

Finding the Silver Lining: Student Positive Growth Amidst Adversity

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine how high school students from private and public schools find positive growth amidst adversity. This also focused on the adversities encountered by the students and find the silver lining amidst adversities. It also determined how the students transform their experiences into opportunities for personal and academic growth. Using a case study approach, a multi-level interview guide was employed: structured questions ensured consistency across all seven participants, semi-structured probes allowed for follow-up and clarification, and unstructured prompts provided space for spontaneous narrative expression. The research focused on seven (7) participants, four (4) from public school and three (3) from private school who have experienced significant challenges in their academic and personal lives. These students were purposively selected to reflect a range of backgrounds and experiences. Based on the findings, adversity emerged as a powerful catalyst for both personal and academic growth, compelling individuals to adapt and persevere in the face of difficult circumstances. The students demonstrated emotional resilience, which was nurtured through faith, self-reflection, and the support of meaningful relationships. The presence of mentors and positive role models played a critical role in helping students navigate trauma and remain motivated. Furthermore, participants exhibited significant personal transformation, characterized by increased responsibility, enhanced empathy, and a deeper sense of purpose. The study concluded that high school students faced numerous challenges, such as family loss, abandonment, financial problems, bullying, and academic pressure. Despite these difficulties, they showed resilience by finding support from family, friends, teachers, and personal interests like music and sports. These coping strategies turned their struggles into opportunities for growth, making them more independent, empathetic, and motivated to succeed. Their stories highlight the need for educators and policymakers to create supportive environments that nurture resilience and help students turn adversity into achievement.

Keywords – Adversity, Positive Growth, Silver Lining

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Adolescence is a crucial stage of development marked by academic challenges, social changes, and personal growth. It is a time when students not only receive formal education but also undergo significant psychological, emotional, and social development. However, many high school students face a variety of challenges that have an impact on their overall well-being and academic performance. Adversity includes things like financial hardships, family problems, domestic violence, mental health issues, natural disasters, social pressures, and academic obstacles. Students may find it challenging to concentrate on their coursework, engage in extracurricular activities, and acquire the skills they will need in the future because of these barriers (Newcomb et al., 2019).

According to Russo-Netzer and Moran (2016) a prolonged exposure to adversity, particularly economic hardship and family instability, can have long-term consequences for cognitive development, emotional regulation, and academic achievement.

However, resilience refers to an individual's ability to adapt, recover, and thrive in the face of adversity. It has a significant impact on individuals, particularly students. Masten (2020) as an individual ability to withstand, adapt, and recuperate from adversity and stress. Likewise, Waters et al. (2021) emphasizes the value of social support in building resilience, asserting that a person's capacity to handle hardship can be enhanced by having solid bonds with peers, family, and teachers.

Furthermore, in the academic setting, resilience has been linked to student achievement. Estacio (2020) found that resilience helped Filipino high school students acquire critical qualities like self-efficacy, optimism, and perseverance. These characteristics allowed them to see challenges as opportunities rather than barriers to success. Positive coping strategies, problem-solving skills, and emotional regulation contribute to resilience, while social and institutional support systems play a vital role in reinforcing it.

Financial hardship is one of the most common challenges that high school students face. Students from low-income families frequently face barriers to accessing educational materials, stable housing, food security, and healthcare. Financial instability is linked to poor academic performance and school dropout (David et al., 2021). According to the study, students from financially disadvantaged backgrounds frequently perform poorly on standardized tests, have higher dropout rates, and have difficulty accessing higher education.

Scholarship programs, such as the Department of Education's (DepEd) Senior High School Voucher Program and the DOST-SEI scholarship for STEM students, provide financial aid to academically gifted but economically disadvantaged students. Studies by David et al. (2021) show that such initiatives improve student retention rates and motivate students to persevere despite financial constraints. These programs are especially relevant in communities like Nampicuan, Nueva Ecija, where financial instability remains a leading cause of school dropout and academic disengagement among secondary students.

Family disruptions, such as parental separation, domestic violence, or the loss of a loved one, create emotional distress and academic difficulty for students. Research consistently shows that students facing such conditions are more likely to become resilient when they receive consistent emotional support from teachers, mentors, or peers (Ansari & Iqbal, 2025).

School-based counseling programs offer emotional support to students affected by family instability. According to Ansari et al. (2025), such interventions improve students' academic performance and emotional health by helping them develop coping mechanisms. In Philippine schools, where guidance counselor-to-student ratios remain low, the presence of even one trusted adult figure has been found to make a measurable difference in student resilience and retention.

Students also face challenges related to their mental health. This includes anxiety, depression, and stress, which are becoming more common among high school students. The pressure to excel academically, social expectations, and personal struggles all contribute to an increase in mental health cases. According to the UNESCO (2023), depression is one of the most common causes of illness among adolescents. Navarro et al. (2023) found that students who are under a lot of stress are less motivated to study and are more likely to use unhealthy coping mechanisms.

Japan and South Korea are some of the world's highest student suicide rates, which were frequently attributed to intense academic pressure. To address this, many Japanese and Korean schools have implemented mindfulness and mental wellness programs such as meditation sessions, stress management workshops, and designated "safe spaces" for students to relax. Research by Ansari and Iqbal (2025) found that students with stronger resilience skills are more focused on their studies and have better emotional control. Many students with mental health concerns benefit from therapy, peer support, and self-care techniques to increase their emotional intelligence and self-awareness. Some even go on to become advocates for mental health, trying to dispel the stigma attached to mental illness. In the Philippine context, a similar pattern is evident: students who receive school-based emotional support are more likely to develop healthy coping behaviors and remain academically engaged despite personal struggles (Garay et al., 2022).

Furthermore, bullying and peer pressure pose significant social challenges to students' self-esteem and academic engagement. The rise of cyberbullying has exacerbated the effects of social harassment on adolescents. According to Masten (2020), bullying victims are more likely to experience social disengagement, anxiety, and depression. Nonetheless, studies indicate that supportive school environments and anti-bullying initiatives can lessen these impacts and aid students in regaining their self-esteem.

The Department of Education (DepEd) issued the Anti-Bullying Act of 2013 (Republic Act No. 10627), which requires all schools to implement policies to prevent and address bullying. Research shows that students who receive consistent institutional and peer support after experiencing bullying develop stronger empathy, emotional resilience, and, in many cases, a sense of advocacy for others (Masten, 2001).

Students in disaster-prone areas face unique challenges including school closures, loss of learning materials, and trauma. A UNESCO (2023) study found that recovery initiatives significantly improve learning outcomes and resilience among affected students. For example, after Typhoon Haiyan (Yolanda) devastated parts of the Philippines in 2013, students who participated in post-disaster recovery programs showed higher levels of resilience and civic engagement (UNICEF, 2023). This Philippine experience illustrates how adversity, when met with structured institutional support, can serve as a catalyst for both personal growth and community leadership—a pattern directly relevant to the present study's focus on students in Nampicuan, Nueva Ecija.

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on resilience and positive growth as critical components of students' personal and academic development. Numerous studies have investigated how adversity can lead to personal transformation by increasing emotional strength, self-awareness, and coping skills. However, there are still several critical gaps that require further investigation, particularly in the context of Philippine education. One of the most significant gaps is a lack of contextualized research on how Filipino students cope with adversity and achieve positive growth. Given the unique challenges that students in the Philippines face, such as financial insecurity, educational disparities, and limited access to mental health services, there is an urgent need for localized studies that investigate how these factors affect students' capacity for resilience and personal growth (Garay et al., 2022).

Students today face a myriad of adversities that significantly impact their academic performance, emotional well-being, and personal growth. Despite the potential for positive transformation, several underlying factors exacerbate their struggles, making it difficult for them to thrive. Academic pressure, socioeconomic difficulties, mental health issues, a lack of support networks, and the insufficiency of school interventions are among the main problems that students face. This study examines how high school students in Nampicuan, Nueva Ecija overcome hardship and find positive growth, contributing to a growing body of locally grounded research on Filipino student resilience. Gaining an understanding of these difficulties and achievements will help parents, educators, and institutions design better support systems for students facing adversity.

Adversity does not have to be the end of a student's journey; it can be the beginning of a powerful transformation. Students can overcome adversity by developing resilience, providing appropriate support, and implementing effective interventions. Like the Kintsugi philosophy, it may help affected students develop unique strengths and perspectives. The purpose of this study is to assess the "silver linings" - the transformative growth of the students that emerge from these difficult circumstances among high school students in Nampicuan, Nueva Ecija, both private and public. The study sought to understand how students achieve positive growth in the face of adversity.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to assess how high school students from private and public schools find positive growth amidst adversity.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the adversities encountered by the high school students?

