

# DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

## STRESSORS, STRESS LEVELS AND COPING PATTERNS OF GRADE VI CHILDREN OF BOTH SEXES AND DIFFERENT SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS

---

A Thesis  
Presented to  
The Faculty of the Graduate School  
De La Salle University

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts in Education  
Major in Guidance and Counseling

---

By

Ma. Cecilia Aurea H. Feranil  
June 3, 1989



# DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

v

## STRESSORS, STRESS LEVELS AND COPING PATTERNS OF GRADE VI CHILDREN OF BOTH SEXES AND DIFFERENT SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUPS

### ABSTRACT

This study intended to find out the stressors, stress levels, and coping patterns of grade six pupils of both sexes and different socio-economic groups. It also sought to determine whether sex and socio-economic grouping of the respondents have any influence on stress levels and coping patterns.

The design of the study was descriptive survey using 500 grade six students (244 males and 256 females) as subjects. They were enrolled in two co-educational schools in Metro-Manila for the schoolyear 1988-89.

Three instruments were used to gather the necessary data. The Checklist of Stressful Events in Children was used to determine the different stressors affecting children. It is made up of 40 items classified into 8 major types namely :

- a. lack of resources
- b. personal threat/harm
- c. family crisis
- d. change in lifestyle
- e. school



- f. family relations
- g. environment
- h. social/peer relations

The Children Manifest Anxiety Scale (CMAS) developed by Castaneda, McCandless, and Palermo measures anxiety in 4th, 5th, and 6th grade children. The scale is made up of 42 anxiety items and 11 additional items designed to provide an index of the subjects' tendency to falsify his responses to the anxiety items.

The Coping Patterns Questionnaire determines the coping patterns of the respondents. It consisted of 16 hypothetical situations classified into 8 major groups namely :

- a. lack of resources
- b. personal threat/harm
- c. family crisis
- d. change in lifestyle
- e. school
- f. family relations
- g. environment
- h. social/peer relations

Data were treated by determining frequencies and percentages. Major types of stressors were ranked accordingly. Likewise, frequencies and percentages were used to find out the stress level of the respondents.



# DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

vii

Chi-square was computed to determine significant difference in the stress level of the subjects according to sex and socio-economic grouping. Furthermore, characteristics of the subject's coping patterns were tabulated according to categories. Frequencies of responses were tallied and then converted to percentages.

Findings of the study revealed that the common major types of stressors encountered by the respondents according to their intensity are as follows :

1. personal threat/harm
2. social/peer relations
3. school
4. lack of resources
5. family crisis
6. environment
7. family relations
8. change in lifestyle

Characteristics of the subject's coping patterns were tabulated according to categories namely :

- a. immediate, active and self-reliant approach
- b. less immediate, active self-effort but with some support from others
- c. with some degree of dependence on others
- d. passive dependence on others with little or no effort on ones part.



e. no effort to deal with the problem or simple resignation.

f. irrelevant responses

Generally, more female respondents employed coping patterns which are immediate, active and self-reliant approaches. Significant differences in the predominant coping patterns of the respondents according to sex and socio-economic groups were tested using the statistical method of finding the significant difference between percentages. The results obtained show that generally, significant differences were found in the predominant coping patterns of the respondents according to socio-economic groups but no significant differences were found in the predominant coping patterns of the respondents according to sex.

Moreover, the predominant coping patterns employed by CSA respondents were approaches with some degree of dependence on others and those that are less immediate but likewise effective coping strategies. However, the predominant coping patterns employed by PES respondents were immediate, active and self-reliant approaches.

Furthermore, the results obtained also show that 14% of CSA students have high stress level, 80% have average stress level and 5.2% have low stress level. With regards to the PES students, 8.8% experience high stress



level. Looking at the sex of the respondents, obtained results reveal that the girls have higher stress level compared to the boys (14.8% vs. 7.8%). Generally, respondents of both sexes have average stress levels (81.9% of boys vs. 81.2% of girls). More boys were found to have low stress level compared to girls (10.2% vs. 3.9%).

The PES pupils had significantly higher stress levels than the CSA pupils. However, girls had significantly higher stress level than boys except for the group with low stress levels where no significant difference between sexes was obtained.

In the light of the foregoing findings, the following conclusions were derived :

1. Children are vulnerable to stress.
2. Children experience similar stressors regardless of sex and socio-economic groups.
3. Sex and socio-economic groups are variables in determining stress levels.
4. Children in this particular study have not experienced alarming stress levels. Generally, they have average stress level.

Based on the conclusions drawn from this study, the following recommendations are given for further research.

1. A more comprehensive and in-depth study of a



# DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

x

similar nature be conducted and include a program design for stress management for children.

