

Research Article

Health Crisis Coping Strategies of Senior High School Teachers of King Thomas Learning Academy, Incorporated: An Analysis

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Abstract: This study aimed to analyze the coping strategies of senior high school faculty of King Thomas Learning Academy, Inc. in the pandemic period. The data was gathered from nineteen (19) senior high school teachers from the learning institution through documentation and survey. Analysis of the data showed that accepting late submissions from students and accepting calls and receiving emails from students after working hours ranked number one (1) with a weighted mean of 4.77. The use of social media networking sites providing happiness and enjoyment to the teachers ranked number two (2) with the weighted mean of 4.46. Lastly, using their personal gadgets for virtual classes ranked number three (3) with the weighted mean of 4.38.

These indicators were perceived to be the top three coping strategies. The researchers conclude that teachers need adequate support to increase their productivity and keep them motivated. Additionally, collaboration between superior/principal and co-teachers, effective preventive measures, and a positive attitude when dealing with the pandemic also play an important role in reducing/coping with stress. The availability of adequate information and support from social media and schools also helped motivate the teachers in this study to deal with the outbreak.

Keywords: Coping strategies, Senior high school, COVID-19.

Introduction

School systems worldwide have been affected gravely by the raging COVID-19 Pandemic. World Health Organization (2020) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic last March 11, 2020. According to Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General, "This is not just a public health crisis, it is a crisis that will touch every sector, So, every sector and every individual must be involved in the fight". Without much choice, schools around the world, from basic to tertiary levels were closed by their respective governments. This is one of the dire consequences of lockdowns implemented by almost all governments to arrest the spread of the pandemic. In this case, face-to-face learning and traditional classroom methods of teaching were suspended indefinitely.

According to UNICEF as of September 2020, more than 1 billion children are at risk of falling behind due to school closures. Roughly 168 million schools were closed for almost a year aimed at containing the spread of COVID-19. To keep the world's children learning, countries have been implementing remote education programme. However, a large proportion of the world's children, particularly those living in poverty, lack access to the internet, personal computers, televisions, or even radios at home, amplifying the effects of existing educational inequalities.

Students who lack access to the necessary technologies for home-based learning have few options for continuing their education. As a result, many students who participate in face-to-face sessions/learning run the risk of never returning to school, undoing years of progress made in

education globally (UNICEF, 2020). This challenged the educational system specifically of the Philippines on how they would adjust to the new normal setup and make sure that no student would be left behind.

The remaining months of the academic year 2019 to 2020 after the Philippine Government issues a Luzon-wide Enhanced Community Quarantine, students experienced difficulties to finish the required hours of the curricula. Some schools used online classroom and file transfer to deliver and receive the remaining requirements of their students in order to pass the subjects without compromising the public health. Some students have the capacity to cope, some are not.

The Department of Education and Commission of Higher Education orders, in the light of the learning continuity plan, advises all the schools nationwide to blend all available platforms, methodologies, and systems to deliver learning materials to all students, as long as there's no face-to-face classes.

According to Ana P. Santos in her article "In the Philippines, Distance Learning Reveals the Digital Divide" (2020), roughly 28 million Filipino students who have been impacted by school closures are meant to minimize the spread of COVID-19. Filipino students have not been inside a classroom since March, when President Rodrigo Duterte declared a nationwide public health emergency. Government education bureaus had planned to eventually allow face-to-face classes in areas with low COVID-19 infection rates but then, in May, Duterte created a "no vaccine, no classes" policy, effectively keeping schools closed indefinitely. It's not good for a country where "there was an education crisis even before [the pandemic]," said Isy Feingold, chief of education at UNICEF Philippines.

In the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), a global survey on the knowledge of 15-year-old students, the Philippines ranked last among 79 countries in reading comprehension. The country's performance in mathematics and science was also among the lowest in the study and the PISA report indicated that more affluent students outperformed those from disadvantaged backgrounds. "This pandemic aggravated [the education crisis]," said Feingold, who believes it is critical that "the school year (Santos, 2020).

Due to the impossibility of face-to-face classes, the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), which regulates colleges and universities, developed distance learning options that include online platforms, offline modules, or a combination of the two, referred to as blended or flexible learning.

