Rising from Struggles: A Descriptive Qualitative Study on the Development of Low-Performing Bachelor of Science in Disaster Resilience Management Students

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ABSTRACT

Low-performing students are an educational problem. This study explored the development of the characteristics of low-performing BSDRM students using qualitative descriptive research design, I interviewed 12 purposively selected participants and applied thematic analysis to analyze the data. The findings revealed that classroom instruction, training, and OJT exposure helped cultivate responsibility, discipline, resilience, preparedness, empathy, survival skills, and disaster-response capabilities, although limited practical opportunities and resources hindered their full competence as future disaster responders. Educators and disaster-response practitioners may strengthen the learning environment through supportive instruction and practical activities to improve students' academic performance and disaster preparedness. Future studies may use correlational designs and Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to examine and validate the identified themes.

Keywords: Rising from struggle, descriptive qualitative study, development of low-performing, bachelor of science disaster resilience management students

INTRODUCTION

In this section presented the problem and its scope, significance of the study, research questions, theory and theoretical lens, and the study assumptions.

The problem and its scope

Low-performing students have become a major educational concern in higher education institutions worldwide. In all education systems, a significant number of students are still identified that are not achieving the expected learning competencies and grades. In terms of learning outcomes, academic achievement, or student proficiency, it is now an undeniable fact that academic performance of students in college has been declining in recent times, as emphasized by international studies. Recent literature further emphasizes the ongoing problem in educational quality and the development of student learning in many parts of the world, as shown by low-performing students (Demareva et al., 2023; Bonacini et al., 2023).

From a global perspective, in the United States, students entering and studying in higher education institutions (HEIs) have been reported to lack academic readiness and college-level competencies (Becerra et al., 2023). International education measures showed that pupils in the United Kingdom achieved the lowest mathematics and science scores since 2006, highlighting ongoing concerns about their mathematics and science standards (Busby, 2023). A number of student achievement reports have been issued in Australia over the years and have consistently pointed to a lack of academic performance and student satisfaction with the quality of university learning (Miller et al., 2024).

In the Philippine context, research in the country has underscored this glaring problem of low proficiency and poor educational performance of Filipino learners and students. Observed that Filipino students had been showing low achievements in test scores in international assessments that measure students' educational

competency and performance, indicating that academic performance and development in the Philippines remains a concern. (Bernardo et al., 2023) In addition, there are several studies conducted in the Philippines that have reported on the problems encountered in academic performance and academic learning outcomes among higher education students in the country's colleges and universities (Collado et al., 2023).

In the Davao Region, the problem of low-performing college students still exists in some higher education institutions. Studies in the local context of Davao City cited student academic achievement, scholastic performance and learning competencies among the tertiary learners as concerns. The difference in the academic performance of college students in Davao City still exists in the higher education institutions, and this shows the continuing concern of education in Davao City. The continuity of low-performing college students in Davao Region may lead to academic excellence problems, less confidence in academic involvement, less readiness for professional duties, and problems in maintaining institutional learning standards. These impacts could also impact the academic standing and image of colleges and universities in the area (Pulgarinas., 2023).

This problematic situation seems to endure with consequence in the student's academic and professional formation. However, there is a clear research gap in the limited understanding of how BSDRM students' characteristics interact with environmental influences such as classroom instruction, training exposure, and institutional support systems, particularly in relation to their academic adjustment, engagement, and holistic development. This urgent need for investigation highlights that if student characteristics do not align with environmental demands, students may experience difficulty in meeting academic expectations, low involvement in learning processes, and challenges in achieving holistic development, which may further lead to reduced readiness for career opportunities, increased stress levels, and lower satisfaction with the educational experience. Therefore, there is a need to explore the characteristics of students in the BSDRM program and examine the effects of the environment on students, as the findings of this study can have a significant impact in guiding educational practices, optimizing students' support systems, and improving student learning performance.

Significance of the study

This study recognizes that the study on the experiences of Bachelor of Science in Disaster Resilience Management students is significant in supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4 (Quality Education) and SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities). In the Philippine context, the findings support the vision, mission and mandate of the Commission on Higher Education by contributing evidence-based insights that promote equitable access, quality, and relevance of higher education, while fostering the development of locally responsive, innovative, and globally competitive graduates and lifelong learners. Furthermore, this study aligns with the vision, mission and goals of the Holy Cross of Davao College Graduate School Program, which envisions the formation of holistically equipped professionals and commits to providing quality instruction, relevant research, and socially responsive service. By examining students' personal and environmental experiences, the study contributes to improving academic performance, training access, and institutional support systems, thereby fostering professional competent disaster resilience practitioners who can effectively serve communities, reflecting the institution's commitment to forming graduates who are agents of social transformation guided by the motto of the graduate school.

