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Effects of Stress Appraisal on Coping Strategies Mediated by Academic Efficacy from the Perspectives of BulSU Law Students

Josefina Carreon Ochoa
josefina_ochoa2003@yahoo.com
Bulacan State University

Abstract Law program is not far behind the dilemma of choice and reality since the course creates stress which needs appraisal and coping. This study described the process of appraisal and the mediation of academic efficacy to coping ways. A total of 100 Law students in their mid-year participated in this quantitative, descriptive, correlational study that surveyed coping strategies, academic efficacy and stress appraisal. Correlational and regression analyses confirmed the direct and total positive effects of stress appraisal not on avoidance-focused but on problem-focused and emotion-focused coping. Academic efficacy mediates the relationship between stress appraisal and problem-focused coping ($\beta = .30$, $t(97) = 3.80$, $SE = .08$, $p = .0003$) and emotion-focused coping ($\beta = .37$, $t(97) = 4.98$, $SE = .08$, $p = .00$). The hypotheses that stress appraisal and academic efficacy were predictors of coping strategies and that academic efficacy mediated the relationship were validated. Implications for educational practice were forwarded.

Keywords: academic efficacy, coping strategies, appraisal

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Introduction

The struggles hurdled in the tertiary level across countries trigger stress, anxiety, procrastination and psychological well-being (Kim, Alhaddab, Aquino & Negi, 2016). Clamors among first year college students especially those taking the Law program ranged from confidence to stress and vice versa. The law graduate considered his first year in college as the hardest since the law school prepared him so much to become the best lawyer after graduation. Reflections express the need for sacrifices and the need to persevere with glimmer of hope throughout the program as failure never overtook determination to succeed (Rodriguez, 2014).

Midyear students, in general, were the best sources of reflections and of coping as they utilized their academic efficacy. Academic stress is managed by drawing one's motivation to strive, by identifying coping ways and succeed (Vizoso, Rodriguez & Gundín, 2018). Stress must be assessed to be ready in terms of finances, effort, and academic endeavor to partake (Parcon, 2017).

The Philippines' higher institution had seen attrition in the Laws program showing the difficulties realistically encountered in this choice fulfillment (Bancoro, 2017) as rephrased from one who made it in the admission exam; "I celebrated when I passed the Law Aptitude Exam (LAE), although I did not know what exactly I celebrated for. Amidst warnings from those (un)fortunate to make it, I welcomed Law school. Then as I started, I found that there was nothing more grueling, more disastrous than the life of Law students struggling in their first year" (Lora in Rodriguez, 2014).

Appraisal and self-efficacy were important motivators to efficacy (Moore, Russell & Bouchoucha, 2017). For efficacious students to survive any struggle, they should confront problems with positivity and resilience while those who cannot bear the academic stress would leave school.

Amazingly, some Law students excel, maintain academic scholarships, and finish the program in time due to their self-efficacy (Hen & Goroshit, 2014). Efficacious students endorse coping ways such as: perceiving and confronting the presenting problem, getting sympathy from others, and avoiding the stress. These are processes partaken to survive (Mateo, Makundu, Barnachea & Paat, 2014) the course.

At a state university, above 50% of those enrolled would finish the program and a good percentage passed and topped bar examinations. This was due to their appraising effort and efficacy. This appraisal, especially with level of difficulties to hurdle, were gathered through feedbacking and setting ready for finances, books and cognition (Kundu, 2015). Thus, appraisal (Young, Pakenham & Norwood, 2018) was tantamount to calculating self. Consequently, when academic stress was appraised, coping strategies were determined (Moore & Buchwald, 2017). Calculating the amount of effort to expend was significant because it determined coping ways as appraisals lead to one's critical thinking and regulating emotion (Eyal, 2017). For example, somemay turn to drugs and alcohol to cope with a perceived threatening situation that is overloading. If this happened, psychological well-being would be hampered (Parcon, 2017). Subsequently, as students managed strenuous task of studying, meeting deadlines, submitting requirements, among other tasks, students could resort to appropriate coping strategies (Wendorf, & Brouwer, 2018).

Coping strategies are ways enabling individuals to get through and overcome constraints (Davis, Randall, Ambrose & Orand, 2015). Coping develops resilience and transfer of negative emotions to positive or neutral feelings (Eyal, 2017). In addition, coping mechanisms are outcomes culled from efficacious students. Recent literature forwarded the themes: *problem-focused, emotion-focused and avoidance-focused coping*.