In this context, this study described and analyzed the responses of King Thomas Learning Academy, Inc. in Sipocot, Camarines Sur, with regard to the lockdown and the suspension of face-to-face schooling. The researchers attempted to investigate the current status of the school in terms of its pedagogical innovations, availability of programs, enrollment rate, economic aspects, and how these variables influence the quality and implementation of its educational system and services, and the coping strategies of teaching and non-teaching faculty to their new normal delivery of education and learning, using the Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus.

Methodology

This paper utilized Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus which described how the ruling and intellectual classes maintain their social privileges even after these privileges are broken by education and equality opportunities. Bourdieu's sociological analysis of habitus that focuses on the French educational system suggests that certain individuals from outside the dominant classes and wealthier groups can succeed, whereas the middle and wealthy cannot. On the other hand, however, they enjoy a significant edge in terms of social and cultural capital and that is formed because of a habitus.

According to Bourdieu (1997), the concept of habitus was introduced by Aristotle and refined by Marcel Mauss and further expanded by Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Yet it was Bourdieu, who turned it into a cornerstone of his sociology, and used it to address the sociological issue of agency and structure-the habitus is shaped by structural position and produces action and thereby also confirms and reproduces social structure. This study, however, focuses on the middle-class habitus and on how private schools deal with the problems of the reproduction and transformation of this habitus in the time of COVID-19 pandemic.

The researchers used a mixture of narrative-qualitative and descriptive-quantitative methods. The quantifiable gathered data determines the coping strategies of SHS Faculty through an online survey while narrative-qualitative gathered data used to determine the current status of King Thomas Learning Academy, Inc. and how does the school's capital improve the quality and implementation of its educational system and services through an online interview via Facebook Messenger Chat as a supplementary data to its principal problem.

Participants selected within King Thomas Learning Academy–Senior High School Department, it involves 1 OIC/Principal, 1 Faculty Head and 17 Teachers, total of 19 SHS Faculty. A documentation and survey method were used with the questionnaire as the main instrument, and an interview via Facebook Messenger as the secondary instrument to gather the desired data and information.

Results and Discussion

The researchers find it necessary to learn the background of King Thomas Learning Academy Inc. according to the narratives of convenient-respondents from SHS Faculty. Through this, the researcher is able to analyze the factors that change and improve the status, and capital of King Thomas Learning Academy Inc. as well as the coping strategies of SHS Faculty. Current status of King Thomas Learning Academy, Inc. in the time of COVID-19 Pandemic:

Innovations

According to the respondents, the institution as a whole shifted from the traditional way of teaching to blended learning using a different platform such as modular, offline and online learning that helps students to continue their education.

The institution used the modular learning as the main modality which is very far from the traditional face-to-face learning, and implemented several innovations in the learning modality such as the utilization of online learning through Zoom and Google Meet wherein, the teachers uploaded video tutorials and lessons.

Availability of Programs

According to the respondents, despite the problems that King Thomas Learning Academy Inc. encountered during this time of pandemic, the school maintained to be in a good level to ensure that every student will receive a quality education. The school continued to open all their existing and new, from kindergarten up to their newly-opened department, the College department.

Enrollment Rate

According to the respondents, the enrollment rate of the institution in this time of the Pandemic hit its expected enrollees because of the different scholarships being offered to the students. Hence, there are still some students who did not stay and decided to stop studying due to financial status.

Economic Resources

According to the respondents, the school implemented all possible means and ways for education. KTLA provided an internet connection on selected barangays to help students who struggle to connect with the internet and for them to do their learning materials, activities, and research and

submit their assessments and projects without hindrances. Also, the school provided distribution points on selected barangays to assist students in sending and receiving their modules without going to the school.

The school's capital improves the quality and implementation of its educational system and services according to the convenient-respondents of SHS Faculty. It showed that a school's capital improves the quality and implementation of its educational system and services through implementing ways, programs, and strategies that will help every student, as well as the teachers in every way that they can to provide a good and high-quality education and services for everyone.

Most of the respondents believed that the school provided a system based on their capital such as: established distribution and internet points on selected barangays, used the school's social media page on Facebook for communications, and other, not specified ways and strategies. SHS Teachers' personal rating indicates that accepting late submissions from students and accepting calls and receiving emails from students after working hours tied in ranked number one (1) with weighted mean of 4.77 and is described as Very Frequently.

