



## Mental Health Issues Experienced by High School Students during Covid-19 Pandemic Online Learning Sessions

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### Abstract

Mental health issues of students are one of the rising major concerns during the Covid-19 pandemic. Back to back online classes not only tires students, but also induce adverse effects upon the individual's mental health including stress, lack of social interaction, anxiety, fatigue and exhaustion, hopelessness, insomnia, and emotional outbursts. In this research, the statistical data on diverse mental conditions experienced by Thai high school students are collected via survey form sent out to a total of 200 respondents which includes questionnaires on mental health issues experienced and their opinions on the accessibility and availability of mental health supports for teenagers. The collected data were analyzed in relation to the online learning period due to the prolonged Covid-19 pandemic lockdown before a conclusion is reached. This research raises the awareness of the students' mental state and how online learning together with the Covid-19 quarantine has been worsening their conditions in hopes of providing information for further research and actions to be taken.

**Keywords:** mental health, mental health conditions, Covid-19 pandemic, high school students, online classes

### INTRODUCTION

The Coronavirus 2019 disease outbreak, also well known as Covid-19, began in the late December of 2019 and was announced a pandemic by the World Health Organization by 2020 [1]. Throughout the year, people's lifestyles were drastically altered due to stringent containment measures such as social distancing, quarantine, school closures, and lockdown, which are unfamiliar by many. During the social isolation period, an aspect brought to light is the increasingly widespread utilization of the internet and online to compensate for the inconvenience and infectious risk of conducting onsite activities like school, work, and meetings [2]. With online learning

regarded as a new norm for students during their social isolation period, students cannot participate in the school's regular onsite classes and activities. The limitations implemented upon the mode of virtual learning have brought about numerous adverse effects on the student's mental health, such as stress, anxiety, decreased social interactions, and burnout syndrome [3,4]. These mental conditions arise from long hours of focusing on the electronics screen [5]. With these mental conditions evident among students, their academic performances as well as their overall wellbeing may deter as the online learning season prolongs indefinitely. Therefore, this survey-

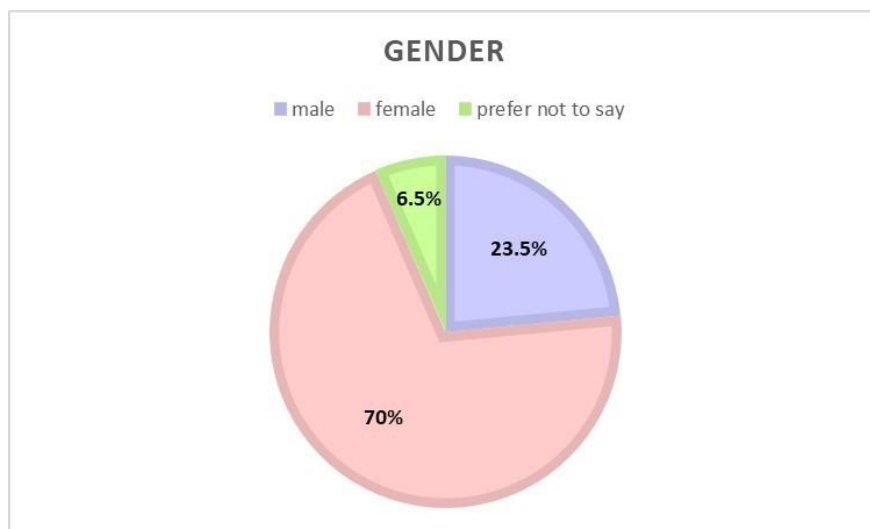
based research is conducted with the aim to study the mental health issue trends among high school students in Thailand attending daily online classes and to provide insight upon their perspective on the availability and accessibility of mental health supports which could be used as a basis for future works.