Problem-focused coping means confronting stress and then accepting responsibilities resolving to conflicts (Haley, Levine, Brown & Bartolucci, 2016) where individuals see beauty and meaning in reality. *Emotion-focused coping*, on the other hand, employs sympathetic ways and feeling anxious at the tasks at hand (Davis et al., 2015). Moreover, such strategy to cope is employed when a situation is impossible to change and when emotionality can be a good resort. Coping is managed through praying, venting or seeking support from friends and family members (Haley et al., 2016) and the like. Meanwhile, *avoidance-focused coping* are attempts to remove oneself mentally or even physically from difficult situations (Moore et al., 2017). It could be observed when learners start to drop the course or take a temporary break. Avoidance coping includes denying the stressor, and mentally disengaging as in daydreaming, sleeping, and alcohol use to numb the self (Eyal, 2017).

Stressful situations are appraised bearable or otherwise. Such process could be done by looking into one's capability to confront challenges or by believing in one's self-capability. In the context of the academe, this is known as *academic efficacy* that predicts coping by way of determining which approach to partake, as facing the stressor, feeling apathetic about it or avoiding it. Thus, on account of academic efficacy stress appraisal is utilized, coping strategies are determined (Khan & Zaib, 2019). To date, there is dearth of literature exploring the effects of appraisal on coping ways especially among Law students.

Framework of the Study

Research found appraisal to predict academic efficacy (Honicke & Broadbent, 2016). According to (Khan & Zaib, 2019), stress is a dynamic interaction process between the individual and his environment as when an individual finds

the situation within his capability, there is regulation and drawing within capability to handle the reality (Bancoro, 2017). He stated, "during law school, the educational value of the course is routinely assessed by students, at the end of each semester."

Every individual possesses an inner resource drawn within which to Bandura (2004) is known as self-efficacy. Efficacy, he added, is task specific aimed at bringing out the strength in an individual (Kazak, 2019). In addition, its precepts may influence thought patterns, actions and emotional arousal specifically among students. He discussed in his study the types of self-efficacy as: driving efficacy, math, language, picture, computer, dancing, among other capabilities. Briefly, one's capability to cope academically is termed *academic efficacy*.

Academic efficacy is specific to the context of the academe as it refers to student's believing in his capability to handle tasks, assignments, examinations and so (Sachitra & Bandara, 2017). Depending on whether students possess such ability and held constantly, would determine the kind of coping students would partake. Thus, when academic efficacy is accounted for, stress appraisal would determine the utility of coping strategies (Basith, Syahputra & Ichwanto, 2020).

Theoretically, transactional model of stress and coping frames the utility of students' coping ways toward stressful situations (Bedewy & Gabriel, 2015). To them, evaluating situations would endorse such self-knowledge important to succeed in doing the tasks. To add, efficacy is found to be mediating the effect of appraisal on procrastination, thus it equally identifies and regulates the kind of coping to be employed in every academically stressful situation (Kazak, 2019). Given the succeeding arguments, a strong connection between efficacy and appraisal is hypothesized as appraisal

may equally predict efficacy to enable Law students cope and penetrate in the flow to reach their goals (Moore et al., 2017).

Few studies had examined the role of stress appraisal in determining which coping to employ in order to succeed, as well as the mediation of efficacy in the equation (Young et al., 2018). Doing the research led to: (1) describing the relationships between the stress appraisal and the coping strategies; (2) linking stress appraisal to coping strategies including mediation; and (3) testing the effects of the mediation to be made. The transactional model of stress and coping put in stress appraisal as antecedent and coping strategies as outcomes (Sachitra & Bandara, 2017). Seeing the results of test would help in trying to find out assistance students need to appraise their coping strategies. In that, as efficacy is accounted for, the kind of coping strategies to employ will be determined.

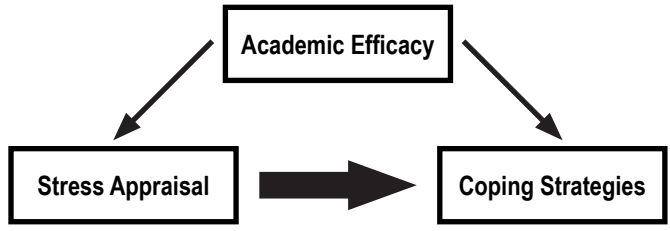

Figure 1. The Conceptual Model of the Study.

