacts on the mental health of all who are affected.

Schäfer et al. (2020) assessed the impact of the COVID outbreak on the mental health of people. Results show that 10% of the respondents experienced a clinically significant increase in psychopathological symptoms and decreased sense of coherence. Furthermore, those with a low sense of coherence have higher psychopathological symptoms from pre- to post-outbreak.

Lai et al. (2020) investigated the factors that are associated with mental health outcomes. They found that a considerable proportion of people are reported to be experiencing symptoms of depression, anxiety, insomnia, and distress, especially women and frontline health care workers. They concluded that frontline people exposed to COVID-19 have a high risk of developing unfavorable mental health outcomes and need psychological support or interventions.

Moghe et al. (2020) identified and analyzed the personal, social and psychological impact of COVID-19 on students' mental health. Findings revealed that female students are more concerned about their health and future, but they are more prone to well-being issues such as feelings of uncertainty, helplessness, and outbursts than male students. In addition, the urban students are more heavily mentally affected than the rural students.

However, time spent on the Internet is comparable despite the gaps in infrastructure and resources. The results indicate an overall increased awareness about mental health among the student population, and with programs/strategies focusing on background and gender, a significant improvement is attainable.

This literature review tackles the general views on mental health and problems, the effects of mental health problems and symptoms on students' education, and the consequences of COVID-19 on the mental health of people, including the students. Upon reading these articles and references, the researcher has not encountered any study exploring the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic and the new-normal education on the mental health of high school students in a previously critically hit area in the country. Insights into the students' thoughts, challenges, and coping mechanisms can help make the study more rounded. To formulate an appropriate and contextual mental health program for the students, adding another mechanism to help students amidst the pandemic. Hence, the conduct of the study.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study determined the mental health condition of the junior high school students in Bantayan Island, Cebu, Philippines, during the new normal education amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings were the basis for a Mental Health Program for stakeholders. Specifically, it answered the: 1] Respondents' demographic profile; 2] Level of the well-being of the students based on a] Positive emotions, b] Engagement, c] Relationships, d] Meaning, and e] Accomplishments; 3] Level of anxiety and stress about the COVID-19 pandemic; 4] Significant relationship between a] Profile and level of the well-being of the respondents, b] Profile and level of anxiety of and stress of the respondents.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a descriptive correlational design in exploring the mental health conditions of the high school students in Bantayan National High School, Cebu, Philippines. The quantitative aspect of the research obtained data on demographics, level of students' thinking, and anxiety and stress, which are crucial in establishing their mental health.

The researchers considered the number of COVID-19 cases in the Municipality of Bantayan, making students more anxious and socially isolated for more than three months. Bantayan has 46 cases with 0 deaths as of October 9, 2020, based on the DOH-CVCHD RESU7 tracker. The consideration of the COVID-19 cases was of prime importance since this establishes the notion that even island-secluded places can be reached by such transmission and could outbalance the mental health of the residents, particularly the students. The respondents of the study were 2,759 high school students. They selected probability random sampling through the fishbowl method. The study utilized the researchers made questionnaire containing the: a] Demographic Profile, b] Students' Well-being Scale, c] COVID Anxiety Syndrome Scale, and d] COVID Stress Scale.

Demographic profile sheet. The study used this tool to gather pertinent demographic variables such as age, sex, address, parents' work, combined income, number of siblings, number of schooling siblings, and type of new normal learning delivery.

Students' Well-being Scale. This instrument aimed to determine the extent of students' well-being on the five aspects of mental well-being: positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments.

COVID Anxiety Syndrome Scale. This was an instrument based on a standardized tool adapted from the study of Nikčević and Spada (2020). It has a series of statements regarding people's ways of dealing with COVID-19.

COVID Stress Scale. This was an adapted tool from the study of Taylor et al. (2020). It has 36 items that are grouped into five

scales, namely (1) danger and contamination fears, (2) fears about economic consequences, (3) xenophobia, (4) compulsive checking and reassurance-seeking, and (5) traumatic stress about COVID-19.

The gathered data were statistically treated using frequency, simple percentage, mean, standard deviation, and Chi-square test of independence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The study looked at seven profiles: the students' age and gender, their parents' occupation and family combined monthly income, and their number of siblings and schooling siblings.

The age and gender of the student respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Age and Gender Profile of the Respondents

Age [years old]	Male		Female		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
Above 19	33	2.61	21	1.41	54	1.96
16 - 19	587	46.40	753	50.40	1,340	48.57
Below 16	645	50.99	720	48.19	1,365	49.47
Total	**1,265**	**100.00**	**1,494**	**100.00**	**2,759**	**100.00**

As presented in Table 1, there were 1,265 of the students (45.85%) are males, and 1,494 (54.15%) are females. This means that most students are studying high school at their appropriate ages, and the remaining are still studying despite their late ages, even amidst the global crisis. In general, the high school students in the identified school are studying at their appropriate high school ages. In addition, there is a comparable number of males and females in the institution. Age and gender are two critical variables in any educational research. As such, these profiles are included in this study.

Table 2 shows the combined monthly income of the students' respective families. The income bracket is based on the income classification by the National Economic Development Authority.

Table 2 Combined Monthly Income of the Family

Income Bracket [in PhP]	Income Class	f	%
Above 78,901	Upper Middle Income	10	0.36
31,561 – 78,900	Middle Class	29	1.05
15,781 – 31,560	Lower Middle Income	105	3.81
7,890 – 15,780	Low Income	304	11.02
Below 7,890	Poor	1,509	54.69
Income not indicated		802	29.07
Total		**2,759**	**100.00**

As shown in Table 2, more than half of the students belong to a family with a Poor income classification. This means that their parents earn below the minimum wage, indicating that they earn according to the time of their service delivery. This is supported by the most common occupations of their parents (e.g., fishing, construction, driving) that pay them only during the service they give to the employers. Following this are the students from families

with a Low-Income classification. This means their parents are minimum wage earners, indicating that they are hired according to contract while others are regular employees. This means that only very few students belong to well-off families in Bantayan. Instead, their parents may be employed abroad or in above-minimum professional jobs. Most families are at low-income levels, affected mainly by the ongoing pandemic. Because of this, parents get in whatever job is available in order to provide

for both primary and protective needs (World Bank, 2021).

During the pandemic, the students are schooled in their homes as going to school seems dangerous for viral transmission. Therefore, they are at home together with the other members of the family, including their siblings. This number of siblings may have affected their mental health, and thus, it is included in the study. Table 3 gleans the number of siblings and schooling siblings of the high school students.

Table 3 No. of Siblings and Schooling Siblings of the Students

Number	Siblings		Schooling Siblings	
	f	%	f	%
5 and above	943	34.18	265	9.60
3 - 4	845	30.63	774	28.05
1 - 2	698	25.30	1,140	41.32
0	273	9.89	580	21.02
Total	**2,759**	**100.00**	**2,759**	**100.00**

As gleaned in Table 3, most of the high school students have at least five siblings (34.18%), followed by 3-4 siblings (30.63%) and 1-2 siblings (25.30%). Only 9.89% of the students do not have any siblings. This suggests that most of these students belong to big families with at least three children in their circles. These big families mainly belong to low-income levels (Rupnarian, 2020).

In the number of schooling siblings, most students only have one or two siblings currently studying (41.32%). This is followed by 3-4 schooling siblings (28.05%) and 0 schooling siblings (21.02%). Thus, only 9.60% of the students have more than five schooling

siblings. This indicates that most high school students have siblings studying with them at home. As such, they are bound to help the younger ones to finish their modules. Siblings have a crucial relationship, especially in education amidst the pandemic (Davies, 2018).

Level of the Well-Being of the Respondents

In this time of the global health crisis, students, in particular, may have affected their mental health. The PERMA model can determine their well-being based on five aspects, namely positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment.