**METHODOLOGY:**

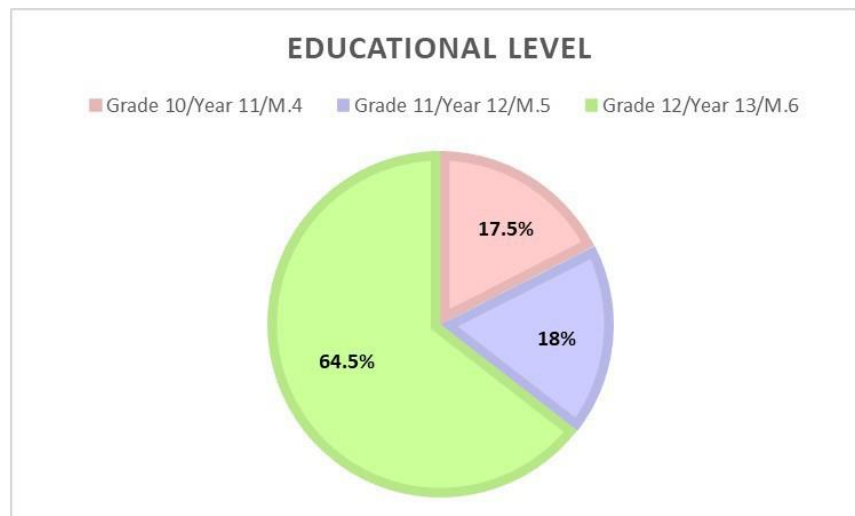
This survey-based research is conducted through a collection of data via survey form consisting of 13 questions, divided into 3 sections including personal information, questions related to mental health conditions, and questions regarding access to mental health supports and consultations. The survey is sent out to a target group of 200 Thai high school students who are taking online classes as a substitute for onsite classes during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**RESULT:**

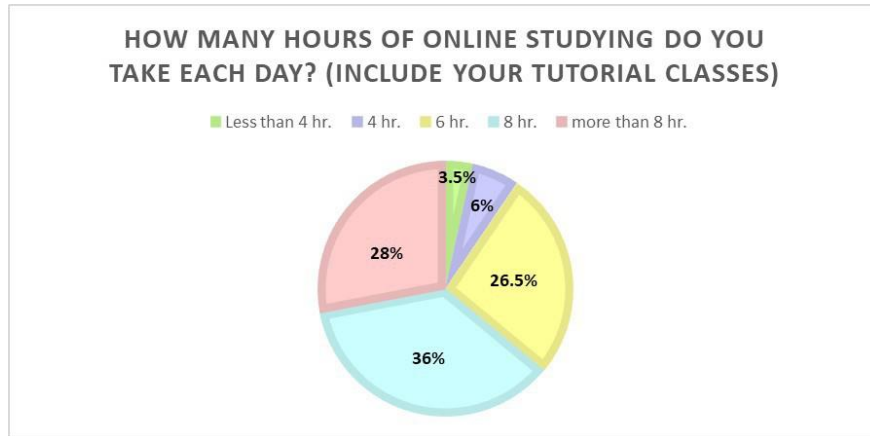
**Figure No.1: Gender of respondents**



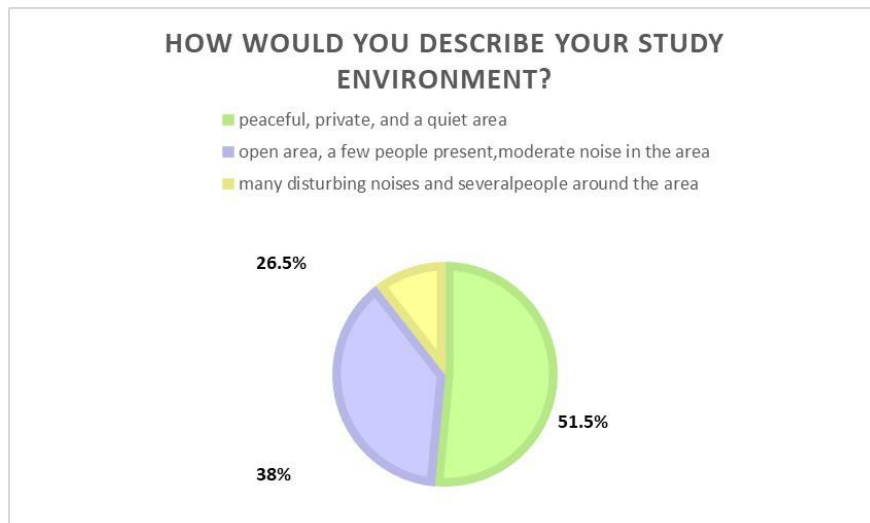
**Figure No.2: Education level of respondents**



