

Coping Strategies to Psychological Stressors among Parents Living with their Children during the COVID-19 Lockdown in Langata Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya

Mariam N. Miring'u and Wambua Pius Muasa Ph.D

Institute of Youth Studies, School of Arts and Social Sciences, Tangaza University College, Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Kenya

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.70941>

Received: 24 August 2023; Revised: 11 September 2023; Accepted: 15 September 2023; Published: 30 September 2023

ABSTRACT

Coping with psychological stressors emanating from Covid-19 is significant for mental well-being of parents and their children. The study aimed to explore the coping strategies to psychological stressors among the parents living with their children during the Covid-19 lockdown. On March 10, 2020, the world went into lockdown due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The lockdown negatively affected the psychological well-being of both the parents and the children. The study employed phenomenological research design. Through purposive sampling the study utilized a sample size of 15 participants constituting parents who lived with their children during the lockdown period. Data was collected through the use of the Interview Guide and analysed using thematic analysis. The results showed that the coping strategies to psychological stressors faced by parents living with children during Covid-19 lockdown were online connection, prayer, reading, engagement in recreations, spending time with each other and taking precaution measures. The study recommends to counselors and psychologists to come with better alternatives of offering counseling services in the events they cannot meet their clients face to face. Finally, the study recommends to counselors and psychologists bodies to factors the ethics to be adhered to when counseling is offered through online services and counselors and clients cannot meet face to face.

Key Words: Coping Strategies, Psychological stressors, Parents living with children, Covid-19 Lockdown, Langata Constituency

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has created new impediments in practically every area of parents' and children's lives, seriously jeopardizing their quality of life (Carver, 2013). Carver (2013) defines coping as actions used to decrease threat, harm, and loss as well as the distress that is typically associated with these occurrences. Managing is a crucial process for adaptation and survival since it demonstrates how people perceive, assess, react to, and learn from stressful events (Gembeck, 2016). Studies have found that a person's choice of coping mechanism significantly affects how they experience anxiety (Adasi, et al., 2020). Jiao et al. (2020) found that families that used media and digital entertainment helped their children to deal with discomfort, worry and stress caused by Covid-19 lockdown. Also, families listening to reliable information on the state of covid-19 coped better with lockdown compared to those relied on unreliable information sources (Wang et al., 2020).

According to Jiao et al. (2020) parents helped their children to cope with covid-19 lockdown through open and honest dialogue which was essential in handling psychological stressors and providing comfort. Parents offered emotional support and refrained from giving information about the pandemic that could lead to psychological stressors among the children. In addition, Prayer was also found significant in managing the

psychological stressors emanating from Covid-19 lockdown (Jiao et al., 2020). Parents spending time together with their children through various activities promoted resilience in coping with Covid-19 lockdown. In addition, spending time together and engaging in various activities helped enhanced their health and fitness (Wang et al., 2020).

The impacts of stress on parenting are hypothesized to be lessened by effective coping mechanisms. The appraisal technique was described by Lazarus (1984) as an effective coping mechanism that emphasizes resilience in the face of challenges, reappraisal, and managing stressors. Lazarus (1984) asserts that the appraisal theory holds that a particular event or stressor affects an individual's cognitions of an event, known as appraisal. The process by which an individual's subjective interpretation or evaluation of significant events or situations produces emotions is examined by appraisal theory. So, a person's assessment of events determines their level of safety about their position in the environment. After evaluating the acute experience, the person starts to cope. There are two ways that a person can employ coping mechanisms. Goals relevant to a particular circumstance are the emphasis on problem-focused coping, which also gives the person, involved a sense of mastery and control over the process of pursuing those goals. Instead, positive reappraisal—cognitively reshaping challenging beliefs positively—is a component of emotion-focused coping (Fogel et al., 2022). The theory affirms the value of emotion-focused coping in circumstances when the person has little control, specifically the importance of positive appraisal in stressful life events such as Covid-19 pandemic.

Fogel et al. (2022) claimed that the Covid-19 lockdown gave family members more time at home, fostering family cohesion and increasing opportunities for interaction. Comfort, joy, happiness, love, and appreciation are positive feelings that can support and enhance mental health. The current circumstance, which necessitates social isolation and more excellent time spent at home with family members, may explain the happy emotions parents and their children experience, given the positive emotions frequently experienced in interpersonal relationships. That might have helped them maintain their well-being, particularly regarding parenting and family ties.

Gerhold (2020) distinguished between coping strategies that are problem and emotion-focused. The most popular problem-focused techniques included paying attention to professionals, taking their counsel, and carefully deciding what to do next. The two most popular emotion-focused coping strategies were accepting the situation and attempting to divert one with various activities. Orgilés et al. (2020) identified three types of coping mechanisms used by young people: task-oriented for example, collaborating on social movements and highlighting the benefits of staying at home; emotion-oriented i.e seeking relief from others, and avoidance-oriented, i.e not worrying about the situation, ignoring it, and acting as if nothing was happening. Acceptance was the method that young people used the most frequently. Shechter et al. (2020) discovered that the most typical coping strategy among young people, as with studies of previous pandemics, no comparable coping categorizations can be found in research that focused on the current outbreak (Shechter et al., 2020).

According to sustainability study (2020) conducted in Finland showed the coping strategies that were used by the families to cope with Covid-19 lockdown. Daycare facilities were open to all children, but parents were urged to keep their children at home if at all conceivable. However, some parents considered daycare or school services and supported them significantly. Parents with children in grades one through three (7-9 years old) who work in positions crucial to society's ability to operate could also engage their children in school.

The child's full- or part-time daycare attendance allowed parents to manage their work responsibilities. Parents and children in some households remained at home initially during the lockdown, while others remained there to the end (Sustainability, 2020).

Although the lockdown frequently reduced or prevented face-to-face connections with close contacts, social

contact with friends and family was often considered essential for children's and parents' wellness. Several families thought internet media to be crucial for preserving social ties. In particular, video calls were cited as a valuable tool for communication, and several families also made frequent use of the following other digital platforms (Sustainability, 2020). Several families allowed their children to meet friends in person to lessen the possibility of their children spreading the virus or infecting others. However, they frequently restricted the number or location of these gatherings. Parents might have stipulated, for instance, that their children could only play with kids from a particular family or a select group of kids in the neighborhood. In addition, many parents only allowed their children to play outside. Interestingly, parents did not express the importance of spending time with their friends "in real life" as a coping mechanism. Unofficial assistance from relatives, such as assistance from grandparents (who did not fall into the high-risk category for COVID-19), was also considered beneficial. Families did not charge for service, except for younger relatives who used it to earn some pocket money. Caring for the children was a natural part of the extended family dynamics.

Many parents used adaptive coping strategies, including making sense of the world and identifying and tampering with undesirable emotional responses. Adaptive coping mechanisms reduce stress, enhance psychological health, and improve (Gerhold, 2020). Even though nearly half of the children looked less interested in activities they had done often before the outbreak, like playing or studying, Pisano et al. (2020) found that most parents believed their kids could adapt to the pandemic's restrictions. Hence, adaptability was not a sign of health. In addition, various scholars have noted that elements of the pandemic, such as the number of cases per zone or specific lockdown measures (permission for some outings), significantly predicted the psychological issues that children and their parents would experience (Pisano et al., 2020).

