The Self-Efficacy and Loneliness of College Students Amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The current pandemic has caused the education system to adapt especially to a new way of learning, namely online learning. Furthermore, Online learning set-up results to students learning within their homes and cause them to isolate themselves, avoid social contact, and lessen the interaction within their friends, family, and other love ones. Although students still achieve academic excellence, learning from home can have an effect to their psychological health and to their self-efficiency. One of these is Loneliness, the more a student feels to be lonely the higher its risk in having low self-efficacy. In that manner, this study observes the relationship of Loneliness to Self-Efficacy of college students living here in the Philippines. The statistical findings reveals that there is a significant relationship between Loneliness and Self-Efficacy (r=.171).

Keywords: Loneliness, Self-efficacy, College Students, COVID-19 Pandemic, Philippines

Introduction

The educational system in the Philippines through CHED adapted the flexible learning system and will continue in the year 2021 until the next years (De Vera, 2021). The education system norm in the Philippines would be flexible learning, bringing back the traditional face-to-face learning setup will not be an option. Policies like this are adopted since the commission doesn't want to risk exposing their educational stakeholders if ever another pandemic happens (De Vera, 2021).

Furthermore, this pandemic produces sudden lockdown, it also results to unexpected stop of many outdoor activities that are usually important in everyone's daily life and an important role in development of youngsters such us sudden interruption of school and free time activities, isolation of self from society, lack of autonomy, sudden change in work's activities, loss of loved ones, and long-term suffering. These are one of many factors that results to a person's stress, emotional and psychological distress (Cattelino et al. 2021).

Students tend to feel pressure from themselves and from society and competitiveness, which is usually associated with perfectionism that results in increasing stress throughout their students training and will cause harm on their health. These elements including anxiety and depression has a relationship with self-efficacy (Arima et al. 2020). And somehow affect students' mental health and worry and stress themselves, will have a decrease in terms of describing how they feel,

had trouble studying, and sudden feeling of loneliness (Berman et al. 2021).

Hawkey and Cacioppo (2010) states that loneliness as an anguish emotion of a person that doesn't quantitively or qualitatively met their social needs. In the study of Fiori and Consedine (2013), there are countless students who feels social anguish and loneliness when it comes to adapting new academic learning and developing socialization. Thus, Bandura (1997) affirms that self-efficacy is a belief on the efficacy to be successful of an individual, it focuses on one's capability to do such task in a certain situation.

According to Roth et al. (2021), both resilience and self-efficacy have been found to exert a significant palliative effect by weakening the perceived loneliness relationship. Moreover, Lijuan et al. (2014) states that loneliness appears to be linked to academic difficulties throughout the college years, this includes student is lower levels that is interested and has the initiative to discover new situations. However, Suanet and Tilburg (2019) reveals that there is no evidence of a contagious of loneliness in older adults and in youngsters. Aside from that, proficiency and self-efficiency are essential for a complete understanding of loneliness in today's society.

Moreover, this study investigates the relationship between self-efficacy and loneliness among college students. The researchers seek to understand how online learning affects one's mental stability, particularly in those students who experience loneliness. Furthermore, the researchers conducted this analysis to seek out how one's self-efficacy of the

students will function effectively during this new normal educational system.

Research Question

This study investigates the relationship between self-efficacy and loneliness among college students. Thus, it sought to answer the question:

1. Is there a significant relationship between self-efficacy and loneliness among college students?

Literature Review

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy focuses on what people believe in terms of their capabilities to do actions or performances on a specific level (Bandura, as cited in Rahimi, 2022). It also states there that Bandura had suggested four main causes that can influence self-efficacy, these are social persuasion, mastery experience, emotional and physical states from others, and increasing experience of an individual from the society (Rahimi, 2022).

Martinez and Maravilla (2020) states that students can improve their self-efficacy if one has an idea on self-efficacy beliefs hence one can be able to grow as a productive people who also can overcome problems in their daily challenging life if they are given the opportunity to train and enhance self-efficacy.

Furthermore, Ashrafi-rizi et al. (2015) explains that self-efficacy can affect one's choices and decisions. Students tend to participate more in activities that they believe they are more capable of doing. For that reason, students who are more self-efficient are more likely to improve their trait of being certain, persistent action in doing their duties and their skills in decision-making by helping each learner recognize their potential skills.

As stated by Vhargese, Norman, and Thavaraj (2015), people who have high self-efficacy tend to be more confident in their skills and abilities. They tend to do well in whatever they do and are more likely to have more participation in learning activities. Aside from that, people with huge self-efficacy are most likely to have great coping skills and have more confidence dealing with their problems that they face in their everyday lives rather than those with low self-efficacy.

In support study above, Blanco et al. (2020) study shows that people who found doing performances

difficult are most likely to have lower self-efficiency than those who are efficient in doing tasks. Moreover, in this times of new learning, self-efficacy among students is mainly affected, students tend to have lower confidence because of the unusual set up.

Gharetepeh et al. (2015) revealed that most students with higher academic achievement have higher self-efficacy rather than students with lower self-efficacy though both groups that has low self-efficacy and high self-efficacy are associated with self-awareness components and social skills.

In addition, Moos and Azevedo (2017) also state that computer self-efficacy motivational composition has an important role in gaining knowledge with CBLE. This study empirically investigated the relationship between the factors related to computer self-efficacy, discovering outcomes, and the educating process using CBLE.

Loneliness

Tan, Pamuk, and Donder (2013) state that loneliness is a common and normal emotion that everyone can experience in their everyday lives, an emotion by a person who hopes to contact other people. It is also a negative feeling that has a lack of compatibility between desire and achieving social contact. However, one can experience loneliness too even though they are in a middle of a crowd.

Hysing et al. (2020) reveals that students who lack companionship are the ones who felt lonelier than those students who have enough companionship within their relationships and also students who lived alone are more prone to loneliness, isolation, and feeling left out than those students who lives with their partners/friends or family.

According to Vasileiou et al. (2018) loneliness is mainly experienced by young adults who during their early adulthood leaving their homes alone for the first time, to pursue education. Attending education within universities requires relocating to a new city, or sometimes relocating to a new complete environment abroad. These kinds of changes within one's life increase the risk of becoming and feeling alone due to separation from people you have an intimate relationship with.

Thomas, Orme, Kerrigan (2020) shows that loneliness is a strong cause of depression and anxiety, this can lead to have an unenthusiastic effect on an academic performance of a student as well as on adjustment to a new environment within their new university, and

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sometimes a big factor for a student to drop out within their school. This kind of negative emotion labeled as one reason of poor mental health in higher education.

However, moving out or separation from home are not the only causes of loneliness. In study of Yavich, Davidovitch, Frenkel (2018), frequent use of internet can result to ignore any interactions within their family neighbors. People who often use social medias and the one who have high risk in being lonely and stressed in a day due to lack of spending time with their significant people.

In support to Yavich et al. (2016), phobia in socialization or the feeling of loneliness might be in line with the frequent use of technological devices such as cellphones, which mainly use social networking sites. Frequent use of the internet can cause internet addiction that can be one of the causes of such consequences as social isolation, loneliness, failure in academics, conflict within the family, debts, and even job loss.

In addition, Nottage et al. (2022) states that people who are anxious about attachment might have a negative view of themselves but have a positive view towards others are at higher risk of being lonely. In this reason, a person who are anxious about attachment might not have social interaction or connection to build up for their low self-esteem while people who have mixed attachment who has negative views within their selves and to people around them might lack in seeking support.