Table 4 Level of Positive Emotions of High School Students

Indicators	Level of Well-being					Mean	Description
	NW	RW	SW	OW	AW		
A. Positive Emotion							
1.I feel joyful.	3.6%	10.0%	37.2%	27.2%	22.0%	2.54	Often Well
2.I feel positive.	3.1%	8.9%	41.6%	27.9%	18.5%	2.50	Often Well

3.I feel contented.	3.5%	9.9%	38.2%	25.3%	23.1%	2.55	Often Well
B. Engagement						
1.I become absorbed in things that I do.	2.8%	14.2	48.0	19.8	15.2	2.30	Sometimes Well
2.I feel excited and interested in things.	3.1%	11.6	51.9	21.3	12.1	3.28	Sometimes Well
3.I lose track of time while I do something I enjoy.	3.1%	16.2	48.3	24.0	8.4	2.18	Sometimes Well
C. Relationship						
1.I received help and support from others when I needed it.	3.1%	9.2%	39.0%	27.1%	21.6%	2.55	Often Well
2.I feel loved.	2.3%	8.7%	39.0%	27.9%	22.1%	2.59	Often Well
3.I am satisfied with my relationships.	2.7%	8.8%	37.2%	25.7%	25.6%	2.63	Often Well
D. Meaning						
1.I lead a purposeful and meaningful life.	3.4%	12.2%	44.5%	25.6%	14.3%	2.35	Sometimes Well
2.I feel that what I do in my life is valuable and worthwhile.	3.4%	10.7%	44.5%	28.7%	12.7%	2.37	Sometimes Well
3.I generally feel I have a sense of direction in my life.	4.0%	10.1%	43.9%	26.4%	15.6%	2.40	Sometimes Well
E. Accomplishment						
1.I feel I am having progress towards attaining my goals.	3.0%	11.5%	48.9%	25.0%	11.6%	2.31	Sometimes Well
2.I achieve the important goals I have set for myself.	2.3%	10.3%	49.4%	25.5%	12.5%	2.36	Sometimes Well
3.I can handle my responsibilities.	3.4%	12.1%	49.0%	26.0%	9.5%	2.26	Sometimes Well

Legend:
0.00 - 0.80 (NW, Not Well), 0.81 - 1.60 (RW, Rarely Well), 1.61 - 2.40 (SW, Sometimes Well), 2.41 - 3.20 (OW, Often Well), 3.21 - 4.00 (AW, Always Well)

As shown in Table 4, the students are often joyful despite the negativities that the pandemic has caused. They are also often positive regardless of the things happening around them. They also often feel content with what they have now and are grateful to survive despite the health crisis. Students often show positive emotions that make them happy and optimistic even during these challenging times. These positive emotions can broaden or increase students' thoughts, habits, and actions that lead to better feelings about life (Tsybulsky & Muchnik-Rozanov, 2021) and can undo the effects of negative emotions and promote resilience (Spain et al., 2021).

As reflected in Table 4, the high school students are only immersed in what they sometimes do. They also only sometimes become excited and interested in things. They only sometimes lose track of time while they

enjoy what they do. This "sometimes" is evident because they have limited engagements during this quarantine period that they may not be interested in what is done at home, and their interest is outside the home, which they cannot do. Finding ways to be engaged in difficult situations is an opportunity to show more positive emotion and self-esteem and avoid anxiety and depression (Jie et al., 2021). Engagements contribute both to physical and mental well-being.

Also, as shown in Table 4, the students often received help and support from their family members when needed. They also often feel loved by their families. Because of this, they are often satisfied with their relationships during the pandemic. Students are inherently social beings, and positive relationships significantly impact their well-being, especially during these challenging times. With positive social interactions, students build better relationships with enthusiasm amidst the pandemic, contributing to better health outcomes (Akkermans et al., 2016).

