

Covid-19: Its Effects on the Psychosocial Life of Criminology Students of the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology

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Abstract:- The aim of this study was to determine the effects of COVID-19 on the psychosocial life of Criminology students of the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology. The participants in this study were the 541 students from the College of Criminology. A questionnaire-checklist was used using the Google Forms platform. Data were collected online. Measures of central tendency such as frequency and percentage distribution, weighted mean were used. The effects of COVID-19 on the psychosocial life of Criminology students are as follows: Majority of the respondents fall into the ages of sixteen to twenty. With regard to gender, respondents were dominated by males. The most influential effects of COVID-19 are: It causes anxiety and stress on how we can overcome this pandemic and limited interaction with my friends. On the other hand, by contrast to other studies, the respondents showed lower concerns scores on the statement that they feel paranoid. Majoring in Criminology requires a sound body and mind. Therefore, the findings of this study signify that despite of the pandemic the respondents maintained a healthy mental condition.

Keywords:- COVID-19, Effects, Psychosocial, Criminology, Students, University.

I. INTRODUCTION

People from all walks of life did not escape from the prevalent coronavirus. The widespread of the contagious disease effectuate new stressors like fear and worry, inhibits physical activities, social affairs- as a result of isolation and it causes changes to our way of living. As previously reported, the proliferation of persons contaminated by the coronavirus draw out fear of being infected has heightened anxiety. Societies have difficulties to deal with the fear of catching the virus; lose someone they loved and other psychosocial concerns like thinking what lies ahead on how we can overcome this pandemic.

The escalating figure of COVID-19 makes out each segment of human race to sense its impact. In times of pandemic like COVID-19, it produced remarkable challenges for the Tertiary School.

Educational establishments like Universities and colleges, these are places where students acknowledge new experiences while acquainting with others. Unfortunately, in this time of pandemic students are undoubtedly affected because the schools where they customarily live and learn are closed.

In the Philippines, Higher Education Institutions (HEI's), both public and private, have also had to adjust to the new situation amidst of the pandemic (Simbulan, 2020).

Consequently, the continual escalation of coronavirus, closure of schools as well as the stringent quarantine creates stress to students.

Numerous studies about the coronavirus have enormously affected the attitude and mental condition of mankind. However, there is currently no known study on the effects of COVID-19 particularly to criminology students.

In Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, one of the Universities in the Province of Nueva Ecija, Philippines, offers Criminology course. Criminology majors study criminal behaviors and their repercussions on society. Therefore, they should have an exquisite interest in people and in the fields of criminal law, psychology and sociology. Moreover, studying crimes and deviant behavior and later on practicing in the field can be mentally challenging. Due to this, students enrolled in such course should safeguard their mental health.

The researcher, as a faculty member from the College of Criminology and currently assigned as the Guidance Coordinator of the department, recognized the value of assimilating the effects of COVID-19 on the life of Criminology students.

The aim of this study is to cognize the effects of COVID-19 on the psychosocial life of Criminology students of the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology as well as to ascertain the demographic profile of the students in terms of their age and gender. The findings of this study will serve as a threshold to set forth psychosocial programs for criminology students during the outbreak of this pandemic.

II. METHODOLOGY

A questionnaire-checklist was developed to be answered using the Google Forms platform. Data were collected online. The questionnaire included the Effects of COVID-19 on the psychosocial life of Criminology students as well as their demographic profile with regard to their age and gender. The respondents of this study were the 546 students from the College of Criminology of the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, Philippines. This study received approval from the Dean of the College of Criminology and all the respondents were abreast online permission and were guaranteed of anonymous data collection.

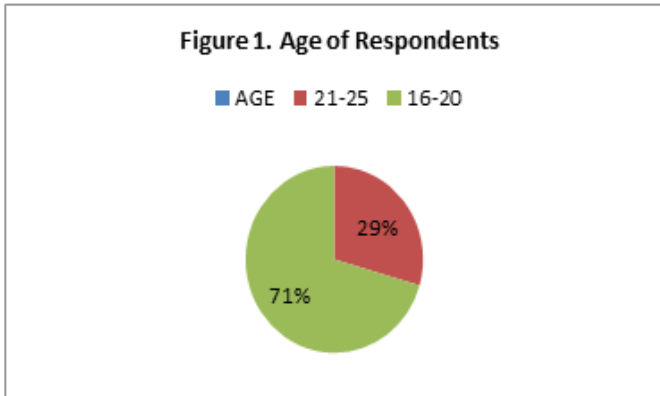
III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Profile of respondents

As can be elicited from the illustration in Figure 1, majority of the respondents were 16 to 20 years of age. It obtained a frequency of 385 and a percentage distribution of 71 percent, while the 21-25 years of age obtained a frequency

of 161 and a percentage of 29 percent. The data shows that the usual age to enter college is between 16-20 years of age.