Statement of the problem

In this study, this explored the development of a low-performing Bachelor of Science in Disaster Resilience Management student. Specifically, this research seeks to address the question:

1. What are the development of low-performing BSDRM students on their characteristics?
2. What ways these characteristics are influenced by their environment?

Theoretical Lens

This research was anchored on the **Person-Environment (P-E) Fit Theory (French et al., 1982)**, which is generally defined as the compatibility between individuals and their environment. This theory holds that individuals have positive outcomes that bring personal needs, values, goals, abilities, and personalities into their environments. In contrast, organizational environments carry distinctive demands, supplies, values, and cultures,

and "fitting in" is not a static state but an evolving process that triggers behavioral, cognitive, and affective responses. P-E fit theory states that stress arises not from the person or environment separately, but rather from misfit between the person and environment. Together, these elements reflect a dynamic and reciprocal relationship between the person and the environment, making P-E Fit Theory a highly relevant lens through which to examine the experiences between the person and the environment. In addition to Person-Environment Fit Theory, this study may also be viewed through the lens of ***Resilience Theory,*** originally proposed by Norman Garmezy (1973) and further developed by researchers such as Ann Masten (2001). ***Resilience Theory*** emphasizes an individual's capacity to adapt positively and recover from adversity, challenges, and demanding life circumstances. The theory suggests that individuals can develop protective factors that enable them to cope effectively with stressors and maintain positive functioning despite difficulties. Within the context of BSDRM students, resilience is reflected in their ability to overcome academic difficulties, develop coping mechanisms, and persist despite barriers related to learning, training opportunities, and environmental constraints. The theory provides a useful perspective for understanding how low-performing students transform challenges into opportunities for growth, ultimately contributing to the development of disaster preparedness, adaptability, and professional competence (Garmezy, 1973; Masten, 2001).

Conceptual Paradigm

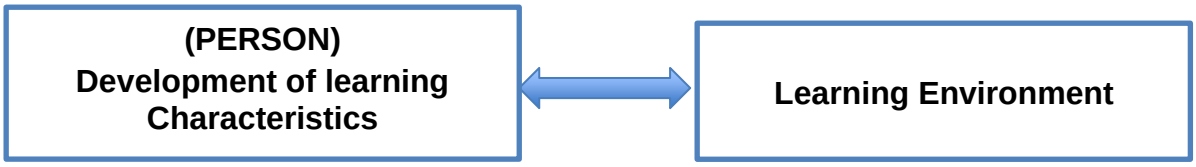


Figure 1.1. Conceptual Paradigm of Experiences of BSDRM students Based on Person-Environment Theory

Assumptions

This study assumed that students who did poorly might have differing experiences with their own individual and academic attributes when it comes to responsibility, discipline, resilience, preparedness, empathy, survival skills and disaster response skills, based on their view of and interaction with their learning environment. Furthermore, classroom instruction, training, field exposure and OJT experience could be developmental experiences that contribute to building these characteristics and that limitations of hands-on training, instruction and equal learning opportunities could be factors that may impede their ability to be fully competent and prepared to become future disaster responders.

METHODS

In this section presented the methodological procedures and explained in detail how the research was conducted. This included a thorough discussion of the research design, sampling method, data collection process, analysis procedures, and ethical considerations.

Research design

In this study, it utilized qualitative descriptive research design. This approach aims to provide a rich, straightforward description of an experience or event, rather than focusing on thick description, theory development, or interpretative meaning of the perceptions of low-performing BSDRM students. In order to create a systematic, factual, and complete understanding of the facts, properties, and relationships between the phenomena under investigation, the descriptive research method examines human stability, a specific object, a condition, a thought system, or a particular phenomenon at this time (Nazir., 2014). Through this approach, the researcher gathered detailed development of participant's characteristics and how this influenced their learning environments. One of the strengths of this research design is that it enables the generation of clear and detailed descriptions of participants' perception in their natural context, resulting in rich and practical insights that are valuable for understanding student development and improving educational practices (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Locale of the study

In this study, this was conducted at Davao del Norte State College, specifically among the students enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Disaster Resilience Management (BSDRM) program under the Institute of Leadership, Entrepreneurship, and Good Governance (ILEGG). The institution is located in Brgy. New Visayas, Panabo City, Davao del Norte, and I chose these participants because of their unique program offerings that promote disaster preparedness, resilience, and community engagement.