The variables were presented in Figure 1. Coping Strategies - were determined by stress appraisal. Academic efficacy would be predicted by stress appraisal and it would equally predict coping strategies (Hen & Goroshit, 2014). When academic efficacy was accounted for, stress appraisal determined the utility of coping strategies among sampled Law students.

Methodology

This section details the design, participants, instruments, procedures and data analysis that guided the study.

Research Design

The study utilized descriptive evaluative design using quantitative data and simple mediational technique. As described in the study, such type of research uncovers complexity not only by examining the path between stress appraisal and coping more so the mediation of academic efficacy (Nassaji, 2015). Research as such is concerned with path and process of behavioral occurrences. The survey tools are appropriately used to gather data. In this study, the researcher first conducted informal observation and then collected numerical data for evaluation. The approach was described numerically through their mean and standard deviation. Scales put the range to behavioral description.

Participants

The student participants enjoined the College of Law students of the Bulacan State University during their second year between 2018 and 2019. The sophomore and junior student-participants, in their mid-year, were able to surpass the initial challenge of freshmen year. Most of them had shared their decision to go on the law program during their early years and had proven themselves coping well as they underwent enough experience in pursuing the course. Seniors were found stressed with their busy schedules in their academics.

Out of the 100 students, all or 100 percent participated in the study; 54 were female and 46 were male. Their age ranged between 22 and 33 with a Mean of 24.04

and Standard Deviation of (*SD*=2.67). Table 1 describes the demographic profile of the participants.

Table 1.
Demographic profile of the participants.

Sex	Sample	Percentage (%)
Female	54	54
Male	46	46
TOTAL	100	100

Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
22 and below	32	32
23-25	48	48
26-28	10	10
29-31	8	8
32 and Above	2	2
TOTAL	100	100

Monthly Income	Frequency	Percentage (%)
P14,000 and below	6	6
P15,000 - 109,000	68	68
P110,000 – 204,000	12	12
P205,000 – 299,000	10	10
P300,000 and Above	4	4
TOTAL	100	100

Research shows that most of the students were young who probably after graduating from Bachelor Degrees had pursued post graduate course in the college. Noticeably, they belong to the above average earning families who could pursue courses after graduating from college even without earning a living.

Instruments

A four-part questionnaire was administered. The questionnaire consisted: (1) demographic profile, (2) academic efficacy, (3) coping strategies and (4) stress appraisal. Permissions from the authors to use the scales were sought. Using Academic Efficacy Scale, data were analyzed. A total of ten (10) items were analyzed through a Likert Scale related to students' beliefs in attaining goal or executing behavior. The tool ranged between 1 and 4 where 4 means *Very Sure* and 1 *Not at All Sure.* A high number corresponded to high academic efficacy. The items started with a stem, *"How sure are you about being able to…* followed by the action. A sample item reads, "*find a way to pay for Law school*", yielding good reliability of α= .82.

Coping Strategies Scale (Ganesan, Talwar, Fauzan & Oon, 2018) was utilized in the study. The 42-item scale determined students' coping ways while pursuing the post-graduate degree. The scale had undergone analysis to establish the groupings of the subscales. It yielded three ways of coping: 14 items for problem-focused coping, 11 items for emotion-focused coping, and 17 items for avoidance-focused statements. Item statements were answered using a Likert type scale ranging between 1 and 4 where 1 means *Not Used* and 4 as *Used a Great Deal*. A sample item reads, *"just concentrated on what you had to do in the next step"* (Ganesan, 2018) yielding a reliability of α= .73.

Positive or negative cognitive stress appraisal can be a self-care strategy that affects ability to cope with stress. This could be utilized to examine cognitive stress appraisal and identified related individual and environmental factors (Natsuka, Tadaka & Arimoto, 2018). Stress Appraisal was patterned from the Stress Indicator Questionnaire designed by the Counseling Team in California (Bedewy & Gabriel, 2015; Ganesan et al. 2018). It was a 45-item questionnaire that described the frequency of how stress was appraised

and rated in a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means *Never* and 5 means *Almost Always*. The scale underwent thorough content analysis. A sample item reads, "refused to think much about it" yielding a high reliability of α= .93.