During this pandemic, the students only sometimes lead a purposeful and meaningful life. They only sometimes feel that what they do now is valuable and worthwhile. They also only sometimes feel their direction in life. This may also be due to quarantine restrictions that they cannot fulfill what they want to do. Nevertheless, they sometimes think about their life's meaning, signifying that they also think of their essence that may help alleviate their well-being. Students becoming more optimistic are more likely to experience personal growth following this pandemic. A strong sense of meaning can also help facilitate the post-trauma experienced during the pandemic (Woodhall-Melnik & Grogan, 2019).

Table 4 highlights that high school students sometimes feel they are progressing towards accomplishing their goals. They also sometimes achieve the goals that they set for themselves. They also sometimes can handle their responsibilities. In other words, they only sometimes accomplish their set goals during this pandemic. Having a sense of accomplishment leads the students to work towards and reach their goals, achieve mastery over their endeavors, and have self-motivation to complete what they set out to do. Achieving goals has been found to produce larger gains in well-being (Scarpa et al., 2021).

The extent of the well-being of the students is shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Level of the Well-being of High School Students

Aspect	Level of Well-being					Mean	Description
	NW	RW	SW	OW	AW		
A. Positive Emotions	3.4%	9.6%	39.0%	26.8%	21.2%	2.53	Often Well
B. Engagement	3.0%	14.0%	49.4%	21.7%	11.9%	2.26	Sometimes Well
C. Relationships	2.7%	8.9%	38.4%	26.9%	23.1%	2.59	Often Well
D. Meaning	2.5%	10.9%	44.3%	26.9%	15.5%	2.37	Sometimes Well
E. Accomplishments	2.9%	11.3%	49.1%	25.5%	11.2%	2.31	Sometimes Well
Overall Well-being	**0.9%**	**10.1%**	**43.4%**	**37.4%**	**8.1%**	**2.41**	**Sometimes Well**

Legend:

0.00 - 0.80 (NW, Not Well), 0.81 - 1.60 (RW, Rarely Well), 1.61 - 2.40 (SW, Sometimes Well), 2.41 - 3.20 (OW, Often Well), 3.21 - 4.00 (AW, Always Well)

In Table 5, the first aspect shown is positive emotions. In this aspect, most students are sometimes well (37.6%) but are closely followed by often well (28.2%). The weighted mean of the level of well-being is 2.49, indicating that generally, the students are often well when it comes to positive emotions. They are often joyful despite the negativities that the pandemic has caused. They are also often positive regardless of the things happening around them. They also often feel content with what they have now and are grateful to survive despite the health crisis. Students often show positive emotions that make them happy and optimistic even during these challenging times.

Aside from positive emotions, engagement with others is also a vital aspect of the well-being of the students. Almost half of the students are sometimes well (49.4%), and only 21.7 percent are often well. Descriptive statistics revealed a weighted mean of 2.23, indicating that generally, the students are sometimes well in their engagements. However, they are only immersed in what they are sometimes doing. They also only sometimes become excited and interested in things. They only sometimes lose track of time while they enjoy what they do. This "sometimes" is evident because they have limited engagements during this quarantine period that they may not be interested in what is done at home, and their interest is outside the home, which they cannot do. Despite this, they still find engagements in their respective homes that make them lose track of time, helping their well-being while at home.

Another building block of well-being is relationships. Around 38.4% of students are sometimes well in this aspect, while 26.9% and 23.1% are often well and always well, respectively, in the same aspect. The weighted mean for this aspect is 2.50, indicating that students are often well in relationships. They often receive help and support from their family members when needed. They also often feel loved by their families. Because of this, they are often satisfied with their relationships during

the pandemic. This finding means that students find satisfying relationships during the pandemic because of the presence and support of the immediate family and school community. Though there are limitations during the quarantine, the students find ways to interact with their classmates and teachers remotely using Facebook, Messenger, and even text messaging. Students are inherently social beings, and positive relationships significantly impact their well-being, especially during these challenging times. With positive social interactions, students build better relationships with enthusiasm amidst the pandemic, contributing to better health outcomes (Zaharia et al., 2021).

