



# The Resilience and Coping Strategies for Student-Athletes on Acculturation of the New Normal

Solehah Mardhiyah binti Misnan\* & Abd Rahim bin Mohd Shariff

Faculty of Sports Science and Coaching, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, 35900 Tanjong Malim, MALAYSIA

\*Corresponding Author: Solehah Mardhiyah binti Misnan

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**Abstract:** The concept of cultivating new norms has been introduced by the Government using the CAPP (*Cegah* - Prevent, *Amal* - Practice, *Patuh* - Compliance, and *Pantau* - Monitor) approach which targets individuals, families, and communities in preventing COVID-19 from further spreading. This acculturation or process of lifestyle change has indirectly educated each individual to adapt as quickly as possible. The cultivating of new norms throughout the Movement Control Order has resulted in restrictions on movement and made it difficult for individuals to adapt to these situations. This study aims to examine the level of resilience and coping strategies towards cultivating new norms during the COVID-19 pandemic among the Malaysian Sports School student-athletes. This study uses descriptive from quantitative method, which involved 275 respondents of student-athlete from Malaysian Sports Schools throughout the country. The study constructs focused on resilience, coping strategies and acculturation of the new norms based on the objectives of the study. The level of Cronbach's Alpha reliability values obtained for all questionnaires is high ( $\alpha > 0.95$ ). Data were analyzed descriptively and inferentially using mean, standard deviation and percentage using SPSS version 26.0. The results of the study shows that the score is at a high mean score level, namely; resilience ( $M=3.82$ ,  $SD=0.49$ ) and coping strategies ( $M=4.15$ ,  $SD=0.64$ ) and acculturation of new norms ( $M=4.46$ ,  $SD=0.55$ ). The findings of this study can be used as a guide and basis for the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE), Ministry of Youth and Sports (KBS), Ministry of Health of Malaysia (MOH) and Malaysian Sports School (SSM) to continue in empowering the student-athletes by building up their resiliency through programs and help them to easily cope with the new normal.

**Keywords:** Resilience, Coping Strategies, New Normal, COVID-19, Student-Athlete

## 1. Introduction

The concepts of cultivating new norms by using the CAPP approach has been introduced by the Government to prevent the COVID-19 from spreading. *C* is to control COVID-19 by educating family and community the new normal of life. *A* is to adapt a new set of behaviors to prevent individual, family and community from COVID-19 infection. *P* is to comply with the SOPs of the operation of essential sectors and other government directives. *P* is to monitor self, and family health status and seek immediate treatment is symptoms occur. Besides, the virus transmission can be controlled by restricting human movement to break the COVID-19 chain (Ministry of Health Malaysia, 2020). As such, various government agencies in an integrated manner have acted as frontline personnel by enforcing Movement Control Order (MCO), Enhanced Movement Control Order (EMCO), Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO), Recovery Movement Control Order (RMCO), according to the current situation. Various of new standard of procedure (SOP) were introduced by the government and all methods introduced are new phenomenon to the society in this country.

\*Corresponding author: [solehahmardhiyah@gmail.com](mailto:solehahmardhiyah@gmail.com)

