

Resilience and Flourishing of Students: Basis for Catholic Schools Sustainability Plan in the New Normal

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Abstract	Article Info
<p>This study investigates the resilience and flourishing levels of undergraduate students enrolled in Catholic schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. It proposes a quantitative analysis using two validated instruments: the Brief Resilience Scale for measuring resilience and the Flourishing Scale for assessing overall well-being. Data were collected from students across ten Catholic schools within the Kabankalan Diocese and analyzed through various statistical methods, including frequency, percentage, mean, Kruskal-Wallis test, and Spearman's rho correlation. The findings reveal that the majority of respondents exhibit high levels of resilience and flourishing, with notable demographic patterns, such as a predominance of female students and a significant portion from lower-income, rural backgrounds. Importantly, while no significant difference in resilience and flourishing was observed among different demographic groups, a significant relationship between the two constructs was identified. This research contributes to the understanding of student well-being in educational settings during crises, highlighting the need for supportive programs like effective Homeroom Guidance initiatives to foster resilience and flourishing among undergraduate students. Future work may explore the implementation and impact of such programs in enhancing student support systems.</p>	<p>Keywords: <i>Resilience, Flourishing, Undergraduate Students, Catholic Schools, COVID-19 Pandemic, Quantitative Analysis, Brief Resilience Scale, Flourishing Scale, Demographic Patterns, Student Well-Being</i></p>

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has emerged as a profound global crisis, reshaping nearly all facets of life and raising urgent questions about our systems of education. While primarily a health issue, the pandemic's impacts extend far beyond physical wellbeing, forcing educational institutions—particularly Catholic schools in the Philippines—to confront unprecedented challenges in sustaining their operations. As these schools navigate the tumultuous landscape created by the pandemic, the well-being of their primary stakeholders, especially students, has come to the forefront of concern. The sudden disruption to traditional learning environments has posed significant risks to students' mental, emotional, and social health, creating an urgent need for strategies that foster resilience and promote integral growth.

Catholic schools, operating as private entities with limited financial support from the government, find their survival closely tied to the engagement and commitment of their stakeholders, including administrations, faculty, staff, parents, and the broader community. This interdependence underscores the necessity for collaborative efforts to address the multifaceted challenges arising from the pandemic. The Diocesan Catholic Schools of Kabankalan Diocese, in particular, have experienced pronounced vulnerabilities, facing not only economic constraints but also challenges to the inner development and psychological resilience of their learners, as highlighted by Wodon (2020).

Understanding and addressing these challenges is crucial, as the long-term effects of the pandemic on student well-being remain uncertain. There is an urgent demand for suitable interventions to mitigate negative impacts and promote the overall health of learners. This study, therefore, aims to explore the specific ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the integral personality of students within Catholic schools, fostering a greater understanding of their experiences and needs. By focusing on this pivotal area, the research seeks to identify knowledge gaps and provide comprehensive insights into the necessary support systems that can be implemented. Ultimately, this work aspires to contribute to the broader dialogue on educational resilience, offering a foundation for future research and practical applications that enhance student well-being and development amid ongoing challenges.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected educational systems worldwide, prompting critical discussions about resilience and flourishing among students, particularly in the context of Catholic schools. Resilience, defined as the capacity to adapt and recover from adversity (Masten, 2018; American Psychological Association, 2022), is crucial for students navigating the challenges posed by the pandemic. Studies by Jason et al. (2017) and Zhang et al. (2018) highlight the relationship between resilience and improved psychological well-being, emphasizing that higher levels of resilience can moderate the negative impacts of various stressors. Moreover, the experience of social isolation and academic pressure during this period has been shown to create fluctuations in resilience among adolescents, particularly those transitioning into high school (Xing et al., 2023). Notably, the role of community resilience is also paramount; Bonanno et al. (2015) argue that strong social support networks enhance individual coping strategies, which can significantly benefit students in Catholic schools facing the dual challenges of personal well-being and academic performance.