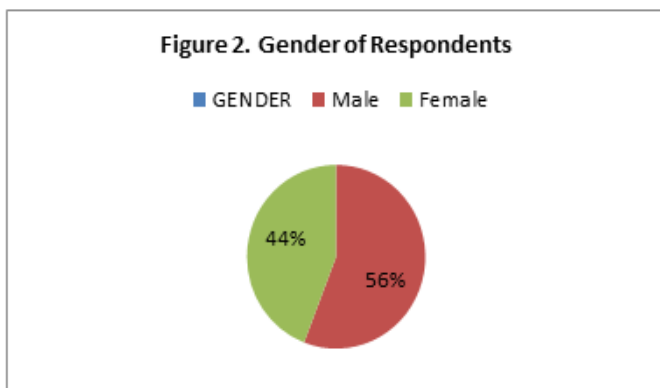
College students are varied cluster of individuals of all ages. Most students who graduated from senior high school are normally between the ages of sixteen to eighteen. As a result, after their graduation they enter college within those ages.



The distribution of respondents as to gender is presented in Figure 2. It shows that the frequency for male respondents was 305 with a percentage of 56 percent, while for female was 241 frequency with a percentage of 44 percent.

It shows that female gain entry into practical areas of criminal justice. Although not dominant, at least recognition that gender matters has taken into account.

To some extent, femininity influences the field of criminology. Evidently, women perpetually obtained position in Criminal Justice.



3.2 Effects of COVID-19 on the Psychosocial Life of Criminology Students

As reflected in Table 1, with regard to the Effects of COVID-19 on the Psychosocial life of Criminology students, the following statements obtained the highest weighted mean: (1) It caused anxiety and stress on how we can overcome this pandemic, 3.03; and (2) Limited social interaction with my friends, 2.90; while the statement that obtained the lowest weighted mean is: I feel paranoid, 2.38. It has recently been observed that fear of COVID-19 is associated more with anxiety and stress (Hidalgo et al., 2020). Since all academia are closed beyond the normal limit, college students are not excuse to be stressed.

Additionally, uncertainty ads to the situation were people are unaware of how long this pandemic will go on (Naser et al., 2020). Likewise, the respondents also agreed that; limited social interaction with my friends is also one of the psychosocial effects of COVID-19. People who regard

acquiring COVID-19 were more certainly to embrace the idea of physical distancing attitude.

Other studies revealed that due to this pandemic, the closure of schools and avoiding contacts with individuals has unfortunate effect to the assimilation of people into the society. Further, some studies disclosed that getting along with others have lessen remarkably. On the contrary, the respondents disagree that; Feeling paranoid is an effect of COVID-19.

Paranoia often include a cognitive style involving worry, the presence of negative affect like fear and in the present case, fear of COVID-19, anxiety and depression, negative thoughts about the self, interpersonal sensitivities, anomalous experiences such as hallucinations, insomnia and reasoning biases (Lopes et al., 2020).

The soundness of mind of every human is considerably overwhelmed when we encounter health crisis situation. The present epidemic has notably with mental manifestations and makes much peak of symptoms in students mental health.

In response to the question; I feel paranoid, the respondents disagree. This is contrary to existing literatures. Majoring in criminology requires studying a variety of disciplines: some neuroscience, a lot of law, a lot of sociology and psychology (Sherman, 2019), therefore it is indeed imperative that students taking up such course should possess a sound body and mind.

TABLE 1. EFFECTS OF COVID-19 ON THE PSYCHO-SOCIAL LIFE OF CRIMINOLOGY STUDENTS

Item Statement	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. I worry too much that leads to emotional breakdown.	2.82	Agree
2. It caused anxiety and stress on how we can overcome this pandemic.	3.03	Agree
3. I am experiencing fear, such as fear of dying because of the pandemic.	2.77	Agree
4. Feeling in-prison in our own house.	2.68	Agree
5. I feel afraid on the outdoor activities.	2.82	Agree
6. I feel paranoid.	2.38	Disagree
7. I feel that it is not safe when I am outside our house.	2.88	Agree
8. I feel boredom because I always stay at home.	2.82	Agree
9. I don't talk too much to other people because I am afraid that they have the virus and I will be infected.	2.73	Agree
10. Limited social interaction with my friends.	2.90	Agree
Average Weighted Mean	2.78	Agree

IV. CONCLUSION

As can be inferred from the study, the demographic characteristics of the respondents such as age and gender greatly influence and explain its variation. Majority of the respondents fall into the ages of sixteen to twenty. This is the common age to enter college. Likewise, the study shows that women make way into the field of Criminal Justice, although not dominant but it is evident that women have made

significant entry into the field of criminology considering that historically, the discipline is peculiar on men. Further, the most influential effects of COVID-19 are: it causes anxiety and stress on how we can overcome this pandemic and limited interaction with friends. It clearly shows that this pandemic affects to a high degree the emotional and social relationships of the students. On the other hand, by contrast to other studies, the respondents showed lower concern scores on the statement that they feel paranoid. This signifies that Criminology students as the respondents of this study have managed to maintain a sound body and mind despite of this outbreak.

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