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Abstract: In the evolving landscape of higher education, St. Michael's College (SMC) recognizes the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student welfare. This paper emphasizes the critical importance of addressing mental health, time management, and stress in the college environment, underlining their influence on academic success and personal growth. The call to action urges students to prioritize their well-being. Diverse cultural and religious perspectives, including Islam, emphasize the importance of a balanced mind and body. The wide-ranging literature review uncovers empirically supported strategies for mental health, time management, and stress reduction. Personal autonomy emerges as crucial in addressing these challenges. This study underscores the importance of these dimensions, calls for student action, and highlights the diversity of perspectives contributing to holistic well-being.

Keywords: mental health; post-pandemic; student-centered solutions; stress reduction; time management

I. Introduction

In times of adversity, we find the strength to endure and the wisdom to navigate life's trials. Resilience is a testament to an indomitable human spirit.

In the dynamic realm of higher education, St. Michael's College (SMC) students grapple with an array of formidable challenges. Central to these challenges is the imperative of personal agency in effectively managing mental health, time, and stress (Covey, 2020; Weekes, 2020). This paper embarks on a journey through the multifaceted landscape of collegiate life, where students strive to navigate the complex interplay between academic rigors and personal growth.

However, the significance of addressing these challenges cannot be overlooked. Mental health, time management, and stress profoundly influence students' academic performance, overall well-being, and long-term success (Nagoski, 2019; Brewer, 2021). Failure to address these issues may result in adverse consequences, including diminished academic achievement, decreased quality of life, and enduring psychological repercussions. Therefore, understanding and mitigating these challenges are vital components for fostering a holistic and fulfilling educational journey.

In the pursuit of guidance and wisdom, the Bible is a source of profound spiritual and moral insights. Throughout this paper, the author explores relevant biblical passages and Islamic teachings that offer valuable insights into Mental Health, Time Management, and Stress Reduction. By integrating spiritual perspectives, the author aims to provide a holistic approach to address these challenges and recognize the significance of integrating faith and practical strategies.

Within the unique context of SMC, students face distinctive challenges, from the demanding academic environment to the intricacies of personal growth. This paper aspires to uncover these challenges faced by SMC students, illuminate insightful strategies for managing mental health, optimizing time utilization, and effectively reducing stress (Davis, Eshelman, & McKay, 2019; Hanson et al., 2020; Wolters & Brady, 2021; Gibbons, 2022). Drawing from a synthesis of existing

research and real-world experiences, this study offers a comprehensive understanding of the landscape, supported by insights from experts.

Indeed, the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic ushered in an era of unprecedented challenges for college students worldwide, profoundly reshaping their perceptions and experiences regarding mental health, time management, and stress reduction (Cuaton, 2020; Estrellado, 2022; Aruta et al., 2022; Serrano, Reyes, & De Guzman, 2022; Lim et al., 2022; Serrano & Reyes, 2022). As we navigate the post-pandemic landscape, the author examines how these aspects have been redefined, emphasizing the need for adaptable student-centered solutions informed by the realities of a rapidly changing world. "In times of adversity, we find the strength to endure and the wisdom to navigate life's trials. Our resilience is a testament to the indomitable human spirit." - (Eslit, 2023).

II. Literature review

Drawing from a rich pool of scholarly resources, this in-depth literature review explored proactive measures and self-help techniques that empower SMC students to thrive in the face of adversity. By sharing the latest research and insights, the author aims to equip educational institutions such as SMC with the knowledge and tools necessary to cultivate a flourishing college environment, fostering resilience and success in an ever-evolving educational landscape. In SMC, the Guidance Office plays a pivotal role in addressing these concerns by actively organizing and implementing Health and Wellness Programs for students. These programs are a testament to the SMC's commitment to the overall well-being of its student body, providing vital support in navigating the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. In addition to academic excellence, these initiatives focus on promoting mental health, teaching effective time management, and offering stress-reduction strategies tailored to the unique needs of college students in the post-pandemic world.

A. On mental health:

College life can be tough, and it can take a toll on students' mental health. Let's dive into some research that shows how students can boost their mental well-being and take care of themselves.