Data Analysis

As the psychometric properties of the scales were established, mean and standard deviation were described. Afterwards, correlation and regression analyses were employed through path analyses using simple mediation model (Hayes, 2013) and Process Procedure for SPSS Release 2.16.3 software. Three runs of the Process Model 4 were conducted with each of the coping strategies as dependent variable (DV), stress appraisal as independent variable (IV), and academic efficacy as the mediating variable. Models were tested finding the decrease in the *R* value based on .05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

The following section presents the numerical data and interpretations to address the goals set forth. In order to establish the relationship of stress appraisal on coping strategies, regression was conducted. Table 2 presents the results.

Table 2.
The effect of Stress Appraisal on the Coping Strategies of Law Students.

Variable	*M*	*SD*	*CSPF*	*CSEF*	*CSAF*
Stress Appraisal (SA)	2.58	.59	.28**	.30**	.23*

*(n=100)*p* < .05. **p* < .01. ***p* <.001.

Table 2 presents the predictive value of stress appraisal on coping strategies. Table 2 also shows a $p < .01$ (M=2.58; SD=.59) for the stress appraisal affects problem-focused coping at .28. This reflects that appraisal yielded

an increase of 28% enabling Law students to cope as confronting, accepting responsibility and cognizing what was required when one was able to assess an endeavor, there came out an automatic process of drawing inner strength (Mitsutake, Shibata, Ishii et al., 2016). Similarly, at $p < .01$, stress appraisal affected emotion-focused coping at .30. This means that appraisal yielded an increase of 30% in feeling about the situation, regulating self and seeking other's support to cope very well. Confirming Davis, Randall, Ambrose and Orand (2015), as one appraised his capability, resilience had effected Law students' perspectives. Finally, at $p < .05$, stress appraisal affected avoidance-focused coping at .23, a weak but significant effect was observed. This means that appraisal yielded an increase of 23% of coping by way of distancing from the program or trying ways and means to escape. Moore, Russell and Bouchoucha (2017) forwarded mental disengagement tantamount to leaving stress behind and find better ways of coping.

Another path established is from the independent variable stress appraisal and academic efficacy. Table 3 presents the results.

Table 3.
Stress appraisal to Academic Efficacy.

Variable	M	SD	AE
Stress Appraisal (SA)	2.58	.59	.23*
Academic Efficacy (AE)	2.98	.51	—

*(n=100)*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p <.001.*

Table 3 shows the path leading stress appraisal to academic efficacy. From the 100 sampled Law students, at $p < .05$ (M=2.58; SD=.59) appraisal yielded an increase of 23% which means that utility of appraisal entails calculating risk, thus bringing out one's confidence to manage the program's academic requirements. This modest effect may

prove (Ganesan et al., 's (2018) position that appraisal would bring out the needed force within individuals to battle situations. Further confirming Bancoro in 2017, he found Law students at Negros Oriental to perceive the program as preparation to life and to being great lawyers.

Another objective of the study was to find the effect of academic efficacy on coping strategies. Table 4 presents the results.

Table 4.
The effect of Academic Efficacy on the Coping Strategies.

Variable	*M*	*SD*	*CSPF*	*CSEF*	*CSAF*
Academic Efficacy (AE)	2.58	.59	.43**	.46**	.19

*(n=100)*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p <.001.*

Table 4 presents the effect of academic efficacy on the coping strategies from the perspectives of the sampled Law students. Results confirmed the hypothesis that academic efficacy significantly affect both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies. At $p < .05$ (M=2.58; SD=.59) academic efficacy yielded an increase of 43% in problem focused coping and 46% in emotion focused coping. The findings concurred with Mateo and colleagues (2014), that efficacy became a factor in determining students' coping mechanisms, whether to seek support, become emotional or confront the situation. Interestingly, efficacy did not predict avoidance focused coping, ($p < .05$, M=2.58; SD=.59; .19) which means that Law students were found efficacious who did not practice avoidance during stressful situations. They were able to adjust well from the rigorous tasks in the college. Confirming Sachitra and Bandara's (2017) study, self-efficacious individuals would find remedy, would bounce back but would not back out no matter how pressured they would be.

As to the stress appraisal and academic efficacy of the respondents, Table 5 presents the results.

Table 5.
Correlations of the Constructs involved in the study.

