CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The chapter presents; (1) the summary of the study, (2) the results, (3) the conclusions and (4) recommendations for further study.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study were to find out the sources of stress, to examine stress levels and to reveal the stress coping strategies of M.1 students in the English Program at Patumwan Demonstration School. The subjects of this study were all 70 students in M.1 in the English Program at Patumwan Demonstration School. The information of this research was gathered by asking all 70 students to complete a questionnaire. The questionnaire contained four parts; demographic information, sources of stress, stress levels and coping strategies. The survey was conducted in December 2008. The respondents were asked to complete the questionnaires and return them in the same day. After receiving the data collection, the researcher analyzed the data with the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Program version 12.0. The demographic information, sources of stress, stress levels and coping strategies were analyzed by using descriptive statistics i.e. frequency, percentage, mean and deviation. The correlation between stress levels and coping strategies was determined by using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

5.2.1 Personal Data

The respondents were female (66.1%) and male (33.9%) students in M.1 in the English Program at Patumwan Demonstration School in academic year 2008. About 57.6% of the respondents had no experience in an English Program, while the other (42.4%) had experience in an English Program.

5.2.2 Sources of stress

The findings revealed that the major source of stress came from their studies (academic sources of stress) (mean score = 2.50). The top three academic sources of stress were:

1. Workload and homework (Mean score = 2.75)

2. Having a lower grade point average than expected (Mean score = 2.63)

3. A high frequency of quizzes and tests. (Mean score 2.54)

The mean of interpersonal sources of stress was 1.98. Parents were the interpersonal source of stress that caused the most stress to the students (Mean score = 2.16). The mean of school environmental sources of stress was 1.81. The number and cleanliness of the toilets were the school environmental sources of stress which caused the most stress to the students (Mean score 2.05).

5.2.3 Stress levels of the respondents

Stress was divided into five levels: much lower than normal stress, normal stress level, slightly higher than normal stress level, moderately higher than normal stress level, and much higher than normal stress level. The majority of the students (40.68%) were at the normal stress level. These students were still able to study and play happily. About 32.20% were in a slightly higher than normal stress level. In this case, there is a possibility that students had academic sources of stress. Workload and homework were the main causes of stress. They might be under stress to get their work done. Also, the students had to read a lot because they felt that there were too many quizzes and tests for them. Students who were at the slightly higher than normal stress level were concerned about their health and had stress symptoms such as poor sleep patterns, headaches, or a lack of concentration.

However, these students did some activities to relax such as listening to music, going to see a movie, or travelling. They could also talk to their parents, their teachers or someone they trust about problems they were having so that they might receive some good suggestions.

Those who were at a much higher than normal stress level, they stopped doing work or activities that might be causing the stress to them. They talked to their close friends, parents or teachers to get ideas on how they could solve their problems. Moreover, some stress coping strategies relating to meditation might be of help such as mindful breathing or breathing meditation.

Although stress is considered undesirable, stress can still help us to lead a happy life. Students who were at a much lower than normal stress level (3.39%) might somehow experience stress later on. Therefore, it is important that they learn how to cope with stress and solve their problems after. Experiencing a little stress, they might achieve their goal.

5.2.4 Stress levels caused by symptoms

A majority of the students (59%) occasionally had poor sleeping patterns. Also, more than half of them (55.9%) occasionally became irritated or annoyed rather easily.

5.2.5 Stress coping strategies

From the findings, the majority of the students often used problem-focused coping strategies (Mean 2.62), followed by social support coping strategies (Mean = 2.59), and finally avoidance coping strategies (Mean = 2.20). The problem-focused coping strategy which was most frequently used was acceptance. In this case, students learned how to accept what happened and they understood that the event could not change.

5.2.6 Gender and stress level

Based on the hypothesis testing, the stress level did not depend on the gender of the students. Previous studies revealed that females were more likely to have stress than males, but in this case, young students might experience different factors contributing to stress different ways.

5.2.7 Experience in an English Program and stress level

The hypothesis testing showed that experience in an English Program did not affect the stress level of the students. Students who had studied an English Program had stress which was similar to those who had never studied an English Program.

5.3 DISCUSSION

This section is concerned with two topics: the causes of stress and stress level and stress coping strategies.

5.3.1 Causes of stress and stress level

The results revealed that students encountered many different sources of stress. According to the results, the highest mean of the sources of stress contributing to stress among M.1 students in the English Program at Patumwan Demonstration School belonged to academic sources of stress (Mean = 2.50). Academic sources of stress included high academic competition in class, a heavy workload and homework, problems studying in English, difficult lessons, getting low grades, a high frequency of quizzes and tests and too many subjects to study a day. According to the results, the most serious academic source of stress was the amount of workload and homework (Mean = 2.75). In this case, there is a possibility that the students were given too many assignments and a lot of homework at the same time. The students were aged between 12 to13 years old; therefore, they might not be able to handle the heavy workload.

Regarding the stress level, a majority of students (40.7%) were at a normal stress level, followed by those who were at a slightly higher than normal stress level (32.2%). According to the result, there was no relationship between gender and the stress level of the students (Sig. = .276). Male and female students had an equal chance to encounter stress.

5.3.2 Stress coping strategies

The findings reveal that a majority of the students used the problem-focused coping strategies (Mean = 2.62), followed by social support coping strategies (Mean = 2.59), and avoidance coping strategies (Mean = 2.20). Some problem-focused coping strategies that were often used were acceptance (Mean = 2.99), such as accepting their own abilities and accepting that the problem could not be changed and learning from the past.

5.4 CONCLUSIONS

To sum up the main findings of this study, academic factors caused the most stress to the students. A majority of the students were at a normal stress level. Only a small number of the students were at a much higher than the normal stress level. The top three symptoms of stress the students occasionally experienced were feeling too bored to do anything (62.7%), feeling frustrated (61.0%), and experiencing a lack of concentration (59.3%). The results also showed that most of the students were able to cope with their stress. The majority of the students generally used acceptance and the problem-focused strategy to cope with their stress.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

In further studies, there should be a larger population. The sample of this study was only 59 respondents out of 70 students, so the findings can not be generalized to students in other schools.

Also, some other variables should be included such as grade point average, hours of study outside class, or hours of sleep to see whether these variables are related to stress level. Moreover, the time when the questionnaires were distributed might have affected the respondents' answers. The researcher did not have much time to observe the respondents at different periods of time. If future researchers could do that, the results of the study may be more significant. Therefore, it was recommended that further studies observe students' behavior to find out what caused their stress and to what extent, including their coping strategies.