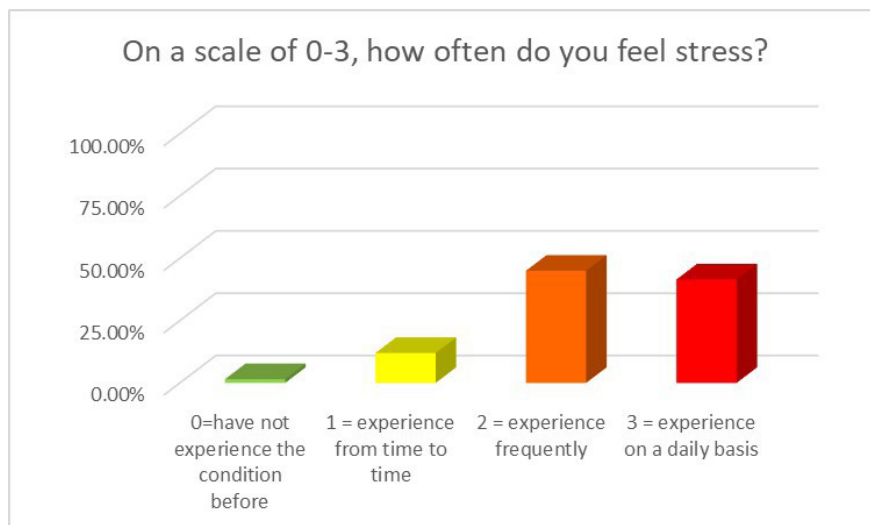
**Figure No.3: Respondents' hours of online study**



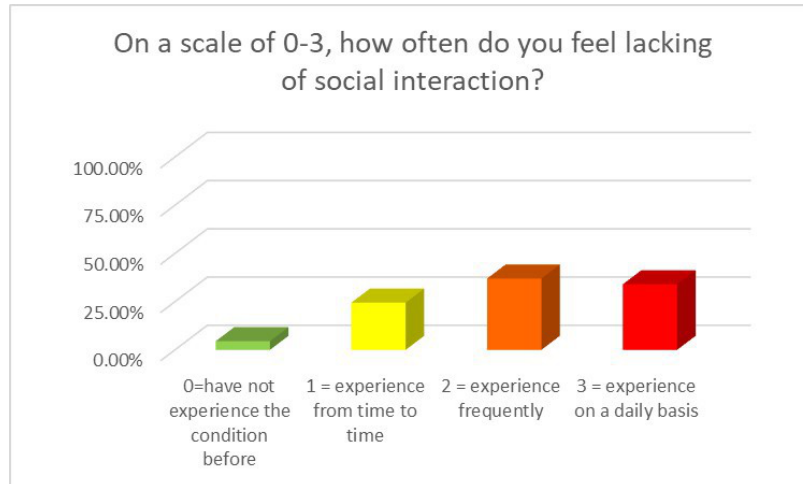
**Figure No.4: Respondent's learning environment**