Proactive Steps for Mental Health Improvement: Academic stress can really mess with a student's mental well-being, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Barbayannis et al., 2022). So, it's important for students to realize how academic stress and mental health are connected. Some researchers found that things like heavy coursework and worries about getting sick during the pandemic can crank up stress levels. To stay mentally healthy, students need to handle these academic pressures wisely.

Also, a survey from 2020 showed that students were dealing with mental health challenges during the pandemic (Insight N. U. S., 2020). This reminds us of the importance of taking proactive steps for mental health.

Self-Help Strategies for Mental Health: Here are practical guide to help people improve their well-being:

1. **Mindfulness:** Researchers say mindfulness practices like meditation and deep breathing can help students become more aware of their thoughts and feelings (Surzykiewicz et al., 2022). This awareness can help reduce anxiety and depression.
2. **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT):** CBT techniques are good at tackling mental health issues in college students (Kodish et al., 2021). Students can use self-guided resources like workbooks and online programs to challenge negative thoughts and build positive habits.
3. **Stress Reduction:** There are simple stress-reduction techniques, like muscle relaxation and deep breathing exercises (Davis, Eshelman, & McKay, 2019). These methods can help students lower their stress levels and manage their time better.

Resilience and Mental Well-Being: Resilience is key to staying mentally healthy when life gets tough (Skalski et al., 2022). The study conducted by Skalski, Konaszewski, Büssing, and Surzykiewicz (2022) highlights the mediating role of persistent thinking and anxiety about the coronavirus in the

relationship between resilience and mental well-being. This underscores the importance of developing resilience as a proactive mental-health strategy.

Innovations in Telemental Health: In today's world, telemental health services are becoming really important. They're super convenient, especially in a pandemic, and they give students easy ways to get help when they need it (Hadler et al., 2021).

In a nutshell, taking care of mental health during college, especially during challenging times like the pandemic, is crucial. Understanding the link between academic stress and mental health and using self-help techniques like mindfulness and CBT can make a big difference. And don't forget about resilience and the new telemental health options available to students – they are valuable tools for proactive mental health care.

B. On Time Management:

College life can be quite demanding, especially in the context of the post COVID-19 pandemic, which has added new stressors and disrupted daily routines (McGinty et al., 2020). Having good time management skills is key to handling these challenges and staying productive.

Setting Priorities and Taking Control of Schedules: College students have a lot on their plates – academics, social commitments, and personal responsibilities. Experts like Wolters and Brady (2021) say that it is crucial to set goals and take charge of your schedule. When students actively prioritize and keep track of their progress, they tend to manage their time better.

Techniques for Efficient Time Utilization: There are some nifty time management techniques, like the Pomodoro Technique and the Eisenhower Matrix, that can help make the most of your time (Neves & Hewitt, 2021). These methods break tasks into smaller pieces, encourage focused work, and reduce procrastination.

Importance of Effective Time Management in College: Time management is a big deal in college. Theobald et al. (2020) have shown that it is linked to how well you do academically. Students who are good at managing their time are better at active learning, which can help bridge achievement gaps in higher education.

Common Time Management Challenges Faced by Students: Students often struggle with time management. Procrastination, poor planning, and trouble allocating time to tasks are some of the usual issues (Neves & Hewitt, 2021). Recognizing these challenges is the first step to fixing them.

Strategies for Managing Time Effectively: Students can use a variety of strategies to tackle time management challenges and boost their productivity.

1. **Structured Time Management Techniques:** Try techniques like the Pomodoro Technique, which involves focused work intervals and short breaks (Fried et al., 2022).
2. **Self-Reflection and Assessment:** To get better at time management, you first need to know your strengths and weaknesses (Theobald et al., 2020). Self-assessment helps you create personalized strategies for improvement.
3. **Support and Resources:** Colleges can lend a hand by offering support and resources to help students with time management (Spear, Morey, & Steen, 2021; Patfield, 2023; Zorach & Lipka, 2023). This can include guidance, workshops, and access to time management tools.

