

Coping Strategies of Online Students during the Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Over the past 10 years, much research has been conducted on the experiences of students studying online in ALA accredited MLIS programs. However, little research has been done on the experiences of MLIS students studying online against a backdrop of emotionally difficult situations, such as global pandemics. While previous studies have captured the impacts of transitioning to virtual learning environments on students, and growing literature of virtual learning under COVID-19 has provided some accounts of what students faced, it has yet to examine how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the emotional health of online MLIS students overall and how they coped with the challenges arising from the pandemic. The research used previously validated instruments including the Perceived Stress Scale 4 (PSS-4) and the Brief COPE which is an abbreviated version of the COPE (Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced) Inventory to measure online MLIS students' stress levels and coping strategies during the second year of the pandemic (March 2021 to present) which included both the Delta and Omicron waves in the United States. Questionnaire was disseminated with the help of MLIS programs and student associations. A total of 469 responses were received. The questionnaire included questions about the support structures at their schools and basic demographic questions in addition to the PSS-4 and Brief COPE scales. The study fills an important gap in the literature

on the subject by bringing in the student voices. The findings of the study should have implications for enhancing online MLIS education to better understand and support students experiencing emotionally difficult situations.

ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Students; Online learning; Education; Administration.

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

Coping; Emotional Health; Mental Health; Online Education.