2. How did the high school students find the silver lining amidst adversities?
3. How do high school students transform their experiences into opportunities for personal and academic growth?

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study would provide valuable information on how students positive growth amidst adversity can transform their challenges into unique strengths and opportunities for growth.

Students. The study's findings will benefit students who encountered adversities by providing a deeper understanding of their potential for growth and resilience, allowing them to recognize that their difficult circumstances can be transformed into unique strengths, like the golden repairs in Kintsugi art. These students will have access to documented success stories and tried-and-true coping strategies that will inspire and guide them on their paths of personal and academic development.

Educators and Academic Institutions. This study will provide teachers and school administrators of private and public secondary schools in Nampicuan with critical information about the specific needs and potential of students who encountered adversities, allowing them to develop more effective teaching strategies and support systems. The insights gained will aid in the creation of a more nurturing and understanding educational environment that recognizes and builds on these students' distinct experiences and perspectives.

Guidance Counselors and Mental Health Professionals. The study will give school counselors and mental health professionals valuable insights into the resilience-building process of students who encountered adversities, allowing them to create more targeted and effective intervention strategies. This understanding will help them better support student's emotional well-being and academic success by using more informed and empathetic counseling approaches.

Parents and Guardians. The research findings will provide parents and guardians with critical insights into how to better support their children's academic and personal development, regardless of family circumstances. This knowledge will help them understand the significance of maintaining supportive relationships and instilling resilience in their children, even in difficult circumstances.

Future Researchers. This study will make significant contributions to the existing body of knowledge on student resilience and adaptation, particularly in the Philippine high school context. Future researchers will benefit from the methodology, findings, and recommendations presented, which can be used to lay the groundwork for additional research on family dynamics, student development, and educational support systems in similar contexts.

Scope and Delimitation

This case study focused on the positive growth amidst adversities in private and public school students who have faced significant adversities particularly in areas affecting academic performance, typical school experiences, challenges and struggles.

The study aimed to examine how students develop coping mechanisms, resilience, and personal growth through these experiences, highlighting the silver lining in their struggles.

The research scope includes the participants' personal growth narratives, their developed coping strategies, and the support systems that have helped them be resilient. The study would investigate how these students have turned their difficult circumstances into opportunities for personal and academic development, particularly through the lens of the Kintsugi philosophy.

The delimitation of this study outlined the boundaries and limitations intentionally set by the researcher to keep the investigation focused and feasible. The study is delimited to junior public high school students of

Nampicuan, Nueva Ecija. It specifically includes students who have experienced different challenges who are at critical stage of emotional and cognitive development, making them vulnerable to and capable of growth amidst adversity.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are lexically and operationally defined for a better understanding of the study.

Academic Journey. The continuous process of intellectual and professional growth that individuals undergo throughout their educational experiences. It encompasses the specific, measurable, and observable aspects related to students' experiences, challenges, and growth their academic lives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). It also assesses through academic performance data, self-reported experiences, and qualitative accounts, offering a comprehensive understanding of how students navigate challenges and achieve personal growth amidst adversity.

Adversity. The persistent or compounding conditions—such as poverty, family instability, trauma, or systemic barriers—that place individuals at significant risk of negative outcomes over time. Unlike challenges, which refer to specific and immediate difficulties requiring effort to overcome, adversity involves ongoing stressors that affect a student's overall development and well-being (Newcomb et al., 2019). In this study, adversity refers to the significant and sustained hardships that high school students in Nampicuan, Nueva Ecija face, which form the context within which coping, resilience, and positive growth are examined.

Challenges. The difficulties, obstacles and problems that require effort, skill or determination to overcome. It can arise in various aspects of life, including personal, academic, or social and often tests an individual's abilities, resilience, and problem-solving skills (Masten, 2020). In the context of the study, it refers the difficulties, obstacles, or struggles that students encounter in their academic and personal experiences, which require problem-solving skills, resilience, and adaptability.

Coping Mechanism. The specific cognitive and behavioral strategies individuals use to manage stress, reduce emotional distress, and adapt to difficult situations in the short term (Obbarius et al., 2021). Coping mechanisms are the immediate, action-oriented responses to adversity—distinct from resilience, which refers to a broader, long-term adaptive capacity, and from positive growth, which refers to the lasting personal development that may follow. In this study, coping mechanisms refer to the practical strategies students use to manage the pressures they face in academic and personal settings, such as drawing, exercise, prayer, seeking social support, and positive self-talk. These strategies help students maintain emotional stability and continue functioning despite hardship.