Self-Efficacy And Loneliness

Loneliness was found to be a main personal factor to the loss of self-efficacy within the society. The rise of internet addiction among students in universities, particularly among young adults, has resulted in their isolation (Kaur, 2018). Mohammadi and Torabi (2018) states that young adults who become socially isolated had worse social self-efficacy. As a result, it was thought necessary to observe and look at the function of loneliness when it comes to moderating the relationship between the two variables: internet addiction and social self-efficiency. Examining loneliness, the consequences of internet addiction of university students in Turkey, social self-efficacy, and more ways to improve the role by executing effective methods.

According to Lijuan et Al. (2014), loneliness appears to be associated with difficulties in academic throughout the college years, this includes lower levels of students who are interested and invested in

exploring new things, the same goes to lower academic self-efficacy and self-competence judgments.

Bakioğlu (2020) reveals that the relationship between IA, social self-efficacy, and loneliness appeared to be a mediator. When the time amount spent on the internet increases, the individual's social life also increases. Realistically speaking, every individual spends most of their time using the internet.

According to Iskender (2018), If an individual spends most of their time on the internet, their social relationships tend to decrease and most likely grow lonely. As a result, the lonely person's conviction in social self-efficacy diminishes with time. Individuals with diminishing experience in beginning and maintaining social relationships and those with broken previous social interactions avoid forming new ones. In fact, university time encompasses the ages during which people learn new experiences in relationship. Furthermore, if a social relationship is not formed within young age, the individual will be unable to complete his or her essential life tasks.

Feldman et al. (2016) reveals a statistically significant negative correlation between hope, being lonely, and self-efficacy in academics and a statistically significant negative correlation between loneliness, optimism, and academic self-efficacy. This study found a statistically significant negative correlation of hope and optimism as an interposition between loneliness and academic self-efficacy among children with learning difficulties.

Tsai et al. (2016) found that friendships with different groups of people (international Chinese and Non-Chinese students, and U.S. students) are related to loneliness and social self-efficacy. In the time of their first two semesters in the United States, students with greater levels of social self-efficacy have a higher number of American friends. In addition, students who have a higher percentage of American friends are less prone to loneliness during their first semester in the United States. In other words, perceived intimate ties or social relationship may be a significant factor in social adjustment of Chinese overseas students.

Jin et al. (2019) examined the impact of the characteristic mindfulness on loneliness, regulatory emotional self-efficacy, subjective well-being, and the relationship between trait mindfulness and loneliness. 600 college students completed the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale, The Scale of Regulatory Emotional Self-efficacy, the General Well-Being Schedule, and the Loneliness Scale. It was revealed that mindfulness could predict the loneliness of a college student in a

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significant but negative way.

Methodology

Research Design

This study employed descriptive correlational research method. This design aims to give a glimpse of the existing situation, uncover correlations between variables, and anticipate future events based on current information (Stangor, and Walinga, 2019). The researchers aim in this study is to know the relationship between Self-efficacy and Loneliness among college students.

Respondents

The respondents of this study were 172 college students who were currently enrolled in any college or universities in the Philippines. However, this study was conducted through a convenience sampling technique due to the ongoing pandemic.

Instruments of the study

In data gathering, this study utilized two instruments, the General Self-Efficacy (GSE) for self-efficacy while for loneliness, the researchers used UCLA Loneliness Scale.

The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) is an instrument to determine the participant's self-efficacy linked with their emotions. This scale has 10 items and its score ranges from 10 to 40 with a reliability of Cronbach's alpha ranging from .76 to .90 (Schwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). This scale is valid, reliable, and recommended for measuring general self-efficacy (Chen, Gully, and Eden, 2001). The UCLA Loneliness Scale is a 20-item scale intended to measure each person's feeling of loneliness and social Isolation. This scale is highly reliable with a consistent Cronbach alpha range between .89 and .94.

Procedures

The researchers ask their respondent's consent before executing the instruments. The participants were asked to fill up relevant information needed without requiring them to put up any private details of every respondent, and answer the questions with honesty. Aside from that they were also asked for their permission first before answering the questionnaire. Moreover, the researchers assured keeping all the responses confidential and protected by the Data

Privacy Act of 2012 (R.A. 10173). After the data collection, all responses were all deleted.