Sample and sampling technique

This study selected twelve fourth-year BSDRM students who were chosen based on specific criteria, namely: being officially enrolled in the BSDRM program, identified as low-performing based on key indicators such as Mock Board Interview, General Knowledge, Search and Rescue Operation, and Basic Life Support (BLS) and Standard First Aid Training (SFAT), with scores below the passing mark of 80, as well as their willingness to participate and ability to clearly express their experiences. The study utilized purposive sampling to select participants who met the specific criteria relevant to the study, allowing the researcher to gather rich, detailed, and in-depth information from participants (Creswell et al., 2018). Clear inclusion criteria were set, to guarantee the relevance and appropriateness of participant selection. The participants had to be officially registered 4th year students of BSDRM and be considered as low-performers as per the program related performance indicators, in addition to being willing to participate voluntarily and articulate their experience and opinions on academic performance and learning environment. Before starting data collection, all participants were given information on the aims and importance of the study, as well as assurances of confidentiality and the right to drop out at any time, without consequences.

Data gathering technique

In gathering the data, this study utilized both In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) as data collection methods. In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) are one-on-one, open-ended conversations used to explore participants' personal experiences and perceptions in detail (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). In this study, IDIs were conducted with six (6) participants during the data gathering phase. The advantage lies in allowing participants to freely share detailed and personal insights without outside influence. Meanwhile, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) are guided group conversations that gather shared experiences and collective perspectives about a specific topic (Krueger & Casey, 2015). FGDs were conducted with another six (6) participants after the IDIs during the data collection period. The advantage of FGDs is that they encourage participant interaction, helping generate broader ideas, common patterns, and diverse viewpoints. The semi-structured interview protocol was used to guide both in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) in order to obtain comprehensive and meaningful data. The interview guide was made up of open-ended questions that explored the participants' experiences relating to the development of their characteristics and how their learning environment affected their academic performance. These questions gave participants the freedom to express their perception, problem, and understanding concerning their educational experiences. Additionally, probing questions were used to encourage more detailed and extended responses and to give further clarity to the themes that arose and to ensure consistency of responses throughout the interviews. This allowed the researcher to get a deeper understanding of the factors that cause students to have low academic achievement as well as how environmental influences have contributed to students' learning experiences.

Data analysis technique

This study used thematic analysis following Braun and Clarke's six-phase framework. The researcher familiarized themselves with the data, then Initial codes were generated initial codes, after which I searched for themes. The themes were then reviewed the themes, defined and named them, and lastly wrote the final report. The method was suitable because it allowed for an organized and systematic interpretation of the shared perception and meaning-making of the participants. Through this analytical process, the findings remained grounded in the actual realities and perceptions of the participants, providing a credible basis for understanding the development of low-performing BSDRM students' characteristics and their preparedness in disaster-related situations.

Trustworthiness

This study ensured the trustworthiness and ethical integrity of this study, the research adhered to the criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability throughout the process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In credibility Credibility was achieved through informed consent and semi-structured interviews that allowed participants to share clear and detailed experiences, while dependability Dependability was maintained through a consistent and organized research procedure using a validated interview guide. In confirmability The study ensured by carefully analyzing the data and using participants exact statements to support the findings, and transferability I addressed by providing clear descriptions of the research context. Throughout the study, ethical standards were strictly followed in line with the Society for Moral Integrity and Legal Ethics Board and permission was secured from the institute dean and program chairperson, ensuring participant privacy, voluntary participation, and proper handling of all data, while maintaining honesty and transparency in the research process. To further enhance the rigor of the study, member checking was employed by allowing participants to review and verify the accuracy of selected interpretations derived from their responses. Additionally, an audit trail was maintained to document key research decisions, coding procedures, and theme development throughout the study. These strategies strengthened the credibility and dependability of the findings by ensuring that the interpretations accurately reflected participants' lived experiences.

RESULTS

In this section presented the results and summary findings of this study, organized to address the research questions raised at the outset directly. These results serve as the foundation for the subsequent discussion.

Development of Low Performing BSDRM Students' Personal Characteristics

During the interviews, the participants consistently described how the BSDRM program significantly developed their personal characteristics as students.

One participant stated….