In a nutshell, being able to manage your time effectively is super important for college students, especially during the challenging times of the post COVID-19 pandemic. Research emphasizes the value of setting goals, using structured time management techniques, and being aware of how you manage your time. Recognizing common time management problems and tapping into institutional support can help students improve their time management skills, leading to better academic success and overall well-being.

C. On Stress Reduction:

At SMC, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented unique challenges to higher education, profoundly altering the learning environment and significantly increasing stress levels among

students (Tria, 2020). In this unprecedented context, the adoption of effective stress reduction methods has become imperative, empowering students to regain control over their well-being.

Self-Care Practices for Stress Reduction: Amid the multifaceted challenges posed by the pandemic and its aftermath, self-care practices have gained prominence as essential tools for students. Among these practices, mindfulness and relaxation techniques, such as meditation and deep breathing exercises, have been emphasized as effective means to help students manage their stress. These practices enhance self-awareness and emotional regulation, crucial for maintaining mental well-being (Cuaton, 2020).

Regular physical activity and exercise have also emerged as holistic approaches to self-care, capable of alleviating stress and improving mood (Lim et al., 2022). These practices address both the physical and mental dimensions of well-being, providing students with a well-rounded method for managing stress.

Stress Coping Strategies: Effectively coping with stress has become a critical skill for students as they navigate the complex socio-ecological challenges brought about by the pandemic (Aruta et al., 2022). Among the strategies, developing problem-solving skills and fostering resilience have been identified as pivotal. Problem-solving equips students with the tools to tackle stressors, while resilience acts as a psychological buffer against the distress brought on by crises (Serrano and Reyes, 2022).

Sources of Stress for SMC College Students: The transition to online learning has been one of the most significant sources of stress for college students at SMC. This sudden shift has introduced a range of stressors, including technological challenges, connectivity issues, and the need to adapt to remote education (Estrellado, 2022).

Psychological distress has also emerged as a considerable source of stress for students. It not only affects their academic performance but also has a profound impact on their overall quality of life (Aruta et al., 2022). Recognizing the mediating role of psychological distress is essential in addressing these challenges (Serrano et al., 2022).

Impact of Stress on Academic Performance and Well-being: The consequences of stress on academic performance and overall well-being have been particularly pronounced during the pandemic. The shift to online learning, coupled with increased social media use, has raised concerns about the mental health of college students in the Philippines (Lim et al., 2022). Elevated stress levels have been associated with negative effects on academic outcomes and well-being.

Strategies for Managing Stress in the Philippine Context: To effectively manage stress, students can employ strategies tailored to their unique challenges. Adaptive coping mechanisms enable students to navigate psychological distress more effectively, ensuring that they can endure and adapt to the pressures of the global health crisis (Serrano & Reyes, 2022).

Efforts to build resilience, both at the individual and institutional levels, play a crucial role in stress reduction. Promoting resilience equips students with the capacity to withstand adversity and adapt to the new learning environments introduced by the pandemic (Estrellado, 2022).

Overall, given the unprecedented challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, stress reduction has become a paramount concern for students at SMC. This includes adopting self-care practices, such as mindfulness and physical activity, as well as developing effective coping strategies, including problem-solving and resilience-building. Recognizing the specific sources of stress, such as the transition to online learning and psychological distress, is essential. Ultimately, managing stress is vital for academic success and overall well-being in the Philippine context.

Islamic Guidance on Mental Health, Stress Management, and Time Management in Higher Education:

Islam and the Quran offer valuable guidance on mental health, stress management, and time management (Mirza, 2023). Concerning mental health, Islam promotes self-care, urging believers to tend to their physical and mental well-being, often through acts of worship like prayer and meditation (Kakroo, 2023). It emphasizes the importance of community support, encouraging individuals to seek help when needed and find solace in the company of friends, family, or

professionals (Achour et al., 2021). The Quran also underscores the virtue of patience during challenging times, reinforcing the idea that enduring difficulties with resilience is a part of the faith (Mirza, 2023). It is worth noting that SMC, while being a Catholic school, is renowned for its inclusivity, catering to students from all walks of life, including Muslims, fostering an environment where diverse perspectives and cultures are embraced.In terms of stress management, regular prayer, or Salat, provides moments of reflection and relaxation, serving as a source of comfort and stress relief (Kakroo, 2023). The concept of Tawakkul, or trust in God's plan, helps individuals reduce stress by encouraging reliance on a higher power and alleviating unnecessary worry about the future (Mirza, 2023). Although not explicitly addressed in the Quran, the principles of responsibility and accountability align with effective time management. Muslims are encouraged to balance their religious obligations, academic pursuits, and other responsibilities while prioritizing their time wisely (Ghaffar, 2023).

