



ASSESSING WAYS THROUGH RESEARCH AND AUGMENTATION (AWRA): IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF COLLEGE STUDENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES PHASE 1

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ABSTRACT

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic changed the overall educational landscape of the country. It shifted the attention to how the students handled the predicaments presented by the situation. This survey explored the effects of the pandemic on the mental health of college students from both public and private institutions in the Province of Samar, Philippines. Data collection focused on two areas of mental health: anxiety and depression. It was done through online and face-to-face modalities with the use of the following tools: Anxiety GAD-2, Anxiety GAD-7, Depression PHQ-2, and Depression PHQ-9. Data were analyzed through quantitative methods. It was found that of the 180 college students, 91 (50.56%) screened for generalized anxiety disorder as a result of the pandemic. Further analysis under this premise revealed that most of the college students which accounts for 87 (48.33%) developed moderate anxiety. By using the Depression PHQ-2 tool, it was found that 127 (70.56%) college students developed major depressive disorder during the pandemic. Furthermore, 113 (62.78%) have PHQ-9 scores between 5-9, classified as mild severity of depression. This means that they need to be observed constantly and a follow-up diagnostic test should be conducted. Moreover, the following factors were identified that contributed to their current mental health: pandemic scare and fear of the unknown (175/180, 97.22%), decreased social activities and interaction due to pandemic restrictions (178/180, 98.89%), and forced transition of the mode of learning and other academic concerns (179/180, 99.44%). The pandemic had negative implications for the mental health of college students. To cope with this, institutions and concerned agencies need to develop a good support system accompanied by a well thought out preventative and rehabilitative programs that cater mental health concerns of college students.

Keywords: Higher Education, Mental Health, Impact, Survey, Philippines