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HOW the tourism & hospitality lecturers coped with the transition to online teaching due to COVID-19: An assessment of stressors, negative sentiments & coping strategies

Vikas Gupta a,*, Hiran Roy b, Garima Sahu c

a Amity School of Hospitality, Amity University, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India
b International School of Hospitality, Sports and Tourism Management, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Vancouver, Canada
c Research Scholar in Amity International Business School, Amity University, Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India

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ABSTRACT

This study identified stressors and relevant coping strategies used by the hospitality & tourism lectures (N = 369) during Covid-19 around the globe. It also intended to reveal how intensely the coping strategies of Brief-COPE scale contribute to forecasting the significant positive and negative result constructs. Stressors and coping strategies were measured by grouping them into avoidant and approach coping. Results of correlations found that significant positive emotional results (well-being, resilience, post-traumatic growth, happiness, and health) linked negatively with avoidant coping and positively with approach coping. However, avoidant coping was found to be constantly associated with negative results (stress, frustration, anxiety, etc.).

1. Introduction

The COVID-19 disease prompted drastic educational changes in Malik, 2020, including the immediate closing of schools, colleges, and universities worldwide, affecting 862 million people and approximately 50% of the global student population (Viner et al., 2020). Neither the lecturers nor the students were adequately prepared to deal with the many difficulties that these deviations presented. Several parents complained about teachers’ unstructured job transmission and a lack of teacher input (Wildemann & Hosenfeld, 2020), while teachers struggled to maintain interactions with their students and lost out on school guidance and support (Goetz, 2020). When most teaching was done from home, little is known about the factors that led to teachers’ difficulties in ensuring the continuation of instruction and content delivery (Malik, 2020). Schools and students, for example, became heavily reliant on digital technologies for both instruction and communication (Huber & Helm, 2020). Although some teachers may not have found internet usage, interaction via social media platforms, or utilising video-conference applications as a significant challenge, many observed this transmission as a burden (Quezada, Talbot, & Quezada-Parker, 2020). Moreover, some teachers had seen the circumstances as optimistic, while others found it extraneous, based upon their level of technical skill competencies (Drossel et al., 2019). Furthermore, it is possible that some interpreted it as adverse and stressful. If the latter is true, it may be a possible stressor for the teachers, leading to feelings of stress and a decrease in well-being (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2018).

A review of extant literature (Mahmood, 2020; MacIntyre et al., 2020; Nasri et al., 2020) suggests that the overall stress on the lecturers had increased with the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic. Teaching is usually considered one of the utmost stressful and...
demanding jobs, but working as a hospitality or tourism lecturer generates its own peculiar and distinctive challenges due to their emphasis on the practical aspects (Lagosi & Jameson, 2017). Job assignments that were once professed as significant have become complex due to the speedy transformation from the conventional teaching platform to the online delivery of content for which most of the faculties were not prepared at all. However, the impact of this transition seems to remain for a more extended period. Several researches (Kyriaicou, 2010; Travers & Cooper, 1996) recommends that teachers are more likely to encounter stress when they lack resources, guidance and time while delivering lectures. Inadequate transition time, resources, and encouragement were the critical obstacles to lecturers’ capability to use and apply technology in their classrooms (Pittman & Gaines, 2015).

This transition may also lead to psychological reactance by the lecturers as their freedom or so called free behaviours were hindered by the change in teaching methodology. According to the Theory of Psychological Reactance proposed by Brehm (1966), reactance is an aversive form of psychological stimulation that occurs when individual’s free behaviours are threatened or withdrawn (Brehm, 1966; Brehm & Brehm, 1981). It acts as a catalyst for regaining one’s autonomy. The degree of reaction is determined by the significance of the compromised freedom and the perceived threat’s severity (Brehm, 1966; Brehm & Brehm, 1981; Clew & Wicklund, 1980). Internal risks are those risks that are inflicted on oneself as a result of selecting one option over another. External risks can be impersonal contextual elements that constitute an obstacle to an individual’s autonomy. The undesirable psychological condition of reactance leads to emotional and psychological attempts to reclaim one’s independence, which are complemented by emotional experiences. Thus, when individuals (lecturers) are intimidated due to the sudden changes, they often feel uneasy, confrontational, aggressive, and enraged (Berkowitz, 1973; Dillard & Shen, 2005; Rains, 2013).

Moreover, lecturers are more likely to be stressed and feel anxious if they are required to use equipment and technologies they are not comfortable at all (Al-Fudail & Mellar, 2008; Gupta & Sahu, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c; Pithers & Soden, 1998). Teachers had to convert to teaching in an online environment, but many had to be their technical support as well simultaneously apart from just teaching and delivering lectures. It is akin to being the director, actor, and stagehand in a play simultaneously—a truly challenging feat. Previous studies (MacIntyre et al., 2020; Nasri et al., 2020) conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic suggested that teachers dealt with a wide-ranging realistic pedagogical stressors, as well as the stresses of the pandemic itself, which include health risks for themselves and the others, variations carried out by working from home, challenges to present and impending employment, novel household and family obligations including taking care of the home schooled children, and sometimes being restricted to their residences. During the sudden closure of the educational institutions due to the Covid-19 pandemic across the world, all these situations existed. Reactions to the Covid-19 pandemic have fashioned an extensive array of novel stressors for lecturers to contract with, containing difficulties instigated due to the speedy transition from the conventional to the online teaching platform, which requires further exploration and enquiry. This study will, therefore, enquire to what extent the lecturers experience particular stressors?

Isolations and lockdowns are important as preventative measures for bodily health (Centers for disease control and prevention, 2020), but they can be harmful if imposed for an extended period. Few studies suggested (Brooks et al., 2020; Gardiner & Moallef, 2015; Gupta & Sahu, 2021a, 2021b, 2021c) that it was a traumatic experience for the teachers that had resulted in extreme financial hardship due to job loss (Reger et al., 2020); societal problems like social withdrawal (Thunström et al., 2020), consumption of alcohol, cyberbullying, and addiction; and emotional health problems like suicidal tendencies and melancholy. Quarantine was found to be related to conditions such as depression (31.2 percent) and anxiety (28.9 percent) during the SARS epidemic (Wheaton et al., 2012). Moreover, a study conducted on teachers in China (Xiang et al., 2020) revealed that those in quarantine experienced monotony, aloneness, frustration, worsening anxiety, and mental distress. Till date, many studies have been conducted on Covid-19 and its impact on the psychology of university students (Surdarasen et al., 2020); teacher’s readiness for online teaching during Covid-19 (Palivand and Singh, 2021); coping strategies of students (Baloran, 2020); and maintaining student-faculty relationship during the pandemic (Shim & Lee, 2020). One study conducted on language teachers had even correlated their coping strategies with stress (MacIntyre et al., 2020; MacIntyre et al., 2019); however, no study had addressed the negative sentiments, stressors and subsequent coping strategies used by tourism & hospitality during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study will fill in these gaps by providing a bridge to assess the stressors, negative emotions and coping strategies of the lectures which becomes quite relevant and significant during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Understanding how the hospitality and tourism lecturers coped with the transition to online teaching and how their coping strategies were correlated with the negative sentiments and stressors is essential due to the unique stressors associated with the Covid-19 pandemic and the extraordinary instructional reactions around the globe (MacIntyre et al., 2020). This study will apply the Brief COPE scale given by Carver (1997) to measure the stressors and coping strategies by grouping them into two groups-avoidant and approach. Moreover, their negative emotions, happiness and well-being is measured through PERMA Profiler and WHO-5 index of well-being. It will also apply Hierarchical multiple regression analyses to display the patterns of coping strategies used by the lecturers. Specifically, the following research questions will be addressed in this study:

RQ1. What are the common stressors for hospitality and tourism lectures during the pandemic, and to what extent they experience the particular stressors?

RQ2. What are the coping strategies used by the hospitality & tourism lectures during the Covid-19 pandemic?

RQ3. How intensely do the coping strategies of the Brief-COPE scale contribute to forecasting the significant positive and negative result constructs?

In the subsequent sections, the stressors associated with the transition to online teaching for hospitality and tourism lecturers and their response to online teaching and correlation with stress, coping strategies and negative emotions will be discussed in detail. Further, in the methodology section, data sampling technique, operationalization of the online survey instrument including usage and validation of the shorter versions of more extended psychological survey tools (i.e., Brief-COPE, PERMA and WHO-5 amongst others)
will be used to determine positive and negative results on the demographic profiles of the respondents. Results will be presented in form of the stressors experienced by the lecturers and the coping strategies they have applied to deal with these stressors during the Covid-19 pandemic. Lastly, to assess the role of hospitality and tourism lecturer’s coping strategies in forecasting the significant positive and negative result constructs and reveal the results of defined research questions, a step-wise multiple hierarchical regression will be applied on the positive and negative result constructs based on the Brief-COPE Inventory. The practical and theoretical implications along with the study limitation will also be presented at last.

2. Literature review

2.1. Lecturer stressors associated with the transition

“Stress” is a person’s reaction to a change in environment or a potentially dangerous situation and “Stressors” are those variations in an individual’s life or dangerous situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). It may also be viewed as “a specific association between an individual and the external environment that the individual perceives as exploiting or exceeding his or her capabilities and jeopardising his or her well-being” (Lazarus, 2006). Stress is better understood as a connection between stressors and the person’s emotional responses (Weiller et al., 1998). The extent to which a teacher encounters stress in a scenario is determined by several indicators, which include: aspirations of potential upcoming requirements; lecturer’s preparedness to manage them; assessment of needs & the lecturer’s strategies to overcome them; and the lecturer’s level of expertise preparedness and experience in dealing with requirements efficiently (Bottani et al., 2019; Talbot & Mercer, 2019). Pertaining to this study, extant literature (MacIntyre et al., 2020; Mahmood, 2020; Sundarasen et al., 2020) revealed that Covid-19 negatively influenced teachers’ psychological well-being, resulting in severe anxiety, negative sentiments and depression.

The reaction to the Covid-19 contagion catastrophe has generated no dearth of stressors, as this is unquestionably a time of increased emotional distress and mental trauma for the teachers (CDC, 2021; Odriozola-González et al., 2020). Teachers and students worldwide are still coping with the incredible series of events triggered by Covid-19, as universities and colleges were closed and authorities issued different levels of rescue centre directives ranging from social distancing to strict isolation to deal with the pandemic. Numerous teachers had to shift to teaching in unaccustomed and challenging circumstances with very little notice and preparedness, and little, if any, coaching or training (MacIntyre et al., 2020). It has been assumed that instructors will continue to do their best by adjusting, acclimatising, and pursuing efficient teaching in the spectrum of tourism and hospitality through the use of a variety of online reserves. Due to this, lockdown stressors for the teachers extended way beyond teaching and academics, including detachment from friends and relatives, absence of autonomy, concerns about the virus’s transmission, confusion on the probable duration of lockdown, daily frustration, repetitive lifestyle, fear of shortage of essential commodities in the near future, paucity of information, financial losses, fear of job loss & career, and social pressure (Gupta, Cahyanto, Sajnani, & Shah, 2021; Shim & Lee, 2020; Sundarasen et al., 2020).

In general, teaching is usually considered as most stressful and tedious professions due to the pressure imposed by excessive workload, time-bound work assignments, unstable work-life interconnection, apprehension about losing the interest of class, frequent student evaluation, deficiency of professional self-image, inadequate work freedom, unnecessary administrative commitments, strained relations with co-workers, job-role conflicts, emotional labour, anxiety about being judged, and handling academic transformation and innovation (MacIntyre et al., 2020). However, working as a hospitality or tourism lecturer generates its own peculiar and distinctive challenges due to their emphasis on the practical aspects, including extensive practical course delivery, dealing with students from different socio-demographics, unwarranted work exposures, dissimilar learning capabilities of students, frequent student-industry interactions, uncertainty about one’s subjective acquaintance, and students’ different levels of emotional anxiety. Considering the stressors discussed above and the novel stressors emerged due to the Covid-19 pandemic, including anxiety amongst the teachers and learners due to sudden closure of institutions (Sundarasen et al., 2020); maintenance of positive learner-teacher association; and dealing with issues related to student engagement during online sessions (Mohamad Nasri, Hussein, Mahmud, & Halim, 2020; Odriozola-González et al., 2020), it is important to understand the coping strategies applied by the hospitality and tourism lectures to respond to these stressors. Moreover, applying these coping strategies will help assess the lecturer’s happiness and psychological well-being.

2.2. Correlation with stress, coping strategies and negative sentiments

Teachers use coping mechanisms such as psychological, social, and behavioural calming to adapt to difficult situations and cope with stressful incidents and reduce feelings of distress (Admiraal & Wubbles, 2000; Kyriacou, 2001). According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984, P: 141), coping may be defined as “continually changing emotional and behavioural approaches to deal with particular external or internal requirements that are deemed to be impacting or exhausting the person’s resources”. It is a method of dealing with a stressful situation using one or more approaches (Gustems-Carnicer & Calderon, 2013). Coping strategies are balanced personal characteristics that decide how an individual responds to stressful conditions regularly. These methods are frequently focused on conceptual differences between threat approach and threat avoidance (Weinberger et al., 1979). In one of the earliest study conducted on stress and behavioural self-control, Lazarus and Folkman (1984) proposed their “transactional model” which segregated the coping strategies into “problem-focused” and “emotional focussed”. Emotion-focused coping aims to reduce or manage the negative emotion correlated with or caused by the event instead of problem-focused coping, which aims to solve the specific problem or do anything to change the cause of stress.
Further to this, Carver et al. (1989) established a multi-faceted coping model- COPE Inventory (Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced) and a measurement tool with 60 measurement items. They considered an antecedent of Brief-COPE, which was a more refined and rationalised version. The Brief-COPE consists of 28 self-measurement items grouped into 14 predictor variables of two items apiece, all of which are intended to assess possibly successful and unsuccessful coping strategies in the face of a stressor. Though Carver (1997) does not advocate using the Brief-COPE as a specific measure to assess a broad concept, coping mechanisms can be grouped into broader constructs like “approach coping” and “avoidant coping”. While “avoidant coping” approaches lead to more negative approaches such as behavioural disengagement, self-distraction, self-blaming, drug abuse or venting; “approach coping strategies” consciously aim to shift the stressor or acknowledge its role in one’s life such as acceptance, emotional support, planning and active coping.

It was further stressed by Carver (1997) that specific coping strategies must not be regarded as superior over others. Instead, the most suitable option between a person’s individual coping strategies and the restrictions of a particular scenario should be considered. Montgomery and Rupp (2005) also developed a model which states that lecturers engage in cognitive processes that include the perceptions and assessments of external traumatic activities that arise from specific facets of their academic careers, including learners, management, co-workers, and job requirements. Teachers use active or passive coping mechanisms, or both, after assessing the stressor to cope with it. The use of coping mechanisms discussed above by instructors in the face of stressors is a crucial component of their emotional adjustment and well-being (Talbot & Mercer, 2019).

Teachers may experience anxiety, depression, and a variety of other negative emotions when coping strategies fail (MacIntyre et al., 2020). Fatigue has long been a subject of concern for instructors (Herman et al., 2020). Steadily increasing dysfunctional behaviours such as avoidance, abstinence, frustration, alcohol & drug dependence, and violence may be linked to stress associated consequences (Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016). Given the probability that teacher’s stress may unfavourably influence learners, coping for teachers is especially critical.

We recognised ten conceivable indicators, five positive and five negative, to investigate the efficacy of coping approaches amongst the hospitality and tourism lecturers based on a similar study conducted by MacIntyre et al. (2020) on language teachers. The growing literature on positive psychology (Butler & Kern, 2016; MacIntyre et al., 2019) emphasises the importance of using both positive and negative indicators as an individual’s well-being is much more than just the absence of negative purpose.” Thus, the absence of negative purpose, depression, loneliness, anxiety, and sickness is not similar to the presence of positive affect, health, happiness, social linkage, faith, and wellness. Resilience, perceived health, growth, and the five sub-scales of wellness-index named PERMA are among the selected positive indicators for this study. PERMA identifies five main factors (Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment) contributing to an individual’s overall happiness and well-being (Seligman, 2011). Enhanced stress, frustration, anxiety, loneliness and depression were amongst the negative indicators examined in this study.