Variable	*M*	*SD*	*1-SL*	*2-AE*	*3-CSPF*	*4-CSEF*	*5-CSAF*
1- Stress Appraisal (SA)	2.58	.59	—	.23*	.28**	.30**	.23*
2- Academic Efficacy (AE)	2.98	.51		—	.43***	.46***	.19
3- Coping Strategy Problem Focused (CSPF)	2.92	.40			—	-.70***	.43***
4- Coping Strategy – Emotion Focused (CSPF)	2.81	.45				—	.58***
5- Coping Strategy – Avoidance Focused (CSAF)	2.68	.42					—

*(n=100)*p < .05. **p < .01. ***p <.001.*

Table 5 presents the correlations between the student-respondents' stress appraisal and coping strategies as well as their academic efficacy and coping strategies. Results show that stress appraisal (M=2.58; SD=.59) was significantly and positively associated with academic efficacy (.23; p<.05); significantly related with problem-focused (.28; p<.01) and emotion-focused coping (.30; p<.01) and avoidance focused coping (.23; p<.05). Results confirmed the hypothesis that stress appraisal affected the way one would deal with stress, highest in emotion-focused coping and lowest in avoidance-focused coping. This presents the perspectives of Law students who would initially vent out their emotions and then, would reflect further to battle. Kim and colleagues (2016) were supported in their claims that any struggle would bring out anxiety and psychological endeavor to partake. Further confirming Basith and colleagues' (2020) research, that aptly elaborated on the resulting behavior as efficacy was utilized in any grueling position one may be in.

Results also show that academic efficacy (*M*=2.98; *SD*=.51) was significantly and positively predicted by both problem-focused (.43; $p<.001$) and emotion-focused coping (.46; $p<.001$. Results confirmed the hypothesis that academic efficacy could affect the way with which students could cope with academic endeavor, confront the situation and strategize better. Confirming Hen and Goroshit (2014) study, efficacy yielded coping when one culled out with their strong sense of belief their individual capability. Success could be attained when choice is realized and they could accept the fact that challenges and difficulties are requisites to climb the ladder of success (Mateo et al., 2014).

Fulfilling the final objective of the study, the effects of stress appraisal on coping strategies was calculated through mediational analysis. Table 6 presents the direct and total effects of the independent variables to the dependent variable through a process model.

Table 6.
Direct and Total Effects of Stress appraisal on Coping Strategies Mediated by Academic Efficacy.

Direct and Total Effects	*β*	*SE*	*LLCI*[a]	*ULCI*[a]	*significance*
1. DIRECT EFFECT: SA → CSPF	.1316	.0498	.0328	.2305	*
2. INDIRECT EFFECT: SA → AE → CSPF	.0601	.0284	.0124	.1257	*
3. TOTAL EFFECT: SA → CSPF	.1918	.0568	.0790	.3045	*
4. DIRECT EFFECT: SA → CSEF	.1510	.0680	.0161	.2859	*
5. INDIRECT EFFECT: SA → AE → CSEF	.0727	.0334	.0127	.1436	*
6. TOTAL EFFECT: SA → CSEF	.2237	.0818	.0614	.3860	*
7. DIRECT EFFECT: SA → CSAF	.1395	.0795	-.0183	.2973	
8. INDIRECT EFFECT: SA → AE → CSAF	.0232	.0183	-.0032	.0716	
9. TOTAL EFFECT: SA → CSAF	.1627	.0857	-.0073	.3328	

Note. N = 100. SA = Stress Appraisal; AE = Academic Efficacy; CSPF = Coping Strategy: Problem-Focused; CSEF = Coping Strategy: Emotion-Focused; CSAF = Coping Strategy: Avoidance-Focused.

**-significant*

Table 6 shows the direct effect of stress appraisal on problem-focused coping strategy, that was statistically different from zero, β = .1316, *SE* = .0498, 95% *CI* [.0328, .2305]. Moreover, its indirect effect through the mediation of academic efficacy was also statistically different from zero, β = .0601, *SE* = .0284, 95% *CI* [.0124, .1257]. Thus, the total effect was significant, β = .1918, *SE* = .0568, 95% *CI* [.0790, .3045]. Findings confirmed the study of Natsuka et al., (2018) who found appraisals to be directly affecting academic efficacy, and thus enabling confrontational or *problem-focused coping*. The results further inferred that as students conduct appraisal, they would cull within them an inner strength to hurdle well the academic tasks at stake.

