

Psychological Detachment from School: Examining the Effects of Home Challenges on School Engagement

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Abstract

This study aimed to (1) determine the participants' demographic profile, (2) identify their level of home challenges encountered, (3) identify their level of psychological detachment from school at home, (4) identify their level of school engagement, (5) identify the predictors of school engagement, and (6) determine whether psychological detachment from school at home mediated the relationship between home challenges encountered and school engagement. The researchers gathered data from 371 second and third year college students from LPU-Laguna and LPU-SC School of Health Sciences who were 18 to 24 years old using the HCES, PDS-S, and SES. Results showed that participants were mostly 20 years old, females, regular, second years, from CAM and CITHM, from lower-middle income families of about 4 to 8 members, and first-born children with 1 to 2 siblings. They exhibited moderate levels of home challenges encountered, psychological detachment from school, and school engagement. Home challenges encountered were significant predictors of school engagement. Psychological detachment from school mediated the relationship between home challenges encountered and school engagement. This study provided substantial evidence emphasizing the overlap between home and school domains.

Introduction

College life is arguably one of the many defining stages in life which shapes individuals as they start to broaden their interpersonal relationships and develop their career paths. In general, it offers various opportunities from which individuals could cultivate healthy learning habits and become more independent decision makers ([Arjanggi & Kusumaningsih, 2016](#)). However, college life is also very challenging because of factors within and beyond a student's control. School-related constraints, such as adjustment difficulties, emotional demands, hectic deadlines, heavy academic workload, and peer pressure, make the university setting a major source of stress, considering how students spend most of their day at school ([Galanek et al., 2018](#)). At the same time, students dealing with school-related tasks may also be burdened by the home challenges they encounter ([Morris et al., 2021](#)). While it is true that school-home integration can help students gain a sense of control towards almost all aspects of their life, they may be put at a high risk of exhaustion if the blurry line between school and home boundaries becomes mismanaged ([Luta et al., 2020](#)). Without enough recovery experiences, students' health and well-being may become severely impaired which could then affect their school engagement ([Sonnentag, 2011](#)), thus psychological detachment from school plays a crucial role.

Psychological detachment from school refers to an individual's mental state of "switching off" from the school domain in order to effectively focus and function on other domains ([Cheng & McCarthy, 2013](#); [Luta et al., 2020](#); [Sonnentag, 2011](#)). For this study, it refers to an individual's sense of being "away" from the school situation through disengaging from school-related tasks and thoughts at home or during non-school hours. Through psychologically detaching from school, individuals can better attend to home matters while setting aside school-related constraints. Previous studies have shown how psychological detachment serves as an effective stress reduction method which facilitates the increase in life satisfaction, reduction of psychological strain, replenishment of lost resources, and the restoration of one's overall physical and mental well-being ([Cheng & McCarthy, 2013](#); [King, 2020](#); [Sonnentag, 2011](#); [Sonnentag, 2012](#)). However, while detaching from school helps students bounce back to the school situation, this does not imply that the home is a non-stressful domain. To

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further, [Sanz-Vergel et al. \(2011\)](#) added that the beneficial effects of psychological detachment may be buffered by familial trait role salience or the degree to which an individual is invested in a familial role and is involved in family-related matters.

Students have other roles aside from being students. They are also children, siblings, or even parents. While some students experience the inability to detach from the school domain, others find it hard to detach from the home domain. Home challenges encountered by students then refer to the difficulties and constraints faced by students whenever they are at home. For this study, home challenges will be explored in terms of home-related stressors, role demands, and rumination which make it more difficult for students to concentrate on accomplishing school-related tasks. Home-related stressors refer to the quantitative and environmental stressors which endanger one's well-being at home. On the other hand, role demands refer to the familial roles and responsibilities students have as members of the family. Lastly, rumination refers to how students worry about conflicts which are not present at home but may have happened in the past or may happen in the future. In a study by [Morris et al. \(2021\)](#), students reported how the home challenges they encountered at home had affected the way they prioritize their studies and their active participation in class discussions, not to mention how contextual factors, such as income and access to resources, had also influenced their level of psychological detachment from school at home or during non-school hours ([Luta et al., 2020](#)).

This makes school engagement not just a choice but rather an uncontrollable outcome on the part of the student. School engagement then refers to one's active commitment and involvement to effectively function in the school domain. For this study, it is defined in terms of recovery experiences, quality of life, and mental health-related outcomes. Recovery experiences refer to opportunities for individuals to relax, release tension, and replenish their lost resources. On the other hand, quality of life refers to students' physical well-being, considering how stress is a psychophysiological response. Lastly, mental health-related outcomes refer to one's mental health and well-being. Students with low psychological detachment from school without sufficient recovery experiences from home or during non-school hours are at risk of developing physical and psychological complications, fatigue, burnout, and negative mood ([Ellerbe, 2021](#)). School-related constraints then become in conflict with the need to meet home-related constraints and, as [Cheng and McCarthy \(2013\)](#) documented, students opted for escape avoidance as a strategy to manage their role conflicts, further making the situation across all domains worse. Thus, for students to recuperate, sufficient recovery experiences are important towards attaining a good quality of life and mental health-related outcomes ([Luta et al., 2020](#); [Schraub et al., 2013](#)).

The challenge to psychologically detach from school at home or during non-school hours is further aggravated by pandemic-related constraints. Because of COVID-19, the government has imposed widespread restrictions affecting multiple sectors of the economy ([Rotas & Cahapay, 2020](#)) and forcing everyone to stay at the "comfort" of their homes which then also affected the education sector. According to [UNESCO \(2020\)](#), school closures have affected 28 million students in the Philippines. Most HEIs adapted to online learning as a mode of delivery ([Rotas & Cahapay, 2020](#); [Tria, 2020](#)). [Cleofas \(2020\)](#) claimed that situations experienced in the year 2020 may have great impacts on college students' adulthood transition. Robbing them of socialization opportunities, peer-to-peer interactions, and engagement with enjoyable school activities, the new normal may affect their psychological emotional development. Additionally, students who experience difficulty in forming good relationships with their teachers and friends are prone to absenteeism ([Sahin et al., 2016](#)). If left unattended, [Alipio \(2020\)](#) stated that adjustment problems can lead to higher dropout rates, decreased efficiency in managing stress, lower capability to manage academic demands, low motivation, and low academic performance. On the other hand, home-related factors also contribute to school engagement difficulties. Considering the digital divide, students face conflict with home responsibilities, financial problems, health-related problems, inadequate learning resources, limited teacher-student and student-student interactions, overloaded academic requirements, poor communication opportunities, power interruptions, uncondusive learning environment, unstable internet connection, and vague learning materials ([Alvarez, 2020](#); [Mateo, 2021](#); [Baticulon, 2021](#); [Rotas & Cahapay, 2020](#)).