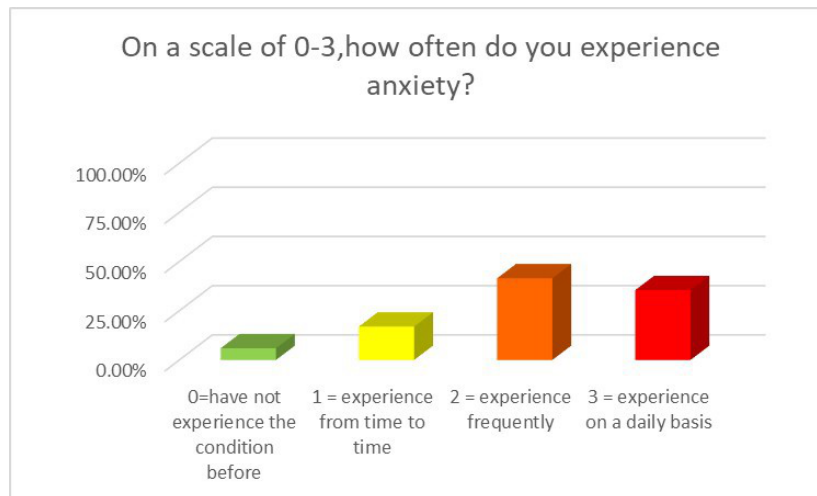
**Figure No.5: Stress levels of respondents**



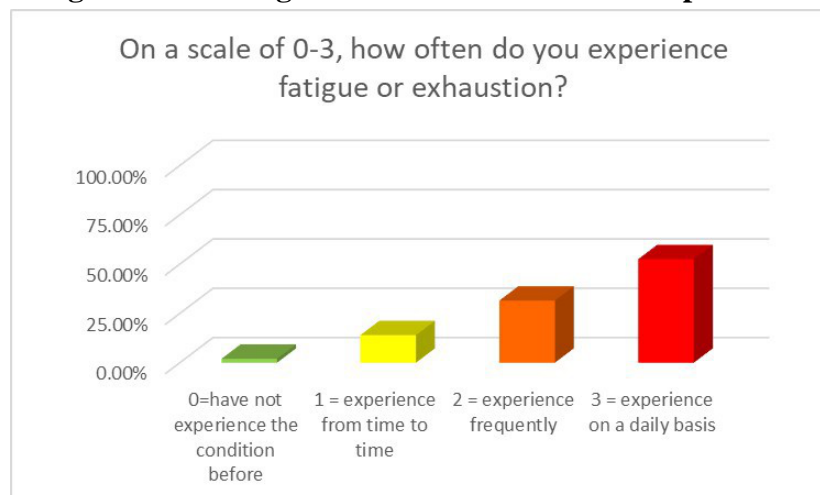
**Figure No.6: Lack of social interaction levels of respondents**



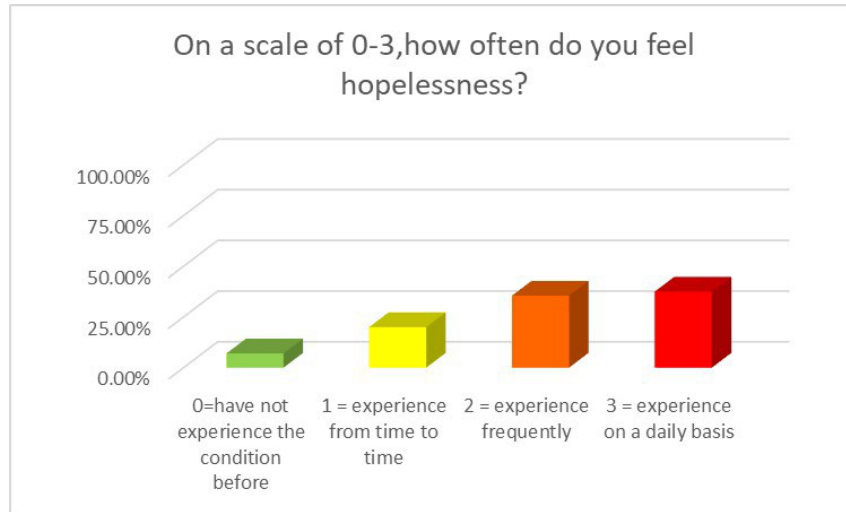
**Figure No.7: Anxiety levels of respondents**