Ethical Considerations

The respondents were informed about the objectives of the study. On top of that, this study was made during the widespread of Coronavirus therefore the survey questionnaire is performed through an online platform called Google Forms. The first part of the questionnaire clearly stated the respondent's criteria and asked the respondent's permission before proceeding to the actual research questions. The research professor approved the questions used in this study. In addition, the researchers make sure that all the responses were kept confidential.

Result

Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Loneliness

The major goal of this study is to perceive whether there is a relationship between Self-Efficacy and Loneliness. As demonstrated in Table 1, the statistical analysis reveals that the variables are significantly correlated. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 1
Pearson Correlation Between Self-Efficacy and Loneliness

CORRELATION		
	Self-Efficacy	*Loneliness*
Self-Efficacy	-	.171*
Loneliness	.171*	-

The study by Grotan, Sund, and Bjerkeset (2019) affirms that the students who appear to be lonelier are the ones who are at higher risk of low self-efficacy rather than those students who reported to be less lonely. Aside from students who feel lonely, their study also shows that students who live separately or live alone reported low self-efficacy and delayed progress in their academic performance.

In addition, Icekson et. al. (2021) states that students' and non-students' loneliness is correlated with their self-efficacy. Adults and young adults who claim to have a huge experience of being lonely tend to have a

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rough time learning things while those adults and young adults who are reported to be less lonely don't have a hard time learning. Furthermore, their study also reveals that younger students who reported having difficulties in learning are most likely to have a feeling of loneliness.

Discussion

Various studies have supported and presented different results on the link between self-efficacy and loneliness. However, some studies tend to overlook the importance of the interrelationship between the two variables. Participant reaction was an indicator for producing fact-based results about student self-efficacy and loneliness.

From this, we can conclude that self-efficacy is significantly correlated with loneliness. The results show that increased self-efficacy is perceived by students as a decrease in loneliness. This study also shows that pandemics have influenced student learning and grades in several areas. Therefore, to reduce the level of burnout, parents, schools, and educational institutions need to monitor the effectiveness of their students.

In addition, students' self-efficacy should always be considered in coping with various pressures, adapting to new learning and new environments, and monitoring self-actualization. Keep in mind that low self-efficacy leads to a feeling of loneliness for the student. Therefore, this study suggested promoting priorities for reviewing students according to circumstances, abilities, efficiencies, and coping mechanisms to avoid loneliness. Reduced pressure and stress are also important in allowing the share an individual's self-efficacy and loneliness. As a result, student loneliness is avoided and proactively addressed.

Conclusion

The worldwide health fiasco has made e-learning an educational tool. Consequently, academe adherents were required to adapt to the new pedagogy environment. Specifically, youngsters who mostly are the students experienced such a discursive pace of learning that eventually led to the roots of stress, and emotional and psychological distress. The overall emotional intelligence score used to predict self-efficacy explanation differed between students with

varying levels of academic achievement. The self-efficacy structure was explained to students with low academic achievement using self-awareness and self-motivation components. Incontestably the study's result asserted that the students who seem to be lonelier are the ones that have a higher risk of low efficacy.

Findings from current studies suggest that university counselors and health professionals can better assess counseling and therapeutic interventions for lonely students when self-efficacy support is dealt with. Programs can also be designed to better educate students, parents, and teachers about the factors that contribute to loneliness, how to recognize them, and how to deal with them. Improving student self-esteem and self-efficacy can lead to more effective counseling and treatment programs for lone college students. In addition, both counseling and community-based social self-efficacy interventions can be performed to promote positive psychological adaptation. As a result of these discoveries, both researchers and professionals can gain a better understanding of social self-efficacy, personality variables of means and expressiveness, and psychological adaptation variables of self-efficacy and loneliness.

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