Happiness and wellness are probably the most obvious concepts to assess when assessing the psychological health of lecturers dealing with the pandemic burden. Happiness, indeed, is among the most vexing and complicated terms in psychology and sociology (Topp et al., 2015). This study utilised the elements of PERMA Profiler and WHO-5 Index of well-being to assess the measure of lecturer’s well-being and happiness during the pandemic situation and shifting to online teaching mode to deliver lectures. PERMA Profiler is a five forked concept of cognitive health and well-being that defines a feeling of achievement, joy, and purpose (Barreto et al., 2020; Seligman, 2011) using 23 indicators. However, for this study, we utilised the fifteen items of this happiness and well-being measurement scale, which best suited the study requirements. The individual’s emotional well-being can also be measured using the WHO-5 well-being index used in more than 230 earlier research in the well-being domain (World Health Organization (WHO), 1998). The five questions of the WHO-5 well-being index are also used as a measure for framing the study’s survey instrument.

Emotional resilience is a term relevant to the well-being of lecturers that describes the ability to overcome and emerge from emotional distress or sustain successful functioning within the face of adversity (MacIntyre et al., 2020). In general, resilience refers to the person’s ability to deal with stress or recover quickly from a horrific incident to return to prior levels of performance, and it can be achieved through a variety of mechanisms. Resilience implies the likelihood of development, advancement, and growth following trauma, in addition to the preservation or restoration of prior functionality (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Thus, the final indicator of the psychological well-being of the lecturers that we’re using is based on the literature on post-traumatic stress disorder. Moreover, based on the study conducted by MacIntyre et al. (2020), we also included a measure of post-traumatic growth to measure the likelihood of perceived growth in lecturers during the pandemic which entails enhancing one’s social interactions, enjoyment of life, personal power, new life opportunities, and spiritual transformation. Further, it will be exciting to use this updated indicator to assess whether hospitality and tourism lecturers feel any sense of development or substantive progress as a result of the intervention thus far, though still in the middle of the disease outbreak.

Regarding the negative indicators, this study utilised: stress, frustration, anxiety, loneliness and depression to investigate the efficacy of coping approaches amongst the lecturers. Stress amongst the lecturers is characterised as physically and psychologically negative reactions to events related to a lecturer’s job, like frustration or distress, as a consequence of a disparity amongst the coping strategies (Wheaton et al., 2012). Frustration is highly dysfunctional behaviour. It is amongst the most severe and potentially harmful sentiment because it is linked to a powerful decision to act. It has been related to a decreased degree of happiness, mental illnesses, and PTSD (Lerner & Tiedens, 2006). As a subgroup of psychological effects, anxiety has received less recognition, even though it is just as common and potentially as devastating as depression amongst the teachers (Weiller et al., 1998). Confusion and perceptions of danger to oneself or others may exacerbate anxiety (Kroenke et al., 2007). Teachers having anxiety may suffer from other symptoms, such as feeling tired, loss of consciousness, discomfort, or nausea, in addition to extreme emotions of insecurity or distress (Brawman-Mintzer & Yonkers, 2004; Shah et al., 2021).

Depression may be designated as “a situation of distress, loss of enthusiasm or enjoyment, reduced energy, feelings of
worthlessness, impaired sleeping habits, and difficulty concentrating” in an individual. Furthermore, depression is often accompanied by anxiety symptoms. These issues may become persistent or chronic, causing significant cognitive deficits in a person’s responsibility to think for themselves and their families (World Health Organization, 2012). Lastly, loneliness, on the other hand, is a much more aggressive feeling that refers to “the negative feeling that arises when an individual’s network of social interactions is lacking in any significant way, either explicitly or implicitly.” Loneliness is described as a situation in which an individual feels an uncomfortable or impermissible deficit with certain associations (Gierveld et al., 2006). Due to the situations of lockdowns and isolations worldwide due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the perception of loneliness was likely to increase amongst the lecturers. Further, in greater amounts, each of these cognitive feelings could be detrimental and self-destructive if retained for a longer duration.

3. Methodology

3.1. Data collection and study participants

An online structured survey was conducted on 1048 tourism and hospitality lecturers (Indian and foreigners) to gather the data for this research using the Snowball sampling approach. The questionnaire was prepared in only English considering this as a medium of instruction for majority of the hospitality and tourism institutions around the world. Before data collection, the main author obtained ethical approvals. It was entirely voluntary to participate in this study and participants’ anonymity, and confidentiality (as stated in the questionnaire survey) were also safeguarded. Only those interested were diverted to the survey contribution link after being asked if they wanted to contribute through an initial filter question. Dillman online survey method (de Jong Gierveld, van Tilburg, & Dykstra, 2006; Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009; Gupta & Sajnani, 2020) has been used to encourage the respondent turnout, which included sending quick reminder emails and text messages to participants. All filled-in questionnaires were thoroughly scrutinised for data continuity and reliability. A small number of survey forms were inconsistent or incomplete (N = 40), wrongly marked for attention seeking questions (N = 6) and some had missing values (N = 17). Thus, they were not considered worthy and excluded from further analysis.

The questionnaire was pilot-tested on a random sample of 45 lecturers through personal emails. It lasted ten days, and minor adjustments to the variables on socio-demographics were made to make it more reliable, appropriate, and meaningful. The entire data collection process took nine weeks to gather the responses from the lecturers (from February 2021 to April 2021). Since it was based on self-reported data of lecturers, it may have some inherent bias (most probably the common method variance [CMV]). To minimise this bias, variables were updated to avoid unfamiliar wordings and conform to the survey instrument’s question order sequence. At last, Harman’s Single Factor Method was applied to test the effect of bias, and the findings were positive, indicating that there was no bias inside the measurement items.