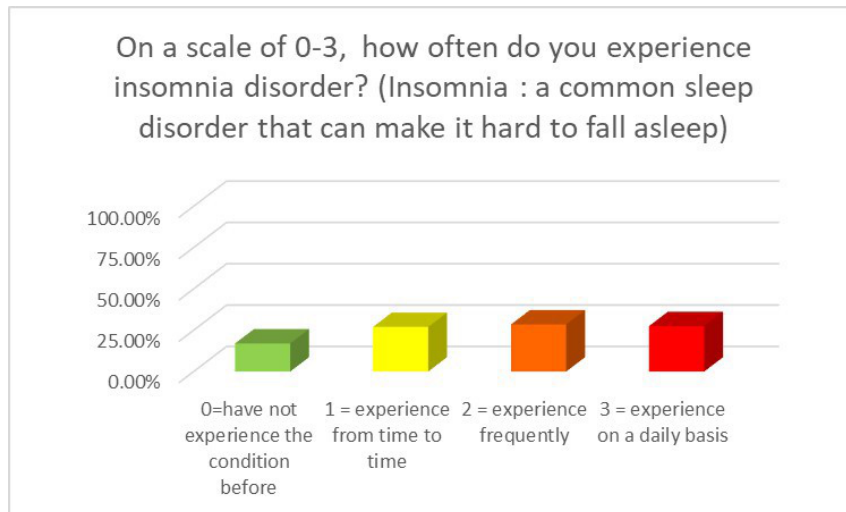
**Figure No.8: Fatigue or exhaustion levels of respondents**



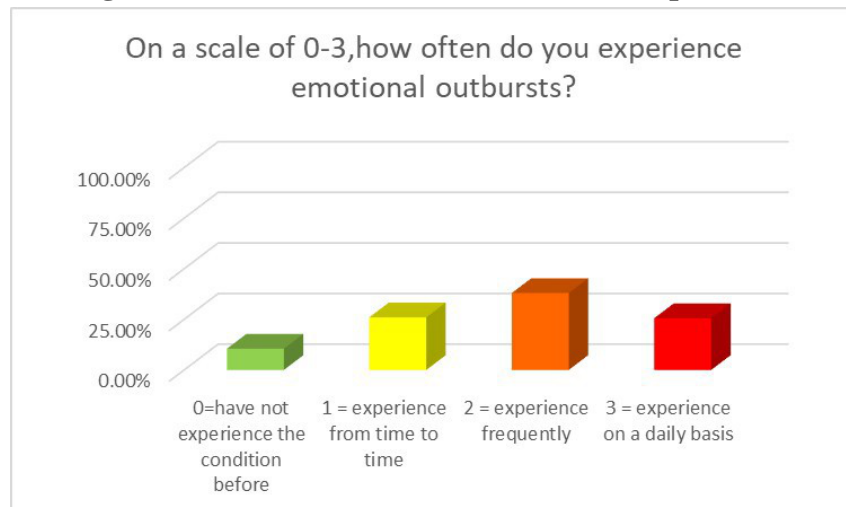
**Figure No.9: Hopelessness levels of respondents**