These prevailing factors contributed to the research gap. Although research studies on psychological detachment are abundant, the literature tended to focus on employees in the work domain. Psychological detachment from work has consistently been associated with job stressors and work performance ([Cheng & McCarthy, 2013](#); [Ellerbe, 2021](#); [King, 2020](#); [Sanz-Vergel et al., 2011](#); [Sonnentag, 2011](#); [Safstrom & Hartig, 2013](#)).

while psychological detachment from school remained a rarely investigated phenomenon ([Luta et al., 2020](#); [Morris et al., 2021](#)). Exploring psychological detachment from school is also of necessity considering how students have stressors similar to employees such as heavy workload, emotional demands, and time constraints which are also important to explore ([Hurst et al., 2013](#)). However, this employee-focused literature alone would not suffice to capture the whole student psychological detachment experience considering the differences between a student and an employee. As [Luta et al. \(2020\)](#) stated, students pay to learn while employees are being paid to work, and this difference is notable in examining how students and employees spend their non-work and non-school hours, respectively.

In relation to this, most detachment studies pertaining to the school setting referred to school detachment and not psychological detachment from school which are entirely different concepts. School detachment refers to the state of not being affiliated or enrolled in any educational institution ([Ergün & Demir, 2017](#)). Simply, it is “being out” of the school setting and is more focused on outcomes such as the rate of school dropouts ([Akfirat et al., 2017](#)). On the other hand, psychological detachment from school refers to a mental state of disengaging or “switching off” from school-related tasks or activities and was thus the focus of this study. This study then sought to examine the relationships and effects of home-related and school-related factors to manage psychological detachment from school and prevent school detachment in the long run. Lastly, considering home-related constraints, there were only a few studies focused on exploring psychological detachment in relation to home factors. For a country like the Philippines, it is important to explore family-related issues considering how familial values are embedded within the community ([Morillo et al., 2013](#)) and how they impact school engagement ([Morris et al., 2021](#)). All these issues then lead to the conceptualization of this study.

Theoretical framework

Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory

Extensively used in trauma and stress studies for the last two decades, the COR Theory was conceptualized by [Hobfoll \(2012\)](#) which emphasized the impacts of stressful challenges, threat, resource loss, and appraisals on an individual’s life. Specifically, the COR Theory posits how individuals have the tendency to acquire, conserve, gain, keep, and protect their resources in order to prevent damage, threat or loss ([King, 2020](#); [Maslach & Leiter, 2017](#)). It is objective by nature which seeks to look at how loss and gain cycles contribute to burnout, resilience, stress, and trauma, making it influential in the field of Positive Psychology ([Hobfoll, 2012](#)). Resources are reserved so that individuals can accommodate and meet demands. In spite of the employee-focused literature on psychological detachment ([Luta et al., 2020](#); [Merino-Tejedor et al., 2017](#)), college students also face several challenges and cater to multiple roles in both the school and home domains, thus showing the importance of the COR Theory in assessing how they manage home challenges and school engagement whilst conserving their limited resources ([Ellerbe, 2021](#)). Resources may be any form of objects, conditions, personal characteristics, and energies condition valued by the individual, of which such value is heavily dependent on how necessary it is for protection or survival (primary resources), relationships (secondary resources), and accomplishments (tertiary resources) ([Alarcon et al., 2011](#); [Demsky et al., 2014](#); [Halbesleben et al., 2014](#); [King, 2020](#)). These resources may be accessed from both the home and school domain, thus showing how multifaceted college life could be. Such value associated with primary, secondary, and tertiary resources may differ per individual and may depend on the individual’s experiences as stated by [Holmgreen et al. \(2017\)](#).

Effort-Recovery (E-R) Theory

Another theoretical foundation relevant to the research framework is the E-R Theory of Meijman and Mulder. In support to how the COR Theory presupposes the relationship between stress and recovery, the E-R Theory focuses on the relevance of sufficient recovery experiences in the prevention of resource loss. E-R Theory emphasizes on how effort expenditure (that is, the amount of work, time, or effort spent into a particular domain) may lead to load reactions (that is, the accumulated responses) which may be detrimental to the individual, resulting to increased load reactions, decreased vigor, and activation of the stress-related responses ([Demsky et al., 2018](#); [Ellerbe, 2021](#); [Jo & Lee, 2021](#); [Shimazu et al., 2016](#)). Students are not mechanistic robots. They experience heavy workload, emotional demands, and time constraints which may cause them to feel tired, resulting in fatigue and physical or mental-health problems ([Hurst et al., 2013](#)). With this, the E-R Theory seeks

to emphasize how a period of replenishment or recuperation benefits individuals. Students need to take a break from both home and school domains, specifically the home challenges encountered and school engagement.

Objectives of the study

Generally, the study sought to determine the role of psychological detachment from school at home in examining the effects of home challenges on school engagement among students in an online learning set-up. Specifically, it aimed to (1) determine the participants' demographic profile in terms of (a) age, (b) gender, (c) year level, (d) family income, (e) family size, and (f) birth order, (2) identify the participants' level of home challenges encountered in terms of (a) home-related stressors, (b) role demands, and (c) rumination, (3) identify the participants' level of psychological detachment from school at home, (4) identify the participants' level of school engagement in terms of (a) recovery experience, (b) quality of life, and (c) mental health-related outcomes, (5) identify the predictors of school engagement, and (6) determine whether psychological detachment from school at home mediated the relationship between home challenges encountered and school engagement.

