



Coping Orientation of Academic Community in the Time of COVID-19 Pandemic: A Pilot Survey Study

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Abstract

In this paper, we have mapped the coping methods used to address the coronavirus pandemic by members of the academic community. We conducted an anonymous survey of a convenient sample of 674 faculty/staff members and students from September to December 2020. A modified version of the RCOPE scale was used for data collection. The results indicate that both religious and existential coping methods were used by respondents. The study also indicates that even though 71% of informants believed in God or another religious figure, 61% reported that they had tried to gain control of the situation directly without the help of God or another religious figure. The ranking of the coping strategies used indicates that the first five methods used by informants were all non-religious coping methods (i.e., secular existential coping methods): regarding life as a part of a greater whole, regarding nature as an important resource, listening to the sound of surrounding nature, being alone and contemplating, and walking/engaging in any activities outdoors giving a spiritual feeling. Our results contribute to the new area of research on academic community's coping with pandemic-related stress and challenges.

Keywords: academic staff, academics, coping strategies, coronavirus epidemic, higher education.