

# COPING STRATEGIES AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS OF SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS AMID COVID-19

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## Purpose of Study

- How does COVID-19 affect psychological distress of social work students?
- How do social work students use coping strategies to deal with distress?
- How do social work students' different racial and ethnic backgrounds affect their psychological distress and coping strategies?

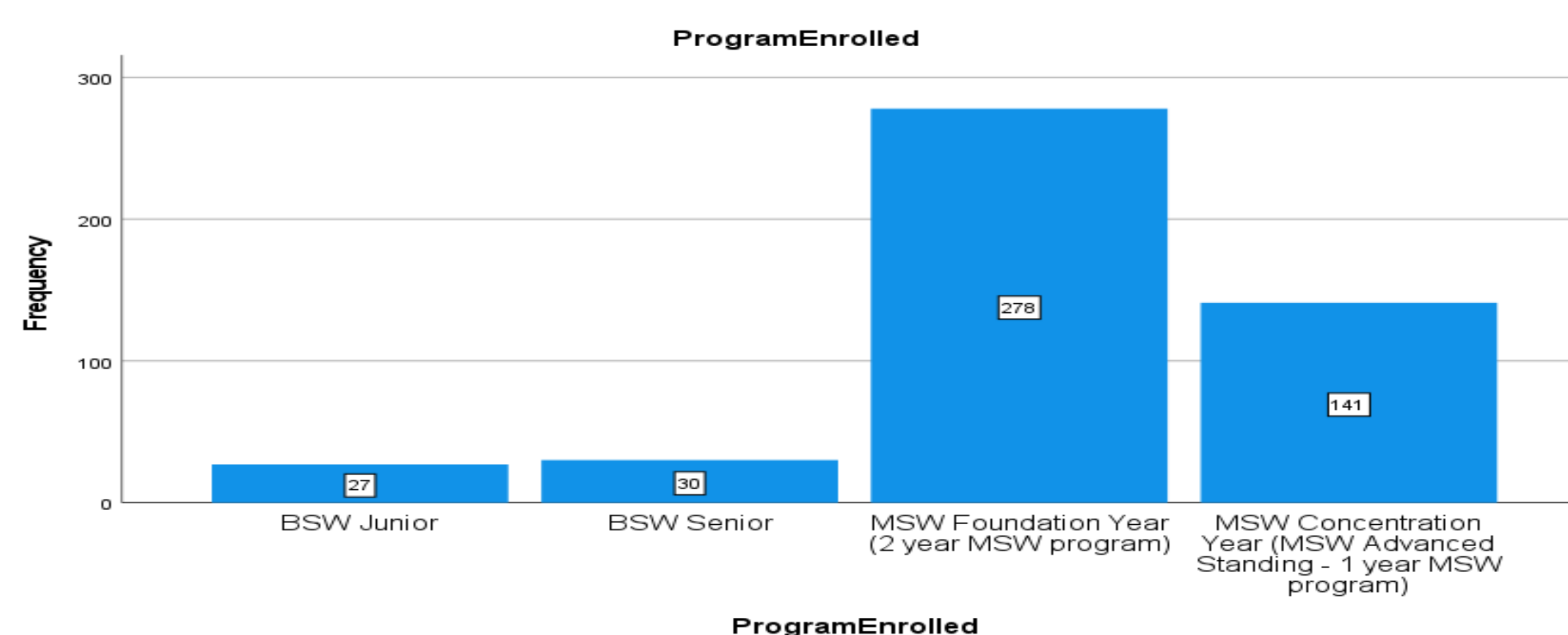
## Methods

- The study employed a quantitative research method utilizing an online survey.
- BSW and MSW students (N=482) from social work schools in the U.S. were recruited.