Methodology

Research design

Generally, the study sought to determine the role of psychological detachment from school at home in examining the effects of home challenges on school engagement among students in an online learning set-up. Specifically, it aimed to (1) determine the participants' College life is arguably one of the many defining stages in life which shapes individuals as they start to broaden their interpersonal relationships and develop their career paths. In general, it offers various opportunities from which individuals could cultivate healthy learning habits and become more independent decision makers ([Arjanggal & Kusumaningsih, 2016](#)). The study made use of a quantitative research design through a descriptive design analyzed through regression and mediation analyses. According to [Apuke \(2017\)](#), a quantitative research design refers to the analysis and utilization of numerical research data which would require specific statistical tools and techniques in order to describe, relate, and predict one or more aspects or characteristics of a group, community, or phenomenon through a systematic empirical investigation of the social phenomenon being explored. A descriptive research design, then, refers to a study focused on a descriptive examination of the variables through the use of parametric and nonparametric tests ([Akoglu, 2017](#)). Similarly, a regression analysis focuses on inferring causality by means of analyzing the relationship between independent and dependent variables, specifically as to how they become predictors and criterion variables ([Sarstedt & Mooi, 2014](#)). Through a regression analyses, causality can be inferred and the research findings will hold practical importance for the intended population. Lastly, the research integrated a mediation analysis to investigate how a causal relationship between the independent and dependent variable is mediated by another variable ([MacKinnon, 2011](#)). A mediation study should be supported by an exhaustive theoretical framework and a resource pool of relevant literature so that relationships and causations can be inferred.

Research method

The study made use of the survey method through a post-positivistic research paradigm. According to [Žukauskas et al. \(2018\)](#), post-positivism employs critical realism as its ontological position, objectivism as its epistemological position, and experimentation as its methodological position. The survey method then refers to a procedure by which information are directly taken from the study participants by having them answer close-or open-ended questions, respond to specific statements, and provide their overall evaluation of a phenomenon. It is the most widely used research method due to its practicality ([Showkat & Parveen, 2017](#)). The research methodology was divided into two main phases, namely the validation phase, where the three self-constructed psychological scales have been subjected to the validation of 7 internal and external experts or professionals from the fields of Psychology, Communication or Languages (specifically English and Filipino), and Statistics, followed by the pilot study phase conducted among 40 second and third year LPU-Laguna and LPU-St. Cabrini college students.

Participants of the study

The participants qualified for the study consisted of second and third year college students from LPU-Laguna and LPU-St. Cabrini School of Health Sciences who were at least 18 to 24 years old and enrolled in an online learning set-up for A.Y. 2021-2022. The study population was 1,618 college students where 824 were currently in their second year level and 794 were in their third year level. Considering the study population, the sample size should consist of at least 348 participants. The sample size fit the rule of thumb for structural equation modeling (SEM) which states that sample sizes for structural equation models should be at around 300 as stated by [Comrey and Lee \(2013\)](#) and [Tabachnick and Fidell \(2013\)](#). The sample size was also proportional to the study population and was determined through a priori power analysis with an alpha level of 0.05, small to medium effect sizes, and a desired power of 0.95 using G*Power, a free statistical software used to identify sample size from a population through conducting power analyses ([Balkin & Sheperis, 2011](#)).

Sampling technique

The study made use of a two-stage sampling. First, it utilized stratified random sampling which refers to a technique where a sample is determined through randomly selecting participants from homogenous subgroups or smaller units called strata within that specific population ([Singh & Masuku, 2014](#)). Each stratum should have mutually exclusive characteristics not overlapping with other strata ([Frey, 2018](#)). Through stratified random sampling, all participants under each stratum within the population were equally represented in the sample. The sample size was then stratified according to the school and year level of the participants. Thus, a sample of at least 348 students was obtained from 245 students enrolled in LPU-Laguna and 103 students enrolled in LPU-St. Cabrini School of Health Sciences which consisted of 177 second year college students and 171 third year college students. Afterwards, due to pandemic-related constraints, the researchers utilized non-probability convenience random sampling which refers to a sampling technique where participants are randomly selected by or referred to the researchers, then participants self-select whether they wish to participate ([Stratton, 2021](#)).

Research instrument

Home Challenges Encountered Scale (HCES)

The Home Challenges Encountered Scale (HCES) is a 28-item scale constructed by the researchers intended to measure the level of the challenges encountered by the participants at home which refer to the difficulties and constraints faced by students whenever they are at home. It contained three subscales, specifically Home-Related Stressors (HCES-HRS), Role Demands (HCES-RD), and Rumination (HCES-R), of which 6 items were negative valence items in order to look out for response bias and random responding. Items 2 and 5 were the negative valence items for HCES-HRS, items 4, 7, and 9 for HCES-RD, and item 2 for HCES-R. During the validation phase, the HCES and its subscales were found to have excellent content validity (HCES-HRS S-CVI/Ave = .99, HCES-RD S-CVI/Ave = .99, HCES-R S-CVI/Ave = .97, and HCES S-CVI/Ave = .98). Through internal consistency reliability methods, the HCES was also found to be a reliable scale ($\alpha = .88$) so as its HCES-HRS ($\alpha = .71$), HCES-RD ($\alpha = .75$), and HCES-R ($\alpha = .79$) subscales. Items were in a 7-point Likert Scale where "1" stands for "very untrue of me" with a verbal interpretation of "extremely easy" to "7" which stands for "very true of me" with a verbal interpretation of "extremely difficult".

Psychological Detachment from School-Scale (PDS-S)

The Psychological Detachment from School-Scale (PDS-S) is a 4-item scale constructed by the researchers intended to measure the level of the participants' psychological detachment from school at home or during non-school hours. It is the sense of being 'away' from the school situation through disengaging from school-related tasks and thoughts at home or during non-school hours. During the validation phase, the PDS-S was found to have an excellent content validity (S-CVI/Ave = 1.00). Through internal consistency reliability methods, the PDS-S was also found to be a reliable scale ($\alpha = 0.76$). Items were in a 7-point Likert Scale where "1" stands for "very untrue of me" with a verbal interpretation of "never" to "7" which stands for "very true of me" with a verbal interpretation of "always".

