STUDENTS' COPYING STRATEGIES WITH COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN TANZANIA: A CROSS SECTIONAL STUDY OF UNIVERSITIES IN MOROGORO MUNICIPALITY

Venance Shillingi*, Eliza Mwakasangula
Mzumbe University, Morogoro, Tanzania
vshillingi@mzumbe.ac.tz
efaty@mzumbe.ac.tz

Abstract: *Globally, COVID 19 caused closure of all educational institutions to control the spread of this pandemic. The spread of the disease has caused various emotional and mental distortions of university students. Thus, this study aims to establish students' coping strategies used to cope with COVID-19 pandemic. The cross-sectional study was conducted among four (4) universities where 389 valid respondents out of 400 sampled students out of 3200 final year students in the faculty of social science and humanities through stratified random sampling technique within Morogoro Municipality in Tanzania. The study used structured questionnaires and interview guide to obtain data. The study used multiple linear regressions and content analysis to analyse the collected data. The findings of the study indicated that seeking for social support and social distancing were significantly and positively related to students coping strategies with COVID-19 in Tanzania's universities. Also, students copying strategies contributed about 79.1% of all initiatives of copying with COVID 19, while 20.1% is contributed by other copying strategies which were not part of this study. The study concluded that, COVID 19 pandemic has an adversative effect on the health of university students and their studying environments. In this vein, the study recommends that, students should be encouraged to maintain social distancing among each other, wash hands with running water, do physical exercises, and get social support so as to reduce anxiety and the spread of COVID-19 pandemic within universities.*

Keywords: Copying strategies, Students, Tanzania universities, mixed method design, Regression Analysis.

JEL classification: C12, C18, I230, I190

1. Introduction
The impact of COVID-19 pandemic was felt across a wide range of industries, populations and organisations. University, colleges and School closures, moves to online study, and the reduction of social and networking possibilities, are some of examples that have impacted on university students (Gautam & Gautam, 2021). Preliminary research revealed increased isolation and disturbed work routines which sparked increase in mental health problems vulnerability of the population (Anderson, 2020; Hamza et al., 2020). Recent studies have persuasively documented the pandemic's wide-ranging consequences on college students. Aucejo et al., (2020) did a survey at Arizona State University and revealed that, the adverse

---

impact of pandemic included delays in degree completion, lost salaries and employment possibilities, and lowered labour market expectations for students after graduation. Rodríguez-Planas, (2022) finds that low-income students in the City University of New York system are more likely to face stress and difficulty with online learning. Browning et al. (2021) and Nagar (2021) found that many students felt a lack of motivation, worry, tension, and loneliness.

Indeed, the growing research portrays a gloomy picture of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on college students. Despite the speedy publication of these different researches, little is known about copying strategies used by university students to adjust with COVID 19 and respond to the misfortune caused by this pandemic. The main question of this study was, what coping strategies are used by university students during COVID 19 pandemic, and which ones were successful in improving outcomes? Given the pandemic's broad negative effects on students, information on appropriate coping strategies throughout the epidemic is clearly needed to help universities and colleges better serve their students. This study focuses on Universities in Tanzania.

2. Literature Review
This provides literature relating to COVID 19 pandemic and copying strategies used world-wide. The aim was to document literature related to this study.

2.1 COVID 19 Pandemic
Like any pandemic, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic marked a serious interruption in all sectors of economy and all communities. Like other areas, university life was disrupted severely(Nurunnabi et al., 2020). The core academic activities in areas of teaching, research, service, and consultancy were interrupted with lockdowns requiring academics to work from home for extended periods of time (Sophie et al., 2021). However, this did not work well to some universities in Tanzania, due to lack of reliable technological infrastructure such as internet, computers and other electronic gadgets to facilitate smooth e-learning process Also, international evidence quickly began to emerge of the differential gendered experiences of these disruptions(Masha'al et al., 2022).

COVID-19 pandemic caused disruption of education system world-wide where it affected university students' learning from traditional to online learning after closure of campuses (Chandra, 2021). The shift from traditional to on line learning has troubled students through technological difficulties and associated learning gadgets such as laptop, iPad and other computer accessories to easier learning process(Zainel et al., 2021); This has raised a great concern about those university students who largely depend on university housing meal plans, and other support to make them stay secure and safe. Also, insufficient resources owing to the impacts of emotional isolations caused by COVID 19 has let to many problems to students in universities ((Huang et al., 2020; Thai et al., 2021; Urio et al., 2022). Moreover, the pandemic crisis caused health and economic implications which was mostly felt by the most vulnerable people in the communities(Escultor et al., 2022); and the evidence on how to cope with COVID 19 still remains scarce. Therefore, this study set out to investigate the students' copying strategies with COVID 19 pandemic.

Coping strategies are the perceptive and behavioural efforts made by an individual to deal with, mediate, tolerate and minimise the challenges presented by stressful situations and external sources. Studies revealed that, coping strategies help to promote positive attitude, reduce stress and psychological behaviour, whereas others worsen stress and promote a negative attitude and psychological impact (Al-Hasan et al., 2020; Akbar & Aisyawati, 2021; Aquino & Scott, 2022). The practicality of coping strategies depend on other factors such as intensity of the stressor, stressor controllability, adequate coping resources, and nature of the outcomes (Zainel et al., 2021; Franzoi et al., 2022). Students who worried of becoming

infected with COVID-19 were seen to be at higher risk of anxiety compared to other students. Also, a positive correlation between students' anxiety levels and their dysfunctional coping strategies were found to include denial, behavioural disengagement, venting, and self-blame to their loved ones (Masha'al et al., 2022; Rodríguez-Planas, 2022). However, students who were studying nursing were willing to use coping planning for their betterment.

2.2 Empirical Literature Review

Masha'al et al., (2022) did a cross-sectional study on the COVID-19 infection in relation to anxiety and coping strategies among students in Jordan University during the COVID-19 pandemic. The result revealed that, there is a positive relationship between students' anxiety level and their coping strategies. The notable copying strategies were denial, venting, disconnected, and self-blame. Babicka-Wirkus et al., (2021) did a study on university students' strategies for coping with COVID-19 pandemic stress in Poland. The result showed that, during COVID 19 pandemic, students used coping strategies of planning, acceptance and seeking emotional support; while the lowest coping skills were observed to the youngest students. Moreover, Sophie et al., (2021) studied on student's perceptions and coping strategies with COVID-19 pandemic during the first wave at the faculty of medicine in Geneva. Results show that the main coping strategies were increased telecommunications and physical activity.

Thai et al., (2021) did a cross-sectional study among public health and medicine students, where the results indicated that, coping strategies and perceived stress was higher than avoidant coping strategies. Also, Akbar & Aisyawati, (2021) conducted a study on coping strategies with COVID 19 pandemic among University Students in Jakarta Indonesia. The findings revealed that coping strategies significantly decreased psychological distress among university students. Further, Nagar, (2021) studied on coping strategies of high school and college for Anxiety students which were selected based on random stratified sampling and snowball sampling technique(Franzoi et al., 2022; Ibarra-Mejia et al., 2022). The findings show that the pandemic has led to an increase in stress and a higher emotional oriented coping strategy, thus during pandemic students opted avoidance coping strategy than seeking social support and problem-solving coping strategies.

Chandra, (2021) did a study on academic stress and emotional copying strategies with COVID 19 among undergraduate and postgraduate students in Indian. The results revealed that, students used creative activities and learned courses that had new technical skills in order to cope with COVID 19; and also found that, distancing and the use of emotional intelligence were preferred copying strategies by most students in order to avoid depression and boredom; while Huang et al., (2020) studied on emotional response and coping strategies in nurses and nursing students during COVID-19 outbreak in China. The findings showed that more women meaningfully took to problem focused coping and more men took to emotion-focused coping strategies. Moreover, Nurunnabi et al., (2020) conducted a study on students coping strategies with anxiety caused by COVID-19 pandemic in China. The results revealed that, techniques for survival and coping strategies were vital due to high level of anxiety caused by the pandemic.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The framework shows the existing relationship between predictors variables, that is copying Strategies (problem focused, seeking social support, emotion focused, social distancing) and an outcome variable which is the copying with COVID 19 pandemics. It is conceptualized that copying with COVID 19 pandemic is theorized as the outcome variable to copying strategies, that is, problem focused, seeking social support, emotion focused, distancing.
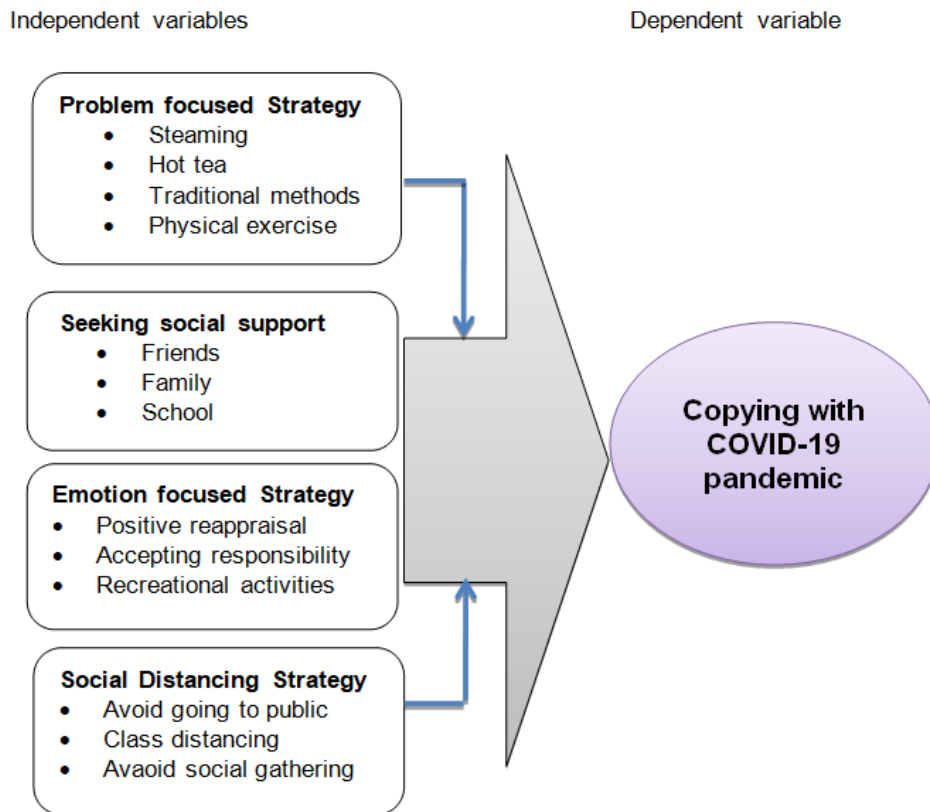
Figure 1: Conceptual framework
Source: Researcher's construct, 2022

3. Methodology

The study philosophy was pragmatism where both positivism and interpretivism were integrated, with a major emphasis on the deductive approach to theory development. This study used explanatory sequential design, that allows collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by qualitative data to explain the quantitative findings (Chandran, 2004; Feilzer, 2010; Cooper & Roger, 2012; Wilson, 2014; Bryman, 2016). The study surveyed four (4) Universities found in Morogoro municipality in Tanzania. These include Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), Mzumbe University (MU), Muslim University of Morogoro (MUM), and Jordan University College (JUCo). Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were used to select a sample size of 400 respondents out of a targeted population of 3200 final year students in faculties of social science and humanities of the four (4) surveyed universities. Qualitative data were collected from twenty (20) class representatives (i.e., 5 class representatives from each university). The sample size of 389 which was 12.2% of the target population was regarded as enough for statistical tests since other scholars like Mugenda and Mugenda (2003); Creswell (2015); Kothari and Garg (2014) and Gibson, (2017) suggested that, a 10% sample size from a target population is large enough for reliable data analysis, tests for significance, and to infer the findings of the study.

Inferential analysis was used to establish the influence of students' copying strategies with COVID 19 pandemic at alpha of 0.05. The study used this regression model:

$$Y_1 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \mu_i$$

Whereby $Y =$ copying with COVID 19 pandemic, β_o Is a constant that predicts the level of influence given the Y-value when all predictors' values (X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4 – are zero while $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ - are constant regression coefficients representing the conditions of the predictors to the outcome variable. On the other hand, X_1 - Problem focused strategy, $X_2 –$ Seeking social support strategy, $X_3 –$ Emotional focused strategy, $X_4 –$ Social distancing strategy and μ_i - A disturbance term explaining other predictors that influence copying with COVID 19 pandemic but the study did not consider them.

4. Presentation of Findings
The study used descriptive statistics and regression analysis as data analysis tools in this study.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis
The study targeted data from a sample size of 400 out of 3200 final year students housed in the faculty of social science and humanities at the main campus of the four (4) surveyed universities in Morogoro municipality, which is 12.2% of the target population. However, out of 400 respondents a total of 389 returned questionnaires, which translated to 97.25% of response rate. This is correlates with other scholars who argue that, response rate of 70% is suitable for a study (Kothari, 2011). Therefore, response rate of 97.25% is appropriate for a study to infer its findings.

4.1.1   Students' Copying Strategies with COVID 19 Pandemic
The study set out to determine the influence of Students' copying strategies (problem focused, seeking social support, emotional copying, and distancing strategies) on copying with COVID-19 pandemic in Tanzania's higher learning institutions. Below were finding obtained. These copying strategies were surveyed by using a five-point likert scale. The result is explained in the following sections as per predictor:

Problem focused Strategy in Copying with COVID 19 Pandemic
The aspects of Problem focused strategy to organization performance were examined by asking the respondents whether leaders had ability to direct subordinates, capability toward organization direction, and the availability of multiple skills in leading. The results in Figure 4.1 show that, out of 389 respondents the majority about 28% strongly agreed and 46% agreed while 7% were neutral. Others, 8% and 11% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. The findings suggest that, large segments of students used to steam as a copying strategy with COVID 19 in higher learning institutions. These results support other researchers who reported that, use of steam inhalation therapy helps in managing respiratory conditions. However it lacks scientific support as an appropriate practice(Chowdhury et al., 2022).

One of the class representatives of Mzumbe University lamented that:
>   *"… some students use steam therapy as their copying strategy with COVID 19, most use their water jugs to boil water mixed with traditional herbs to steam themselves in*

*their hall of residents" (Interview, Class representative, Mzumbe University;
22/03/2022).*
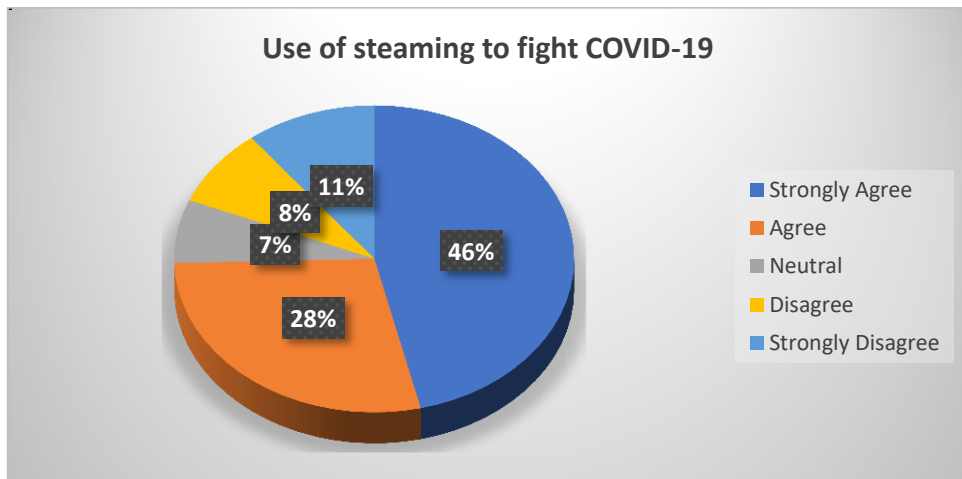
Figure 4.1: Use of Steaming as a strategy for copying with COVID-19
Source: Field data, 2022