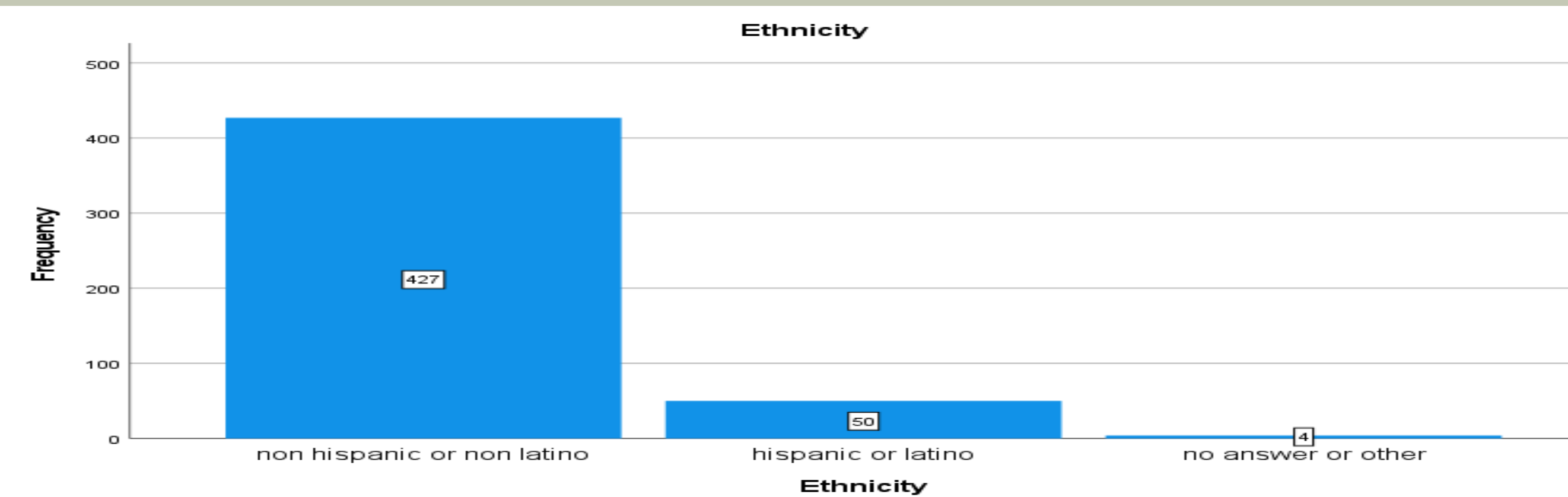
## Instruments

- Participant demographic questionnaire
- 10-item Hopkins Symptom Checklist-10 to measure psychological distress.
- 28-item Brief COPE to measure coping strategies such as avoidant coping and approach coping