Personal. The people who offer practical, social, and emotional support to help someone overcome obstacles and attain well-being. In this study, it refers to the individual characteristics, experiences, and internal processes that influence students' responses, decisions, and growth when facing adversity. It includes their emotions, thoughts, values, and coping strategies, which shape the ability to navigate challenges and achieve positive growth.

Social. The system of connections and assets that offer people practical, emotional, and informational support. It encompasses connections with family, friends, peers, community members, and organizations that contribute to a person's overall well-being (Ungar, 2021). In the study, it refers to the interpersonal relationships, interactions, and support systems that influence students' experiences, coping abilities, and overall growth. It encompasses the connections with family, peers, teachers, and the broader community that shape students' emotional well-being and resilience when facing adversity.

Resilience. The sustained capacity to adapt positively and recover from adversity over time (Masten, 2001). Resilience is distinguished from coping mechanisms, which are the immediate strategies used to manage stress, and from positive growth, which refers to the lasting transformation that may emerge after adversity is navigated. Resilience is the bridge between the two: it is the adaptive process that allows individuals to apply coping strategies effectively and ultimately arrive at a state of growth. In the context of this study, resilience

refers to the students' demonstrated ability to maintain their well-being and continue pursuing academic and personal goals despite significant and ongoing challenges, drawing on both internal strengths and external support systems.

Silver Linings. The positive outcomes, lessons, or personal transformations that emerge from difficult or challenging experiences (Barr et al., 2024). Silver linings are distinct from coping mechanisms, which are the immediate responses to stress, and from resilience, which is the capacity to recover and adapt. Silver linings represent the endpoint of a growth process—the lasting benefits that students gain after having navigated adversity with the support of coping strategies and resilience. In this study, silver linings refer to the tangible and intangible gains students reported as a result of their hardships, including increased empathy, stronger identity, renewed academic motivation, and a deeper sense of purpose.

Support Systems. The network of individuals, groups, or resources that provide emotional, practical, and professional assistance during the times of need (Ungar, 2021). In the study, it provides emotional, academic, and practical assistance to students during times of adversity or challenge. It plays a critical role in helping students cope, build resilience, and achieve positive growth.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND STUDIES

This part presents the current work within the context of review of the body of scholarly literature. A thorough understanding of the theoretical frameworks, empirical findings, and conceptual underpinning of the field is demonstrated by the researcher. The groundwork of pertinent literature on the findings of silver lining of positive growth among students from broken families are included.

Related Literature

On Student Positive Growth

In the face of adversity, students often uncover their true strength, demonstrating that challenges can serve as catalysts for personal growth. Difficult situations—be it academic struggles, personal hardships, or global crises like the COVID-19 pandemic—test their resilience and determination. However, these obstacles also foster essential life skills such as adaptability, perseverance, and problem-solving. For instance, research shows that mindfulness practices significantly enhance resilience among students, highlighting the importance of self-awareness and emotional regulation in overcoming challenges (Waters et al., 2021).

Furthermore, research emphasizes the role of supportive educational environments in nurturing coping mechanisms, suggesting that institutions play an important role in student development during trying times. By learning to navigate hardships, students develop a mindset that views setbacks as opportunities for growth, embracing failures as lessons rather than defeats. Moreover, adversity cultivates empathy and emotional intelligence, shaping them into well-rounded individuals capable of uplifting others facing similar struggles. Just as a silver lining emerges behind dark clouds, hardships can illuminate a student's potential, enabling them to emerge stronger, wiser, and more prepared for the future.

Students who experience severe adversities such as sexual violence, early pregnancy, and other traumatic events often face overwhelming challenges that threaten their education and well-being. However, despite the pain and hardships, many survivors demonstrate remarkable resilience and personal growth. Studies highlight that support systems, including counseling, peer networks, and educational institutions, play a crucial role in helping students overcome trauma.

Young mothers who receive educational support and mentorship are more likely to complete their studies and build stable futures. Moreover, survivors of sexual violence who receive proper psychological and community assistance often develop a strong sense of self-advocacy and empowerment. Adversity, though painful, can foster inner strength, emotional intelligence, and a deep sense of purpose, inspiring affected students to not only rebuild their lives but also become advocates for others facing similar struggles. By finding the silver lining in their experiences, these students prove that resilience and hope can thrive even in the darkest times.

