The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic: College Students Stress, Gender and Coping.

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ABSTRACT

Research shows that both stress and coping are experienced differently by college men and women. The current study aimed to collect data to determine differences in the way young college men and women respond to stress and coped with the COVID-19 pandemic. The sample consisted of 22 females and three males. The quantitative survey included single item indicators for items from the perceived stress scale, five items from the coronavirus impact scale, and a 12-item version of the ways of coping scale. Results showed the students who reported higher stress levels also reported negative changes to their income. Females were significantly more likely to use hand sanitizer when hand washing was not available, wash their hands and wear masks then men. Males were more likely to wear a mask 10 females. Vaccine compliance was found to be unique predictor of overall stress levels.

HYPOTHESES

1. Female college student will report higher levels of stress.

2. Females will be more likely to engage in problem-focus coping.

3. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused students to experience great stress .

4. Females are more likely to report higher rates of hand-sanitizing, mask wearing, vaccination, and hand washing to protect themselves from COVID-19 and this is related to females having problem-focused coping scores.

5. Higher rates of protective practices (handwashing, mask wearing, vaccination, and hand sanitizing) are related to lower overall stress levels.

6. Problem-focused coping should mediate the relationship between stress levels and COVID-19 related stress.

COVID-19 Stress → Problem-Focused Coping → Less Overall Stress
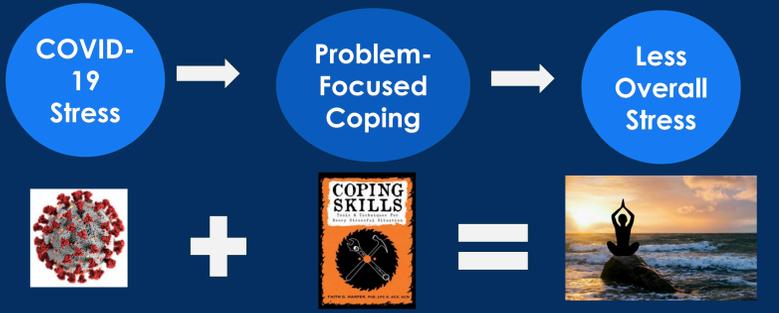
METHODS

Participants (N=25 and counting)

- 22 Females/3 Males
- 8 Juniors/17 seniors.
- 21 African Americans/ 2 Latinos/ 2 students who described their race as other.

Measures

- **Perceived Stress Scale** (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983; 4- items) – "Have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life." $\alpha = 0.84$
- **The Coronavirus Impact Scale**. (Stoddard et. al., 2021; 5-items) – How has your mental health been impacted by the pandemic
- **Ways of Coping Scale** (Adapted from Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; 12-items) – "I tried to analyze the problem in order to understand it better." $\alpha = 0.57-0.71$
- age, major, gender, race, ethnicity, work, parental status, handwashing frequency, hand sanitizing frequency, mask wearing, vaccination status

Procedures

- Quantitative survey that uses deductive reasoning.
- IRB Approval was obtained before the collection of data.
- Survey was administered through survey monkey. Students entered a raffle for a $50 Amazon gift card upon completion of survey.
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RESULTS

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Major Outcome Variables

Variable	N	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	α
Age	25	27.73	10.01	2.12*	4.20*	N/A
Adaptive Coping	25	14.12	3.36	-0.86	0.85	.71
Maladaptive Coping	25	6.68	2.21	0.59	0.58	.57
Problem-Focus Coping	25	5.40	1.61	-0.33	-0.67	N/A
Stress	25	9.52	1.56	0.25	-0.93	.84
COVID-19 Stress	25	4.76	1.88	0.50	-0.21	.34

*Age was both positively skewed and leptokurtic meaning most of the sample was young.

Table 2: Univariate Results for Hypotheses (H) 1, 2, & 4

H	Variable	Men M (SD)	Women M (SD)	t (23)	p	Cohen's d
1	Stress	9.33 (1.15)	9.55 (1.63)	-0.22	0.83	0.16 (S)
	COVID Stress	5.38 (2.31)	4.68 (1.86)	-0.56	0.58	0.33 (S)
2	Adaptive Coping	13.00 (1.73)	14.27 (3.52)	0.61	0.55	0.46 (M)
	Maladaptive Coping	6.67 (1.15)	6.68 (2.34)	0.01	0.99	0.005 (S)
	Problem-Focused Coping	6.00 (0.00)	5.32 (1.70)	0.68	0.50	0.005 (S)
4	Handwashing	2.67 (1.15)	3.82 (0.59)	2.85	0.009**	1.26 (L)
	Sanitizing	2.67 (0.58)	3.76 (0.62)	2.86	0.009**	1.82 (L)
	Mask Wearing	0.33 (0.58)	1.55 (0.51)	3.82	0.001**	2.23 (L)
	Vaccine	2.67 (0.58)	2.32 (0.72)	-0.80	0.430	0.54 (S)

** p < .01; S, M, L = small, medium, and large effect sizes

Hypothesis 3:

COVID Stress is related to increased overall stress (p= .149 Not Sig), but Financial COVID Stress is related to increased overall stress r (23) = -0.48, p = 0.016)

Table 3: Hypothesis 5 Predictors of Overall Stress

Variable	Beta (SE)	t (sig.)	R²
			0.57*
COVID Stress	-.29 (.14)	0.58	
Handwash	.54 (.48)	0.28	
Sanitize	.16 (.42)	0.72	
Mask Wearing	-.19 (.50)	0.71	
Vaccine	1.38 (.40)	0.003**	
Online Learning Satisfaction	-.41 (.43)	0.36	
GPA Since Learning Online	.63 (.52)	0.24	

$R^2 = .57$, $F (7, 16) = 3.03$, $p = 0.31$

p< .05, p < .01; H = Hypothesis

Hypothesis 6:

Mediation effects of coping between stress and COVID stress will be run when sample is larger.

DISCUSSION

1. **Women engage in greater COVID-19 preventive care.**
2. **Financial stress from the pandemic significantly impacts overall stress for college students.**
3. **Vaccine status predicts overall stress; with vaxed and boosted students experiencing great stress.**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS