The COVID-19 pandemic led to an increase in the adoption of online teaching and learning. Several studies show that both students and lecturers benefit from online teaching and learning in cases where contact learning cannot take place. However, other studies reveal that some students face challenges during online teaching and learning, requiring them to develop coping mechanisms. Thus, the objective of this study was aimed at accentuating the coping strategies of students for online teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. A non-empirical research design was adopted for this study. Search engines such as ‘Google scholar were used to sample and review documents using keywords to source relevant data that is from 2002 to 2022. Data were analysed using inductive Thematic Content Analysis (TCA). The study's findings show that access to online teaching and learning is challenging for some students. It was also revealed that some students cope with the challenges of online learning and teaching by employing positive strategies such as seeking support while some students employ harmful coping mechanisms such as using drugs and alcohol to cope with the challenges they face during online teaching and learning. The underlined conclusion suggests that online teaching and learning should be accessible and support systems for students should be available. Mobilisation of resources that will help all students to participate in online teaching and learning is needed.

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about the chosen topic (Bruce, Beuthin, Sheilds, Molzahn & Schick-Makaroff, 2016). The researchers obtained data from several journals using a purposive sampling technique since there are existing papers on online teaching and learning. Google scholar and South African National Electronic Thesis or Dissertation (ETD) portal were used to source information on online teaching and learning.

The researchers restricted the years from 2002 to 2022 for purposes of relevancy and data saturation (Maluleke, 2020; Mokwena & Maluleke, 2020). Creswell (2014) avers that researchers can carry out a study using secondary data by gathering information from qualitative documents such as accredited journals. Furthermore, Matthews and Ross (2010) assert that qualitative data offers an understanding of the ideas and approach employed in a study. The inductive Thematic Content Analysis was used in this study. This method allowed the researchers to generate themes and analyse the collected data as confirmed by (O’Reilly & Kiyimba, 2015).

**Literature Review**

**Theoretical Framework Applications**

**The resilience Theory**

The resilience theory was founded in 1974 by pioneers of resilience such as Norman Garmezy. Resilience is about the capacity of an individual to recover and to maintain adaptive behaviour after experiencing hardships (Garmezy, 1974). The resilience theory offer researchers lenses for research that closes the micro-macro gap as affirmed by (Patel, 2015). This allowed the researchers the opportunity to understand the challenges that students face and how they cope with them. Resilience is centered on people’s capacity to rebound from hardships strengthened and more capable (Walsh, 2006). In the context of this study, this allowed the researchers to understand that resilience is achieved when students access and cope with online learning and teaching in the midst of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

In a system perspective, Masten (2015) holds that the adaptation to disturbances that threaten the functionality or development of a system can be termed resilience. In the context of this study, online learning as a system is functional when students can participate in it and survive its challenges. Van-Breda (2001) argued that the important part of resilience lies in achieving better-than-expected results in the event of hardships. This theory is relevant to the study because the study sought to accentuate coping strategies of students for online teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. This theory offered lenses for the researchers to successfully establish how students coped with online teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**An overview of online teaching and learning**

The online teaching and learning process was relatively new for some students and instructors which created a mammoth task of adapting to it. This is in line with Jaques and Salmon (2007) and Kirkwood and Price (2014) who postulates that both students and educators experience challenges in adapting to online learning and teaching. The researchers are of the view that even though students attend at the same institution they do not share equal resources and capacities to fully participate in online learning and teaching. Therefore, there is a need for students who are struggling to be supported as lack of support can lead to some students not participating in the online teaching and learning. This is in line with, Munezero, Iruka, Kirongo, Etiegni and Suhonen (2016) who assert that some students and teachers need motivation and support to participate fully in online teaching and learning. The researchers have observed that during online learning some students get distracted. This is supported by Chandra (2020) who posits that social interaction and keeping up with lessons is difficult for some students as they get easily distracted during online teaching and learning.

**Challenges of online teaching and learning**

There are quite several challenges that were faced by students whilst being taught and learning online during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Some students misunderstand task instructions and do not complete tasks on time during online teaching and learning (Pierce-Friedman & Wellner, 2020). In addition Gillett-Swan (2017), report that some students cannot actively participate in some activities such as group work activities when being taught and learning online. According to Anderson (2008) the use of online learning tools, pandemic related anxiety and stress are a challenge for some students. COVID-19 instilled fear in many individuals including students which affected their learning abilities. This is in line with, Rajal, Gazal and Alkattan (2020) who reported that the emergence of COVID-19 left students with fear of academic failure. In addition, Kusumo, Staples, Zhu, Zhang and Jeffery (2012) found that one of the challenges that are faced by students has to do with internet connectivity. Ali, Uppal, and Gulliver (2018) hold that institutions of higher learning experience major barriers to the successful implementation of online teaching and learning such as using the existing pedagogy in online teaching and learning and as well as offering enabling conditions. It is also believed that, behaviour can pose a challenge during online teaching and learning for both educators and students (Muthuprasad, Aiswarya, Aditya & Jha, 2021). Islam, Beer and Slack (2015) concurs by alluding that, scholars from time-to-time face challenges when participating in online teaching and learning. Several studies show that some students during online teaching and learning face technological challenges such as lacking electronic devices and experiencing internet connectivity issues (Sadeghi, 2019; Tamrat & Teferra, 2020).
Discussion And Findings

Through the lenses of the study theory, this section presents the findings and discussions of this study. From secondary data, the following themes emerged, access to online teaching and learning and coping strategies employed by students during online teaching and learning.

Theme 1: Students’ access to online teaching and learning

The world experience disasters which disturb the learning process of students from time to time and the solution to continue the learning process in such events is through technological platforms (Meyer & Wilson, 2011). Dhawan (2020) found that access to online learning platforms was a challenge to some students who lacked resources and knowledge of technology during the COVID-19 pandemic. Salmon (2002) avows that during pandemics students must access online teaching and learning platforms to continue with their learning process. Access is the most important step to online teaching and learning. This means that a central concern of whether the technologies such as the online learning and teaching platforms are accessible arises. The researchers are of the view that for teaching and learning to continue during the COVID-19 pandemic access to online platforms had to be made for both students and lecturers as lack of access can defeat the purpose. This is in line with Liang and Chen (2012) who believe that factors such as financial or physical constraints prevent students from accessing online teaching and learning platforms. Students who manage to gain access to online learning platforms get benefits such as low cost and following the latest teaching and learning developments (Sukmadinata, 2003). In the same breath, Singh and Thurman (2019) assert that accessing online learning platforms is important as it allows students to be anywhere while learning and interacting with instructors and other students. In light of the above it is clear that if students do not have access to the online teaching and learning platforms or resources, online learning becomes none-beneficial to students.

Theme 2: Coping strategies applied by Students

In the event of stress and psychological distress, coping strategy is a key variable (Dooley, Fitzgerald & Giollabhui, 2015). The stressor and the person attempting to cope with it determine the type of coping strategy that individuals are to employ to cope with their faced challenges (Newman, Holden & Delville, 2011). This study sought to accentuate online teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers have observed some students requesting for mentorships to cope with online teaching and learning at the University of Limpopo. This is in line with Gore, Bloem, Patton, Ferguson and Joseph (2014), who assert that during pandemics some students cope with the challenges of online teaching and learning by accepting their responsibilities and seeking for social and academic support. In the same breath, Liang and Chen (2012) postulates that some students resort to consultations with their college and university Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) departments for skills on the use of online platforms, googling for notes and consultations with colleagues to cope with the challenges of online-learning and teaching. On the other hand, Barrot, Llenares and Del-Rosario (2021) found that students who lacked resources to participate in online teaching and learning resorted to joining groups that share free resources and consulted with teachers to overcome the challenges. Barrot et al (2021) also found that some students dealt with the challenges that they face in online-teaching and learning by asking for help from their families and using resources available at home. The researchers observed students abusing substances during the COVID-19 pandemic to cope with the challenges that emanated from online teaching and learning. Similar findings by Liang and Chen (2012) show that some students in his study engaged in negative coping strategies such as self- isolation, taking alcohol, and taking drugs to cope with the stress brought by the challenges of online-teaching and learning. This shows that students also employ negative coping strategies to cope with the anxiety brought by pandemics and online teaching and learning.

Conclusion

Online teaching and learning was increasingly adopted by many institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic. It can also be deduced that students face challenges during online teaching and learning which requires them to develop coping strategies. Some students employ positive coping strategies such as seeking social support whilst others employ negative coping strategies such as using substances. Challenges of online teaching and learning differ from one environment to another and one student to the other. Thus the following recommendations are presented by this study:

i. Future research should focus on support systems that can be utilized to help students access and cope with online teaching and learning during pandemics.

ii. Introduction of programs that equip students to actively participate in online teaching and learning without experiencing challenges.

iii. Institutions of higher learning must mobile resources’ for students who do not have resources’ such as learning devices.

iv. Institutions of higher learning must have emotional and social support programs to help students who use negative coping strategies such as taking drugs.

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Informed Consent Statement: The University of Limpopo research ethics policies were respected in this study and honesty by acknowledging ‘all’ sources used in this study was upheld. The list of references is provided, and plagiarism is avoided in this study.

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