> *First year sa second sem nag start nakog working student. Ma-behind ko sa uban ug sa klase kay panagsa lang man ko maka-skwela. Hina ko maka catcp up sa mga lesson unya lisod pagud among mga major subjects' ma'am tapos mabehind pagud ko mao na mo gamay akong grades gud. Personally, ang nakuha nako na experience tungod ani gani nga kurso, Ma'am, naa na koy mga alamag unsay buhaton during and after disaster gani.*
>
> (During the second semester of my first year, I started becoming a working student. I often fell behind my classmates and in our classes because I could only attend school occasionally. I struggled to catch up with the lessons, and our major subjects were already difficult, Ma'am, so being left behind caused my grades to become low. Personally, because of this course, I gained experiences and knowledge about what to do during and after disasters. (IDI1-Lines 1-2)

One participant emphasized….

> *Sa academics hina ug dili good akong performance, dili ko fast learner pero naga paningkamot na makatuon ko ug aside ana, budget pud. Akong papa raman gud ang nag trabaho tapos akong mga kuya kay naa na silay isig ka pamilya. Pero kani nga kurso kay dako gud ug tabang sa akoa Pero kani nga kurso kay dako gud ug tabang sa akoa parehas atong shearlines naay gamay nga part sa Maco, sa Hijo ug Bucana ning baha ma'am isa ko sa naka response didto.*
> (In academics, I am weak and my performance is not that good. I am not a fast learner, but I keep striving to learn, and aside from that, budgeting is also difficult. My father is the only one working, while my older brothers already have their own families. However, this course has helped me a lot. During the shear line incident, when some areas in Maco, Hijo, and Bucana experienced flooding, Ma'am, I was one of those who responded there. (IDI-1-Lines 7-8)

Participant shared…

> Akong na experience as a DRM student is naka tuon ko ug bandaging unya mag tend ug mga samad.Pananglitan naay mga kalamidad na sunog so learned pud ko ug unsaon pag prevent sa mga kalayo ug sa flood unsaon pag mitigate ana.
> (My experience as a DRM student is that I learned bandaging and how to treat wounds.For example, during disasters like fires and floods, I learned how to prevent fires and mitigate floods.) (-IDI-2-Lines 1-2)

One participant reflected…

> *Personally, nakatoon ko labaw na ang among kurso kay dapat naa gud kay knowledge ug skills about unsay buhaton before and after emergencies. Ma'am, sa among course related man pud nga dii magpataka ug labay og basura, ing-ana aron iwasan pud sa baha.*
> (Personally, I learned that our course requires knowledge and skills about what to do before and after emergencies.Our course also teaches us not to throw garbage carelessly to help prevent flooding. (IDI-3-Lines 1-2)

Participant stated…

> *As a BSDRM student, naka tabang kini sa akoa na mahimong responsible, proactive, and empathic sa mga komunidad na naapektuhan sa dakong sakuna.*
> (As a BSDRM student, this helped me become responsible, proactive, and empathetic toward communities affected by disasters.) (IDI-4-Lines 1-2)

Participant shared…

> *Nindot kaayo kay ning sulod ko ani na kurso na walay nahibal an unya karon nag OJT ko kay daghan nako ug nahibal an na sjills na pwede nako aaapply.*
> (It feels good because I entered this course without knowledge, but now during OJT, I can already apply many things.) (IDI-5-Lines 1-2)

Participant described….

> *Ang na agian nako kay kanang daghan kaayo. usa kay tagaan ko ug knowledge ug skills para mutabang ug tao before and after disaster.*
> (I experienced many things, especially gaining knowledge and skills to help people before and after disasters.) (IDI-6-Lines 1-2)

Participant further explained….

> *Naa koy disiplina sa akong kaugalingon ug taas na pasensya pud labaw na during disaster need pud stable akong emotional na state.*
> (I developed self-discipline and greater patience because during disasters my emotional state also needs to remain stable.) (IDI-6-Lines 3-4)

One participant shared...

> *Responsible nako, kabalo nako unsay buhaton during disaster gyud.*
> (I became responsible and now know what to do during disasters.) (FGD-2-Lines 1-2)

Participant emphasized…

> *In terms sa pagtabang kay dapat dili labag sa loob unya kabalo mo trato ug tama sa mga biktima sa kalamidad kay naglisod na gani ang mga naapektohan kailangan gud tabangan ug sabton sila ma'am. Nga mas nasabtan ug nabago akong panan aw sa pagtabang.*

> (In terms of helping, it should not be done unwillingly, and you must know how to properly treat disaster victims because they are already struggling. They really need to be helped and understood, ma'am. Through this, I have come to better understand and change my perspective on helping others. (FGD-3-Lines 2-3)

One participant reflected….