Also using social media networking sites to gain happiness and enjoyment placed second (2) ranked with the weighted mean of 4.46 and is described as Very Frequently. Then, using personal gadgets for virtual classes ranked third (3) with the weighted mean of 4.38 and is described as Very Frequently. These indicators were perceived to be the top three (3) coping strategies. Combined with other practices based on their different capitals, SHS teachers of King Thomas Learning Academy, Inc. were able to utilize personal coping strategies to deal with stress and adverse emotions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in the educational system to a significant degree.

In the findings of the study of Baloran and Hernan, (2020) private school teachers experience anxiety or psychological stress during COVID-19 pandemic, but keep maintaining their commitment to their individual and collective functions in their educational institutions considering professional, ethical, and moral responsibility towards their profession.

It was found out that the school opened all their programs; Pre-School, Elementary, Junior & Senior High School, newly opened College and Technical-Vocational. The school applied blended learning for all their programs. The total enrollment rate is much higher than last school year (2019-2020). The respondents expressed that the school suffered from a financial crisis due to the pandemic. Nonetheless, the school continuously operates with voucher programs from the government.

Closure of school was not an option however the education systems have responded by developing remote learning plans, which rely on multichannel strategies that combine different technologies (print materials, radio, TV, Internet, and/or mobile) and incorporate synchronous and asynchronous learning. These kinds of modalities of delivery are not that difficult to follow. In which the teacher has given their students more ways to communicate with one another.

The pandemic has introduced uncertain major aspects in King Thomas Learning Academy Inc. such as Modular learning, offline and online learning. However, schools through the time of pandemic have reached their aim for both student and teacher to be productive and different learning modalities.

This pandemic brought us a lot of challenges, that those challenges didn't become a hindrance to have a closure of the school; however, the school did their best to give excellent quality. Even making a lot of adjustments, it did not become a hindrance for everyone to stop working and learning. Yet the school continued to serve, with the best-efforts school closure was never an option it continued to conduct researches about how to give an easier way of learning. This pandemic has

taught students and teachers how to be more resourceful and many ways, where students and teachers work hand and hand amidst pandemic.

The respondents present that even though we are in a battle with the COVID-19 Pandemic it never became a hindrance or weakness for them that they even strived to give the best quality for learners. They would always talk and update their family, friends, and relatives about their current state, some of them would ask for help and support to relieve stress. Most of the respondents would visit a doctor to monitor their physical and mental health conditions, they would most often communicate with their superiors regarding their mental and emotional state however they rarely would seek guidance counseling.

The respondents would always socialize with their co-teachers in their free time, in their free time they would hang out with their friends and families during weekends. Most of the respondents would attend church mass and worship in online services. Due to this COVID-19 Pandemic by following health protocols, most of the respondents would read about the COVID-19 responses, prevention and mechanism of transmission, to prevent a further contamination and spread of the COVID-19, the respondents always follow health and safety measures in the school.

The teachers would always use face masks inside the faculty lounge to follow health protocols. As teachers who would want to increase their professional growth some of them would attend webinars and events lined up in their career.

Most of the respondents feel sad when they can't reach their students, hence, most of them would accept late submission from students, most teachers would always accept and respond to calls and texts from students after working hours, however, other teachers would not. In vacant time the respondents would use social media platforms to gain happiness and enjoyment.

Majority of the respondents exercise regularly. In some moments that are stressful they would take a deep breath, stretch and meditation to free themselves from stress. Most of the teachers avoid taking home school-related works, few of them respond sometimes while some respond always of taking home school-related works.

Most of the respondents would sometimes try to avoid stress and issues by diverting their attention to other things while a few of them would always avoid stress and issues. Majority of the respondents would always have their own personal relaxation activities.

The teachers would sometimes feel anxious when their superiors/principal corrects them while some would never feel anxious because they already know the standard that should be followed, they would also feel distracted sometimes when the internet is low. In terms of the economic capital, the respondents are experiencing low internet connection, hence, most of them would use their own money to buy prepaid data loads to access mobile networks.

Most teachers would have part time or online jobs to gain extra income while some of them do not have any part time jobs at all. Most of the Teachers would use their own gadgets and tools to accomplish virtual classes. Most of the respondents would sometimes feel disappointed when their salary is delayed because they have a loan to pay.