Spanish parents noticed more emotional and behavioral symptoms than Italian parents, which may be related to the fact that young people in Italy had more opportunities for physical activity because they were permitted to spend more time outside (Orgilés et al., 2020). Other researchers noted that a significant portion of the children in a population of Belgian and French children displayed discomfort at the time of the first COVID-19 lockdown (Chartier et al., 2021). At the "Bon Samaritan" hospital, there was a change from denial to the acknowledgment of the reality of this disease. However, unfortunately, in addition to the health crisis, the consequences could be even worse for sub-Saharan Africa (Ataguba, 2020). Like the rest of the world, residents of Sub-Saharan Africa are waiting for an indisputably effective solution, like medication or vaccine (Thanh Le et al., 2020). To help students deal with psychological and psychosocial issues that impair their academic performance and interpersonal relationships, Kenyan schools took the lead in establishing counseling sessions with counselors in schools. To deal with the pressure of academic success brought on by the COVID-19 effect, these sessions supported students in building assertiveness, self-awareness, interpersonal and social skills, modifying maladaptive habits, and changing their mindset. In addition, the schools included the parents so that they could jointly understand their children's demands, fears, and worries, which would aid the parents in leading their children in terms of moral standards—social aspects of life, and spiritual convictions. Understanding how families dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic during the lockdown was crucial after the outbreak. Coping mechanisms discovered during the lockdown had both beneficial and harmful effects. When the pandemic hit, the capacity to apply positive cognitive evaluation prevented a significant decline in family quality of life. Though globally, studies were conducted on coping mechanisms to Covid-19, the similar studies were scant from the local perspective and therefore, the objective of the current study was to explore the coping strategies to psychological stressors among parents living with their children during the COVID-19 lockdown in Langata Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

The research design provides the framework for the study. The plan focuses on the research subject rather than the why of the research subject (Babbie, 1990). The study employed a phenomenological research design because it aimed at exploring the lived experiences of parents with their children in Mugumo-in

Ward during the Covid-19 lockdown in terms coping mechanisms. Target population was the parents, caregivers, adoptive parents, or single parents living with their children. Through purposive sampling, the study utilized a sample size of 15 participants. The study employed Interview Guide to collect data among the participants. The Interview Guide had two sections. The first section captured the demographic details of the participants including the age, gender, level of education, religion, marital status, career, and income. The second section collected data on coping strategies to psychological stressors among parents living with their children during the COVID-19 lockdown.

The participants were issued with a consent form to fill before conducting the interviews. The interviews took 45 minutes to 1 hour. At the end of the interviews the participants were thanked for accepting to participate in the study. Thematic analysis was utilized in analysing the data that was collected from the participants. Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.79). The thematic deductive approach was used in this study to analyze and interpret the data that produced the final findings of this study. The raw data was coded in themes after identifying the pattern from the data.

RESULTS

The study was set out to explore the coping strategies to psychological stressors among parents living with their children during the COVID-19 lockdown in Langata Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya. The research questions was: What are coping strategies to psychological stressors of the parents living with their children during the COVID-19 lockdown in Mugumo-ini Ward?. Using thematic analysis, the themes from the data collected was identified and supported by verbatim from the participants. Before presenting the findings as per the research questions, the study presented the demographic details of the participants.

Demographic details of the participants

The study presented the demographic of the participants. The demographic details for the participants who were interviewed captured their age, gender, educational level, occupation and religion.

Demographic Information for Students

The study presented the demographic details of the parent participants that were interviewed. The results are presented in table 1.

Table 1

Demographic Details for Parent Participants

Participant Number	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Religion	Educational Level	Number of Children	Occupation
P1	34	Male	Married	Christian	Graduate	1	Business
P2	43	Female	Single	Christian	Primarily	2	Business
P3	65	Female	Window	Christian	Graduate	3	Accountant

P4	65	Female	Single	African	Graduate	3	Hr Officer
P5	47	Male	Married	Christian	Graduate	2	Business
P6	51	Female	Married	Christian	Post-Graduate	3	Youth Officer
P7	49	Female	Single	Christian	Post-Graduate	2	Lecturer
P8	54	Male	Married	Christian	Graduate	4	Pastor
P9	38	Female	Single	Christian	Graduate	2	Business
P10	46	Male	Window	Christian	Graduate	3	Events Organizer
P11	48	Male	Married	Christian	Graduate	4	Business
P12	60	Female	Single	Christian	Graduate	3	Personal Assistant
P13	58	Female	Married	Christian	Post-Graduate	3	Teacher
P14	45	Female	Married	Christian	Graduate	2	Clinical Officer
P15	30	Female	Single	Christian	Graduate	1	Virtual Assistant

Table 1 showed that participants were between ages of 30 years to 65 years. Majority of the participants were females compared to their male counterparts. Most of the participants were married and single and only few were windows. All the participants were Christians. Majority of them were graduate while it is only one who had attained primarily education. Most of the participants had two to three children. All the participants had dynamic careers.

Key Findings

From the data six themes emerged as coping strategies to psychological stressors among the parents living with their children during Covid-19 lockdown.

Online Connection

Almost all the participants used use online communication to connect with their family members and friends. Online connection helped them to alleviate stress. This was expressed by a participant, who reached out to his friends and family through video chats when said,

I leaned on my social support network to get through it. I reached out to my friends and family, and we would have regular video chats to catch up and check in on each other. And I also found comfort in online Church services and prayers. It was tough not being able to see people in person, but being able to connect virtually was a lifeline for me (Participant 1).

The theme of online connection with family members and friends was echoed by another participant who joined support group through online to share her challenges when said,

I found that online social interactions really helped me get through it. I joined some online support groups and forums where I could talk to people who were going through the same thing. I also started using social media more to stay in touch with friends and family. Just being able to talk to people who understood what I was going through really helped me feel less alone. It also gave me a sense of community and support that I really needed at that time (Participant 2).

Another participant utilized online communication to connect with family members which enabled her to deal with stress when said,

I made sure to keep in touch with my family members. We would call each other regularly to check in and chat. Yes, it definitely helped alleviate some of the stress. It was nice to know that we were all in this together and supporting each other. Knowing that I had the support of my loved ones helped me feel less alone and more hopeful during a really difficult time (Participant 4).

The same theme of connection was echoed by another participant when said,

I'm glad my family and friends were supportive. We kept in touch more often than we used to, and that helped alleviate the loneliness and anxiety. Surprisingly, they improved. We called each other more often and checked up on each other regularly. We also had more time to connect on a deeper level and shared our struggles. Yes, I felt more connected and supported, and it helped improve my mental health. I also became more grateful for the people in my life (Participant 15).

Prayer

Most of the participants found prayer to be instrumental in coping with Covid-19 lockdown. Prayer provided a sense of hope and comfort. It also helped them to deal with anxiety and to remain positive. This theme is expressed by a participant when said,

One thing that helped us cope as a family was prayer. We would pray together every evening before dinner, and it brought us closer to each other and gave us a sense of hope and comfort. Yes, we would talk about our worries and fears during prayer, and it were a good way to encourage ourselves. It also helped the kids feel less anxious and more positive about the situation. We would take turns leading the prayer and sometimes we would read passages from the Bible that related to the situation. It was a nice way to reflect on our faith and connect with each other. Yes, we still do it every day. It has become a regular part of our routine, and it's something that we all looked forward to. Praying together as a family helped us to remain together (Participant 2).

Furthermore, the theme was supported by another participant who experienced peace and solace through prayer and reading the bible when said,

I found solace in reading the Bible and praying regularly. It helped me stay grounded and gave me a sense of peace in these turbulent times. Our Church moved all of our services online, and I attended them regularly. It was a bit strange not being in a physical space with others, but it was better than nothing. Prayer and daily communication with my family helped us a lot. We prayed together every day and talked about the lockdown and how we could cope with it. We read the Bible together, played games, and had family prayer time every day. Yes, it helped a lot. It gave us a chance to bond as a family and focus on things other than the pandemic (Participant 4).

Moreover, the theme of prayer was supported by a participant who said,

The COVID-19 pandemic was really tough for me. With the lockdown and reduced work hours, I was under a lot of stress and anxiety. But I found some solace in prayer and reading the bible. It helped me stay centered and focused on the positive things in life. We were all feeling stressed and anxious, especially with the constant news of deaths and infections but we found solace in prayer and attending online services. It helped alleviate some of the stress and fear we were all feeling. It also brought us closer as a family and strengthened our faith (Participant 9).

Also, another participant felt that prayer helped them in experiencing calmness during the challenging time when said,

I turned to prayer and reading the bible for comfort and guidance. I also attended online services and listened to praise and worship music to lift my spirits. I felt a sense of community with others who were also seeking solace and strength through faith. It helped me stay grounded and hopeful during a challenging time. I encouraged my children to pray and have faith that everything will be alright I believe that prayer is powerful and it helped us to remain calm during the challenging times. I also taught them how to meditate and reflect on the positive things in their lives, which helped them cope with the stress and anxiety. We would often pray together as a family, and that brought us closer to each other and to God (Participant 14).

Likewise, the theme was supported by another participant who reported prayer to have helped her to calm the mind and have positive outlook in life when said,

I found myself meditating a lot to calm my mind and keep a positive outlook. I also turned to prayer to find some sense of comfort and strength. I enjoyed a glass of wine here and there to help me relax. They did, but it was still challenging at times. I think the key was finding things that brought me a sense of peace and comfort, even if it was just for a little while (Participant 15).

Reading

Some of the participants pointed out reading as one of the strategies they used to handle the lockdown challenges. The theme is echoed by a participant, who said,

We found comfort in reading the Bible together and attending online church services. It was a way for us to connect spiritually and emotionally during a really challenging time. The online church services were really helpful to have a sense of community, even if it was virtual. It helped us feel more grounded and connected during a really uncertain time. And we're grateful for the support we received from our faith community (Participant 1)

The theme was supported by another participant who engaged in reading different books including the bible, biographies and motivational books and helped him in getting peace in the midst of the chaos when said,

I decided to focus on reading the Bible, biographies, and other motivational books. It helped me find peace and hope in the midst of the chaos. I found solace in the stories of other people who had faced adversity and overcome it. It made me realize that I can also come out stronger from this situation. And reading the Bible gave me spiritual strength and guidance. I read "The Purpose Driven Life" by Rick Warren, and it really resonated with me. It helped me focus on the bigger picture and understand that there's a purpose for everything (Participant 3).

Also, another participant found reading books and watching videos as a better way of handling stress when said *"I spent a lot of time reading books and watching movies. It was a great way to escape from the stress of the situation. I read all kinds of books, from fiction to non-fiction. It was a great way to learn new things and keep my mind active"* (Participant 4). Likewise, another participant stayed positive as a result of reading books when said, *"I tried my best to stay positive. I read a lot of books and magazines to take my mind off things, and used online services to stay connected with friends and family"* (Participant 7).

Engagement in Receptions

Almost all the participants were engaged in recreations to cope with stress of Covid- 19 Pandemic lockdown. They engaged in diverse activities including games, singing, exercising among others. The theme is expressed by a participant, who showed how engagement to recreations helped in handling stress when said,

We also made sure to have some fun activities and games for them to do at home. And we talked a lot about how important it is to stay positive and be grateful for what we have. My family and I found ways to bond

through activities such as solving puzzles, playing board games, singing and exercising. We made it a point to have fun together, and it helped us take our minds off the pandemic. I loved solving puzzles. It was a great way to keep my mind sharp while also having fun with my family. We would all gather around the table and work together to complete the puzzle, and it was always a satisfying feeling when we finished it (Participant 1).

The same theme was supported by another participant who found engaging in games to have fun and alleviate stress when said,

My family and I found ways to keep ourselves entertained and alleviate stress. We played video games together, which was something we hadn't done in a while. We also got into board games, which was a lot of fun. We even started riding bikes together, which was a great way to get some fresh air and exercise while maintaining social distancing (Participant 4).

Another participant tried hiking as an exercise and in the process developed interest when said,

I started to feel really cooped up and isolated, especially since I was working from home. So, I decided to try hiking as a way to get outside and get some exercise. It was a bit intimidating at first, but I quickly fell in love with it. I started out with some easy trails near my home, and then gradually worked my way up to more challenging ones. I even did a few overnight camping trips. It's become a real passion of mine, and I feel so much better when I'm out in nature. I made sure my children engaged in physical activities such as cycling and walking to alleviate stress. I also provided them with educational resources online to keep them occupied. They were hesitant at first, but eventually, they began to appreciate the routine and the activities, which helped distract them from the pandemic (Participant 6).

Spending Time with Each Other

Some of the participants reported spending time together as a way of handling stress during the Covid-19 pandemic. Spending time together was great way of supporting the children. This theme is expressed by a participant, who said,

We tried to be open and honest with our kids about what was going on. And we also sought counseling to help them work through some of their fears and anxieties. It helped them feel more grounded and in control during a really uncertain time. And we're grateful for the support we received, but we got through it together (Participant 1).

The theme was also expressed by another participant who found spending time together as a way encouraging each other and staying connected among the friends and members of the family when said,

It was definitely a difficult time, especially for the kids. But we tried to stay positive and talking openly with each other. We used to have family sittings after our evening meals, where we would talk about how we were feeling and what we could do to make things better. We also tried to encourage each other and find ways to stay connected with our friends and extended family. I think so. It gave them a chance to talk about their feelings and felt like they had some control over the situation. We also tried to find fun activities to do together as a family, which helped us feel better and stayed connected (Participant 2).

Another participant spend time together with the children educating them about the virus and how to stay safe when said,

I think it was really tough for them at first, especially not being able to go to school or see their friends. But I made sure to talk to them about it, and we spent a lot of time educating them about the virus and how to stay safe. We also taught them about conflict resolution so they could deal with any issues that came up (Participant 3).

Taking Precaution Measures

Some of the participants reported of taking the necessarily precaution measures to avoid contraction of Covid-19 as a way of handling stress. One of the participants trained the children to ensure that the chances of contracting Covid-19 were avoided when said,

I encouraged them to wear masks and practice social distancing whenever they went out. I also made sure they understood the importance of getting vaccinated. They took it seriously and always wore their masks when going out. They also got vaccinated as soon as they could. Of course, as a mother, I was always worried about their safety. But I knew that following the guidelines and getting vaccinated was the best way to protect themselves and others. Yes, we talked about it often and I made sure they were informed about the latest updates and guidelines (Participant 4).

The same theme was echoed by another participant who said,

It was a challenging time for us all. However, I found that educating my children about COVID-19 and its effects helped them cope better. I ensured they understood the importance of wearing masks, social distancing, and washing their hands regularly. I also explained how the virus spreads and the risks associated with it. They became more aware of the situation and started taking the necessary precautions seriously. They were more responsible and took the initiative to keep themselves and those around them safe (Participant, 5).

DISCUSSION

The study was set out to explore the coping strategies to psychological stressors among parents living with their children during the COVID-19 lockdown in Langata Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya. Several themes emerged as coping strategies to psychological stressors emanated from Covid-19 lockdown including online connection, prayer, reading, engagement in recreations and spending time with others. Almost all the participants used use online communication to connect with their family members and friends. Online connection helped them to alleviate stress. The findings were in line with the previous studies. For instance, the findings of this study was consistent with findings of Jiao et al. (2020) who reported that families used media and digital entertainment to assuage their children's discomfort and allay their worries about the extreme stress they were dealing with. Parents valued the assistance provided by schools, whether from teachers or the school lunches offered to children. Although the degree of this remote instruction varied across schools, teachers and children's families reported that having teachers check their students' homework virtually was beneficial. The findings resonated with Sustainability study (2020) which found although the lockdown frequently reduced or prevented face-to-face connections with close contacts, social contact with friends and family was often considered essential for children's and parents' wellness. Several families thought internet media to be crucial for preserving social ties. In particular, video calls were cited as a valuable tool for communication, and several families also made frequent use of the following other digital platforms.

Most of the participants found prayer to be instrumental in coping with Covid-19 lockdown. Prayer provided a sense of hope and comfort. It also helped them to deal with anxiety and to remain positive. The findings were supported by the findings of Jiao et al. (2020), who found prayers to be instrumental in handling stress during the corona pandemic. It has been proposed that intrinsic religiosity can serve in the search for significance during a crisis; the relevance of affectivity highlights the importance of a positive outlook and attitude for stress-related growth. Throughout isolation, families some continued to follow their religion.