Also, one respondent validated the above findings by attesting that:
*"…COVID 19 has pushed students to use different strategies such as steaming and
jogging during morning and evening. Use of steam is mostly used by girls who own
water jugs in their rooms, and especially those who live off campus" (Interview, Class
representative, JUCo; 22/03/2022).*

Table 4.1: Problem focused strategy on COVID 19 (percentages)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Do students use hot tea as a copying strategy for COVID 19?	8	11	5	22	54
Do students use traditional methods such as traditional herbs as a copying strategy for pandemic?	4	9	6	49	32
Do students engage is physical exercise as a copying strategy for COVID 19?	8	6	24	39	23

Source: Field data, 2022

Findings in Table 4.1 answer a question which asked respondents "Do students use hot tea
as a copying strategy for COVID 19". In this case, out of 389 respondents the majority about
54% strongly disagreed and 22% disagreed. On the other hand, 5 % were neutral while the
remaining about 11% and 8% agreed and strongly agreed respectively. Further remarks
were obtained from the second question which requested students whether use traditional
methods such as traditional herbs as a copying strategy for pandemic.
This was supported by one respondent who argued that:
*"…this depends on the family the students are coming from, those who comes from
rural areas where they normally use traditional herbs for treatments of diseases are*

> *also using as copying strategy for COVID 19, but who live in urban and cities they consider traditional herbs as uncivilized practice"* **(Interview, Class representative, JUCo; 03/03/2022).**

Also, the findings in Table 4.1 reveal that out of 389 respondents, 32% strongly disagreed and 49% disagreed while 6% were neutral. Others, 9% agreed and 4% strongly agreed respectively. The third question asked whether students engage is physical exercise as a copying strategy for COVID 19. The result revealed that, out of 389 respondents, 8% strongly agreed and 6% agreed while 24% were neutral. On the other hand, the majority of respondents about 39% were disagreed and 23% strongly disagreed respectively.

This was supported by one respondent who argued that:

> *"…most students do not like physical exercise, but those who enjoy it have used it as a copying strategy for COVID 19; and actually, the number of those jogging nowadays has increased tremendously"* (Interview, Class representative, MUM; 24/03/2022).

Seeking social support Strategy with COVID 19 Pandemic

The aspects of seeking social support strategy in copying with COVID 19 pandemic, was examined by asking the respondents whether students use their friends as a copying strategy for COVID 19 pandemic. The results in Table 4.2 show that, out of 389 respondents, majority about 31% of respondent strongly agreed and 28% agreed while 6% were neutral. Others, 21% disagreed and 14% strongly disagreed respectively. Therefore, the results suggest that, use of friends to cope with COVID 19 stress was used by most of students in higher learning institutions.

In an in-depth interview with one of the students at SUA confirmed that:

> *"… In my view, students use their friends to cope with COVID 19, social media such as Instagram and Whatsup has helped students to connect easily with their friends"* (Interview, Class Representative, SUA; 11/3/2022**).**

The result correlate with other scholars who argues that, significant social support decreases psychological distress and serves as the basis for intervention (Akbar & Aisyawati, 2021).

Table 4.2: Seeking social support Strategy in Copying with COVID 19 Pandemic (percentages)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Do students use their friends as a copying strategy for COVID 19?	31	28	6	21	14
Do students use their family relations as a copying strategy for COVID 19 pandemic?	59	15	8	13	5
Do students use their colleagues and lecturers' social relations as a copying strategy for COVID 19 pandemic?	35	17	29	13	6

Source: Field data, 2022

Moreover, the results in Table 4.2 in respect to students who use their family relations as a copying strategy for COVID 19 pandemic show that, out of 389 respondents, majority about 59% of respondent strongly agreed and 15% agreed while 8% were neutral. Others, 13%

and 5% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. Therefore, the results suggest that, use of family relations to cope with COVID 19 stress was mostly used by students in higher learning institutions.

In an in-depth interview with one of the students at MUM, it was confirmed that:
"… In case of stress caused by COVID 19 I normally call my mom, dad, sister or brother to share my experience and get encouragement from them. I realized family is a key for my wellbeing especially during the time of stress. I love my family" (Interview, Class Representative, MUM; 24/3/2022).