> *Naka hatag jud ug dako nga impact sa akong kinabuhi especially ang pag usab sa akong pag tan-aw sa disaster preparedness, resilience.*
> (It greatly impacted my life especially in changing my perspective regarding disaster preparedness and resilience.) (FGD-4-Lines 1-3)

Participant shared….

> Karon kay naga pangandam nako kung ing-ani man gani ang mahitabo.
> (Now I already prepare the researcher whenever such situations may happen.) (FGD-5-Lines 3-4)

Participant shared...

> *Mas nasabtan pud nako ug unsa ka importante ang paging knowledgeable sa lahi lahi na skills sa survival sa panahon sa kalamidad.*
> (I understood more the importance of being knowledgeable about different survival skills during disasters.) (FGD-6-Lines 2-3)

Participant continued and ended with a realization regarding preparedness and disaster prevention...

> *Mas maayong andam para layo sa disgrasya.*
> (It is better to be prepared to avoid disasters.) (FGD-6-Lines 3-4)

Going back to the participants' responses, they commonly shared that their development in the course improved their understanding of disaster response, preparedness, mitigation, and survival skills. The findings revealed through their voices the happiness they felt from personally learning something and being able to apply it in their field. This sense of joy came from the development of their personal characteristics as BSDRM students, which was evident in their laughter while sharing how they had become more experienced, disaster-ready, and prepared in times of calamity. The observations indicated on their faces a strong desire to learn more because of the various experiences they gained from different training programs. From their responses, the study highlighted that BSDRM students do not only acquire knowledge; rather, they also develop their character, skills, and compassion, which are essential in responding effectively before, during, and after disasters. These observed developments among the participants naturally lead to an understanding of how their learning environment plays a crucial role in shaping and influencing their characteristics as BSDRM students.

Characteristics Influenced by Their Environment

During the interviews, the participants consistently described how their learning environment significantly influenced the development of their characteristics as BSDRM students. Most of them emphasized that the combination of classroom discussions, field exposure, seminars, drills, simulations, and on-the-job training (OJT) experiences helped shape their knowledge, practical skills, confidence, discipline, and preparedness during disaster situations. Their responses revealed that the environment surrounding them served as a vital factor in transforming their perspectives and capabilities as future disaster responders.

One participant stated….

> *Nindot kay biskan first year pa ka, ay second year na diay to kanang mga field field gud naa na me mga field work, ma-exposed na gyud me.Kanang mga life support program. Naa pud me water survival.*

(It is good because even during our early years, we already had fieldwork and actual exposure.We also had life support programs and water survival training.) (IDI-1-Lines 1-2)

Another participant shared...

Sa skwelahan, naka tuon ko ug sa mga baha, sa mga bulkan, landslide, mga natural disasters kung unsaon pag mitigate.Karon sa OJT kay lahi pud kay hands-on man gud.
(In school, I learned about floods, volcanoes, landslides, and how to mitigate natural disasters.During OJT, it was different because it was hands-on.) (IDI-2-Lines 1-2)

He continued…

Karon sa OJT kay lahi pud kay hands-on man gud. pareha atong niagi kay naay mga kahoy na mga natumba so gina gamitan namo sila ug pisi, ginahikot ug bira namo kay mga naka ali sa dalan ug didtoa pud sa kuan kay paabotay pato ang kalamidad tapos nag survey nami didto, nag taod mi ug signage nga mga "prone area" ug "prone sa tsunami". Nag distribute mi ug flashlight didto para sa doul ug baybay.

(Now during our OJT, it's different because it is hands-on. For example, during one of our experiences, there were fallen trees, so we used ropes to tie and pull them since they were blocking the road. We were also stationed in an area waiting for a possible disaster, where we conducted surveys and installed signage such as "prone area" and "tsunami-prone." We also distributed flashlights to communities near the shoreline. (IDI-2-Lines 3-4)

Another participant highlighted…

Sa skwelahan naay naton-an about sa gi-discussed pero lahi ra gyud pag hands on na.Sa skwelahan kay more on knowledge pero pag naa na diri skills gyud na nag OJT nami.
(In school, we learned through discussions, but it is very different when it becomes hands-on. In school, it is more on knowledge, but during OJT, our skills were truly developed.) (IDI-3-Lines 1-2)

One participant stated...