On the Student Adversities

Masten (2020), asserts that adversity is an inevitable part of life, and students, whether in public or private schools, encounter various challenges that test their resilience and adaptability. Research has consistently highlighted the role of adversity in shaping an individual's ability to grow and develop, both personally and academically. The adversities faced by students, the ways they find the silver lining amidst these challenges, and how they transform these experiences into opportunities for growth are significant areas of study. Resilience theory posits that individuals possess the ability to adapt positively despite adversity (Masten, 2020). Many students develop coping mechanisms that enable them to navigate their struggles successfully. Studies have shown that social support from family, teachers, and peers plays a critical role in helping students find optimism amid hardship.

Parental support is a key protective factor in resilience as it offers encouragement and practical help. In a study by Garay et al. (2022), family support was found to be a robust and positive correlate of mental health and a predictor of coping measures among Filipino students. The study established that coping styles fully moderate the connection between family support and mental health, underlining the significance of a supportive family environment in fostering resilience.

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated many challenges for students, introducing struggles with remote learning, isolation, and increased academic uncertainty. The sudden shift to online learning led to difficulties in maintaining motivation, lack of access to technology for some students, and diminished social interactions, all of which contributed to academic setbacks and psychological distress (UNESCO, 2023). Studies conducted over the past decade have shown a significant rise in student mental health issues, with school-based interventions proving effective in mitigating these challenges (OECD, 2019).

Private school students, while often benefiting from better resources, may face increased academic competition, heightened expectations from parents and teachers, and the stress of maintaining their status among high-achieving peers. A study focusing on private secondary school students in India revealed that 35% reported high or very high levels of academic stress, with lower-achieving students experiencing more stress than their higher-achieving counterparts. Additionally, students engaged in extracurricular activities were more likely to report exam anxiety. Participation in organizational activities, internships, and leadership has been found to contribute to students' overall development as well as their academic achievements.

In the Philippine context, similar pressures are evident among high school students in both public and private schools, where academic expectations, poverty, and limited support resources compound each other (Garay et al., 2022). Family-related stressors are another significant adversity. Some students face parental divorce, domestic conflicts, or lack of parental guidance due to work commitments. Financial difficulties further compound these challenges, particularly for students from low-income backgrounds who may have to balance part-time jobs with academic responsibilities or experience food and housing insecurities. Recent studies have emphasized the role of digital learning tools, self-regulation strategies, and peer mentoring in student resilience. Additionally, mindfulness practices, self-determination, and intrinsic motivation help students remain optimistic and engaged in their academic and personal growth.

Studies on Filipino students show that high school students face various adversities, including financial difficulties, family problems, and academic pressure. Despite these struggles, students develop coping mechanisms such as time management, emotional resilience, and social support networks to navigate challenges. Filipino culture values *Bayanihan*, or communal unity, which helps students cope with academic and personal struggles. Studies by David et al. (2021) show that peer support, family encouragement, and teacher mentorship play a crucial role in fostering resilience among Filipino students. Experiencing adversity does not merely result in survival but can also lead to personal and academic transformation. According to Tedeschi et al., (2018), the post-traumatic growth model suggests that individuals often develop a greater appreciation for life, personal strength, and new perspectives after overcoming challenges. For students, adversities become catalysts for the development of critical life skills such as problem-solving, adaptability, and perseverance.

Institutional Support and Student Development

Educational institutions play a crucial role in fostering student resilience by implementing resilience-building programs and emphasizing growth mindset principles. When students learn to view failures as stepping stones to success, they develop greater motivation and determination. Peer mentoring programs and counseling services in schools serve as significant support systems that help students navigate their difficulties while fostering emotional intelligence and leadership skills (Ungar, 2021). Studies highlight the growing importance of social-emotional learning (SEL) programs in schools, which have been found to improve student well-being and academic outcomes.

Research suggests that feelings of alienation are exacerbated by social stigma (Masten, 2020) related to being from a broken family. Peer relationships can become strained as people may perceive children from broken families as feeling 'different' or 'misunderstood' by others. As a result, learners from broken families may struggle academically due to emotional and logistical disorganization. Research indicates that such students are more likely to receive lower grades, be less motivated, and engage in truancy (Masten, 2020). Adversity and family instability result in stress, which can negatively impact learning and intelligence.