Meaning is another aspect of well-being. Most students are sometimes well (44.3%) in this aspect. Derived from the table is a mean of 2.34, indicating that students are general sometimes well in this aspect. However, in this time of the pandemic, they only sometimes lead a purposeful and meaningful life. They only sometimes feel that what they do now is valuable and worthwhile. They also only sometimes feel their direction in life. In this finding, students find it challenging to focus on the meaning of life because of the many things that they think about, especially the effects of the pandemic and remote learning alike. This may also be due to the quarantine restrictions that they cannot fulfill what they want to do. More importantly, they are just students whose primary role is to finish schooling and find the meaning of life after graduating.

Nevertheless, they sometimes think about their life's meaning, signifying that they also think of their essence that may help alleviate their well-being. Having a broader purpose helps students focus on what is truly important when faced with significant challenges or adversities in life, such as this pandemic. Students becoming more optimistic are more likely to experience personal growth following this pandemic. A strong sense of meaning can also help facilitate the post-trauma

experienced during the pandemic (Vidic & Cherup, 2020).

The last aspect of well-being is accomplishments. Almost half of the students sometimes feel they have accomplished something (49.1%). The weighted mean obtained is 2.26, indicating that the students are sometimes well in terms of accomplishments. They sometimes feel they are making progress towards accomplishing their goals. They also sometimes achieve the goals that they set for themselves. They also sometimes can handle their responsibilities. In other words, they only sometimes accomplish their set goals during this pandemic. Though they do it sometimes only, at least they think about their goals and find ways to accomplish them even during the pandemic, such as their studies. Having a sense of accomplishment leads the students to work towards and reach their goals, achieve mastery over their endeavors, and have self-motivation to complete what they set out to do. Achieving goals has been found to produce larger gains in well-being (Scarpa et al., 2021).

Overall, the level of well-being of the students is at mean=2.37, indicating that they are sometimes well during the pandemic.

However, because of the restrictions of the pandemic, they only sometimes create positive engagements at home, find meaning in life, and accomplish their set goals in life. However, they also often feel well because they are optimistic, and they have their families who help and support them during challenging times. With all of these results, the global crisis affects the well-being of high school students. This impact of COVID-19 is supported by the studies of Burns et al. (2020), Son et al. (2020), and Terada (2020).

Respondents' Level of Anxiety and Stress
Due to the challenging times that students experience nowadays, the study looked into the level of anxiety and stress of high school students. Anxiety is a feeling of uneasiness that has affected many people these days during the pandemic. During this pandemic, the form of anxiety is called COVID-19, where people, including students, are characterized by avoidance, checking, worrying, and threat monitoring (Nikčević & Spada, 2020). The level of anxiety among high school students is shown in Table 6.

Table 6 Respondents' Level of Anxiety

Indicators	Level of Anxiety					Mean	Description
	NA	RA	SA	OA	AA		
1. I avoided using public transport.	3.4%	11.4%	31.5%	50.2%	3.5%	2.39	Sometimes Anxious
2. I checked myself for symptoms.	3.3%	10.9%	35.0%	45.0%	5.8%	2.39	Sometimes Anxious
3. I avoided going out to public spaces.	0.6%	5.8%	25.6%	62.6%	12.0%	2.66	Often Anxious
4. I have been concerned about not having adhered strictly to social distancing.	2.1%	10.1%	38.0%	45.0%	4.8%	2.40	Sometimes Anxious
5. I avoided touching things in public.	4.5%	12.5%	32.5%	40.2%	10.3%	2.39	Sometimes Anxious
6. I read about the news about COVID.	2.5%	10.5%	38.0%	42.2%	6.8%	2.40	Sometimes Anxious