Para sa ako, ang learning environment sa BSDRM kay practical and engaging.Mas nindot kay makakat-on ka through real life scenarios. Kanang simulation exercise, mag prepare ka sa actual disaster situations.
(For me, the BSDRM learning environment is practical and engaging.It is better because you learn through real-life scenarios and simulation exercises that prepare you for actual disaster situations.) (IDI-4-Lines 1-2)

Participant shared…

Tungod sa school ug sa OJT na community asa ko na assign ron ma'am kay continuous akong learning and exposure.Like kanang mag-rescue mi, Ma'am. Magsakay sa ambulance.

(Because of the school and the community where I was assigned for OJT, my learning and exposure became continuous.For example, we conduct rescue operations and ride ambulances.) (IDI-5-Lines 1-2)

Another participant reflected….

Sa skwelahan kay daghan kaayo ug gitudlo pero ang tawag ana kay wala nako nasabtan siguro ana kay knowledge-based lang gud.Pag abot nako sa CDR sa Tagum kay murag nag focus nako tapos maminaw nako sa mga seminars and trainings nila naa nakoy nahibal an ug unsay buhaton.
(The school taught many things, but I could not fully understand them because they were mostly knowledge-based.When I arrived at the CDR in Tagum, I became more focused and learned what to do through their seminars and training.) (IDI-6-Lines 1-2)

Similarly, one focus group stated,

> *Kulang mi ug trainings. Kay pilian ra ang set na pwede maka apil sa mga trainings.Maayo gani sa OJT nako karon kay na expose nako ma'am.*
> (We lacked training because only selected students were allowed to participate.Thankfully during my OJT, I became exposed to actual experiences.) (FGD-1-Lines 1-2)

Another participant shared...

> *Aside sa kulang ug skills kulang pud ug instructor kay dili man mi ka trainingMas daghan na ang basic life trainings, physical agility test and mas na improve akong survival skills.*
> (Aside from lacking skills, we also lacked instructors, which limited our training.There were more basic life training, physical agility tests, and my survival skills improved.) (FGD-2-Lines 1-2)

One participant stated...

> *Basic life support ug fire safety measures mao nay na learn nako sa training.*
> (Basic life support and fire safety measures are what I learned from the training.) (FGD-3-Lines 1-2)

Another participant remarked...

> For me, dako pud kaayo ug tabang ang DRM ron. Wala sad ko nagmahay nga nag DRM ko. Daghan ko ug na-learn, parehas pud sa akong OJT ron daghan pud mi ug na-learn about sa BP, naay magkuha og medicine ana. Unya kanang naay ma-accident, makakita ka nga, "Ay ing-anion diay pag-dressing.
> (For me, DRM has really helped a lot. I also don't regret choosing DRM. I've learned many things, especially during my OJT. We learned a lot about checking blood pressure and how to handle giving medicine. And when accidents happen, you get to see and understand, "Oh, so this is how proper wound dressing is done.) (FGD-4-Lines 1-2)

One participant stated...

> *Masulti nako nga ang among learning environment kay supportive ug relevant kaayo sa disaster risk ug resilience education.Ang kurso nag-focus sa community-based approaches ug nag-awhag sa amoa nga maghuna-huna ug kritikal ug magsulbad ug mga problema.*
> (I can say that our learning environment is very supportive and relevant to disaster risk and resilience education.The course focuses on community-based approaches and encourages us to think critically and solve problems.) (FGD-5-Lines 1-2)

Another participant shared…

> *Naka tuon ko na ang learning gikan sa school na as BSDRM kay dili lang gud gikan sa books ug knowledge.Dapat mamold pud akong skills by doing drills, kanang mapping hazards unya ang pinaka importante ma engage sa community.Makatabang gud makapasabot sa amoa unsay real risks pag naay katalagman.*
>
> (I learned that BSDRM education does not only come from books and knowledge. My skills should also be developed through drills, hazard mapping, and community engagement.It helps us understand the real risks during disasters) (FGD-6-Lines 1-2)

Reflecting on the study participants' responses, they consistently mentioned classroom discussions, fieldwork, simulations, drills, trainings, OJT, and community exposure helped them better understand disaster risk reduction and management. The observations indicated during the interview the excitement on their faces on sharing their experience on rescue operations and fieldwork. The findings revealed many positive praises regarding the practical and hands-on learning environment of the BSDRM program, particularly on how it strengthened their skills, preparedness, teamwork, and confidence in responding to emergencies and disasters. It was observed because despite the limited training provided by the school, they still made an effort to learn more

during their OJT, which deepened their understanding of their course. The study highlighted how important training, seminars, and community immersion are for BSDRM students in enhancing their skills and knowledge in disaster response.