The direct effect of stress appraisal on emotion-focused coping strategy was statistically different from zero, β = .1510, *SE* = .0680, 95% *CI* [.0161, .2859]. Moreover, its indirect effect through the mediation of academic efficacy was also statistically different from zero, β= .0727, *SE* = .0334, 95% *CI* [.0127, .1436]. Thus, the total effect was significant, β= .2237, *SE* = .0818, 95% *CI* [.0614, .3860]. These findings seemed to be an affirmation of Filipino's emotionality in situations, that as appraisals were made and stress was anticipated, there is venting out of emotions and trying to get other's sympathy to feel with them which effort may lead to coping and surviving (Bedewy & Gabriel, 2015).

The direct and indirect effects of stress appraisal on avoidance-focused coping strategy was found insignificant (β = .1395, *ns*). This result may mean that highly efficacious students did not escape nor avoid situations as their response to stress was more of confronting, managing, and processing than avoiding situations. This strong belief in their ability lead them to go on and never gave up (Moore & Buchwald, 2017). Indeed, there was transactional model involving appraisals and coping, proving that the academic and social

environment determined cognitive and affective states (Brannon et al., 2014).

Discussion

The study proved the positive effects of stress appraisal to coping strategies as well as the mediation of academic efficacy taken from the perspectives of Law students. Findings confirmed the hypotheses that there was a path that led stress appraisal to coping strategies; stress appraisal to academic efficacy; academic efficacy to coping strategies and academic efficacy as mediator to the hypothesized relationship. Stress appraisal was significantly and positively correlated with coping strategies, $\beta = .20$, $t(98) = 2.28$, $SE = .09$, $p = .025$, confirming Vizoso, et al., (2018) and Kundu's (2015) study that appraisals had led one to reflect and evaluate situations. Theoretically, stress appraisals were helpful in regulating the amount of endeavor to partake, whether to approach or to escape (Hen & Goroshit, 2014). Confirming Davis, et al.,'s (2015) study, that coping developed the needed resilience and transfer of negative emotions to neutral feelings. The results were suggestive of the need for appraisal and realization of the choice made as well as the realities that needed to be managed.

Interestingly, there was a path that linked stress appraisal to academic efficacy ($\beta = .23$), $p < .05$. Confirming Haley, et al.,'s (2016) study which posited that stress appraisal and efficacy as predictors of adaptational outcomes confirmed its hypothesis that stress appraisal was a resource that brought about the realization of such inner ability. Similarly, findings showed that academic efficacy was significantly and positively predicted by problem-focused coping strategy, $\beta = .30$, $t(97) = 3.80$, $SE = .08$, $p = .0003$, and emotion-focused coping strategy, $\beta = .37$, $t(97) = 4.98$, $SE = .08$, $p = .0000$, but not by avoidance-focused coping strategy ($\beta = .12$, *ns*). Findings confirmed the study

of Ganesan (2018) which suggested that path leading to the utility of coping strategies specifically problem-focused coping (Ganesan et al., 2018). Contrary to Hen and Goroshit (2014) and Brannon, et al., (2014), emotion-focused coping strategy was endorsed as a way of coping, perhaps as a way of letting go of stress as when one found relief in the sympathy rendered by significant others.

Academic efficacy was also significantly and positively predicted by problem-focused coping strategy, $\beta = .13$, $t(97) = 2.64$, $SE = .05$, $p = .0096$, and emotion-focused coping strategy, $\beta = .15$, $t(97) = 2.22$, $SE = .07$, $p = .0286$, but not by avoidance-focused coping strategy ($\beta = .14$, *ns*). Results confirmed the previous study of Ganesan et al., (2018) and Parcon (2017) which aptly posited efficacy enabling discernment and coping. Surely, an academically efficacious student would not avoid nor escape any task and would bravely face problems at hand (Bedewy & Gabriel, 2015).

With the mediation model employed, the regression model on problem-focused coping strategy was significant, $F(2,97) = 16.12$, $p < .001$, as it explained 21.93% of its variance; the regression model on emotion-focused coping strategy was also significant, $F(2,97) = 19.06$, $p < .001$, explaining 25.27% of its variance. However, the regression model on avoidance-focused coping strategy was not significant, $F(2,97) = 2.56$, *ns*. The results proved path between academic efficacy and both *problem-focused* and *emotion-focused coping*. The findings conferred with (Sachitra and Bandara, 2017) and Mateo, et al., (2014) that efficacy predicted educational pathways and when accounted for, would lead one to reflections of better ways of coping.