Table 1

| Parameters                  | Frequency | Percentage | Parameters                  | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Place of Origin             |           |            | Past Teaching Exp:          |           |            |
| North America               | 26        | 7.05       | Below 1 year                | 26        | 7.04       |
| Latin America               | 42        | 11.38      | 1-5 years                   | 106       | 28.72      |
| Europe                      | 83        | 22.49      | 6-10 years                  | 111       | 30.08      |
| Asia                        | 164       | 44.44      | 11-15 years                 | 93        | 25.20      |
| Oceania                     | 37        | 10.02      | More than 15 years          | 33        | 8.94       |
| Africa                      | 20        | 5.42       |                             |           |            |
| Age (in years)              |           |            | Type of Work Organisation   |           |            |
| 18-25                       | 61        | 16.53      | Public                      | 129       | 34.96      |
| 26-35                       | 86        | 23.31      | Private                     | 193       | 52.30      |
| 36-45                       | 103       | 27.91      | Any other                   | 47        | 12.73      |
| 46 and above                | 119       | 32.25      |                             |           |            |
| Gender                      |           |            | Type of Teaching Job        |           |            |
| Male                        | 169       | 45.79      | Regular                     | 165       | 44.71      |
| Female                      | 198       | 53.66      | Ad-hoc                      | 73        | 19.78      |
| Transgender                 | 02        | 0.54       | Contractual                 | 81        | 21.95      |
| Marital Status              |           |            | Any other                   | 50        | 13.55      |
| Married                     | 213       | 57.72      | Level of courses handled    |           |            |
| Single                      | 141       | 38.21      | Undergraduate               | 163       | 44.17      |
| Separated                   | 13        | 3.52       | Post-graduate               | 91        | 24.66      |
| Any other                   | 02        | 0.24       | Diploma/Trade diploma       | 63        | 17.07      |
| Any other                   | 24        | 6.50       | Professional                | 29        | 7.86       |
| Annual Household Income     |           |            | Others                      | 23        | 6.23       |
| Below $15,000               | 89        | 24.11      | Time Provided for transition to online teaching |          |            |
| Between $15,001 to $ 35,000 | 110       | 29.81      | Less than one week          | 249       | 67.48      |
| Between $ 35,001 to $ 60,000| 144       | 39.02      | 1-2 weeks                   | 63        | 17.07      |
| Between $ 60,001 to $ 100,000| 12        | 3.25       | 15-30 days                  | 33        | 8.94       |
| More than $ 100,000         | 14        | 3.79       | More than a month           | 24        | 6.50       |

Source: Author/s.
With a response rate of 35.20 percent, a total of 369 validated questionnaires were administered and the majority were found to be females (53.66 percent), from Asia (44.44 percent) & mainly in the age groups of 36–45 years (27.91 percent) and 46 years and above (32.25 percent). It was also revealed that most of the respondents were married (57.72 percent), having an annual household income between US$15,000 to US$60,000 (68.83 percent combined) and employed in private sector (52.30 percent) institutions. Moreover, most of them were found to be handling undergraduate level courses (44.17 percent), having a prior teaching experience of 6–10 years (30.08 percent) and engaged in regular teaching assignments (44.71 percent). Furthermore, majority of the respondent lecturers (67.48 percent) revealed that they were provided with less than a week to transit to the online teaching mode. The detailed socio-demographic profiles of the respondents are provided in Table 1.

### 3.2. Operationalization of survey instrument

Previous researches (Gupta & Sahu, 2021; MacIntyre et al., 2019, 2020; Roy, Gupta, Faroque, & Patel, 2020) on the Covid-19 pandemic were used to build the research variables, with significant changes made to make them more meaningful and accurate. Shorter versions of more extended psychological survey tools (i.e., Brief-COPE, PERMA and WHO-5 amongst others) are used to determine positive and negative results and were intended to be brief measurements or single-item metrics. An adjustment between the scope of detail and the variety of subjects that may be deliberated led to the decision to use the shorter version of these survey instrument materials. The survey questionnaire had three sections. The first section collected the information on the socio-demographics of the hospitality and tourism lecturers. It included questions on the type of their work organisation, teaching job, past teaching experience and level of courses they have handled. It also included a question on how much time was provided to them by their institution for transition to online teaching mode. The second section provided the respondents with a list of sixteen significant “stressors” to select from (any five stressors) based on earlier studies (Lazarus, 2006; MacIntyre et al., 2020; Sundarasesan et al., 2020), that the lecturers might have experienced during the transition to online teaching. Third section dealt with questions on lecturers coping strategies, negative sentiments and general health based on shortened version of various psychological tools (Table 2) deemed fit for the research on a five-point Likert scale with 1 – I haven’t been doing this at all to 5 – I have been doing this a lot.

It included questions on the fourteen subscales that were generated using the 28-item Brief-COPE index (Carver, 1997) of coping strategies (two items per subscale) divided into approach coping (constructive reframing, acceptance, planning, active coping, finding psychological support, and pursuing instrumental support) and avoidant coping (Rejection, drug abuse, self-diversion, venting, mental detachment, and self-accusation). It also included coping strategies utilising religion (i.e., praying, meditation) and humor. Each subscale was not designed to be used as a unified coping index, so we used them separately and in two groups. Lecturer’s well-being and happiness were measured using the five sub-scales (positive emotion, engagement, relationship, meaning and accomplishment) of PERMA-Profiler (Seligman, 2011). It also provided the following negative emotions: frustration, depression, and loneliness, along with four indicators of lecturer’s general health (perceptions about one’s health, one’s health compared to others and fulfilment with general and bodily health) (Seligman, 2011). The survey instrument also included questions based on the WHO-5 well-being index, including measurement items, for example, joyful, calm, vigorous, rested and interesting (World Health Organization (WHO), 1998). An eight-item resilience matrix is also included, with factors indicating how to stay calm, keep working, bounce back, and accomplish essential goals (MacIntyre et al., 2020; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). A revised measure of post-traumatic growth was also incorporated into the survey, with items interpreted in a way that captures new directions, shifting goals, and a perception of being more formidable than ever (MacIntyre et al., 2020; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). An attention seeking question “Have you ever visited Mars” was also included to receive consistent responses.