Emotional focused Strategy in Copying with COVID 19 Pandemic
The issue of Emotional focused Strategy in Copying with COVID 19 Pandemic was examined by asking whether students use recreational activities as a copying strategy for COVID 19 pandemic. The results in Table 4.3 show that out of 389 respondents, 16% strongly agreed and 20% agreed while 9% were neutral. Others, 22% and 33% of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively. These findings suggest that, most students in Tanzania's higher learning institutions do not use recreational activities as a copying strategy for pandemic. Also, in respect to whether students use positive reappraisal as a copying strategy for COVID 19 pandemic, the results in Table 4.3 show that out of 389 respondents, 20% strongly agreed and 11% agreed while 8% were neutral. Majority about 37% disagreed and 24% strongly disagreed respectively. The results suggest that, students do not use positive reappraisal as a copying strategy with COVID 19 in Tanzania's higher learning Institutions.

Table 4.3: Emotional focused Strategy in Copying with COVID 19 Pandemic (percentages)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Do students use positive reappraisal as a copying strategy for COVID 19?	20	11	8	37	24
Do students use accepting responsibility as a copying strategy for COVID 19 pandemic?	21	13	14	38	14
Do students use recreational activities as a copying strategy for COVID 19 pandemic?	16	20	9	22	33

Source: Field data, 2022

Social distancing Strategy with COVID 19 Pandemic
The aspect of social distancing Strategy with Copying with COVID 19 Pandemic was examined by asking whether students avoid going to public places as a copying strategy for COVID 19. The results in Table 4.4 show that out of 389 respondents, majority about 32% agreed and 19% strongly agreed while 10% were neutral. Others, 30% disagreed and 9% strongly disagreed respectively. These results confirm that, students were not going to public places in order to protect themselves with COVID 19 pandemic.

In an in-depth interview with one of the students at Mzumbe University, it was confirmed that
"… nowadays activities involving gathering and going to public places are not encouraged at our university, we even don't participate in inter-university games. We take the issue of social distancing very serious as one of our copying strategies with COVID 19 at our university" (Interview, Class Representative, MU; 22/3/2022).

Also, on the issue whether students use distancing in class arrangement as a copying strategy for COVID 19 pandemic, the results in Table 4.4 show that out of 389 respondents, the majority about 37% disagreed and 17% strongly disagreed while 11% were neutral. Others, 15% and 20% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively. These findings confirm that, during classes and group discussion students did not observe distancing protocol for COVID 19 were not observed

In an in-depth interview with one of the students at JUCo, it was confirmed that:
"… Students do not adhere to distancing protocol due to the small size of our lecture halls to accommodate large number of students. The university should build large halls if distancing is to be applied. So, social distancing does not fit to our university infrastructure" (Interview, Class Representative, JUCo; 22/3/2022).

Moreover, on the issue whether students use of mask and wash hand with running water as a copying strategy for COVID 19 pandemic. The results in Table 4.4 show that out of 389 respondents, the majority about 30% disagreed and 19% strongly disagreed while 21% were neutral. Others, 13% and 17% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed respectively. These findings confirm that, students in Tanzania's higher learning institutions do not adhere to wearing musk and washing their hands with running water.

In an in-depth interview at JUCo, one of the students had this to say:
"… it is unbelievable that students are not washing hands with running water despite the fact that the university had created environment for availability of water in many locations within the university. In the case of mask, only few students do wear them, others have different reasons including financial reasons to buy masks" (Interview, Class Representative, JUCo; 22/3/2022).

The results on wearing mask differ with other scholars who argued that, wearing of face masks was also related with risk perception as well as compliance to advice from responsible health authorities (Zhao & Knobel, 2021).

Table 4.4: Social distancing Strategy with COVID 19 Pandemic (percentages)

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Do students avoid going to public places as a copying strategy for COVID 19?	19	32	10	30	9
Do students use distancing in class as a copying strategy for COVID 19 pandemic?	20	15	11	37	17
Do students use of mask and wash hand with running water as a copying strategy for COVID 19 pandemic?	17	13	21	30	19

Source: Field data, 2022

4.2 Inferential Analysis
Inferential analysis was used to determine copying strategies (Problem focused strategy, seeking social support strategy, emotional focused strategy, and social distancing strategy) as predictors on copying with COVID 19 as dependent variable. Multiple regression analysis

was used to determine the variation caused by independent variables. Regression analysis show that there is strong and positive relationship among variables in the study (R=0.890). Also, the results indicate that 79.1 % of variation of coping with COVID-19 in higher learning institutions is explained by problem focusing strategy, distancing, seeking social support and emotional coping strategy value (R square = 0.791). The remaining 20.9% of coping with COVID-19 in higher learning institution in Morogoro Municipality is explained by other strategies which this study did not consider. Table 4.5 below show results of regression analysis

Table 4.5: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.890[a]	.791	.789	.45914169

a. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional coping strategy, Problem focus strategy, Social Distancing, Seeking social support.

4.2.1 Analysis of variance (ANOVA) for all variables
The analysis of variance (ANOVA) results presented in Table 4.6 below confirm that the model goodness of fit is appropriate for this data since F = 364.128 and the p-value of 0.00 is less than significant level of 0.05 with df = 384. Hence, the result means that focusing coping strategy, seeking social support, distancing and emotional coping strategy, collectively can predict relationship with coping with COVID-19 in higher learning institutions.