Conclusions

The main objective of the study was to prove the path and process between and among stress appraisal, academic

efficacy and coping strategies. Hypotheses were accepted as *stress appraisal* affected both *problem-focused* (β = .1918, *sig*) and *emotion-focused coping* (β = .15, *sig)*. There was enough evidence to prove that appraisals yielded more appropriate ways of coping by either managing the situation or exemplifying the right feelings and cognition and not escape the situation at stake. Further accepting the hypothesis that stress appraisals affected academic efficacy, path *b* was significant (β = .23, *p<.05*); as stress appraisals were made, academic efficacy was yielded, in other words, the more that an individual evaluated the amount of strength and energy needed for a task, the more that he pushed himself. Further accepting the hypothesis that academic efficacy leads to coping strategies, path *c* was proven in the significant values for both problem-focused coping (β = .43, *p<.001*) and emotion focused coping (β = .46, *p<.001*). Indeed, as one strongly believed in his capability and aptly realized his choice as well as the process and ways to deal with any academic difficulty success is ensured.

Finally, mediation hypothesis was accepted in that *academic efficacy* mediated the relationship of stress appraisals on both *problem-focused* (β = .19) and *emotion–focused coping* (β = .22) and not with avoidance-focused coping (β = .16). Indeed, academic efficacy was considered a mediator between any behavior such as appraisal and of outcome behavior as coping strategies. These findings were relevant as they proved the significance of appraisals and efficacy in hurdling difficult situations and in sustaining psychological well-being and excellence in any academic endeavor. The results of the study emphasized efficacy as a mediator which means it could boost coping strategies leading to proper management of the self in the academe more specifically. This study therefore proved faithful to its objectives of establishing the path between stress appraisals and coping strategies, appraisals and academic efficacy, and

then accounting for academic efficacy to clarify the path between appraisals and coping strategies.

Implications

The study shed light on the effects of stress appraisals on coping strategies. It concurred a model of stress appraisal and efficacy and their influence on individual endeavor. As the study proved the path that may lead efficacy to coping strategies in strengthening the self and then coping very well in the academic tasks where such understanding of the path between appraisals and academic efficacy was herein emphasized. Processes needed to be unlocked and such that appropriate behaviors were needed to be practiced for the 'best self' be regulated. This may be facilitated by the dean of the Law program in collaboration with mental health agencies promoting mental health.

The process of looking into the environment and then fitting the self into such evaluation was found very significant in pushing the best and the agentic mechanisms that may be involved. As Law students, they should see in environmental conditions, evaluate these and pinpoint the quality of endeavor they ought to partake to yield effective management of themselves and of the varied situations they would encounter.

Recommendations

Results may yield to an understanding of the mechanism behind the utility of coping strategies important in surviving academically demanding degree programs such as the Bachelor of Laws. There should therefore a need for every higher institution of learning to formally facilitate students' appraisals of the learning scenario. Orientation programs covering the expectations to students, requirements of the program, facilities and scholarships available and

other things, should be rendered by the program head so that incoming students could evaluate the degree of effort to expend, prepare themselves thoroughly and ensure continuance until the degree would be attained. This orientation would lead students to contemplate on their inner resource to prepare themselves, an efficacy that would serve as an arm to boost their confidence to hurdle the strenuous academics. Such activities are relevant to ensure academic excellence.

In the case of those who backed out or are about to give up, psychotherapy specifically choice and reality therapies may be of help. With the goal of clarifying the choices made by the students as well as enabling them to face the reality with all their might, these would be helpful if not preventive. Academic units head should realize the need for extending this utmost support.

Limitations

The study may have been limited to the setting, a state university. Also, the number of participants was quite limited to midyear students who were present at the time of data gathering, excluding the freshmen who may be had groping and those in the midst of deciding to back out. Also, not included, were seniors who had grueling with their academic endeavors. Methodologically, it had been quantitative in approach, thus it had not delved on the deeper insights among the participants.

Directions for Future Research

While the study shed light on paths between the independent, dependent as well as mediating variables, it had not explored possible subscales for stress appraisals and academic efficacy. Furthermore, it had not really delved upon possible moderation, as it only described correlations, effects and simple mediation. Thus, future research may explore other

variables and subscales and conduct hierarchical regression to establish moderation.

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