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Unfortunately, the MCO could give some negative impacts (Kementerian Kesehatan Malaysia, 2020). This acculturation of the new norms is the process of acceptance of new cultural elements among individual or group from the previous culture. It has indirectly educated each individual to adapt as quickly as possible. According to Haslina Hashim (2020), COVID-19 is not only exposing society to the new norms but it also evokes stress on psychology such as feelings or emotion, guilt, despair, anxiety, loneliness, longing, neglect and confessions. Eventually something called psychological distress occur which can generally describe as an unpleasant feeling and emotion. It will begin to affect the way of thinking, behavior, daily activities and functions of an individual's life. Psychological stress can result in the individual having a negative view of themselves, others or even the environment. Depression, anxiety, inability to concentrate, hard to sleep, loosing of appetite, pack of interest in regular activities (known as anhedonia) and in the most extreme cases suicide is one of the consequences of psychological stress. Psychological stress is often occurred to the student athletes due to limited movement and away from their team mates (Jukic, Calleja-González, Cos, Cuzzolin, Olmo, Terrados, Njaradi, Sassi, Requena, Milanovic, Krakán, Chatzichristos & Alcaraz, 2020). The travel restrictions and closures of training centers stopped all sports training for a while (Bok, Chamari & Foster 2020) and made it difficult for individuals to adapt to this situation (Mattioli, Sciomer, Cocchi, Maffei & Gallina 2020). In addition, the elite athletes should be surrounded by dedicated team of professionals and sports science support to maximize their performance during training routines (Heidari, Beckmann, Bertollo, Brink, Kallus, Robazza & Kellmann, 2019). Based on Pillay, Van Rensburg, Van Rensburg, Ramagole, Holtzhausen, Dijkstra and Cronje (2020), one in two athletes experienced depression, lack of energy and lack of motivation during this lockdown period. Such a negative state may be due to anxiety, a fear caused by perception of the situation (Trigueros, Aguilar-Parra, Álvarez, González-Bernal & López-Liria, 2019). Therefore, the resilience and coping strategies are necessity to address this problem (Vinkers, Van Amelsvoort, Bisson, Branchi, Cryan, Domschke & Van Der Wee 2020). If the resilience among students is not well taken care of, students may be stucked with the various other problem that make them more depressed thus affecting their behavior in a negative side. A sport physician from the National Sports Institute said a student athlete is said to have resilience when they are able to face all challenges including changes that occur in the education and sports system during this pandemic (Mohamad Arif, 2020). Those who have the resilience make this drastic change as a challenge, not an obstacle or problem to themselves. Therefore, the objective of this study is to examine the level of resilience and coping strategies towards cultivating new norms during the COVID-19 pandemic among Malaysian Sports School student-athletes.

## **2. Method**

This study uses quantitative method, which involved 275 respondents among student-athletes, Malaysian Sports Schools throughout the country. The study constructs focused on resilience, coping strategies, and acculturation of new norms based on the objectives of the study. The survey instrument has built based on Kumpfer (2002) resilience model. It stated that the interaction between the context of environmental and interval factors as a predictor towards individual resilience. Environmental factors refer to risk factors and protective factors that cover the main environmental domain, such as family, community, cultural, school and peers. This domain will either serve as a risk factor or a protective factor in predicting individual resilience. While individual interval factors refer to cognitive, emotional, spiritual, physical and social dimensions. All these dimensions have an important role in influencing and fostering individual resilience. The research instruments or the questionnaires is using a Likert scale containing 102 question items and was given online to the samples during the MCO. The level

of Cronbach's Alpha reliability values obtained for all questionnaires is high ( $\alpha > 0.95$ ). Data were analyzed descriptively using mean, standard deviation and percentage using SPSS version 26.0.

### 3. Result

The profile of the respondents of this study are gender, race, home location, type of sport, highest involvement in sports and SUKMA XX qualification. The results of the analysis are as shown in the following Table 1:

**Table 1.** Demographical features of the participants

Variance	Groups	N	%
Gender	Male	146	53.1%
	Female	129	46.9%
Race	Malay	219	79.6%
	Chinese	19	6.9%
	Indian	13	4.7%
	Sabah/Sarawak	24	8.7%
Location	City	176	64%
	Rural	99	36%
Sport Branch	Individual	116	42.2%
	Team	159	57.8%
Sport Representation	District	5	2.9
	State	24	20.3
	National	220	69.6
	International	26	7.2
SUKMA Qualification	Yes	125	36.2
	No	150	63.8
<b>Total</b>		275	100%

The results of the analysis found that a total of (n=146, 53.1%) were male, while the majority of respondents were female with a total record (n= 129, 46.9%). The findings of the study also showed that the Malay respondents were the majority with the crowd (n=219, 79.6%), Followed by the Bumiputera of Sabah and Sarawak (n=24, 8.7%), the Chinese were as many (n=19, 6.9%) and (n=13, 4.7%) are Indians. Looking at the location of the house or residence during the acculturation of the new norm, the majority of respondents (n=176, 64%) are from urban areas, and the rest are from rural areas (n= 99, 36%). In terms of types of sports according to table 4.1 above clearly shows that (n=159, 57.8%) respondents are involved in team sports, while a total of (n= 116, 42.2%) respondents are involved in individual sports. In this table is also displayed the analysis of the highest involvement and achievement in sports and the majority of student athletes are representative of the state that is (n=220, 80%), followed by (n= 26, 9.5%) respondents represent the country, (n= 25, 8.7% ) represented the district and the latter (n=5, 1.8%) represented the school only. A total of (n=125, 45.5%) respondents were eligible to participate in SUKMA XX and the rest (n=150, 54.5%) will not be involved in the games.