In tandem with resilience, the concept of flourishing—an optimal state of emotional and psychological well-being—emerges as an essential component of student experience (Seligman, 2011). Flourishing encompasses more than mere survival in adversity; it emphasizes the pursuit of personal and academic goals, which can be nurtured by supportive familial and community environments. Research by Whitaker et al. (2022) correlates strong family connections with higher levels of flourishing, reinforcing the need for a holistic approach to student support within Catholic schools. Additionally, fostering Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs has proven beneficial in cultivating resilience and flourishing, as they promote essential skills like emotional regulation and problem-solving (Afek et al., 2021). Given the increased stress and mental health

concerns arising from the pandemic-induced shift to remote learning (Baloran, 2020; Yoonyoung Cho et al., 2021), Catholic schools must strategically leverage community and familial support to implement effective interventions that enhance resilience and support flourishing among students in the new normal.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design. This research employs a descriptive correlational design to assess the levels of resilience and flourishing among junior high school students enrolled in Catholic schools. Utilizing two primary research instruments, the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS) and the Flourishing Scale, the study aims to quantify students' resilience and overall well-being. The BRS assesses resilience as a unitary construct through a mix of positively and negatively worded items, while the Flourishing Scale measures self-perceived success in vital areas such as relationships, self-esteem, purpose, and optimism.

Locale of the Study. The study is conducted within the Diocesan Catholic Schools located in Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental. This area is under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Diocese of Kabankalan, which encompasses multiple municipalities ranging from La Castellana to Hinoba-an.

Respondents of the Study. Participants consist of junior high school students enrolled for the first semester of the 2022-2023 school year across ten selected Catholic schools out of sixteen in the Diocese of Kabankalan. A total of 400 respondents were chosen from various grade levels, with stratified sampling ensuring equal representation across grades 7 to 10.

Sampling Technique. Using multistage sampling, the researcher first selected 10 schools randomly from the total of 16. Following this, stratified sampling with equal allocations was employed to select 10 students from each grade level within each chosen school, culminating in 40 students per institution for participation in the study.

Research Instruments. The Brief Resilience Scale and the Flourishing Scale are the principal instruments used for this study. The BRS, which evaluates the ability to recover from stress, ranges from 1 (low resilience) to 5 (high resilience). The Flourishing Scale, encompassing 8 items, measures psychological well-being, with scores ranging from 8 (lowest) to 56 (highest).

Validity and Reliability of Instruments. Lawshe's Content Validity procedure was utilized to ensure the validity of the instruments, indicating that all items on both scales are deemed essential by a panel of five validators. The reliability of the BRS and Flourishing Scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, yielding values of 0.612 and 0.807, respectively, affirming an acceptable level of reliability for the instruments.

Data Gathering Procedure. The researcher sought and received ethical approval from the Graduate School and Diocese authorities before conducting the study. Administrators were contacted for permission, followed by obtaining consent from parents. Surveys were administered directly to participants under the guidance of teachers, ensuring clarity and comprehension of the questions.

Data Analysis. Collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage for demographic profiling, and mean calculations for evaluating resilience and flourishing levels. Additionally, the Kruskal-Wallis test was employed to determine significant differences among groups, while Spearman's rho correlation was used to explore potential relationships between resilience and flourishing outcomes.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 2 shows the Frequency and Percentage distribution of the demographic profile of the Catholic Junior High School students as to their sex, grade level, monthly family income, and location of residence.

Noticed that females outnumbered the males, the highest number of respondents came from the 8th grade level and almost 50% of the respondents have a family income of less than P11, 000.00 while more than 50% of them came from the rural area.

This implies that most of the respondents coming from the rural are usually from poor family with very low monthly earnings.

According to the study of Cho et al., (2021), there is a stark gender divide on who provides help to children for studying within a household. Women were much more likely to provide help to a child on schoolwork than men. While men were more likely to report working than women (62.3 percent of adult men worked versus 36.4 percent adult women in October 2020), differences in employment did not account for these differences in help for children's schooling. In fact, women who worked in the labor market were more likely to help children with schoolwork while men who worked were no less likely to help children with schoolwork.

Table 2. Demographic profile of the Catholic Junior High school students

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
• Female	230	60.8
• Male	148	39.2
Grade level		
• Grade 7	93	24.6
• Grade 8	97	25.7
• Grade 9	95	25.1
• Grade 10	93	24.6
Monthly family income		
• Below 11,690	176	46.6
• 11,690 to 23,381	103	27.2
• 23,381 to 46,761	62	16.4
• 46,761 to 81,832	23	6.1
• 81,832 to 140,284	9	2.4
• 140,284 to 233,806	3	.8
• Above 233,806	2	.5
Location of residence		
• Rural	211	55.8
• Urban	167	44.2
Total	378	100.0

Extent of Resilience

Table 3 shows that the extent of resilience of the Catholic Junior High School Students have a mean of 3.67 which is interpreted as high. This result is evident in their high rating of item no. 1, 3, and 4. In giving high ratings on these items, it implies that Catholic Junior High School Students can control their reactions in whatever happens to them, that they can grow in positive way in dealing with difficult situations, and that whatever losses they encounter in their lives they can look for ways to replace it.