Almost all the participants brought up engagement in recreation as one of the major strategies they used to handle stress of Covid-19 Pandemic. They engaged in diverse activities including games, singing, exercising

among others. The findings were in agreement with findings of Pisano et al. (2020) who found play to be significant in helping children to deal with stress emanated from Covid-19 pandemic. The findings were also consistent with findings of Sustainability (2020) who found that Spanish parents noticed more emotional and behavioral symptoms than Italian parents, which may be related to the fact that young people in Italy had more opportunities for physical activity because they were permitted to spend more time outside.

Some of the participants reported spending time together as a way of handling stress during the Covid-19 pandemic. Spending time together was great way of supporting the children. The findings were in line with the findings of Wang et al. (2020) who found family togetherness in Qatar might have made it easier for families to rely on one another for support. Children and teenagers received more family time, and more activities were reportedly done with parents, siblings, and other family members. Spending more time with careers can provide social support, which promotes resilience. A crucial feature screened for was being physically active while isolated at home. When facing health difficulties, including physical activity in children's and adolescents' daily schedules might help them retain their health and fitness. Also, the findings were supported by findings of Fogel et al. (2022) who that the lockdown of 2022 gave family members more time at home, fostering family cohesion and increasing opportunities for interaction. Comfort, joy, happiness, love, and appreciation are positive feelings that can support and enhance mental health. The current circumstance, which necessitates social isolation and more excellent time spent at home with family members, may explain the happy emotions parents and their children experience, given the positive emotions frequently experienced in interpersonal relationships. That might have helped them maintain their well-being, particularly regarding parenting and family ties. The same findings were resonated with the findings of a sustainability study (2020) which found that almost all families, spending time together, or "doing things together," was a key component of coping with the lockdown. This was significant since the lockdown increased the amount of family time spent together. However, the family's leisure time balanced the time spent together during work and schooldays and was considered particularly crucial on weekends. In addition, family time was regarded as a replacement for the children's interests that had been put on hold during the lockdown on weekdays after work.

Some of the participants reported of taking the necessarily precaution measures to avoid contraction of Covid-19 as a way of handling stress. The findings concurred with the findings of sustainability study (2020) which found that several families allowed their children to meet friends in person to lessen the possibility of their children spreading the virus or infecting others. However, they frequently restricted the number or location of these gatherings. Parents might have stipulated, for instance, that their children could only play with kids from a particular family or a select group of kids in the neighborhood. In addition, many parents only allowed their children to play outside. Interestingly, parents did not express the importance of spending time with their friends "in real life" as a coping mechanism. Unofficial assistance from relatives, such as assistance from grandparents (who did not fall into the high-risk category for COVID-19), was also considered beneficial. Families did not charge for service, except for younger relatives who used it to earn some pocket money. Caring for the children was a natural part of the extended family dynamics.

CONCLUSION

Parents living with their children during the Covid-19 lockdown coped with psychological stressors in several ways. Most of them used online communication to connect with their family members and friends which alleviated their stress. Prayer was also instrumental in coping with Covid-19 lockdown. Prayer provided a sense of hope and comfort. It also helped them to deal with anxiety and to remain positive. Moreover, reading was one of the strategies they used to handle the lockdown challenges. They also found engagement in recreation as one of the major strategies to handle stress of Covid-19 Pandemic. They engaged in diverse activities including games, singing, exercising among others. Also, spending time together helped in handling stress during the Covid-19 pandemic. Spending time together was great way of supporting the children and finally, taking the necessarily precaution measures to avoid contraction of covid-19.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the study has the following recommendations.

1. The government and other stakeholders to sensitize people on the importance investing and saving extra income in case of unseen disasters.
2. The counselors and psychologists to come with better alternatives of offering counseling services in the events they cannot meet their clients face to face.
3. Counselors and psychologists bodies to factors the ethics to be adhered to when counseling is offered through online services when the counselors and clients cannot meet face to face.

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