School Engagement Scale (SES)

The School Engagement Scale (SES) is a 22-item scale to measure the participants' level of school engagement or one's active commitment and involvement to effectively function in school. It has three subscales, specifically Recovery Experience (SES-RE), Quality of Life (SES-QOL), and Mental Health-Related Outcomes (SES-MHRO). 6 items were negative valence items. There were no negative valence items for SES-RE. On the other hand, items 1, 2, and 4 for SES-QOL and items 2, 4 and 9 for SES-MHRO were the negative valence items. It was found to have good to excellent content validity (SES-RE S-CVI/Ave = 1.00, SES-QOL S-CVI/Ave = .92, SES-MHRO S-CVI/Ave = .90, and SES S-CVI/Ave = .93) and was found to be a reliable scale ($\alpha = .80$) so as its SES-RE ($\alpha = .84$), SES-QOL ($\alpha = .72$), and SES-MHRO ($\alpha = .79$) subscales. Scores may be interpreted through percentiles and Z-scores, making the scale comparable to other standardized forms of test. Items were in a 7-point Likert Scale where "1" stands for "very untrue of me" with a verbal interpretation of "extremely disengaged" to "7" which stands for "very true of me" with a verbal interpretation of "extremely engaged".

Study procedures

The researchers constructed three psychological scales which were subjected to the validation of 7 internal and external experts or professionals from the field of Psychology, Communication or Languages (specifically English and Filipino), and Statistics to achieve content validity. Suggested comments and revisions to improve the three scales were applied. The validation phase took place from November 8 to December 10, 2021. After the validation process, the instrument underwent a pilot study from December 13 to 16, 2021 among 40 enrolled second year and third year college students from Lyceum of the Philippines University-Laguna and LPU-St. Cabrini School of Health Sciences. Permission was sought from the respective offices two weeks before the said pilot study. After the pilot study, items were then re-evaluated to arrive with the final number of items needed per scale.

Data gathering proper then took place from December 21, 2021 to January 18, 2022. Since the instrument was made accessible online, additional safety and security measures were taken by the researchers. The research instrument was distributed through using Google Forms and required the collection of e-mail addresses for tracking purposes. Due to virtual constraints, the researchers sought the help of year level representatives, officers, and student leaders to cascade the form link to the respective participants. Social media platforms were also utilized and permission to post in official student groups chats or forums was obtained from the respective authorities so that the participants can be informed using the proper channels. The form link contained an electronic consent form and the instrument proper. Instructions and reminders were included in the said link and contact details were provided for the participants. All data collected from the forms were automatically compiled into one Google Spreadsheet which was then subjected for statistical analyses.

Statistical treatment

For the statistical treatment, quantitative data were analyzed through the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 application, a widely used statistical package software in the field of Psychology which enabled researchers to conduct statistical analyses with research data through programming principles (Kirkpatrick & Feeney, 2015). Frequencies, percentages, and measures of central tendency and variability were reported alongside their respective confidence intervals in order to meet the research questions and hypotheses. Regression and mediation analyses were conducted across all variables of interest in order to fulfill the research assumptions using Structural Equation Modeling of the software SPSS IBM AMOS or Analysis of Moment Structures.

Ethical considerations

Due to virtual constraints, informed consent was taken electronically through the use of Google Forms where participants were informed of the research objectives, duration of participation, and procedures to be taken. They were also assured of their rights to anonymity, privacy, and confidentiality. The researchers used special codes in identifying the participants to maintain their confidentiality and anonymity. Participants were also informed of the risks and benefits and were free to withdraw any time they wish. Contact details were provided by the researchers should the participants have any concerns or inquiries regarding the study. Data were stored and treated automatically via a Google Spreadsheet accessible only to the researchers of the study. Data were

solely used for the purpose of the study. Permission to conduct the study was also obtained from the respective institutional authorities.

Results and Discussion

Out of the 371 participants, no outliers were found. However, 28 influential cases were found through Box and Whisker Plot Analysis. The researchers then made the decision to remove these cases, resulting in a total number of 343 participants. The frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of scores, regression, and mediation analysis coefficients were obtained in order to present the study results as indicated below.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Study Participants

	<i>f</i>	%	μ	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>
Age	343	100.00%	20.14	0.80	0.04
18	4	1.20%			
19	63	18.40%			
20	169	49.30%			
21	97	28.30%			
22	8	2.30%			
23	2	0.60%			
Gender	343	100.00%	--	--	--
Male	92	26.80%			
Female	250	72.90%			
LGBTQIA++	1	0.30%			
School	343	100.00%	--	--	--
LPU-Laguna	247	72.00%			
LPU-SC SHS	96	28.00%			
College	343	100.00%	--	--	--
CAS	29	8.50%			
CBA	55	16.00%			
COECS	59	17.20%			
CITHM	104	30.30%			
CAM	94	27.40%			
CO	2	0.60%			
Year Level	343	100.00%	--	--	--
2 nd Year	174	50.70%			
3 rd Year	169	49.30%			
Status	343	100.00%	--	--	--
Regular	304	88.60%			
Irregular	35	10.20%			
Transferee/Shiftee	5	0.90%			
Returnee	1	0.30%			
Family Monthly Income	343	100.00%	--	--	--
< 10,957	26	7.60%			
10,957 to 21,914	80	23.30%			
21,915 to 43,828	99	28.90%			
43,829 to 76,699	67	19.50%			
76,700 to 131,483	34	9.90%			
131,484 to 219,140	19	5.50%			
> 219,140.00	18	5.20%			
Family Size	343	100.00%	--	--	--
0 to 3 members	64	18.70%			
4 to 7 members	265	77.30%			
8 to 11 members	14	4.10%			
Number of Siblings	343	100.00%	1.84	1.34	0.07
0	47	13.70%			
1	117	34.10%			

2	80	23.30%			
3	62	18.10%			
4	22	6.40%			
5	11	3.20%			
6	3	0.90%			
7	1	0.30%			
Birth Order	343	100.00%	1.81	0.32	0.07
None (Only Child)	46	13.40%			
1 st Child (Eldest)	114	33.20%			
2 nd Child	101	29.40%			
3 rd Child	37	10.80%			
4 th Child	35	10.20%			
5 th Child	7	2.00%			
6 th Child	1	0.30%			
7 th Child	2	0.60%			

f = frequency; % = percentage; μ = mean; *SD* = standard deviation; *SE* = standard error.

a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1,000 samples.