### 4. Data interpretation, results and discussion

Cronbach’s alpha (α) test was used to assess the reliability of the data. The results of individual measurement scales used for the survey instrument ranged from 0.74 to 0.90, which were significantly higher than the standard 0.7. (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Kaiser Meyer Olikin (KMO), a metric of sample adequacy, was found to be 0.81, which is greater than 0.60. Furthermore, the Bartlett’s test of Sphericity was established as momentous, demonstrating the data’s appropriateness, validity, and adequacy.

#### 4.1. Stressors experienced by the lecturers and application of coping strategies

Results with regards to RQ1, revealed a list of most significant stressors amongst the hospitality and tourism lectures due to the

| Scale                          | Adapted From                                           | Cronbach’s Alpha(α) |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| WHO Index of Wellbeing        | World Health Organization (WHO), 1998                  | 0.84                |
| PERMA-Profiler                | Seligman (2011)                                         | 0.81                |
| Resilience Index              | Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004; MacIntyre et al., 2020       | 0.79                |
| Post Traumatic Growth Index   | Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004; MacIntyre et al., 2020       | 0.87                |
| Brief-COPE Index              | Carver (1997)                                           | 0.90                |

Source: Author/s.
transition to online teaching in the form of frequency and percentage distribution (presented in Fig. 1). “Feeling of working all times” (Freq: 288; Percentage: 78.04) was found to be the most stressful for the lecturers followed by “stress of online teaching” (Freq: 253; Percentage: 68.80) and irregular working hours (Freq: 230; Percentage: 62.50). All these stressors were found to be more or less related to the uneven work distribution or a feeling of 24 h working and anxiety regarding the delivery of online lectures. Lecturers were also found to be extremely stressed for their personal (Freq: 161; Percentage: 43.80) as well as family health (Freq: 204; Percentage: 55.28) due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Significant stressors for the lecturers also included workload (Freq: 193; Percentage: 52.30), feeling of isolation (Freq: 161; Percentage: 43.80) and loss of privacy (Freq: 153; Percentage: 41.46). Grounded on the responses to the sixteen stressors included in the survey questionnaire as well as the comprehensive list of other stressor items provided by the respondents, it’s reasonable to conclude that the lecturers were under much stress due to the transition of course delivery.

Regarding the results concerning the RQ2 (What are the coping strategies used by the hospitality & tourism lectures during the Covid-19 pandemic?), the response percentages and means of the avoidance coping and approach coping scales of Brief-COPE inventory are presented in Table 3. Results indicated that most lecturers applied approach coping compared to avoidance coping to deal with the stressors. The most significant coping strategy amongst the lecturers was found to be approach coping, including planning (mean: 4.34; Percentage: 81.6), active coping (mean: 4.12; Percentage: 78.2) and acceptance (mean: 3.73; Percentage: 71.1). This represents that most lecturers have accepted the situation and prepared themselves through adequate planning and active coping to deal with the stress perceived. Amongst the avoidance coping, results revealed high scores for self-diversion (mean: 3.72; Percentage: 68.2) and venting (mean: 3.56; Percentage: 63.6). Use of religion (mean: 3.44; Percentage: 66.8) and humor (mean: 3.17; Percentage: 62.7) for coping also revealed significantly positive results amongst the lecturers representing that they relied upon meditation, prayers, and jokes also to relieve the perceived stress. The lowest scores for coping amongst the lecturers were revealed for drug abuse (mean: 2.23; Percentage: 31.3) and self-accusation (mean: 1.86; Percentage: 23.4).

In order to determine whether the current sample’s classification of active and avoidant coping was adequate, we conducted an analysis (Carver, 1997; MacIntyre et al., 2020). We sought two variables using principal components analysis and rotated them using direct Oblimin to cause factors to correlate. The corresponding factor loadings of the structure matrix (Table 4) reveals that with just a slight correlation amongst them (factor correlation = 0.04), the six approach items loaded significantly (>0.50) on the first factor and the six avoidant items loaded significantly (>0.50) on the second factor. Neither the religion nor the Humor items represented a significant load on any factor. Therefore, this result supports categorising coping strategies into avoidance coping (Factor 1) or approach coping (Factor 2).

4.2. Role of coping strategies in forecasting significant positive and negative result constructs

In order to assess the role of hospitality and tourism lecturer’s coping strategies in forecasting the significant positive and negative result constructs and reveal the results of RQ3, a step-wise multiple hierarchical regression was applied on positive and negative result constructs based on the Brief-COPE Inventory. The findings of the step-wise multiple regression for each of the five positive-outcome variables are presented in Table 5. Only predictor variables that add substantial levels of specific projection to the model are held in regression analysis. Each beta weight throughout the calculation must always be viewed in accordance with some other beta weights in the calculation since the significance of beta varies every time a forecaster is detached or added, which is a notable limitation with step-
wise regression analysis. Additionally, further analysis has yielded many calculations with a significant predictor variable whose offerings are usually minor.

The result analysis revealed that a number of approach-coping strategies indicate positive results, while avoidant coping strategies appear to relate adversely to the prediction. The limitations to this result are instrumental support’s adverse contributions to resilience and planning’s negative correlation to the WHO-5 well-being index. It’s questionable if seeking instrumental support has a negative correlation with having a sense of more resilience. Nevertheless, the complexity of the Covid-19 pandemic makes planning more difficult than normal as a coping strategy, resulting in a poor negative correlation with general well-being.