Summary of the findings

1. The development of low-performing BSDRM students' learning characteristics are cultivating their responsibility, enhancing their discipline, building their resilience, improving their preparedness, deepening their empathy, advancing their survival skills, and developing their disaster response capabilities, proactive, and disaster-ready individuals.

2.The ways these learning characteristics are influenced by their environment are how classroom instruction provides disaster-related knowledge, while trainings and OJT exposure transform this knowledge into practical skills; however, limited hands-on training, lack of instructors, and unequal training opportunities hinder the full development of their competence as future disaster responders.

Modified Paradigm

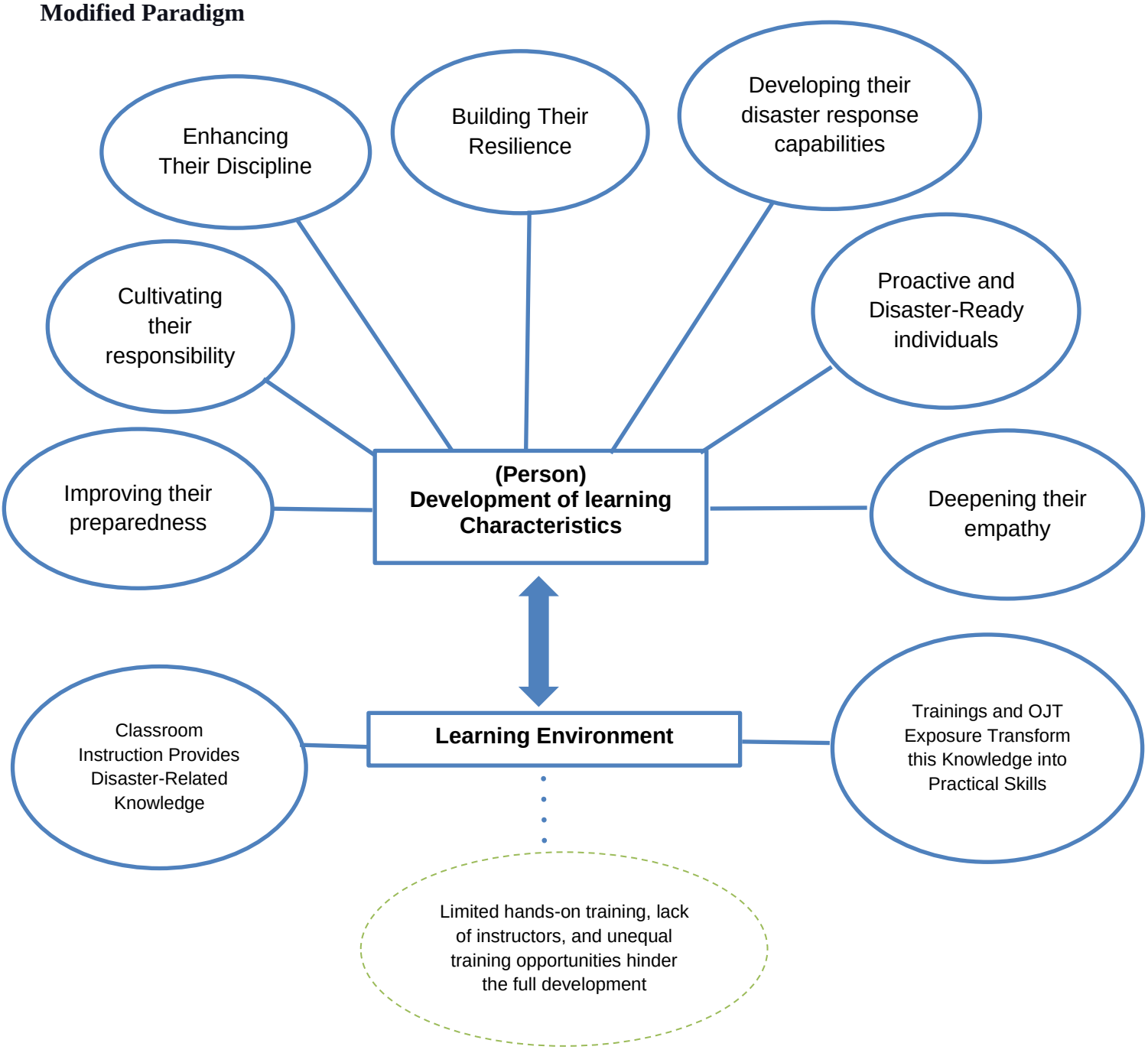


Figure 1.2. Modified Paradigm of the Low-Performing BSDRM Students Based on Person-Environment Theory

DISCUSSION

In this section presented the discussion of the findings based on the themes generated from the result of the study. This study presented the implication for practice, and future direction of the students.