Table 4.6: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	307.049	4	76.762	364.128	.000[b]
	Residual	80.951	384	.211		
	Total	388.000	388			

a. Dependent Variable: Coping with COVID-19
Predictors: (Constant), emotional coping strategy, problem focusing coping strategy, distancing, seeking social support

4.3.3 Combined contribution of predictors of copying with COVID 19 pandemic
The coefficient tables of results below show the contribution of predictors (problem focus strategy, seeking social support, distancing and emotional copying strategy) to the changes in dependent variable (copying with COVID-19 pandemic). The results revealed that (β=0.024, t=0.819, p=0.413) problem focus strategy insignificantly affected coping with COVID-19 in higher learning institutions; while seeking social support strategy significantly influenced coping with COVID-19 in higher learning institutions as indicated by p-value=0.000 which is less the alpha=0.05. Further, result revealed that (β=0.458, t=10.924, p=0.000) confirmed that, distancing strategy has positive significant influenced on coping with COVID-19 in higher learning institutions. Furthermore, the results on emotional copying strategy (β=0.022, t=0.718, p=0.473) implied that, there was no significant influence on COVID 19 pandemic as p-value=0.473 was greater than alpha =0.05. Therefore, seeking social support strategy and distancing strategy had significant influence, while problem focus strategy and emotional coping strategy had no significant influence on coping with COVID-19 in higher learning institutions. The joint effect model goodness of fit was CWC= -3.845 + $0.024X_1$+ $0.446X_2$ + $0.458X_3$+ $0.022X_4$ + ε. The model implies that if student copying strategies are not existing, coping with COVID-19 to students in higher learning institutions will decrease at a rate of 3.845.

Table 4.7: Linear regression of independent and dependent variables

Linear Regression Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-value	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-3.845	.023		.000	1.000
Problem focus strategy	.024	.029	.024	.819	.413
Seeking social support	.446	.043	.446	10.483	.000
Distancing	.458	.042	.458	10.924	.000
Emotional coping strategy	.022	.031	.022	.718	.473

a. Dependent Variable: coping with COVID-19

5. Discussion of Findings
The following sections provides discussion of the findings in respect to four variables of this study.

5.1. Problem focus strategy and coping with COVID-19
The results from the linear regression analysis of independent variable to dependent variable reveal (β=0.024, p=0.413), which means problem focus strategy was not significant on influencing Coping With COVID-19 for university students in Morogoro Municipality. The model goodness of fit was CWC= $-3.845 + 0.024X_1 + 0.446X_2 + 0.458X_3 + 0.022X_4 + \varepsilon$. The model implies that a unit change in problem focus strategy will increase coping with COVID-19 by the rate of 0.024 equal to 2.4% and if problem focus strategy does not exist, coping with COVID-19 will decrease at a rate of 3.845, keeping other copying strategies constant. The results differ with other scholars who argues that, women seriously took problem focused strategy to cope with COVID 19 than men (Huang et al., 2020; Chowdhury et al., 2022).

5.2. Seeking for social support Strategy and coping with COVID-19
The results from the linear regression analysis of independent variable to dependent variable reveal (β=0.446, p=0.000), which means seeking social support strategy was significantly influencing Coping with COVID-19 for university students in Morogoro Municipality. The model goodness of fit was CWC= -3.845 + 0.024 + 0.446 + 0.458 + 0.022 + ε. The model implies that a unit change in seeking for social support strategy will increase coping with COVID-19 by the rate of 0.446 equal to 44.6% and if seeking for social support does not exist, coping with COVID-19 will decrease at a rate of 3.845, keeping other copying strategies constant. These findings are comparable with (Babicka-Wirkus et al., 2021), who reveal that seeking for social support was statistically significant coping strategy to coronavirus pandemic in Poland. Further, Akbar & Aisyawati, (2021) revealed that coping strategies and increased social support were significantly related with decreased psychological distress. In line with the findings made by (Stravakou & Lozgka, 2022) shows that seeking social support significantly influencing coping with COVID-19 pandemic and was the most used strategy among colleges' students. The findings were different from that of, (Nagar, 2021) who revealed that during pandemic high school and college students adopted higher avoidance coping strategy than seeking support coping strategy.

5.3   Distancing Strategy and Coping with COVID-19
The results from the linear regression analysis of independent variable to dependent variable reveals (β=0.458, p=0.000), which means distancing strategy was significantly influencing Coping With COVID-19 for university students in Morogoro Municipality. The

model goodness of fit was CWC= -3.845 + 0.024X_1+ 0.446X_2 + 0.458X_3+ 0.022X_4 + Ɛ. The model implies that a unit change in distancing strategy will increase coping with COVID-19 by the rate of 0.458 equal to 45.8% and if distancing strategy does not exist, coping with COVID-19 will decrease at a rate of 3.845, keeping other copying strategies constant. These findings are in line with the findings made by Falasifah, Fitria and Hakim, (2021) which shows that distancing significantly influenced coping with COVID-19 pandemic and was the most used strategy among college students. Also, Al-Hasan, Khuntia and Yim (2020) found that social distance during pandemic significantly influenced citizen in United State to cope with COVID-19. Similarly, Zainel et al. (2021) found that social distancing in children and adolescents during the COVID-19 pandemic were significantly influencing them to cope with COVID-19 pandemic.