A stable and nurturing adult figure, whether a parent, relative, or teacher, significantly contributes to a child's ability to adapt. Community support and access to mental health services also play vital roles in fostering resilience. However, parental conflict, neglect, or abuse can lead to maladaptive coping behaviors. According to Ansari and Iqbal (2025), expectations and active coping mediate the relationship between parental support and academic resilience. If parents are absent, unsupportive, or involved in family conflict, healthy coping mechanisms may not be learned, leading to withdrawal or other maladaptive behaviors.

Coping Mechanisms and Resilience Among Students

Students frequently adopt problem-focused strategies, such as seeking part-time employment or utilizing community resources. Financial education programs targeting low-SES students can significantly increase their likelihood of employing proactive coping mechanisms like budgeting and financial planning. However, financial stress can lead to avoidance behaviors, as prolonged economic hardship may cause emotional exhaustion, prompting some students to engage in denial or avoidance strategies. Socioeconomic status (SES) impacts academic performance, with financial stress moderating the relationship. Research suggests that promoting self-efficacy can help reduce reliance on maladaptive coping styles, and financial education and student support groups are recommended as effective interventions to help students cope with economic difficulties.

Gender, age, and cultural background influence coping strategies. Research found that girls tend to use emotion-focused coping styles, while boys favor problem-focused or avoidance coping (Zhou et al., 2022)ing strategies. Younger children tend to depend on family and caregivers for comfort, whereas older adolescents tend to act more independently. Cultural factors also influence how children cope with peer victimization. Understanding these differences is essential for designing targeted interventions that are gender, age, and culturally sensitive.

Empowering Student Success Through Engagement and Support System

Students' coping mechanisms are shaped by a variety of factors, including family support, socioeconomic conditions, and cultural influences. Parental guidance and financial stability often determine a student's ability to manage stress and academic pressures effectively. However, despite personal efforts to develop adaptive strategies, many students still face barriers in accessing the necessary support systems. Research highlights the importance of institutional interventions in fostering resilience and promoting positive coping mechanisms. Research emphasizes that institutional support services significantly (Ungar, 2021) enhance student persistence and academic performance, especially for marginalized groups.

Similarly, Ungar (2021) asserts that active student engagement in both academic and extracurricular activities contributes to holistic growth, reinforcing personal and educational development. Moreover, Valladolid (2021)

found that access to counseling and wellness programs alleviates stress and anxiety among Filipino college students, leading to improved academic success and well-being.

Additionally, personal development workshops and life coaching sessions equip students with essential skills to navigate challenges efficiently. Masten (2020) emphasizes that viewing academic struggles as developmental opportunities enhances learning outcomes and long-term resilience.

Furthermore, involvement in leadership roles, internships, and organizational activities fosters critical skills that contribute to both academic and career success. Overall, comprehensive support structures, both institutional and personal, are vital in shaping students' academic journeys and long-term resilience.

Theory on Positive Growth

This study is based on Dr. Martin Seligman's (2011) Positive Psychology, specifically the PERMA model, which provides a framework for fostering resilience and assisting students in thriving in the face of difficulties. Students today face a variety of challenges, including academic pressures, socioeconomic difficulties, mental health issues, and personal hardships. These challenges can have a negative impact on their well-being, motivation, and academic achievement. The PERMA model has five components: positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishments. Applied to Filipino high school students, these components directly correspond to the adversities and growth experiences documented in this study. When integrated into educational settings, this model can be a powerful tool for improving students' ability to cope with adversity while maintaining a sense of accomplishment and success.

One of the most important aspects of the PERMA model is the cultivation of positive emotions like joy, gratitude, hope, and optimism. In the face of adversity, students frequently experience stress, anxiety, and self-doubt, which can impede their academic and personal development (Waters et al., 2021). Encouraging positive emotions can help to balance out negative experiences. Schools can use gratitude exercises, mindfulness techniques, and positive self-talk to help students shift their focus from distress to appreciation and optimism.

Another key component of the PERMA model is engagement, which refers to a deep involvement in activities that provide fulfillment. Many students who face adversity may become disengaged from their studies, which can lead to poor performance. Research shows that when students experience a "flow state," a psychological state in which they are completely immersed in an enjoyable and meaningful activity, they become more motivated and productive. To increase student engagement, educators can use personalized learning approaches, hands-on activities, and creative assignments that are tailored to the students' interests and strengths. For example, a student who struggles with traditional math instruction but enjoys music will find mathematical concepts more engaging if they are taught using rhythm and beats. By encouraging engagement, students gain control over their learning and are more likely to persevere in the face of adversity.