N = 343

[Table 1](#) presents the demographic profile of the study participants. When it came to age ($\mu = 20.14$, $SD = .80$, $SE = 0.04$), 169 of the participants were aged 20 years old, comprising most of the sample (49.30%). This may be understood from the perspective that additional two years were added in high school in relation to the K-to-12 program, thus college students are more likely to enter in college when they are above 18 years of age. For gender, majority of the participants (250) were females, comprising 72.90% of the sample. When it came to school, 247 of the participants (72.00%) were enrolled in Lyceum of the Philippines University-Laguna while the remaining 96 participants (28.00%) were enrolled in LPU-St. Cabrini School of Health Sciences. Of 247 participants from LPU-Laguna, 104 participants (30.30%) were from the College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management (CITHM). On the other hand, of 96 participants from LPU-St. Cabrini, 94 participants (27.40%), were from the College of Allied Medicine (CAM). Similarly, an equal number of participants were taken from each year level, respectively, with 174 participants being second year college students, comprising 50.70% of the sample and 169 participants being third year college students, comprising 49.30%. These measures were taken to match the required number of participants per stratum since the study made use of stratified random sampling in order to show a proportionate and representative sample of the population being observed. Additionally, for their enrollment status, majority of the participants were regular students (304, 88.60%). For family monthly income, the families of 99 participants earned around Php 21,915.00 to Php 43,828.00 per month, comprising 28.90% of the sample, thus showing that students belonged to lower middle income families as determined by [Albert et al. \(2018\)](#). When it comes to family size, majority of the participants belong to a family with about 4 to 7 members which consisted of 265 participants, comprising 77.30% of the study sample. This is desirable considering how Filipinos value a larger number of children ([Morillo et al., 2013](#)). Similarly, when it comes to the number of siblings ($\mu = 1.84$, $SD = 1.34$, $SE = .07$, BCa CI [1.71, 1.98]), 117 participants (34.10%) have 1 sibling. In relation to this, when it comes to birth order ($\mu = 1.81$, $SD = .32$, $SE = .07$), most of the participants, 114 (33.20%) were the eldest or the 1st child in the family. [Seid and Gurmü \(2015\)](#) mentioned that first-born children from developed countries tend to achieve higher educational outcomes and lesser labor work which could explain why there were more first-born children in the sample than later-born children.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of the Participants Considering Their Levels of Home Challenges Encountered, Psychological Detachment from School at Home, and School Engagement

Variables of Interest	μ	<i>SD</i>	<i>SE</i>
Home Challenges Encountered	4.04	.74	.04
Home-Related Stressors	3.33	.95	.05
Role Demands	3.74	.92	.05
Rumination	5.04	.94	.05
Psychological Detachment from School	3.57	1.26	.07

School Engagement	4.19	.79	.04
Recovery Experience	4.76	1.31	.07
Quality of Life	3.72	.93	.05
Mental Health Related Outcomes	4.07	.99	.05

HCES, HCES-HRS, HCES-RD, and HCES-R: 1.00-1.49 = extremely easy; 1.50-2.49 = very easy; 2.50-3.49 = easy; 2.50-3.49 = neither easy nor difficult; 4.50-5.49 = difficult; 4.50-5.49 = very difficult; 6.50-7.00 = extremely difficult.

PDS-S: 1.00-1.49 = never; 1.50-2.49 = very rarely; 2.50-3.49 = rarely; 2.50-3.49 = sometimes; 4.50-5.49 = occasionally; 4.50-5.49 = very frequently; 6.50-7.00 = always.

SES, SES-RE, SES-QOL, and SES-MHRO: 1.00-1.49 = extremely disengaged; 1.50-2.49 = very disengaged; 2.50-3.49 = disengaged; 2.50-3.49 = neither engaged nor disengaged; 4.50-5.49 = engaged; 4.50-5.49 = very engaged; 6.50-7.00 = extremely engaged.

μ = mean; SD = standard deviation; SE = standard error.

a. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1,000 samples.

N = 343

In [Table 2](#), the descriptive statistics of the participants considering their levels of home challenges encountered, psychological detachment from school at home, and school engagement out of 343 participants are presented. The results implied that participants in general find the home challenges they encounter as neutrally easy or difficult ($\mu = 4.04$, $SD = .74$, $SE = .04$). Of all factors considered, it was found that they find it most difficult to deal with rumination related to home or familial issues ($\mu = 5.04$, $SD = .94$, $SE = .05$), meaning, they were most likely to encounter repetitive, troublesome thoughts about problems which may have existed in the past, are bothering them in the present, or something which they would encounter in the future ([Demsky et al., 2018](#)). Since the catchphrase "*dagdag isipin*" is common among Filipinos, it is very likely for students to excessively worry about a lot of stressors even if these stressors have already passed, are non-existent, or are yet to be experienced. On the other hand, participants were neutral with respect to their role demands at home ($\mu = 3.74$, $SD = .92$, $SE = .05$). Since role demands focus on the duties and responsibilities one has at home, the results may be due to how these familial obligations are not seen by college students as obligatory and therefore do not cause them much stress ([Alampay, 2014](#)). Lastly, participants find it easy to deal with the home-related stressors they encounter at home ($\mu = 3.33$, $SD = .95$, $SE = .05$). The results do not mean to show that participants are not stressed at home. In fact, it shows that college students do encounter home-related stressors yet they find the stressors easy to deal with as they are relatively few and low. This may be due to the fact that while there could be family problems beyond their control, still, the family as the "center of the universe" in the Filipino society as [Jocano \(1998\)](#) has stated as cited by [Alampay \(2014\)](#) plays a significant role as to how individuals are supported towards other domains in their lives,

For psychological detachment from school ($\mu = 3.57$, $SD = 1.26$, $SE = .07$), the results implied that the participants sometimes experience psychological detachment from school at home or during non-school hours. To further, it can be stated that second and third year college students experience moderate levels of psychological detachment from school or during non-school hours which can be very helpful so that students can take time to relax and recover from the demands they experience at school. This is supported by [Di Pietro et al. \(2020\)](#) who mentioned that during the COVID-19 lockdown, school hours were reduced by about 4 to 8 hours, with one 1 out of 5 students reporting that within a week, they study less than 9 hours. In the Philippines, [Dayagbil et al. \(2021\)](#) and [Rigo and Mikuš \(2021\)](#) even documented that asynchronous activities may be given to students which they can do at the time of their convenience and were already equivalent to a specific number of hours needed. Somehow, this approach may have several advantages or disadvantages, but what matters is that psychological detachment from school occurs to facilitate sufficient recovery.