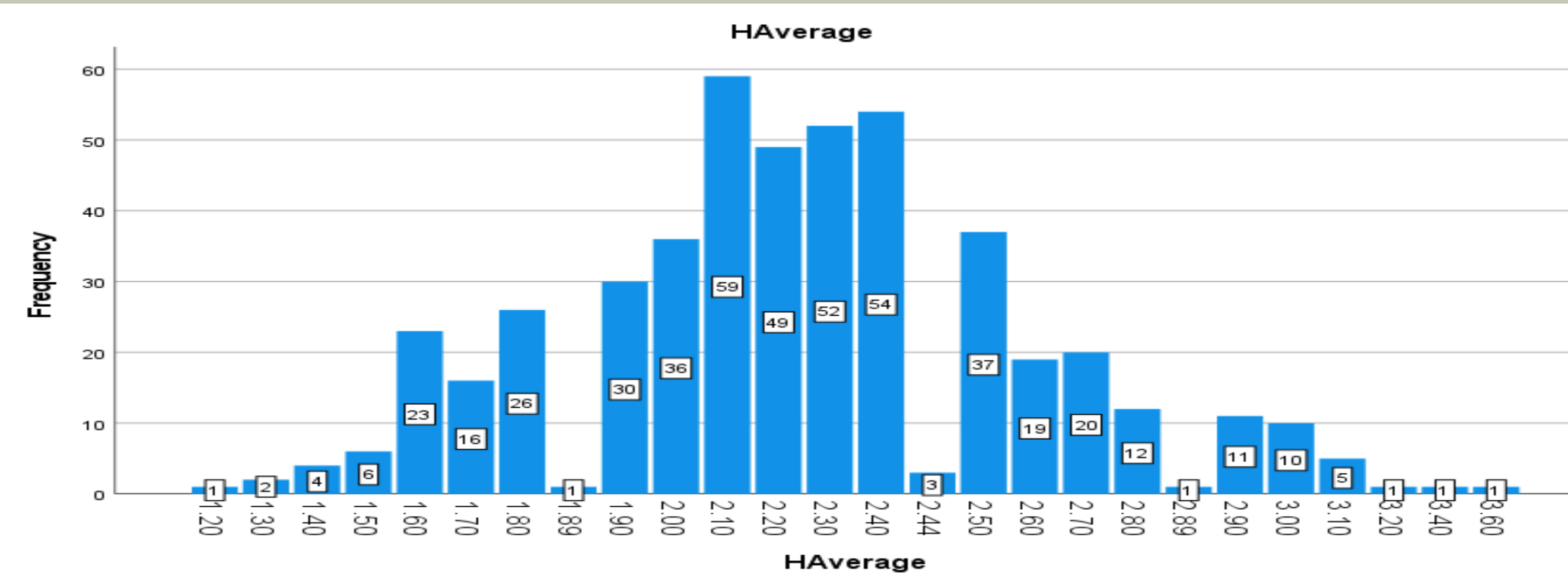
## Results – Program Enrolled



## Results - Ethnicity

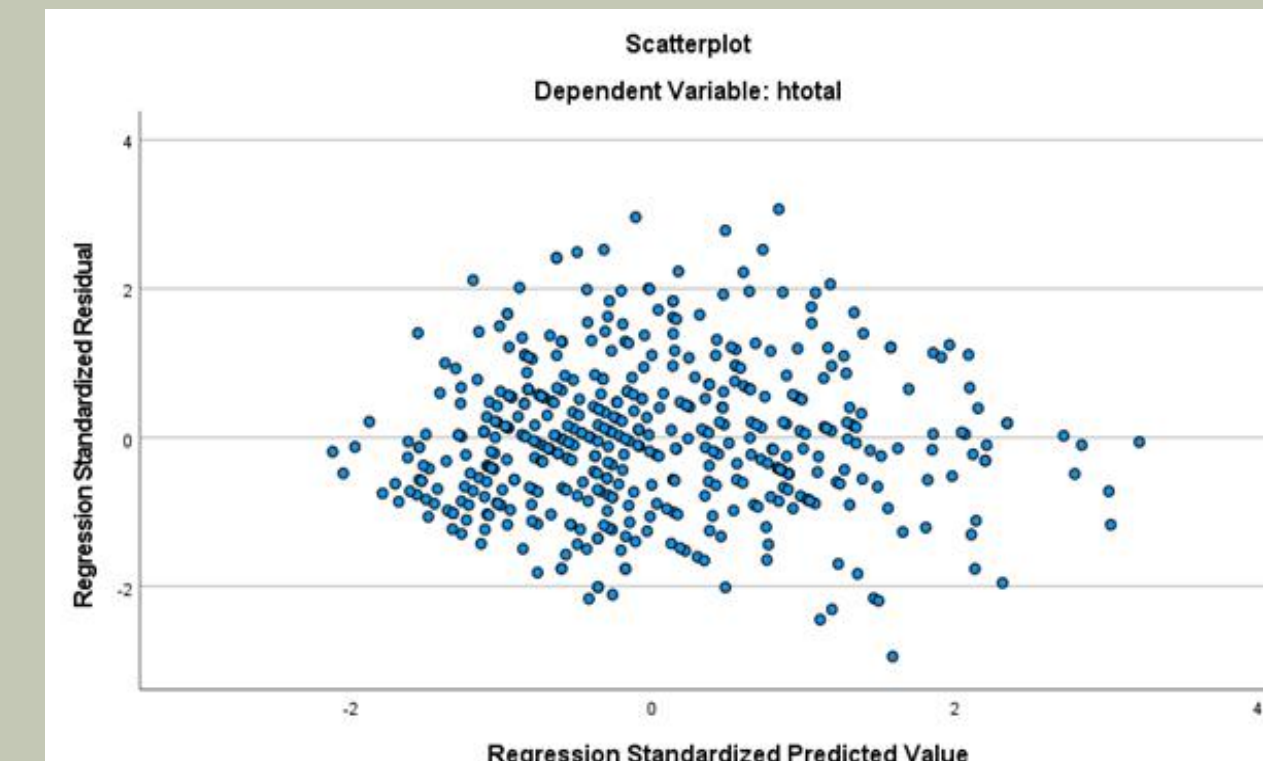
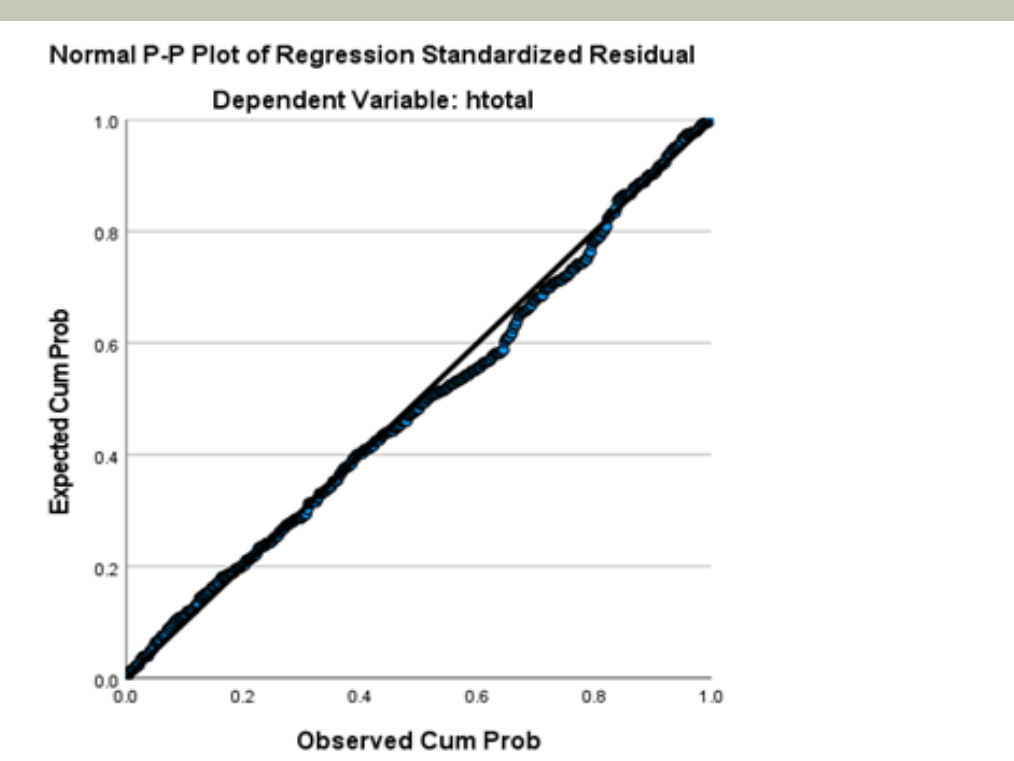