Relationships are important in building resilience because they provide students with emotional support, encouragement, and a sense of belonging. According to Masten (2001), many students facing adversity experience feelings of isolation, self-doubt, or a lack of support. The presence of caring teachers, supportive peers, and strong mentorship programs can significantly improve their ability to cope. Schools can promote healthy relationships by establishing peer support groups, mentoring programs, and safe spaces in which students feel heard and valued. For example, a student dealing with family issues may benefit from having a trusted teacher or counselor who checks in on a regular basis and offers advice. Students who feel supported by their relationships are more likely to develop resilience and remain motivated in their academic journey.

A sense of meaning is another important factor in assisting students in overcoming adversity. Students develop a stronger sense of motivation and perseverance when they understand how their education and personal efforts contribute to a larger goal. Schools can assist students in developing meaning (Tedeschi et al., 2018) by linking their learning experiences to real-world applications, personal goals, and community service projects. Encouraging students to participate in activities that align with their values, such as volunteering, pursuing creative interests, or setting long-term career goals, can help them see challenges as opportunities rather than obstacles. For example, a student who has experienced personal loss may find meaning in joining a volunteer

organization that helps others in need. When students see their difficulties as part of a larger journey of growth, they become more resilient and motivated to overcome obstacles.

The final component of PERMA model accomplishment emphasizes the significance of setting and achieving goals, no matter how small. Many students who face adversity struggle with self-doubt and the fear of failure. Celebrating small victories and reinforcing a growth mindset (Masten, 2020) or the belief that intelligence and abilities can be developed through effort, students can gain confidence and perseverance. Teachers and mentors can help by recognizing progress rather than perfection, emphasizing effort over outcomes, and assisting students in setting realistic and attainable goals. For example, a struggling math student who improves from failing to passing should be praised for their hard work and perseverance rather than being judged solely on the outcome. Recognizing small accomplishments motivates students to keep striving despite difficulties.

Incorporating the PERMA model into educational settings provides a comprehensive framework for building students' resilience and well-being in the face of adversity. Educators and mentors can empower students to face challenges with hope and strength by cultivating positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. Rather than viewing difficulties as insurmountable obstacles, students who use positive psychology strategies gain the confidence and adaptability required to thrive academically, emotionally, and socially. Schools, teachers, and communities all play an important role in ensuring that students not only survive but thrive despite adversity.

Related Studies

Resilience and positive growth among students facing adversity have been extensively studied, highlighting various psychological and environmental factors that contribute to their ability to overcome challenges. Several studies provide insight into the role of resilience, psychological attributes, social support systems, and family stability in students' academic performance and emotional well-being.

Finding the Silver Lining Amidst Adversities in the Philippine Context

Ungar (2021), entitled “*Patterns of individual coping, engagement with social supports and use of formal services among a five-country sample of resilient youth*” highlights the positive impact of therapy, peer support groups, and mentorship programs on individuals' emotional well-being and personal growth. These interventions provide structured support systems that help individuals navigate challenges, build resilience, and develop healthier coping mechanisms. By participating in therapy, individuals can gain self-awareness, process emotions, and learn strategies to manage stress effectively. Peer support groups create a sense of community and belonging, allowing individuals to share experiences and receive encouragement from others facing similar struggles. Moreover, mentorship programs offer guidance and motivation from experienced individuals, helping participants regain confidence and stay focused on their personal goals. Collectively, these supportive environments empower individuals to overcome adversity, enhance self-esteem, and make meaningful progress toward their aspirations.

Masten (2020), study entitled “*Mindsets for the 21st century and beyond*”, emphasizes that individuals with a growth mindset—believing that intelligence and abilities can be developed through effort and learning—are more likely to persist in the face of challenges. This mindset fosters resilience, allowing individuals to reframe obstacles as opportunities for improvement rather than insurmountable setbacks. In the context of students, those who adopt a growth mindset tend to approach academic and personal hardships with determination, viewing difficulties as chances to strengthen their skills. Rather than feeling discouraged by failure, they seek constructive feedback, adapt their learning strategies, and refine their problem-solving abilities. By embracing this perspective, students not only overcome their struggles but also transform their adversities into valuable learning experiences that contribute to both personal and academic success.

Masten (2020) highlights how effective coping mechanisms enable students to build self-confidence, develop perseverance, and maintain motivation despite setbacks. For example, a student facing difficulties in mathematics might see initial failure as an indicator of the need for more practice rather than a sign of innate

inability. Through effort, resourcefulness, and a willingness to learn, they can eventually master the subject, reinforcing the belief that persistence leads to progress.