Lastly, participants were found to be neutrally engaged with their school activities ($\mu = 4.19$, $SD = .79$, $SE = .04$). They were seen to have engaging recovery experiences from school ($\mu = 4.76$, $SD = 1.31$, $SE = .07$). In an online learning set-up, although there are difficulties, students are actively involved and committed to function with their school tasks and activities which then plays a role as to why they continue to study as stated by [Alarcon et al. \(2013\)](#). However, it was found that their mental health-related outcomes were neutrally engaged with school outcomes ($\mu = 4.07$, $SD = .99$, $SE = .05$). While interaction in the virtual space is possible, without physical interaction, engaging with classmates and professors can be psychologically distressing. Unlike before when

students can talk to their seatmates or ask professors, being alone in front of a laptop may make it easy for them to feel that they are isolated from others. Similarly, participants found their quality of life relatively neutral ($\mu = 3.72$, $SD = .93$, $SE = .05$). When it comes to students' physical health, because of the nature of online learning, students sit all-day in front of their laptops to complete an activity, attend a class, or participate in a school event. There are also other students who work at night which may lead to sleep deprivation and fatigue. The school setting can also be stressful and, as documented by [Holmgreen et al. \(2017\)](#), poorer physical health and physical illnesses were reported among stressed individuals. In order to achieve health benefits, students must restore their energy.

Table 3. Regression Analysis Model for School Engagement

Predictor Variables	Criterion Variable	Unstandardized		BCa 95% Confidence Interval		<i>t</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>r</i> ²	
		β	Std. Error	<i>b</i>	Lower						Upper
Gender	SES	-.24	.09	-.13	[-.41]	[-.06]	-2.68**	12.53**	337	.40 ^b	.16
Siblings		.11	.04	-.18	[.02]	[.19]	2.46**				
Birth Order		-.10	.05	-.16	[-.19]	[-.01]	-2.16*				
HCES-HRS		-.20	.05	-.24	[-.29]	[-.10]	-4.11**				
HCES-RD		-.15	.05	-.14	[-.25]	[-.05]	-3.00**				

Constant: $\beta = 5.78$, $\sigma_{\beta} = .024$, $t(337) = 23.99^{**}$, BCa = [5.31, 6.26]

***p*-value is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**p*-value is significant at .05 level of confidence.

[] BCa Confidence Intervals at 95% level of confidence

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender; Siblings; Birth Order; Home-Related Stressors; Role Demands

b. Dependent Variable: School Engagement

c. Unless otherwise noted, bootstrap results are based on 1000 bootstrap samples

N = 343

[Table 3](#) showed the regression analysis between school engagement and gender, siblings, birth order, home-related stressors, role demands, and school engagement with a Durbin-Watson value of 1.91 and an AIC value of 781.37. For this model, gender, number of siblings, birth order, home-related stressors, and role demands were used in predicting school engagement with the constant $\beta = 5.78$, $\sigma_{\beta} = .024$, $t(337) = 23.99$, $r = .40$, BCa = [5.31, 6.26]. Based from the results of the study, gender ($t(337) = -2.68$, $p < .01$, BCa = [-.41, -.06]), siblings ($t(337) = 2.46$, $p = .01$, BCa = [.02, .19]), birth order ($t(337) = -2.16$, $p = .03$, BCa = [-.19, -.01]), home-related stressors ($t(337) = -4.11$, $p < .01$, BCa = [-.29, -.10]), and role demands ($t(337) = -3.00$, $p < .01$, BCa = [-.25, -.05]) were all found to be significant predictors of school engagement. All variables shared 16.00% of the variance in explaining school engagement and was found to be a good fit ($F = 12.53$). Considering that all the assumptions used were correct as well as the sample size used by the researchers for the conduct of this study, school engagement may be dependent on one's gender, number of siblings, birth order, home-related stressors, and role demands. Among the variables, it was found that home-related stressors had the highest influence ($b = -.24$) while gender was found to have the lowest influence ($b = -.13$). This showed how increased levels of home-related stressors may hugely affect school engagement, with females being particularly more vulnerable to decreased school engagement. The study results confirm the study hypothesis that home challenges encountered predict school engagement, with home-related stressors and role demands having the most influence. This is in relation to [Parr \(2012\)](#) and [Morris et al. \(2021\)](#) who argued that since students also have multiple roles in life, school-related tasks can be left unattended as students become overburdened with home responsibilities, demands, and expectations. Examples of these home responsibilities which become challenging, as enumerated by [Cheng and McCarthy \(2013\)](#), include caring for their loved ones, the children, or the elderly, having house chores, and helping with the daily expenses.

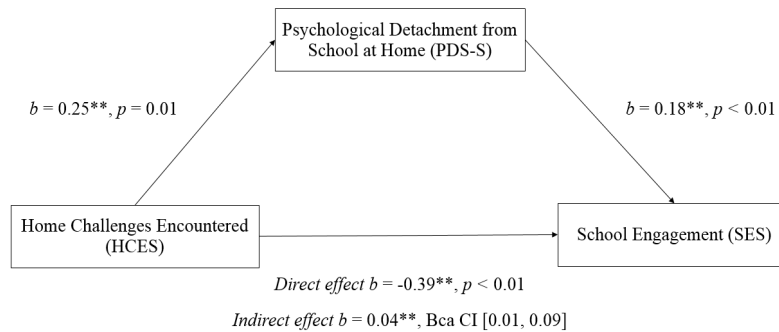


Figure 1. This is the caption of the figure located below the figure

[Figure 1](#) shows the visualization as to what extent psychological detachment from school mediated the relationship between home challenges encountered and school engagement based from the results obtained from the study. Looking at the direct effect of home challenges encountered on school engagement, the direct effect of home challenges encountered on school engagement was significantly negative, $b = -.35$, 95% BCa CI [-.45, -.24], $t = -6.41$, $p < .01$. However, when psychological detachment from school at home was added to the model, the indirect effect of home challenges encountered on school engagement was minimally reduced, $b = .04$, 95% BCa CI [.01, .09]. Interestingly, since home challenges encountered is also positively associated with psychological detachment from school at home, it can be said that psychological detachment from school at home functions for the improvement of both home and school domains. Thus, home challenges encountered has an indirect positive effect on school engagement via its positive effect on psychological detachment from school at home.