Regarding time management in higher education, Islam promotes a balance between religious commitments, academic pursuits, and other responsibilities, emphasizing the importance of prioritizing one's time based on individual needs and obligations (Islam et al., 2022). While specific time management techniques may not be mentioned, the Quran's teachings align with the principles of planning and organization, as fulfilling one's obligations is a fundamental aspect of Islamic ethics (Ghaffar, 2023). Moreover, Islam highly values the pursuit of knowledge, and higher education is viewed as a means to acquire knowledge and contribute positively to society (Mirza, 2023).

It is important to recognize that interpretations of Islamic teachings can vary among individuals and communities, so seeking guidance from scholars or community leaders may provide additional insights (Mirza, 2023). Additionally, when dealing with mental health challenges, stress, or time management issues, it is advisable to consult with mental health professionals and utilize support services provided by educational institutions, alongside seeking spiritual guidance from Islamic teachings (Kakroo, 2023; Adams & Blair, 2019).

Added suggestion, Biblical Wisdom for Mental Health, Stress Reduction, and Time Management:

In response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, St. Michael's College (SMC) and other higher education institutions have recognized the pressing need to address the holistic well-being of their students. This part of the paper aims to offer practical, student-centered solutions for post-pandemic mental health, time management, and stress reduction. While these solutions draw from contemporary strategies, it is noteworthy that timeless wisdom found in Bible verses can enrich the proposed approaches, providing students with a holistic framework for their well-being.

Mental Health and Biblical Comfort: The first pillar of student-centered solutions revolves around mental health. Here, we emphasize the importance of addressing students' anxieties and challenges in light of the pandemic's impact. *Matthew 6:34* advises students to focus on the present moment and not be overwhelmed by worries about the future. This concept is integrated into the approach to alleviate students' mental health concerns. Additionally, *Isaiah 41:10* reassures students that they are not alone in their struggles, offering a source of comfort that complements their mental health strategies (Bible verses about Mental Health, n.d).

Stress Reduction Through Faith: Stress reduction is a crucial component of the student-centered approach, recognizing the common stressors students face during their academic journeys. *Philippians 4:6* encourages students to turn to prayer and gratitude as a means of reducing stress, a practice integrated into the solutions. By acknowledging the importance of faith and spirituality in stress reduction, students are provided with a comprehensive approach to effectively manage their stress (Bible verses about Stress Reduction. n.d).

Time Management and Biblical Stewardship: Lastly, the approach addresses critical aspects of time management. *Ephesians 5:15-17* and *Psalm 90:12* underscore the significance of using time wisely and purposefully. These biblical principles align seamlessly with strategies to help students make the best use of their time, fostering academic success and personal growth (Bible verses about Time Management, n.d).

In the empowerment of college students, effective solutions for post-pandemic well-being encompass a blend of contemporary and timeless wisdom. By integrating insights from Bible verses into student-centered strategies for mental health, stress reduction, and time management, students at SMC are equipped with a comprehensive toolkit for empowerment and well-being in their higher education journey.

III. Activities for Student-Centered Solutions for Post-Pandemic Mental Health, Time Management, and Stress Reduction

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, college students face unprecedented challenges related to mental health, time management, and stress. To empower students in this post-pandemic context, a range of activities can be implemented, drawing on evidence-based practices and research.