## Results – Average Scores Hopkins Symptoms Checklist



## Results – Regression Analysis

- Normal P-P Plot and Scatterplot
  - No major deviations from normality
  - No significant outliers



- Contributions (from largest to smallest)
  - Self-Blame
  - Behavioral Disengagement
  - Substance Use
  - Self-Distraction
  - Positive Reframing

## Discussion

- How does COVID-19 affect psychological distress of social work students?
  - 402 out of 482 participants scored at or above this threshold when combining the scores.
  - 280 participants scored at or above this threshold when looking at anxiety only.
  - 307 participants scored at or above this threshold when looking at depression only.
- How do social work students use coping strategies to deal with distress?
  - Students are utilizing more avoidant coping strategies
  - Examples of how this could be witnessed in the classroom
    - Absences
    - Missing assignments
    - Procrastination
    - Self defeating messages
      - Emails
      - Negative conversations in class
      - Reduced or no participation with others
- How do we develop teaching strategies aimed at inclusion, engagement and positive coping methods, and support systems?
  - Implementation of a mindfulness-based curriculum into student classrooms
    - Contains elements of Approach Coping
      - Acceptance & Positive Reframing
      - Learning to tolerate distressing feelings
  - Practicing self-care.
  - Increasing awareness about stress and coping through school programs such as student orientation, social work clubs, training/workshop, etc.
  - Social service agencies provide training focusing on adaptive coping skills for social work interns and social workers.