Based from the study results, it can then be stated that home challenges encountered affect psychological detachment from school at home or during non-school hours which in turn influences school engagement. The manner by which a college student will become engaged or disengaged with school would then be affected by the level of psychological detachment from school at home or during non-school hours. Thus, it can be stated that college students who experience extremely difficult challenges at home but are able to psychologically detach from school whenever they are at home or during non-school hours may still be able to engage actively in school activities. If such college students are not able to psychologically detach from school, it may lead to decreased school engagement as their resources are lost without replenishment based on the E-R theory. In a way, the negative effects of home challenges encountered on school engagement are cancelled or buffered out by psychological detachment from school at home or during non-school hours. Conversely, college students who experience little to no challenges at home but are less likely to psychologically detach from school at home or during non-school hours may become less engaged. Again, although this may seem counterintuitive, the COR theory posits that if resources are not effectively managed, it may result to further loss cycles. Thus, even though these college students experience relatively little problems at home, they may still feel exhausted if they are attached to their school roles and tasks 24/7 without sufficient breaks. An interesting implication for this study is as to how college students who encounter extreme challenges at home may still be able to have high levels of engagement at school for as long as they are able to psychologically detach from school whenever needed. This could be due to how home challenges encountered may be seen by college students as motivations to do better at school. As [Hobfoll \(2012\)](#) reiterated, families work together to acquire, conserve, foster, and protect the same resources through mutual cooperation, which is why even though home challenges can be extremely difficult for some college students, they still strive to participate in school. This is also in relation to [Alampay \(2014\)](#) who pointed out how the Filipino family practices values such as cohesiveness, extended kin, and respect for elders often regardless of the circumstances.

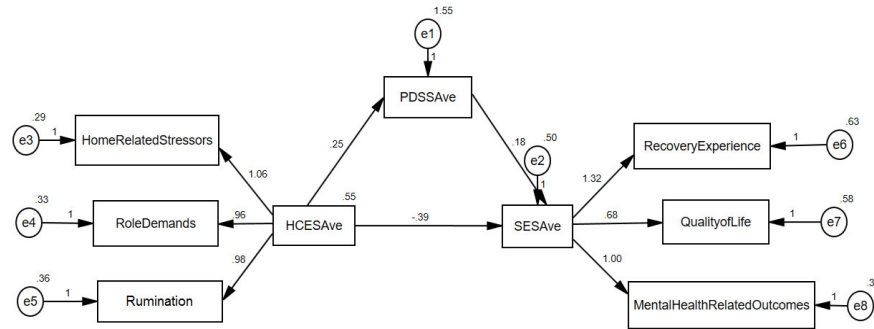


Figure 2. This is the caption of the figure located below the figure.

[Figure 2](#) shows the complete mediational model showing how psychological detachment from school at home partially mediated the relationship between home challenges encountered and school engagement as well as the interaction of each variable with its respective subscales. The model was found to have a χ^2 value of 937.63 and GFI value of .68. Based from the model, home challenges encountered has a coefficient of $-.39$ to school engagement, implying that an increase in the level of home challenges encountered results to a $.39$ decrease in the level of school engagement. Similarly, an increase in the level of home challenges encountered results to a $.25$ increase in the level of psychological detachment from school at home or during non-school hours. Afterwards, an increase in the level of psychological detachment from school at home or during non-school hours resulted to a $.18$ increase in the level of school engagement. No person factors were found to be significantly associated with the level of home challenges encountered.

To further, the results show how psychological detachment from school at home or during non-school hours aids in discontinuing the negative effects of home challenges encountered on school engagement, seemingly acting as a buffer between both home and school domains. Thus, in congruence with both COR and E-R theories, it will help college students who face difficult home challenges to psychologically detach from the school setting temporarily in order to accommodate home and familial concerns and, when such challenges are resolved or made minimal, they become more able to bounce back without compensating their performance at school. However, person factors considered for this study, namely age, gender, year level, family income, family size, and birth order, were not found to be significantly associated with the overall level of home challenges encountered, showing that regardless of one's sociodemographic has little to no effect over the challenges encountered at home. This may be due to how home challenges as one unit is a product of the interaction between home-related stressors, role demands, and rumination which may be more related to one's person factors. Thus, no single factor can ultimately define home challenges encountered.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Conclusion

This study aimed to determine the role of psychological detachment from school at home in examining the effects of home challenges on school engagement among students in an online learning set-up through Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources (COR) theory and Meijman and Mulder's Effort-Recovery (E-R) theory. While there were previous studies on psychological detachment, most focused on the work setting. Additionally, the difference between school detachment and psychological detachment from school at home or during non-school hours should be emphasized. Lastly, there is a need for a framework which integrates both home and school setting to show a realistic understanding as to how college students learn during the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, the researchers gathered data from 371 second and third year college students enrolled in Lyceum of the Philippines University-Laguna and LPU-St. Cabrini School of Health Sciences who were 18 to 24 years old and enrolled in an online learning set-up for A.Y. 2021-2022 from December 21, 2021 to January 18, 2022.

In determining the demographic profile of the participants, it was found that most of the participants were around 20 years of age. Female college students also outnumbered the male college students, and the LGBTQIA++ Community was underrepresented. Most of the college students were regular students in their second year of study who were mostly from the College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management (CITHM) for LPU-Laguna and College of Allied Medicine (CAM) for LPU-St. Cabrini School of Health Sciences. The study was able to represent all college students from different socioeconomic backgrounds, with most of the participants coming from lower middle income families with 4 to 7 members. It was also estimated that each college student has about 1 to 2 siblings. Lastly, most college students were first-born children.