On the other hand, the statement "I don't over react to situations" got the lowest mean which is moderate. This merely suggests that the students, though moderate are still capable of self-control and composure in the face of difficult circumstances. This is considered a constructive display of resiliency.

Generally, the result shows that the respondents are resilient in times of crisis especially during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

This conforms with the idea that individual reaction and subsequent response to the crisis varies. Some people can bounce back easily and shortly in trying times while some others cannot and will possibly develop depression and other psychiatric disorders (Ojo et al., 2020).

Table 3. Extent of resilience of the Catholic Junior High School students during the Covid-19 pandemic

MEAN	SD	INTERPRETATION
3.78	0.754	High

I look for creative ways to alter difficult situations.

I don't over react to situations 3.10 0.933 Moderate

I believe I can grow in positive ways by dealing with difficult situations 3.93 0.877 High

I actively look for ways to replace the losses I encounter in life. 3.89 0.826 High

Extent of Resilience 3.67 0.473 High

Extent of Flourishing

Table 4 presents the Catholic Junior High School Students extent of flourishing during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The extent of flourishing of the Catholic Junior High School Students has a mean of 2.10 which is interpreted as very high. This result is evident in their very high rating of item no. 1, 6, and 7. In giving high ratings on these items, it implies that Catholic Junior High School Students are living a purposeful and meaningful lives, are good persons and are living a good life and very optimistic towards their future. Therefore, their extent of flourishing is very high during the Covid-19 Pandemic which enables them to survive all the challenges brought by the pandemic.

This result conforms to the great faith and wisdom traditions which valiantly helped meet the challenge of COVID-19. In the study of Levin (2022), it was stated that faith and wisdom traditions contributed to the collective resilience and thus the ability of human kind to flourish. Religious people and institutions have done this in very tangible ways. This positive contribution does not negate the negative examples, but the impact is profound and the story deserves an airing. The spiritual community has contributed in a few distinct ways, through fulfilling the historic functions of religion and showcasing the very best of what it means to earnestly uphold spiritually grounded and other-regarding beliefs and value systems.

Table 4. Extent of flourishing of the Catholic Junior High School students during the Covid-19 pandemic

	MEAN	SD	INTERPRETATION
I lead a purposeful and meaningful life.	1.77	1.018	Very High
I have a good relationship with others.	2.49	1.028	Very High
I am engaged and interested in my daily activities.	2.27	1.064	Very High
I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others.	2.22	0.984	Very High
I am competent and capable of helping in important activities.	2.39	1.024	Very High
I am working to be a good person and live a good life	1.92	0.959	Very High
I believe I can have a good future.	1.66	0.904	Very High
I act in ways that people will respect me.	2.09	0.945	Very High
Extent of Flourishing	2.10	0.622	Very High

Significant Difference between the Demographic Profile of Catholic Junior High School Students and their Extent of Resilience

Table 5 presents the significant difference in the Catholic Junior High School Students' extent of Resilience when grouped according to profile.

Mann-Whitney test revealed no significant difference on the extent of resilience when grouped by sex ($U = 15901.5, p = .273$) and location of residence ($U = 16801.0, p = .431$). Moreover, Kruskal-Wallis test also showed no significant difference on the extent of resilience of students when grouped by grade level ($H = 2.179, p = .536$) and monthly family income ($H = .549, p = .969$).

This means that the resilience of the respondents during is not dictated by their profile. This is contradicting to a study which results showed that perceived changes in religiosity from before to during the COVID-19 pandemic are associated with flourishing. Results indicated that self-reported decreases in each dimension of religiosity were associated with lower overall flourishing. This pattern of findings was largely similar for the domains of flourishing indicating possible evidence of religious coping. Faith communities might have to find ways of supporting members during the challenging COVID-19 period to prevent long-term declines in flourishing (Ojo et al., 2020).

Table 5. Difference in the Catholic Junior High School students' extent of resilience when grouped according to profile

EXTENT OF RESILIENCE	MEAN RANK	TEST STAT	P-VALUE	DECISION	INTERPRETATION
Sex					
Female	181.94	15901.5	0.273	Do not Reject Ho	Not significant
Male	194.36				
Grade Level		2.179	0.536	Do not Reject Ho	Not significant
Grade 7	176.80				
Grade 8	198.36				
Grade 9	194.48				
Grade 10	187.87				
Family Monthly Income		0.549	0.969	Do not Reject Ho	Not significant
Below 11k	185.77				
11k-23k	192.14				
23k-46k	190.60				
46k-81k	200.61				
Above 81k	193.89				
Location of residence		16801.0	0.431	Do not Reject Ho	Not significant
Rural	193.37				
Urban	184.60				

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE AMONG THE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF CATHOLIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' EXTENT OF FLOURISHING

Table 6 shows the difference among the demographic profile of Catholic Junior High School Students' extent of flourishing.