Shaping Disaster-Ready Minds

Through the discussions with the participants, it made the researcher understand that the development of low-performing BSDRM students' learning characteristics cultivates responsibility, discipline, resilience, preparedness, empathy, survival skills, and disaster response capabilities, making them proactive and disaster-ready individuals.

The findings align with the study of Sugiyanto et al. (2024), claiming that disaster mitigation education and digital learning strategies strengthen students' empathy, understanding, and responsiveness toward disaster situations. This is parallel to the study because BSDRM students developed deeper empathy, responsibility, and preparedness through their learning experiences and disaster-related exposure. Furthermore, the findings affirm the study of (Kim et al. (2024), highlighting that collaborative learning experiences and disaster-responsive activities enhance students' resilience, empathy, social responsibility, and disaster response behavior. These findings affirm that disaster education, training, and experiential learning contribute significantly to the development of students' personal characteristics and disaster-response competencies.

However, the findings differ from the study of Aslanoğlu et al. (2024), revealing that despite disaster education and training programs, many students still demonstrated insufficient levels of disaster preparedness and limited practical competency due to gaps in training effectiveness and learning application. This contradicts the present study because the participants in the research described how their learning experiences, training, and disaster-related exposure positively strengthened their preparedness, resilience, and disaster-response capabilities as future disaster responders.

Forged Beyond the Four Walls

The interactions with the study participants helped the researcher comprehend the ways these learning characteristics are influenced by their environment are how classroom instruction provides disaster-related knowledge, while trainings and OJT exposure transform this knowledge into practical skills; however, limited hands-on training, lack of instructors, and unequal training opportunities hinder the full development of their competence as future disaster responders.

The findings support the study of Emaliyawati et al. (2025), explaining that experiential learning, disaster simulations, and field exposure significantly improve students' disaster preparedness, practical competencies, and resilience. Moreover, I affirm Ibrahim,et al (2025), who found that classroom instruction combined with practical disaster-response training enhances students' disaster awareness, response skills, and confidence in handling emergency situations. These studies parallel the present findings because they emphasize that both academic instruction and practical exposure play important roles in developing competent and disaster-ready students.

Conversely, the findings disagree with Wulandari et al. (2023) who suggest that disaster knowledge gained from classroom instruction does not automatically translate into effective disaster-response preparedness. Their study on undergraduates found that while students demonstrated moderate to high theoretical knowledge, their actual preparedness and response capability remained inconsistent due to insufficient real-life application and weak experiential reinforcement. This implies that classroom instruction alone is not enough to develop competent disaster responders if not paired with structured and repeated hands-on practice.

The results add to the body of work of student development literature by displaying that academic achievement is not a comprehensive indicator of student growth and potential. Although low performing, participants showed substantial growth in building four competencies: resilience, responsibility, preparedness, empathy, and disaster-response. The results indicate that an overall perspective in assessing student development should be considered

in education programs, taking into account both academic results and the development of practical and socio-emotional skills.

IMPLICATION FOR PRACTICE

Upon reflecting on the modified paradigm, the program dean, chairperson, and educators may strengthen the personal development and learning environment of low-performing BSDRM students through supportive instruction, practical trainings, simulations, seminars, and OJT opportunities to help them become disciplined, resilient, prepared, and disaster-ready individuals. Partnered local government officials and disaster-response practitioners may also continue offering experiential and community-based activities that allow students to apply their disaster-related knowledge into real-life situations. In order to improve their academic performance and understanding of disaster risk reduction concepts and become more disaster-prepared and community-oriented individuals

FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF THE STUDY

Future studies may utilize correlational research designs to examine the relationship between learning environment factors and the development of low-performing students' personal characteristics. Additionally, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) may be conducted to develop and validate survey instruments based on the themes identified in this study, such as development of learning characteristics and learning environment. Future studies should consider including a larger and more diverse sample of participants from different higher education institutions offering disaster-related programs. Expanding the participant pool would allow researchers to compare experiences across varying institutional contexts and improve the transferability of findings. Moreover, future investigations may explore the perspectives of instructors, administrators, and disaster-response practitioners to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing student development and preparedness.

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