When it came to identifying the college students' level of home challenges encountered, it was found that participants encounter moderate levels of challenges at home, of which rumination was determined as the most difficult. Specifically, college students mostly ruminated about their families' expectations of them. Despite this, they found it easy to concentrate on other important things which enables them to remain productive. Role demands were found to be the next stressful factor encountered by students at home, with college students reporting how they have to look out for all of their family members most of the time. However, they also acknowledge that their family is not dependent on them and that their family members help them with their responsibilities at home. Lastly, college students reported low levels of home-related stressors and found it easy to deal with them. College students get upset whenever family problems happen unexpectedly. On the brighter side, however, they have good relationships at home, are provided with their own comfortable living spaces, and are safe from any forms of physical abuse during arguments.

In relation to identifying the college students' level of psychological detachment from school at home, it was found that participants also encounter moderate levels of psychological detachment from school at home or during non-school hours. Specifically, they reported taking a break from their academic life whenever things get too demanding. However, they found it difficult to psychologically detach from thinking about their school activities during non-school hours, thus showing how their non-school hours are compensated for their school activities.

In knowing the participants' level of school engagement, college students reported moderate levels of engagement with their school activities, of which recovery experience was determined as their most engaging experience with school. Specifically, they reported how they can decide what activities to do during their free time. However, free time does not automatically mean non-school hours as they found it difficult to rest and relax after school hours. College students were also found to be moderately engaged in terms of mental health-related outcomes. For them, their lives as students are meaningful. However, doing school activities do not put them in a good mood. Additionally, they found it difficult to regulate their emotions whenever doing school activities. Lastly, students struggle to engage in relation with their quality of life. Specifically, while they do not experience any difficulties in terms of physical movement, they often complained of being unable to eat on time and experiencing headaches.

When it came to identifying the predictors of school engagement, overall home challenges encountered emerged as a significant factor to consider, thus showing how difficulties faced in the home setting have direct negative effects to school engagement. It may also be important to consider how gender, number of siblings, birth order, home-related stressors, and role demands emerged as significant factors in predicting school engagement as well.

In relation with determining whether psychological detachment from school at home mediated the relationship between home challenges encountered and school engagement, it was found that psychological detachment from school at home is a significant mediator effective in suppressing or discontinuing the negative effects of home challenges encountered on school engagement. To further, psychological detachment from school at home or during non-school hours acts as a buffer between both home and school domains.

Recommendations

The researchers contend that the study could serve as a reference for future researchers. Therefore, based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following are highly advised to learn more about this social phenomenon:

Demographic variables, most especially age, gender, family's average monthly income, and birth order, are highly influential factors which affect not only one's engagement at school but also the difficulty of each challenge encountered at home. With this, institutions may opt to devise student-centered programs which cater to specific populations as opposed to using a one-size-fits-all approach to reaching out to its students. Additionally, due to the current set-up, parents are also influential figures as they stay at home with their children. To further, parents may work on giving more consideration to their children and supporting their needs regardless of any bias related to gender or birth order.

As college students tended to deal with moderate levels of challenges at home primarily focused on overthinking and having pessimistic thoughts that will not help them solve their problems, instead, it is recommended for them to focus on what can be done to alleviate the situation and who can be of help. Mindfulness meditation and emotional regulation strategies may be effective in helping them manage and control their thoughts. Taking care of their physical and mental well-being is also important in order to sufficiently engage at school. Eating a balanced meal and sleeping for an ample number of hours are just some of the ways by which they can better practice self-care. Additionally, since college students were moderately able to psychologically detach from school in the current set-up, the researchers suggest that they psychologically detach from school whenever possible and appropriate so that they can better attend to the challenges they encounter at home and the demands they face at school. In an online set-up, it may be tempting to do school activities at one's time of convenience, yet students should be aware of the consequences of such compensations. Although one's academic life consumes a huge part of that individual's sense of identity, setting boundaries can also be healthy and helpful in order to effectively manage one's different roles in life.

Through this study, teachers may also improve on their instructional practices by introducing methodologies which will not compel students to work beyond school hours through using collaborative teaching approaches during class hours. Providing students with an interactive and comfortable atmosphere during class hours as well as activities which allow them to have their autonomy will aid in increasing their engagement. Since college students were found to be moderately engaged at school, the manner by which the school serves as a sufficient "recovery experience" domain is important in understanding how being a student becomes integrated with one's identity. This shows how school roles also play an important part in one's life. To further, institutions may gear towards promoting better programs and extracurricular activities targeted at helping students manage healthy boundaries, regulate their emotions, practice mindfulness meditation and self-care strategies, and express how they truly feel. Since an institution is more than just an academic center for learning, it may look into providing non-academic opportunities in a way that will be engaging for students. This may be done through workshops, trainings, sessions, introspection, meditation, yoga and other activities.

Although limited face-to-face classes are already being implemented, adjusting from online to face-to-face learning will not be easy and thus, the institution should take necessary steps to psychologically prepare students for the gradual resumption of face-to-face classes, of which psychological detachment plays a major role. To further, supporting students especially during these hard times is more than necessary. Parents can do so by being involved with their children's growth, guiding their children of the beneficial merits of education, and providing ample resources for their children. Additionally, parents may also help their students manage their time and roles at home and at school. Lastly, while the mediating role of psychological detachment from school at home in examining the effects of home challenges encountered on school engagement has been established, the researchers recommend further replications of the study across other institutions and the utilization the three psychological scales developed for the purposes of this study as they are more localized to the experiences of Filipino college students. Additionally, future researchers may also consider looking at how psychological detachment from school at home may differ according to the person factors explored and how they interplay with school engagement. They may also explore on the moderating role of psychological detachment from school at home. Lastly, psychological detachment from home at school may also be an intriguing phenomenon to explore. The overlap between home and school domains show how complex a college student's life could be and thus, what they need the most is understanding, consideration, and guidance.

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