7. I checked my family for symptoms.	11.6%	26.0%	26.3%	20.0%	13.5%	2.03	Sometimes Anxious
8. I paid attention to others possibly displaying symptoms.	14.7%	26.0%	25.0%	15.1%	17.2%	1.98	Sometimes Anxious
9. I imagined what could happen to my family.	11.3%	25.4%	28.0%	10.0%	23.3%	2.13	Sometimes Anxious

Legend:

0.00 - 0.80 (NA, Not Anxious), 0.81 - 1.60 (RA, Rarely Anxious), 1.61 - 2.40 (SA, Sometimes Anxious),

2.41 - 3.20 (OA, Often Anxious), 3.21 - 4.00 (AA, Always Anxious)

In Table 6, the high school students are not worried about COVID-19, but they are still cautious that they cannot get the virus. They ride public transport (e.g., tricycles) and go to public spaces as long as they wear masks. They are not so anxious about themselves or their families getting the virus, but they remind each other of the health protocols to avoid it. As a result, they have less anxiety because they know what to do outside and return to their respective houses. When appropriate health protocols are in place, people create a sense of security, and anxiety decreases.

Stress Levels of the Students

Stress is the state of physical or emotional tension that students experience nowadays. For COVID-19, in particular, these stressors come from danger and contamination, socio-economic consequences, xenophobia, traumatic stress, and compulsive checking (Taylor et al., 2020). Table 7 gives the level of stress among high school students.

Table 7 Respondents' Level of the Stress

Indicators	Level of Stress					Mean	Description
	NS	RS	SS	OS	AS		
1. I am worried about catching the virus.	1.6%	12.1%	43.3%	30.6%	12.4%	2.40	Sometimes Stressed
2. I am concerned that I can't keep my family safe from the virus.	3.1%	15.6%	45.2%	30.8%	5.3%	2.20	Sometimes Stressed
3. I am worried that our healthcare network won't be able to protect my loved ones.	4.6%	13.7%	44.2%	31%	6.5%	2.21	Sometimes Stressed
4. I am worried that our healthcare system is unable to keep me safe from the virus.	2.6%	14.1%	40.9%	27.9%	14.5%	2.38	Sometimes Stressed
5. I am bothered that basic hygiene (e.g., handwashing) is not enough to keep me safe from the virus.	4.1%	14%	39.3%	28.5%	14.1%	2.35	Sometimes Stressed

6. I am concerned that social distancing is not enough to keep me safe from the virus.	4.2%	14.2%	44.8%	28.7%	8.1%	2.22	Sometimes Stressed
7. I am disturbed about grocery stores running out of food.	4.6%	17.6%	45.1%	30.1%	2.6%	2.09	Sometimes Stressed
8. I am disturbed that grocery stores will close down.	3.5%	13.2%	38.3%	29.4%	15.6%	2.40	Sometimes Stressed
9. I am disturbed about grocery stores running out of cleaning or disinfectant supplies.	2%	15.7%	39.4%	31.1%	11.8%	2.35	Sometimes Stressed
10. I am disturbed about grocery stores running out of cold or flu remedies.	2.5%	13.8%	43.7%	30.1%	9.9%	2.31	Sometimes Stressed
11. I am disturbed about grocery stores running out of water.	4.7%	13%	43%	28.7%	10.6%	2.28	Sometimes Stressed
12. I am bothered about pharmacies running out of prescription medicines.	1.9%	13.9%	40.1%	30.7%	13.4%	2.40	Sometimes Stressed
13. I am bothered that foreigners are spreading the virus in my country.	2.1%	16.1%	42.9%	27.6%	11.3%	2.30	Sometimes Stressed
14. If I went to a restaurant specializing in foreign foods, I'd be worried about catching the virus.	2.5%	21.5%	40%	29%	7%	2.17	Sometimes Stressed
15. I am bothered about coming into contact with foreigners because they might have the virus.	2.5%	13%	43%	29.4%	12.1%	2.36	Sometimes Stressed
16. If I met a person from a foreign country, I'd be worried that they might have the virus.	2.2%	12.6%	43.5%	29.9%	11.8%	2.37	Sometimes Stressed
17. If I were in an elevator with a group of foreigners, I'd be	1.5%	16.5%	39.5%	28.6%	13.9%	2.37	Sometimes Stressed