In short, the difference between male and female respondents is only 6.2% or only 17 people. Looking at the race, the majority of respondents are Malays while in terms of house location, the analysis shows that the majority of respondents live in urban areas. In terms of the type of sports shows that the majority of respondents are involved in team sports and the majority of them represent the state and 45.5% successfully qualified for SUKMA XX.

Next is the result of the quantitative research. The findings of this quantitative study touch on the level of resilience and coping strategies of student athletes throughout the

acculturation of new norms experienced by the respondents. The results of the analysis are as shown in the following Table 2:

**Table 2.** Descriptive Study Results

<b>Constructs</b>	<b>Subconstruct</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>SD</b>
Resilience	Cognitive	3.84	76.8%	0.49
	Emotion	3.65	73.2%	0.40
	Behaviour	3.67	73.4%	0.44
	Spiritual	4.14	82.8%	0.50
	Physical	3.78	75.6%	0.61
Coping Strategies (Social Support)	Family	4.38	87.6%	0.61
	Community	4.05	81.0%	0.59
	Peers	4.14	82.6%	0.61
	School	4.02	80.4%	0.74
Acculturation of the CAPP New Normal	<i>Cegah</i> - Prevent	4.43	88.6%	0.56
	<i>Amal</i> - Practice	4.50	90.0%	0.53
	<i>Patuh</i> - Compliance	4.67	93.2%	0.51
	<i>Pantau</i> - Monitor	4.24	84.8%	0.61
<b>Total (Mean)</b>		4.12	82.4%	0.55

Table 2 shows the study findings for the overall constructs of resilience, coping strategies and acculturation of new norms. The overall value of the findings is high with a mean level of 4.12 (82.4%) and a standard deviation of 0.55. In details, it shows a high level of resilience (76.4%) and coping strategies (83.0%) for the student-athletes and the overall mean in terms of the items are at a high level of interpretation with a mean level and a standard deviation; resilience (M=3.82, SD=0.49) and coping strategies (M=4.15, SD=0.64) and acculturation of new norms (M=4.46, SD=0.55).

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

An individual resilience varies according to several characteristic, such as gender, race, location and so on. According to Brown and Schafft (2011) students who are from rural area definitely have different level of resilience then students in the city. While racial differences can be seen based on the study conducted by Subra, Abdullah and Devi (2019). where Indian students are still left behind in education compared to other races. This is the reason of dropouts of Indian students in secondary school. The problem in lacking of self-resilience caused students are unable to face the challenge of life and drop out of school. In detailed, spiritual shows the highest score in the resilience among student athletes. The spirituality can be one of the assets that can be used in times of crisis, facilitating the transition to a healthy adjustment, and in some circumstances, is facilitator of personal and spiritual growth (Sirriner, Kliner & Gollery, 2021). Besides, the coping strategies shows family giving important roles during the MCO as a social support (Aziz, Shafie, Lee & Ashaari, 2020). This strategy is also seen as actions to seek help in terms of morality, sympathy or understanding. And lastly new norms show the respondents have the highest score for compliance and according to the Ministry of Health Malaysia (2021), the majority of Malaysians still adhere to the set SOPs.

Undoubtedly, the COVID-19 outbreak impacted worldwide. The new norms or changes in lifestyle have indirectly educated each individual to adapt as quickly as possible. This adaptation is a process of adapting to challenging conditions. There are individuals who are able to cope with the current changes, therefore there are those violate the Movement Control Orders as well as SOPs. Individuals who are able to follow the current changes adapting well

and have an adaptive self-control. They are able to be positive in changes and agreed that the health of themselves and others will be affected. The resilience and coping strategies are essential in the process of adjustments and adaptation to meet the needs, and achieving personal well-being and safety of all. Although the terms of adaptation and adjustment carry different meaning but they are often used to describe the same situation because there is an overlapped in definition. Adjustment also helps human to achieve self-need and environment for survival. Therefore, it is understandable that self-adaptation referring to the process of a person adapting to one self and the environment in life to achieve the desired needs and goals.

## 5. Practical Application

In this research we refer the resilience model by Kumpfer (2002) and the instruments has been modified based on the new normal. We apply the constructs to the descriptive to make it easier for the laymen to read and refer the data. Besides, the tables show the details of the data for every item.

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