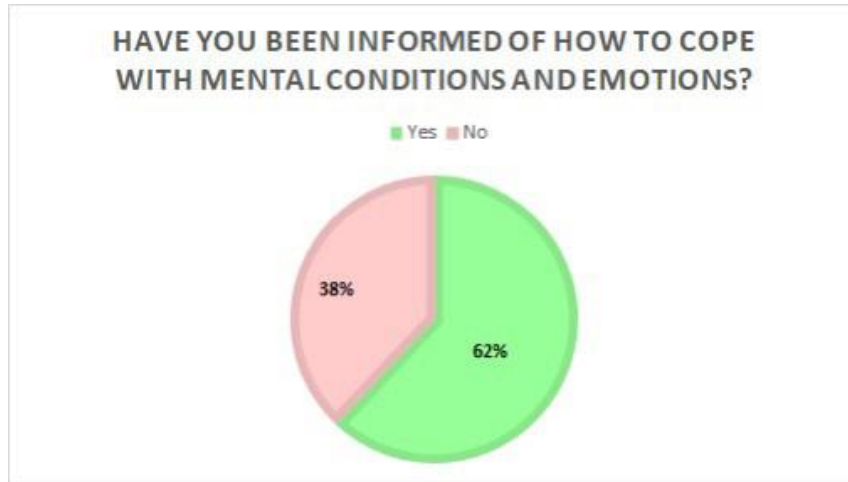
**Figure No.10: Insomnia levels of respondents**



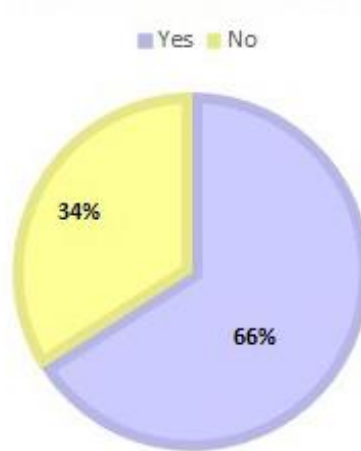
**Figure No.11: Emotional bursts levels of respondents**



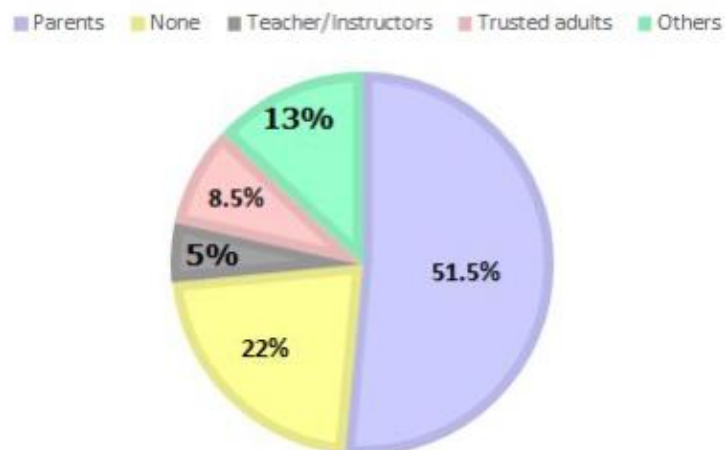
**Figure No.12: Respondent's knowledge on coping with mental health conditions**



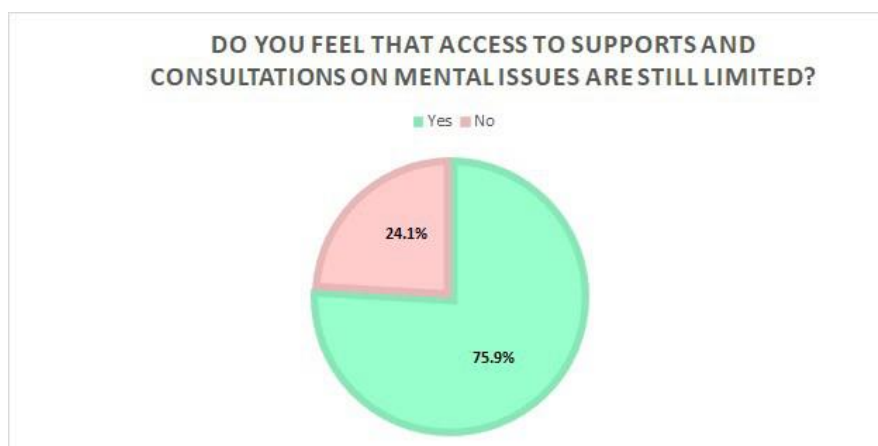
**Figure No.13: Respondent's need of mental health supports or consultations**