Conclusion

The respondents expressed that despite the pandemic, King Thomas Learning Academy, Inc. provides the needs of their students by using all available platforms and alternatives. It was found out that the school offered online classes for those students who can afford to access online and offline learning materials and live conferencing, pen and module for those who can't access internet and located in the far-flung areas, and provided internet points in selected barangays.

The teachers should identify additional resources for the learning of their students aside from the provided resources of the school. Take advantage of the many companies and online platforms that are currently offering free learning opportunities such as short-online courses, webinars, and training. It will help them to catch up with the updates on innovations of the educational system here in the Philippines.

Teachers should have continuous dialogue with parents to inform them that they also do their part by reaching out with their child, helping them in their learning activities and assessments. Teachers must focus on crafting modules rather than online classes because the rate of students without gadgets and access on the internet are much higher than those who have. Make sure that module can give all the learning competencies in a feasible time-span, and all of the assessments are authentic.

By providing internet points in selected barangays, the school enabled the students can access the school's online and offline learning materials such as lecture videos, module, assessments and other references and distribution points in selected barangays, students will no longer go to the main area of the school just to pick-up their modules or send their assessments. By using the social media site, the school is made to post announcements, advisories and reminders, and students are up-to-date with information about the school administration. By opening the 24/7 Communication Lines via Facebook Messenger, the school's parents and students can easily raise their concerns and grant their request immediately.

The researchers conclude that the school utilized all of their available technologies to reach out with the students and parents. The school was the one who went to the area of students to provide their learning needs and that the school provided platforms that were suited to the economic status of the student.

The coping strategies most commonly used by SHS faculty to deal with the COVID-19 outbreak were talking and updating their family about their current status and asking for help and support to relieve their stress. Additionally, some of the teachers seek guidance counseling and doctors about their condition for the benefit of their mental health.

The majority of the teachers are communicating/ socializing with their superior, principal, and co-teacher during their free time to update them regarding their mental and emotional state. Also, most of the respondents attend online/ physical church services and worship. Teachers are always reading about COVID-19 response, prevention and mechanism of transmission so that they correctly follow health safety measures whenever they are inside the school.

Additionally, they use face masks inside the faculty lounge and avoid going out in public places to lessen the risk of exposure from COVID-19. The teachers attend online webinars and events that are in-lined with their career to continue their professional growth. In their own personal time, the teachers use social media networking sites to gain happiness and enjoyment. Some of the respondents exercise regularly and take a deep breath, stretch and meditate. They are also trying to avoid taking home school-related work.

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, teachers feel sad when they can't reach their students and they become distracted when the internet connection is slow, so the teachers accept late submissions from students and some of them also accept calls and receive emails from students after working hours. Most of the respondents use their personal money for prepaid load to access mobile networks. Some of the teachers have an extra income source/s, such as online selling, virtual assistance, and freelance job because their salary is low and sometimes are being delayed.

Teachers are at the forefront of dealing with education problems due to the COVID-19 outbreak. It was found out that the most significant stressor was using their personal money for prepaid load to

access mobile networks, slow internet connection, and delayed salary. In contrast, the main factor that reduced their stress was that all co-teachers worked together to overcome educational problems in this time of pandemic.

The three coping strategies most commonly used by teachers to deal with the COVID-19 outbreak and educational problems were talking and updating their family about their current state, reading about COVID-19 response, and its prevention and transmission, using social media networking sites to gain happiness and enjoyment. Family support was a significant factor motivating teachers to deal with the COVID-19 outbreak and education problems.

The SHS Teachers are at the forefront of dealing with education problems due to the COVID-19 outbreak. They have an obligation to continue providing best quality education services while dealing with this Pandemic. It is important to recognize that teachers have been doing difficult and invaluable work during this time of outbreak by adapting to the new situation in their work.

The teachers would still take time for themselves, at the same time working hard even sometimes they use their own capital for work. Teachers are also doing their own strategy with good performance to attain the school's standard and protocols.

In these challenging times, teachers need adequate support to increase their productivity and keep them motivated. Additionally, a good collaboration between superior/ principal and co-teachers, effective preventive measures, and a positive attitude when dealing with the pandemic also play an important role in reducing/ coping with stress.

The availability of adequate information and support from social media and schools also helped motivate the teachers in this study to deal with the outbreak.

Conflicts of interest

There is no conflict of interest of any kind.

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