5.4. Emotional Copying Strategy and Copying with COVID-19
The results from the linear regression analysis of independent variable to dependent variable reveals (β=0.022, p=0.473), which means emotional copying Strategy was not significant on Coping With COVID-19 for university students in Morogoro Municipality. The model goodness of fit was CWC= -3.845 + 0.024X_1+ 0.446X_2 + 0.458X_3+ 0.022X_4 + Ɛ. The model implies that a unit change in emotional copying Strategy will increase coping with COVID-19 by the rate of 0.022 equal to 2.2% and if distancing strategy does not exist, coping with COVID-19 will decrease at a rate of 3.845, keeping problem focusing coping strategy and emotional coping strategy constant. The results differ with other scholars who argue that, the pandemic has greatly and negatively affected the students' emotional, psychological, and mental state, who experienced mainly fear and anxiety (Franzoi et al., 2022). Similarly, other scholars revealed that, the pandemic has led to an increase in stress and a higher emotional oriented coping strategy. Therefore, students opted avoidance coping strategy than seeking social support and problem-solving coping strategies during pandemic (Franzoi et al., 2022; Ibarra-Mejia et al., 2022).

6. Conclusion
The study concludes that, individually seeking social support and distancing strategies significantly influence copying with COVID 19 pandemic in Tanzania high learning institutions while problem focus and emotional copying strategy insignificantly influence copying with COVID 19. However, collectively F=364.128 and p-value= 0.000 confirms that predictors influence significantly COVID 19 pandemic. In this regard, based on the findings of this study, R-square of 0.791 implies that, 79.1% of COVID-19 initiatives in higher learning institutions in Tanzania is contributed by students copying strategies, while 20.9% is contributed by other strategies which this study did not consider. The study recommends that higher learning institutions should develop an innovative and helpful approach to promote and address the emotional issues of students during a pandemic; encourage students to maintain social distancing among each other so as to reduce the spread of COVID-19; and also ensure social support among students so that they can maintain and handle the spread of COVID-19 within universities.

References
Anderson, D., Kelliher, C., 2020. Enforced Remote Working and the Work-Life Interface During Lockdown. *Gender in Management*, 35(7/8): 677-83. https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-07-2020-0224
Akbar, Z., Aisyawati, M. S., 2021. Coping Strategy, Social Support, and Psychological Distress Among University Students in Jakarta, Indonesia During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Frontiers in Psychology, 12, pp. 1–7. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.694122

Al-Hasan, A., Khuntia, J., Yim, D., 2020. Threat, Coping, and Social Distance Adherence During COVID-19: Cross-Continental Comparison Using an Online Cross-Sectional Survey. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, 22(11): 1–14. https://doi.org/10.2196/23019

Aquino, K. C., Scott, S., 2022. "They're Coming in Pretty Defeated:" Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic (Practice Brief). *Journal of Postsecondary Education&Disability*, 35(2): 175–82.

Aucejo, E. M., French, J., Paola, M., Araya, U., Zafar, B., 2020. COVID-19 Treatment: Close to a Cure? A Rapid Review of Pharmacotherapies for the Vovel Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). *International Journal of Antimicrobial Agents,* 56(2): 106080, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijantimicag.2020.106080

Babicka-Wirkus, A., Wirkus, L., Stasiak, K., Kozłowski, P., 2021. University Students' Strategies of Coping With Stress During the Coronavirus Pandemic: Data From Poland. *PLoS ONE*, 16(7): 1-27. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0255041

Browning, M. H. E. M., et al., 2021. Psychological Impacts From COVID-19 Among University Students: Risk Factors Across Seven States in the United States. *PloS One*, 17(8): 1-27. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0245327

Chandra, Y., 2021. Online Education During COVID-19: Perception of Academic Stress and Emotional Intelligence Coping Strategies Among College Students. *Asian Education and Development Studies*, 10(2): 229–238. https://doi.org/10.1108/AEDS-05-2020-0097

Chowdhury, M. N. R., Alif, Y. A., Alam, S., Emon, N. U., Richi, F. T., Zihad, S. M. N. K., Taki, M. T. I., Rashid, M. A., 2022. Theoretical Efectiveness of Steam Inhalation Against SARS-CoV-2 Infection: Updates on Clinical Trials, Mechanism of Actions, and Traditional Approaches. *Heliyon*, 8(1). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e08816

Escultor, P. T., Galinato, R., Labadan, R., Liwa, L., Arcilla Jr., F. E., 2022. Coping Styles Among College Students During COVID-19 Pandemic. *Randwick International of Education and Linguistics Science Journal*, 3(2): 413–19. https://doi.org/10.47175/rielsj.v3i2.489

Franzoi, I. G., Sauta, M. D., Barbagli, F., Avalle, C., Granieri, A., 2022. Psychological Interventions for Higher Education Students in Europe: A Systematic Literature Review. *Youth*, 2(3): 236-57. https://doi.org/10.3390/youth2030017