2. An analytical study should be undertaken to investigate further the stressors affecting Filipino families as a whole drawing from the idea that children's behavior is simply an outcome of family environment.
3. The relation between various social contexts and the coping behavior of children needs to be examined in greater detail. Some variables which could be considered are the following :
  - a. Parental modeling of coping vs. coping behavior of children.
  - b. Peer socialization practices vs. coping behavior of children.
  - c. Teacher values and attitudes vs. coping behavior of children.
4. Finally, prospective longitudinal studies are needed for clarifying the ways in which coping resources, styles and behaviors change or remain constant with development.



# DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Title Page.....	i
Acknowledgement.....	ii
Thesis Abstract.....	v
<b>CHAPTER</b>	
<b>I. INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Theoretical Framework.....	4
Statement of the Problem.....	15
Hypotheses.....	16
Significance of the Study.....	16
Scope and Limitations of the Study.....	17
Definition of Terms.....	19
<b>II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES.....</b>	<b>21</b>
Stressors.....	21
Stress Levels.....	31
Coping Patterns.....	39
<b>III. METHOD.....</b>	<b>46</b>
Research Design.....	46
Subjects.....	46
Instruments.....	47
Data Gathering Procedure.....	52
Treatment of Data.....	52
<b>IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>54</b>
Results.....	54
Discussion.....	74





# DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

CHAPTER	Page
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	104
Summary of the Study.....	104
Conclusions.....	111
Recommendations.....	112
APPENDIX A.....	115
APPENDIX B.....	120
APPENDIX C.....	125
APPENDIX D.....	130
APPENDIX E.....	131
APPENDIX F.....	132
APPENDIX G.....	134
APPENDIX H.....	135
APPENDIX I.....	140
APPENDIX J.....	142
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	144

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURE

Table	Page
I. Ranking of Types of Stressors of CSA and PES Pupils According to Frequency .....	54
II. Frequency, Percentage and Chi-Square Value in the Stress Levels of the Respondents According to Sex and Socio Economic Groups.....	55



# DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

Table	Page
III-A Frequency, Percentage and Critical Ratio of Coping Patterns to Lack of Resources (Situation 1: Lack of paper, books, pens, and other school materials) As Used By Respondents.....	57
III-B Frequency, Percentage and Critical Ratio of Coping Patterns to Lack of Resources (Situation 2: Lack of allowance/money) As Used By Respondents.....	58
III-C Frequency, Percentage and Critical Ratio of Coping Patterns to Personal/Threat. Harm (Situation 3: Being teased by other children) As Used By Respondents.....	59
III-D Frequency, Percentage and Critical Ratio of Coping Patterns to Personal Threat/Harm (Situation 4: Personal injury or illness) As Used By Respondents).....	60
III-E Frequency, Percentage and Critical Ratio of Coping Patterns to Family Crisis (Situation 6: Change in family member's health) As Used By Respondents.....	61
III-F Frequency, Percentage and Critical Ratio of Coping Patterns to Family Crisis (Situation 6: Death of a close family member) As Used By Respondents.....	62
III-G Frequency, Percentage and Critical Ratio of Coping Patterns to Change in Lifestyle (Situation 7: Family business readjustment) As Used By Respondents.....	63
III-H Frequency, Percentage and Critical Ratio of Coping Patterns to School (Situation 8: Change in living condition) As Used by Respondents.....	64
III-I Frequency, Percentage and Critical Ratio of Coping Patterns to School (Situation 9: Problem with teachers) As Used By Respondents.	65
III-J Frequency, Percentage and Critical Ratio of Coping Patterns to School (Situation 10: Change in class performance) As Used By Respondents.....	66



# DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

Table	Page
III-K    Frequency, Percentage and Critical Ratio of Coping Patterns to Family Relations (Situation 11: Quarrel among family members) As Used By Respondents.....	67
III-L    Frequency, Percentage and Critical Ratio of Coping Patterns to Family Relations (Situation 12: Addition to family) As Used By Respondents.....	68
III-M    Frequency, Percentage and Critical Ratio of Coping Patterns to Environment (Situation 13: Noisy surrounding) As Used By Respondents.....	69
III-N    Frequency, Percentage and Critical Ratio of Coping Patterns to Environment (Situation 14: Pollution/Overcrowding) As Used By Respondents.....	70
III-O    Frequency, Percentage and Critical Ratio of Coping Patterns to Social/Peer Relations (Situation 15: Addition to Barkada) As Used by Respondents.....	71
III-P    Frequency, Percentage and Critical Ratio of Coping Patterns to Social/Peer Relations (Situation 16: Misunderstanding with friends) As Used By Respondents.....	72
Figure	
I        Paradigm for the Theoretical Framework.....	13