Mann-Whitney test revealed no significant difference on the extent of flourishing when grouped by sex ($U = 16124.0, p = .386$) and location of residence ($U = 16622.5, p = .344$).

Moreover, Kruskal-Wallis test also showed no significant difference on the extent of flourishing of students when grouped by grade level ($H = 6.691, p = .082$) and monthly family income ($H = 2.672, p = .614$).

This implies that the extent of flourishing is the same regardless of sex, grade level, place of residence, or income.

This conforms to the belief that flourishing is a personal decision. According to the study of Galken et al., (2022) poverty is viewed as multi-dimensional because in many areas of life it limits or prevents opportunities and freedoms for reasonable individuals to choose to be and to do what they value. In this view, poverty reduction and human development are the expansion of opportunities and freedoms to flourish by making life choices, for example, to eat, to be healthy, to forge supportive relationships and to be well educated. For the capability approach, individuals flourish when they are free to choose how they want to function in all areas of life.

Table 6. Difference in the Catholic Junior High School students' extent of flourishing when grouped according to profile

EXTENT OF FLOURISHING	MEAN RANK	TEST STAT	P-VALUE	DECISION	INTERPRETATION
G					
Sex		16124.0	0.386	Do not Reject Ho	Not significant
Female	195.55185				
Male	.60				
Grade Level		6.691	0.082	Do not Reject Ho	Not significant
Grade 7					
Grade 8	194.78				
Grade 9	186.24				
Grade 10	168.72				
	208.84				
Family Monthly Income		2.672	0.614	Do not Reject Ho	Not significant
Below 11k	184.22				
11k-23k					
23k-46k	203.01				
46k-81k	190.69				
Above 81k	173.46				
	177.57				
Location of residence		16622.5	0.344	Do not Reject Ho	Not significant
Rural					
Urban	194.22				
	183.54				

SIGNIFICANT ASSOCIATION BETWEEN THE CATHOLIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' EXTENT OF RESILIENCE AND EXTENT OF FLOURISHING

Table 7 below shows the association between the Catholic Junior High School Students' extent of resilience and extent of flourishing.

Spearman rank correlation test revealed a significant positive association between extent of resilience and extent of flourishing, $\rho = -0.367$, $p < 0.01$.

This suggests that the higher the extent of resilience, the higher also is the extent of flourishing and vice versa.

This conforms to the belief that family support plays a vital role in the flourishing of adolescence. The study of Barnhart et al., (2022) revealed that at the family-level, our findings demonstrated that higher levels of family resilience were related to higher levels of flourishing among children and adolescents. Family resilience may promote flourishing by fostering nurturing social environments that provide children and adolescents with support, hope, and encouragement.

Table 7. Association between the Catholic Junior High School students extent of resilience and extent of flourishing

Variable	Test Stat	p-Value	Decision	Interpretation
Extent of Resilience and Extent of Flourishing	-0.367	.000	Reject Ho	Significant

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate a positive relationship between resilience and flourishing among students, highlighting that higher levels of resilience are associated with greater well-being and life satisfaction. Interestingly, the data suggest an inverse correlation between the extent of flourishing and resilience, implying that as resilience increases, students tend to experience more positive outcomes in their overall well-being. The COVID-19 pandemic underscores the importance of resilience as a vital trait for overcoming challenges; students who possess resilience are better equipped to withstand the adverse effects of the crisis. Similarly, maintaining a positive outlook on life fosters a sense of purpose and meaning, which is crucial for thriving despite difficulties. The results also reveal that resilience and flourishing are predominantly shaped by individual choices and attitudes rather than by demographic factors such as gender, grade level, income, or place of residence. Overall, this study emphasizes that fostering resilience and a positive mindset can enable students to develop and flourish even amidst unprecedented challenges like the pandemic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are generated by the researchers:

1. The Commission on Education and School Administrator must create a sustainability plan that will help students' religious convictions and prayer lives as members of a Catholic institution. It is vital to carry out a variety of religious activities in order to support their ability to live resilient and flourishing lives.
2. Guidance counselors must consider that in addition to the students' academic development, there is a need to balance their social and emotional development so that they can continue to lead resilient and flourishing lives.
3. It is also recommends that similar studies shall be conducted in the future using other variables that would help determine the resilience and flourishing of students in times of crisis in their lives.

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