The regression analysis results demonstrate the importance of constructive reframing of the circumstance, venting and preventing self-accusation, which are techniques present in all the positive-outcome indicators. Though few people would admit to being responsible for the Covid-19 outbreak, the response to the sudden transition to online learning may be at stake. It takes time to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for online education and to establish programs that function well with an online space. Lecturers in this research were given very little time for the virtual/online transition (in most cases, just under a week), and those who believe they are not doing well in their online teaching position may be accusing themselves. Moreover, according to results, some lecturers even had shown strong emotions or performed venting due to the situation.

The coefficients for stress, anxiety, frustration, depression, and loneliness are all negative outcomes displayed in Table 6. Self-accusation, venting, and mental detachment are three mechanisms that are frequently involved in each of these negative consequences, and they substantially forecast all of them. According to the study findings, these three techniques should be prevented because their intensified use reliably leads to negative consequences. Results also indicate that there seem to be a few unanticipated forecasters as well. Planning seems to have a contradictory effect, positively contributing to anxiety and stress while negatively affecting the lecturer’s overall well-being. It also stands to the reason that if planning in an unpredictable and uncontrollable situation has a negative impact on well-being, a similar influence can be seen for anxiety and stress (Table 5). Confusion prevails both

| Table 3 |
|——|
| Coping strategies applied by the lecturers to deal with stress (N = 369). |
| **Brief-COPE sets** | **Response percentages of 4 & above in 5 point Likert scales** | **Response Mean** |
| **Avoidance Coping** | | |
| Self-diversion | 68.2 | 3.72 |
| Venting | 63.6 | 3.56 |
| Mental detachment | 58.9 | 3.29 |
| Rejection | 53.7 | 2.95 |
| Drug Abuse | 31.3 | 2.23 |
| Self-accusation | 23.4 | 1.86 |
| **Approach Coping** | | |
| Planning | 81.6 | 4.34 |
| Active coping | 78.2 | 4.12 |
| Acceptance | 71.1 | 3.73 |
| Constructive reframing | 65.3 | 3.41 |
| Finding psychological support | 61.7 | 3.11 |
| Instrumental support | 53.3 | 2.79 |
| Humor | 62.7 | 3.17 |
| Religion | 66.8 | 3.44 |

Note: *5-point Likert Scale ranging from 1 (I haven’t been doing this at all) to 5 (I have been doing this a lot).
Source: Author/s.

| Table 4 |
|——|
| Result matrix representing Factor loadings of Avoidance and Approach coping items. |
| **Brief-COPE Inventory** | **Avoidance Coping (Factor 1)** | **Approach Coping (Factor 2)** |
| Self-diversion | 0.67 | 0.21 |
| Venting | 0.65 | 0.23 |
| Mental detachment | 0.61 | –0.19 |
| Rejection | 0.58 | –0.09 |
| Drug Abuse | 0.54 | –0.07 |
| Self-accusation | 0.52 | 0.20 |
| Planning | 0.21 | 0.76 |
| Active coping | 0.19 | 0.73 |
| Acceptance | –0.28 | 0.70 |
| Constructive reframing | –0.17 | 0.64 |
| Finding psychological support | 0.29 | 0.61 |
| Instrumental support | 0.17 | 0.61 |
| Humor | 0.09 | 0.19 |
| Religion | 0.04 | 0.24 |

Note: The subscales of Humor and Religion are not loaded significantly on factors.
Source: Author/s.
internationally and locally in the educational setting. However, those lecturers who tend to prepare ahead of time might well be struggling as a result of the challenge of making strategies at the moment. Lecturers who demonstrate greater adaptability and versatility are rewarded during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Venting, which tends to make a significant contribution to growth despite constantly leading to negative consequences, is the beta weight that defies perceptions. The effect on post-traumatic growth may be due to the way the measure is conceived, such as avoiding potential traumatic interactions. Even though venting is frequently linked to negative sentiments, the impact on growth suggests that participants have a poor propensity to associate and share those sentiments with optimism for a happier future. In contrast to the limitations for regression analysis mentioned here, the large sample used in this study will detect significant forecasters that would not have been considered significant in researches with relatively smaller sample size. The findings are presented for comprehensiveness as well as potential theories for additional research. Ultimately, the regression analysis results reveal that the numerous stressors associated with the sudden transition to online teaching due to the Covid-19 pandemic cause a wide range of coping behaviours for the tourism and hospitality lecturers. Results suggest that approach coping generates more positive results in most situations, whereas avoidance coping generates less positive results.

**Table 5**
Results of specific coping strategies in forecasting significant positive outcomes.

| Brief-COPE Inventory Constructs | WHO Index of Wellbeing (R = 0.62) | PERMA-Profiler (R = 0.68) | Resilience Index (R = 0.54) | Post Traumatic Growth Index (R = 0.50) | Health Index (R = 0.44) |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| **Avoidance Coping**           |                                  |                          |                             |                                      |                        |
| Self-diversion                 |                                  |                          |                             |                                      |                        |
| Venting                        | −0.19                            | −0.14                    | −0.08                       | 0.08                                 | −0.12                  |
| Mental detachment              |                                  | −0.20                    | −0.10                       |                                      |                        |
| Rejection                      |                                  |                          |                             |                                      |                        |
| Drug Abuse                     | −0.07                            |                          | −0.09                       |                                      |                        |
| Self-accusation                | −0.38                            | −0.34                    | −0.33                       | 0.12                                 | −0.31                  |
| **Approach Coping**            |                                  |                          |                             |                                      |                        |
| Planning                       | −0.13                            |                          |                             |                                      |                        |
| Active coping                  | 0.23                             |                          |                             | 0.19                                 |                        |
| Acceptance                     | 0.24                             |                          | 0.28                        |                                      | 0.11                   |
| Constructive reframing         | 0.14                             | 0.16                     | 0.27                        | 0.21                                 | 0.19                   |
| Finding psychological support  |                                  | 0.31                     |                             |                                      |                        |
| **Supplementary coping**       |                                  |                          |                             |                                      |                        |
| Humor                          | 0.18                             | 0.20                     | 0.18                        |                                      |                        |
| Religion                       | 0.11                             |                          | 0.41                        |                                      |                        |

Source: Author/s.

