School Adjustment Problems and Coping Strategies of Senior High School Students of a Catholic School

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Introduction. School adjustment and coping strategies are vital elements of students' lives because they help them adapt and function well to their environment, thereby preventing countless mental health problems. However, despite the robust information about the importance and benefits of adaptability or adjusting well to one's environment, many students still encounter school adjustment problems. Luckily, students often resort to various coping strategies in order to deal with their problems effectively. Hence, the paper determined the degree of school adjustment problems and the extent of coping strategies of senior high school students of a Diocesan Catholic School in Antique during the School Year 2019-2020. Likewise, it determines the correlation between school adjustment problems and students' coping strategies and whether good coping strategies predict school adjustment problems.

Methods. A descriptive-comparative and correlational approach were used to assess, compare, and correlate school adjustment problems and coping strategies of Catholic senior high school students of a Diocesan Catholic School in Antique during the School Year 2019-2020. There were 145 randomly selected students who participated in the study. The data were gathered with the use of two (2) standardized questionnaires, the College Adjustment Scale (CAS) by Anton and Reed (1991) and Coping Strategies Inventory by David L. Tobin (2001), respectively. Mean, Standard Deviation, Mann Whitney, Kruskal-Wallis, and Spearman Rank Correlation were used to analyze the data.

Results. As a whole, the findings revealed that the degree of school adjustment problems of senior high school students were low. In terms of demographics, female students, Grade 11 students, an only child, Roman Catholic, and low family income students have a higher mean score than their counterparts in terms of school adjustment problems. On the other hand, senior high school students have average coping strategies. When coping strategies are further classified into engagement and disengagement coping, the respondents showed an average level for both with engagement coping mean score slightly higher than disengagement coping. In terms of demographics, female, Grade 12 students, an only child, Non- Roman Catholic, and students with high family income obtained a higher score on the engagement coping strategies. Interestingly, all respondents can score higher on engagement coping strategies than disengagement coping strategies when grouped according to demographics. Furthermore, no significant difference existed in the respondents' extent of coping strategies when classified as to grade level, religion, and birth order. However, a significant difference existed in the extent of coping strategies of the respondents when they were classified as to sex and family income. No significant difference existed in the extent of the respondents' school adjustment problems when they were classified as to sex, grade level, religion, and family income. Finally, there was a positive but low significant relationship between coping strategies and school adjustment.

Conclusion. Senior high school students in a Catholic School in Antique were experiencing low school adjustment problems because they prefer to use engagement coping in dealing with those stressors or problems. The findings revealed that students somehow knew how to balance their time in academics, shared problems with peers, strengthen their faith, and achieve high family support. Generally, to avoid school adjustment problems, students should establish strong coping strategies because having poor coping results in higher school adjustment problems; one is a predictor of

the other. To avoid school adjustment problems, peers, parents, teachers, guidance counselors, and administrators play a vital role in developing and enhancing every student's coping strategies.

Practical Value of the Paper. The study contributes to the dearth of literature on school adjustment problems and coping strategies in a Catholic School. The findings of the study may become the basis for designing an enhanced homeroom guidance program on school adjustment problems and coping strategies that will be beneficial to administrators, teachers, and guidance personnel to enhance students' coping strategies. Lastly, the findings may guide future researchers to conduct similar studies that were not covered by the study.

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