Gautam, D. K., Gautam, P. K., 2021. Transition to Online Higher Education During COVID-19 Pandemic: Turmoil and Way Forward to Developing Country of South Asia-Nepal. *Journal of Research in Innovative Teaching & Learning*, 14(1): 93–111. https://doi.org/10.1108/jrit-10-2020-0051

Hamza, C., Heath, N. L., Goldstein, A. L., 2020. When Social Isolation Is Nothing New: A Longitudinal Study On Psychological Distress During COVID-19 Among University Students With and Without Preexisting Mental Health Concerns. *Canadian Psychology/Psychologie canadienne*, 62(1): 20–30. https://doi.org/10.1037/cap0000255

Huang, L., Lei, W., Xu, F., Liu, H., Yu, L., 2020. Emotional Responses and Coping Strategies in Nurses and Nursing Students During Covid-19 Outbreak: A Comparative Study. *PLoS ONE*, 15(8): 1–12. https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0237303

Ibarra-Mejia, G., Lusk, M., Umucu, E., 2022. Mental Health Among College Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic at a Hispanic-Serving Institution. *Health Promotion Practice*, 0(0), pp. 1–10. https://doi.org/10.1177/15248399221092750

Masha'al, D., Shahrour, G., Aldalaykeh, M., 2022. Anxiety and Coping Strategies Among Nursing Students Returning to University During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Heliyon*, 8(1): 1-8. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2022.e08734

Nagar, T., 2021. Coping Strategies of Students of High School and College for Anxiety During the Pandemic. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 7(3): 2235-42. https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3939784

Nurunnabi, M., Hossain, S. F. A. H., Chinna, K., Sundarasen, S., Khoshaim, H. B., Kamaludin, K., Baloch, G. M., Sukayt, A., Shan, X., (2020). Coping Strategies of Students

for Anxiety During the COVID-19 Pandemic in China: A Cross-Sectional Study. *F1000 Research*, 9, pp. 1–16. https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.25557.1

Rodríguez-Planas, N., 2022. Hitting Where It Hurts Most: COVID-19 and Low-Income Urban College Students. *Economics of Education Review*, 87, 102233. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econedurev.2022.102233

Sophie, W. et al., 2021. Medical Students' Perceptions and Coping Strategies During the First Wave of the COVID-19 Pandemic: Studies, Clinical Implication, and Professional Identity. *BMC Medical Education*, 21(1): 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-021-03053-4

Stravakou, P. A., Lozgka, E. C., 2022. The Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic On University Students' Well-Being and Students' Coping Strategies: A Qualitative Approach. *Scholars Bulletin*, 8(5): 130-40. https://doi.org/10.36348/sb.2022.v08i05.001

Thai, T. T., Le, P. T. V., Huynh, Q. H. N., Pham, P. T. T., Bui, H. T. H., 2021. Perceived Stress and Coping Strategies During the COVID-19 Pandemic Among Public Health and Preventive Medicine Students in Vietnam. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, *14*, pp. 795–804. https://doi.org/10.2147/PRBM.S317059

Urio, P. J., Murphy, S. P., Moses, I., Chua, C., 2022. Exploring the Gendered Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic On Academic Staff In Tanzania. *Alliance for African Partnership Perspectives,* 1, pp. 61–71.

Zainel, A. A., Qotba, H., Al-Maadeed, A., Al-Kohji, S., Al Mujalli, H., Ali, A., Al Mannai, L., Aladab, A., AlSaadi, H., AlKarbi, K. A., Al-Baghdadi, T., 2021. Psychological and Coping Strategies Related to Home Isolation and Social Distancing in Children and Adolescents During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Cross-Sectional Study. *JMIR Formative Research*, *5*(4): e24760. https://doi.org/10.2196/24760

Zhao, X., and Knobel, P., 2021. Face Mask Wearing During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Comparing Perceptions in China and Three European Countries. *Translational Behavioral Medicine*, *11*(6): 1199–1204. https://doi.org/10.1093/tbm/ibab043

Bio-notes:

Dr. Venance Shillingi (PhD) is a Lecturer and Strategic Management consultant at *Mzumbe University, School of Public Administration and Management (SOPAM)*, Morogoro - Tanzania. He holds a PhD in Business Administration (Strategic Management) from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT), Nairobi Kenya; MBA (corporate Management) and Bachelor of Public Administration (BPA) both from Mzumbe University, Tanzania; and has published widely in area of strategic management, conflict management, and quality service delivery in health sector. Dr. Shillingi has over 15 years of lecturing, research and consultancy. He has also trained broadly in areas of strategy, strategic management, Strategic leadership, performance management (with balance score card & OPRAS), change management, business ethics, human resource management and other related general management courses. He has also consulted extensively in formulation and review of strategic plans (more than 10 organisations in public sector), business plans, client service charter, Training Needs Assessments (TNA), and other performance tools in private and public sector.

Dr. Eliza Mwakasangula (PhD) is a Senior Lecturer and School Dean, School of *Public Administration and Management (SOPAM) of Mzumbe University in Tanzania*. She has published and trained widely in area of leadership, public administration and general management.