**Table 6**
Results of specific coping strategies in forecasting significant negative outcomes.

| Brief-COPE Inventory Constructs | Unstandardized coefficients (b) |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
|                                | Stress (R = 0.58) | Frustration (R = 0.52) | Anxiety (R = 0.66) | Depression (R = 0.50) | Loneliness (R = 0.52) |
| **Avoidance Coping**           |                                  |                          |                             |                                      |                        |
| Self-diversion                 |                                  |                          |                             |                                      |                        |
| Venting                        | 0.23                             | 0.13                     | 0.14                        | 0.19                                 | 0.26                   |
| Mental detachment              | 0.32                             | 0.23                     | 0.18                        | 0.21                                 | 0.30                   |
| Rejection                      |                                  |                          |                             |                                      |                        |
| Drug Abuse                     | 0.27                             |                          | 0.19                        | 0.24                                 | 0.11                   |
| Self-accusation                | 0.31                             | 0.33                     | 0.23                        | 0.19                                 | 0.26                   |
| **Approach Coping**            |                                  |                          |                             |                                      |                        |
| Planning                       | 0.15                             |                          | 0.09                        |                                      |                        |
| Active coping                  |                                  |                          |                             |                                      |                        |
| Acceptance                     |                                  |                          |                             |                                      | −0.19                  |
| Constructive reframing         |                                  |                          |                             |                                      |                        |
| Finding psychological support  |                                  |                          |                             |                                      |                        |
| Instrumental support           |                                  |                          |                             |                                      |                        |
| **Supplementary coping**       |                                  |                          |                             |                                      |                        |
| Humor                          | −0.19                            |                          | −0.26                       |                                      |                        |
| Religion                       |                                  |                          |                             |                                      |                        |

Source: Author/s.
5. Implications for policy makers, society and educational institutions

The empirical results of this study suggest that lecturers have experienced a variety of stressors due to sudden transition to the online way of teaching, including the feeling of working all the times, the stress of online teaching, irregular working hours, feeling of isolation, family health and personal health. Though lecturers are coping with the help of avoidance and approach coping strategies, they may even apply the stressor mitigating guidelines proposed by The Centers for Disease Control (CDC), which is a crucial implication considering the study results. This includes limiting the amount of time spent watching, reading, and listening to the news on COVID-19, particularly from inaccurate outlets on social networking sites; maintaining a healthy diet, workout, and sufficient amount of sleep; and keeping the mind tension by digitally engaging with family members and friends. Institutions of higher education may also play a critical role in helping lecturers deal with such stressors. Novel counselling recommendations are needed. Academic institutions should look into designing digital psychological interventions like mobile applications and online services on a top priority. Institutions can also provide counselling resources, either in person or over the internet, to help lecturers cope with the emotional and psychological effects of these stressors. They should implement standardised anxiety-reduction services, such as life-skills training and meditation therapy that have been shown to lower stress levels.

In a broader sense, governments and relevant authorities should collaborate with the CDC, WHO, and UNESCO to enhance social awareness, especially amongst lecturers, by employing artificial intelligence to achieve evidence-based and scientific pandemic steps. Most significantly, during pandemics, an all-inclusive learning and teaching strategy should be considered right away, as this research shows that the emergency transition to online teaching has caused considerable anxiety amongst lecturers. The value of Emotional Intelligence (EI) here cannot be overstated for the lecturers. It is the capacity to regulate one’s emotions and is considered as the very first step towards attaining maximum potential in any individual. EI has been found to play a significant role in academic performance, emotional and physical health, and occupational performance (Kautish, 2011a, b). According to researches conducted by Kautish (2010a, b), individuals with greater EI outperformed those who have lower EI in life. We would also expect that this research will shed new light upon the efficacy of hospitality and tourism lecturers’ coping strategies during the crisis. Such experiences are not only significant now, but can also include imperative information about how to better help teachers in the future who can find themselves in high-stress situations, such as during course delivery transitions and times of educational reform. Being an instructor is challenging in the best of circumstances, but learning to cope with it is an indispensable ability that must be integrated into both pre-service and in-service teacher training initiatives as an essential professional practice.

6. Limitations and scope for future research

During this research, we came across few limitations which requires further studies. First, the data collection for this research was performed between February 2021 till April 2021. This was the time when lecturers were already at their homes after the closure of their institutions. If the data has been gathered during the COVID-19 pandemic’s peak, which was in mid-March 2020, the lecturers’ stress levels might have been different. This was, however, not possible as we needed to wait for ethical clearances from the institution. Second, since the data has been collected from an online questionnaire, it relied heavily on self-reported frequencies of the lecturers, which might have some inherent bias (though Harman’s single factor test was used to eliminate the bias). Further researches may be conducted using a more suitable sampling technique (i.e., purposive sampling). Third, research questions (RQ’s) have been used in this study to discuss the results which is an inferior way as compared to hypotheses formulation. However, future researches may utilise the use of hypotheses to present the results in a better manner through statistical relationships. Lastly, due to the complex nature of the research problem, further studies might be needed to completely comprehend the lecturer’s perceptions of stressors and their application of corresponding coping strategies due to the immediate transition to online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhlste.2021.100341.

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