worried that they're infected with the virus.							
18.I am bothered that foreigners are spreading the virus because they're not as clean as we are.	3.7%	17.9%	41%	29.1%	8.3%	2.20	Sometimes Stressed
19.I am worried that I would catch the virus if I touched something in a public space (e.g., handrail, door handle).	2.6%	16.2%	38.1%	30.7%	12.4%	2.34	Sometimes Stressed
20.I am bothered that if someone coughed or sneezed near me, I would catch the virus.	2.9%	12.5%	37.3%	30.9%	16.4%	2.45	Often Stressed
21.I am concerned that people around me will infect me with the virus.	2.2%	19.6%	37.5%	30.9%	9.8%	2.27	Sometimes Stressed
22.I am worried about making changes in cash transactions.	3.6%	17.4%	43.2%	30.9%	4.9%	2.16	Sometimes Stressed
23.I am concerned that I might catch the virus from handling money or using a debit machine.	1.8%	18.4%	38.8%	28.8%	12.2%	2.31	Sometimes Stressed
24.I am worried that mail handlers have contaminated my mail.	2.2%	13.9%	42%	30.2%	11.7%	2.35	Sometimes Stressed
25.Searched the Internet for treatments for COVID-19	3.4%	10.8%	35.8%	27.6%	22.4%	2.55	Often Stressed
26.Inquiring health professionals (e.g., doctors or pharmacists) for advice about COVID-19	4.4%	12.4%	40.6%	28.6%	14%	2.35	Sometimes Stressed
27.YouTube videos about COVID-19	2.9%	17%	41.7%	27.7%	10.7%	2.26	Sometimes Stressed
28.Inspecting your own body for signs of infection (e.g., taking your temperature)	1.6%	14.8%	36.2%	28.5%	18.9%	2.48	Often Stressed

29.Finding reassurance from family or friends about COVID-19	3.9%	12.1%	41.4%	29%	13.6%	2.36	Sometimes Stressed
30.Social media posts concerning COVID-19	1.6%	10.4%	7.2%	48.0%	32.8%	3.00	Often Stressed

Legend:

    0.00 - 0.80 (NS, Not Stressed), 0.81 - 1.60 (RS, Rarely Stressed), 1.61 - 2.40 (SS, Sometimes Stressed),

    2.41 - 3.20 (OS, Often Stressed), 3.21 - 4.00 (AS, Always Stressed)

As presented in Table 7, the high school students are not stressed about whatever consequences the pandemic can have on their families' economic aspects. They are also less concerned about getting the virus from the foreigners they see outside their homes. They rarely check their health status and read about the virus on social media or the Internet, leading to stressful thinking. In other words, students already know that the virus is there, and they need to learn to live with it by following the health protocols and fewer interactions with those outside their homes.

Test of Significant Relationship

Correlational analyses were done to determine the relationships between the students' profile and their well-being. Table 8 shows the results.

Table 8 Correlational Analysis Between Students' Profile and their Well-being

Well-being	Profile	χ^2 value	p-value	Significance	Result
Positive Emotions	Age	22.485	.004	Significant	Ho rejected
	Gender	7.729	.102	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	Income	28.704	.094	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	No. of Siblings	6.038	.914	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	No. of School Siblings	10.103	.607	Not Significant	Ho accepted
Engagements	Age	24.173	.002	Significant	Ho rejected
	Gender	3.723	.445	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	Income	15.719	.734	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	No. of Siblings	17.074	.147	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	No. of School Siblings	15.469	.217	Not Significant	Ho accepted
Relationships	Age	23.117	.003	Significant	Ho rejected
	Gender	0.061	1.000	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	Income	18.024	.586	Not Significant	Ho accepted