Five Activities to Fight Mental Health Concerns:

Activity	Rationale
Stress Management Psychoeducational Groups	Carrillo and Garcia (2022) emphasize the value of stress management psychoeducational groups. These groups offer students a supportive space to learn about stress, its impact, and effective coping strategies.
Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Programs	MacDonald and Neville (2023) conducted a study on online, interactive mindfulness-based stress reduction programs. Such programs promote mindfulness, mental health, and self-compassion, helping students navigate the challenges of the pandemic.
Adapted Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction	Cary et al. (2023) found that adapted mindfulness-based stress reduction programs have a positive impact on anxiety among college students. These programs teach self-regulation and provide practical tools for managing stress.
Access to Stress Management Services	Jones et al. (2021) discuss the importance of establishing stress management services on campus. These services, often available in relaxation zones, provide students with readily accessible resources and support.
Mental Health Workshops and Initiatives	Terrell et al. (2023) recommend implementing mental health workshops that cover stress management, wellness, and mindfulness. These initiatives equip students with essential skills for maintaining their mental well-being.

Five Activities for Time Management:

Activity	Rationale
Self-Regulated Learning	Wolters et al. (2020) highlight the significance of self-regulated learning in college students' time management. This approach encourages students to take control of their learning processes, set goals, and manage their time effectively.
Time Management Workshops:	Trentepohl and Leutner (2023) emphasize the value of time management workshops. These workshops equip students with practical strategies for effective time allocation and task prioritization.
Online Time Management Resources	Clark (2021) underscores the importance of online resources for time management. Providing students with accessible digital tools and resources helps them better plan and organize their academic responsibilities.
Time Tracking and Analysis	Nasrullah (n.d) suggests time tracking and analysis as an activity. By recording and analyzing their daily activities, students gain insights into how they use their time and identify areas for improvement.

Setting SMART Goals	SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goal setting, as recommended by Nasrullah (n.d), encourages students to define clear objectives and deadlines for their academic tasks.

Five Activities for Stress Reduction:

Activity	Rationale
Yoga and Relaxation Classes:	Incorporate yoga and relaxation classes as part of campus activities. These sessions provide students with physical and mental relaxation techniques, promoting stress reduction and emotional well-being (Zorach & Lipka, 2023).
Art and Creative Workshops	Offer art, music, or writing workshops that encourage creative expression. Creative activities serve as an outlet for stress and provide a sense of accomplishment (Lee, Jeong, & Kim, 2021).
Nature Retreats	Organize nature retreats or outdoor excursions to natural settings. Spending time in nature has proven benefits for stress reduction and overall mental health (Serrano et al., 2022).
Mental Health Days	Implement designated mental health days where students are encouraged to focus on self-care and relaxation, recognizing the importance of mental well-being (Berdida & Grande, 2023).
Stress-Reduction Apps	Promote stress-reduction apps and resources that students can access on their smartphones. These apps often offer guided relaxation exercises and stress management tips (Lovin & Bernardeau-Moreau, 2022).

Empowering college students in the post-pandemic context is essential for their academic success and well-being. The cited activities, informed by research and evidence-based practices, align with this goal. By addressing mental health, time management, and stress reduction, educational institutions can provide students with the tools and support needed to thrive in an evolving and challenging world. These activities foster personal agency and resilience, equipping students to navigate the complexities of their academic and personal lives in the post-pandemic era.

IV. Conclusion

In.an ever-changing.landscape.of higher education, St. Michael's College (SMC) recognizes the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on student well-being. This paper highlights the importance of addressing mental health, time management, and stress in the college experience, summarizing the literature on the topic. These parts are not parts; they are important factors influencing academic success and personal growth. It should be noted that this study recognizes the different views of these issues, including the Islamic view, which emphasizes the importance of complete goodness. In Islam, maintaining a state of physical and mental balance is an essential part of a fulfilling life and is consistent with the broader call to prioritize well-being. Students are given a call to action, inviting them to put their interests first as an important part of their journey. "In times of difficulty, we gain strength to endure and wisdom to overcome life's challenges. Our belief is that the human spirit is invincible. Review of the literature reveals many strategies that have been shown to improve mental health, improve time management, and reduce stress. When the time comes, personal capacity for action appears to be the key to successfully overcoming these challenges. As students embark on their educational journey, they can make choices that will positively impact their lives and lay the foundation for a successful future. Student well-being is important, and the journey to empowerment begins now.

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