**Figure No.14: Respondent's experience on receiving supports from adults**



**Figure No.15: The opinions of respondents on the limitness of accessibility and availability on mental health supports**



The majority of the participants in this survey were female high school students (n=140, 70%), followed by male (n=47, 23.5%) and those who preferred not to mention (n=13, 6.5%). Most of the respondents are currently studying in Grade 12 (n=129, 64.5%). The highest number of respondents were engaged in online classes for approximately 8 hours per day (n=72, 36%), which is followed by more than 8 hours per day, 6 hours per day, 4 hours per day, and less than 4 hours per day. In addition, a peaceful, private and a quiet learning environment area (n=103, 51.5%) is where most students take their classes in rather than an open area, a few people around, and a moderate noise level as well as areas with disturbing noises and several people.

The collected data in the section of questions related to mental health conditions faced by high school students taking virtual classes, the majority of the respondents are frequently experiencing stress (n=90, 45%), followed by experiencing on a daily basis (n=83, 41.5%). Other mental health conditions that are most experienced frequently and on a daily basis are lack of social interaction, anxiety, emotional outbursts, and hopelessness. Significantly, a large number of participants feel exhausted and experience fatigue on a daily basis as a result of online learning (n=105, 52.5%). However, according to the results, respondents experiencing insomnia or the feeling of difficulty to fall asleep in varying degrees from not experiencing before, from time to time, frequently, and on a daily basis remain relatively low and in similar percentages, resulting in unidentifiable trends.

The questions concerning the mental health supports and consultations in the third section are included to explore the need, accessibility and availability of the high school students in this survey form who are experiencing various mental health conditions as a result of the prolonged online learning period.

Up to 62% of the survey participants have been informed of methods in coping with various mental conditions and emotions and 66% do feel the need in receiving support or consultations on this issue of theirs. Parents are whom most of the high school students in this survey have asked and received mental or emotional support from (n=103, 51.5%). However, 22% of the respondents had not sought and received this support from any adults. Notably, as high as 75.9%, equivalent to 148 responses, agrees that these supports and consultations on mental health issues for teenagers still remain limited during this period of time.

#### **DISCUSSION:**

From the obtained results of the survey, many high school students in Thailand who had participated in this survey questionnaires have been affected by the prolonged online learning sessions as a result of Covid-19 pandemic. Various mental health issues including stress, lack of social interaction, anxiety, feeling of hopelessness, fatigue and exhaustion, insomnia, and emotional outbursts are revealed to be common among the students at varying degrees up to on a daily basis, which is unhealthy. Conditions like stress, anxiety, feeling of hopelessness, and

emotional outbursts are experienced at a frequent level most. This raises the concern of the student's mental wellbeing which can affect their learning outcomes.

Although many are informed of ways to cope with these mental conditions and emotional fluctuations, more than half of the respondents do feel the need to receive support and consultations. Remarkably, the majority had received support which may help in mitigating the issue of mental conditions among teens. Still, many views that support these mental issues are still limited and not easily accessible to the teens in this survey. If these problems still persist, not only the learning outcomes, but the overall health of the student can potentially be negatively affected. Therefore, issues regarding mental effects of online learning on the students should be mitigated more or less as quickly and efficiently as soon as possible and preventive measures and consultative assistance should be sought to bring about more effective solutions.

#### CONCLUSION:

Majority of the Thai high school students, according to the conducted survey, are facing various mental health issues as a result from the prolonged online learning periods during the Covid-19 pandemic which can potentially lead to a declined academic outcomes, mental condition, and overall well being. Therefore, mental support and consultations should be made more accessible to teenagers and solutions to tackle mental health issues should be proposed to mitigate and prevent it from worsening over time.

#### FUTURE WORK:

All the information and statements in this paper are allowed to be used for academic purposes and further research associated in the field of psychology, education as well as solutions to minimize the mental effects of online learning due to Covid-19 towards high school students.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:

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