	No. of Siblings	10.133	.604	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	No. of School Siblings	5.873	.922	Not Significant	Ho accepted
Meaning	Age	18.419	.018	Significant	Ho rejected
	Gender	2.939	.568	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	Income	28.556	.097	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	No. of Siblings	8.217	.768	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	No. of School Siblings	11.770	.464	Not Significant	Ho accepted
Accomplishments	Age	33.351	.000	Significant	Ho rejected
	Gender	7.451	.114	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	Income	22.670	.305	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	No. of Siblings	8.707	.728	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	No. of School Siblings	15.466	.217	Not Significant	Ho accepted
Over-all Well-being	Age	30.062	.000	Significant	Ho rejected
	Gender	1.732	.785	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	Income	27.372	.125	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	No. of Siblings	8.071	.780	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	No. of School Siblings	6.226	.904	Not Significant	Ho accepted

Based on Table 8, age is the only profile with a significant relationship with all the aspects of well-being and overall well-being. When students are older, they tend to control their emotions (χ^2 = 22.485, p = 0.004) where their positive emotions prevail over the negative ones. Older people tend to find activities that let them engage better (χ^2 = 24.173, p = 0.003) because they have more skills. At the same age, they also tend to derive meaningful relationships (χ^2 = 23.117, p = 0.003) from their family members, friends, classmates, and teachers, even through remote means. When students are older, they tend to derive meaning

(χ^2 = 18.419, p = 0.018) from what they think and do. Lastly, they tend to set their own goals and find ways to accomplish them (χ^2 = 33.351, p= 0.000) even during the pandemic. Overall, well-being is significantly associated with age (χ^2 = 30.062, p = 0.000). As people get older, they enjoy a more positive experience (Raposo et al., 2020).

Correlational analyses were done to determine the relationships between the students' profile and their anxiety and stress. Table 9 exposes the results of the correlational analyses of the data.

Table 9 Correlational Analysis Between Students' Profile and their Anxiety and Stress

Aspect	Profile	χ^2 value	p-value	Significance	Result
Anxiety	Age	7.469	.487	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	Gender	5.802	.214	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	Father's Job	6.989	.538	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	Mother's Job	6.118	.634	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	Income	18.715	.540	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	No. of Siblings	10.389	.582	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	No. of School Siblings	12.058	.441	Not Significant	Ho accepted
Stress	Age	7.578	.476	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	Gender	12.993	.011	Significant	Ho rejected
	Father's Job	7.668	.467	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	Mother's Job	9.019	.341	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	Income	25.302	.190	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	No. of Siblings	18.034	.115	Not Significant	Ho accepted
	No. of School Siblings	12.072	.440	Not Significant	Ho accepted

Based on Table 9, one profile is significantly associated with stress. This profile is gender (χ^2 = 12.993, p = 0.011). This finding means female students tend to become more stressed about COVID than their male counterparts. They tend to be more stressed because females are more emotional and sensitive than males (Abdulrazzaq et al., 2020; Kadyan et al., 2021).

The other profiles do not have significant relationships with either anxiety or stress. This means that the profiles do not give any associations with anxiety or stress. For example, age does not indicate the students' anxiety or stress level because age is not a determinant of anxiety or stress. Studies have shown that the determinants of anxiety and stress among students are certain behaviors such as relationships, peer pressure, family stability, alcoholism, and drugs, among others (Ramón-Arbués et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION

The high school students of Bantayan National High School in Northern Cebu sometimes experience anxiety and stress due to the effects of the health crisis on them. They also faced psychological stress, financial problems, and remote learning issues. Still, they were able to create opportunities to cope with the negative consequences of COVID-19. Because of this, their positive emotions and relationships were

often well, while their engagement, meaning, and accomplishments were sometimes well. Overall, the current condition of their mental health is sometimes well.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended the use of the mental health program formulated based on the findings of this relevant and timely study.

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