Overall, Masten (2020) underscores the importance of fostering a growth mindset in educational settings. By encouraging students to view challenges as stepping stones to achievement, educators and mentors can help them develop the resilience necessary for lifelong learning and personal growth.

Resilience as a Positive Response to Adversity

Estacio (2020), explored *Resilience as a Positive Response to Risk and Adversity Among High School Students*, finding that adolescents displayed high levels of acceptance, religiosity, optimism, purpose, and persistence when confronted with difficulties. This study emphasized that resilience is not merely an innate trait but can be cultivated through external support systems such as family, school, and community engagement. It concluded that high school students facing adversity exhibited significant resilience through key psychological attributes such as acceptance, religiosity, optimism, purpose, and persistence. The findings highlighted that resilience is not solely an inherent quality but can be developed through strong external support systems, including family, school, and community involvement. This suggests that fostering positive relationships and providing structured support can enhance students' ability to navigate challenges effectively.

Similarly, Estacio (2020) examined *The Relationship Between Positive Childhood Experiences and Psychological Resilience in University Students*. Their findings indicated that individuals with strong foundational experiences during childhood exhibited higher self-esteem, which in turn enhanced their ability to cope with adversity. Also, found out that students who had positive childhood experiences demonstrated higher levels of self-esteem, which contributed to their psychological resilience. The results emphasized that early-life experiences significantly influence students' mental health and emotional well-being. This underscores the importance of fostering supportive environments during childhood to strengthen resilience and enhance coping mechanisms in adulthood.

Transforming Experiences into Opportunities for Growth

Students transformed their experiences into opportunities for personal and academic growth by using adversity as motivation to succeed, setting long-term goals, and developing self-efficacy.

Theron (2017), in a study on adolescent resilience, "*Resilience Among Young Mothers in Education*" explored how young mothers who continued their education despite early pregnancy developed essential life skills, such as determination, perseverance, and time management. The study highlighted how these students overcame the stigma and obstacles associated with being teenage mothers by adopting structured study habits, seeking support systems, and remaining goal oriented. As a result, they not only succeeded academically but also served as role models for others in similar situations. This research underscores the importance of providing young mothers with educational resources and mentorship programs to help them navigate both motherhood and schooling successfully.

Garay et al. (2022), in a study on Filipino student resilience, found that "*Overcoming Family Hardships Through Education*", examined how students from broken families often turn to education as a means of improving their circumstances. Many of these students used their difficult home environments as motivation to succeed, determined to break the cycle of hardship that their families experienced. The study found that these students displayed higher levels of independence, responsibility, and a strong work ethic. By viewing education as a tool for change, they were able to channel their personal struggles into academic achievements, setting themselves up for a brighter future.

Grit, Posttraumatic Growth, and Life Satisfaction

Zhou et al. (2022) provided valuable insights into the role of grit, posttraumatic growth, and life satisfaction among students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research found that perseverance and a growth mindset were critical factors in students' ability to adapt positively to adversity. Grit, defined as the combination of

passion and perseverance toward long-term goals, played a crucial role in helping students navigate the uncertainty, stress, and disruptions caused by the pandemic. Students who exhibited higher levels of grit were more likely to remain committed to their academic and personal goals despite the challenges they faced.

Moreover, the study highlighted the concept of posttraumatic growth, which refers to the positive psychological changes individuals experience after overcoming significant hardships. Students who embraced a growth mindset—believing that their abilities and intelligence could develop through effort and learning—were better equipped to find meaning in their struggles, learn from difficult experiences, and emerge stronger. This mindset allowed them to reframe their challenges as opportunities for self-improvement rather than insurmountable obstacles.

Furthermore, the research revealed that students with high levels of grit and posttraumatic growth reported greater life satisfaction and overall well-being. Despite the emotional and academic difficulties brought on by the pandemic, these students were able to maintain a sense of purpose, adapt to changing circumstances, and sustain a positive outlook on life. The study underscored the importance of fostering resilience through supportive educational environments, psychological interventions, and strategies that encourage perseverance and a proactive approach to challenges. By promoting grit and a growth mindset, schools and communities can help students develop the psychological strength needed to thrive in the face of adversity.

The Role of Social Support, Mindfulness, and Coping Strategies

Silvers and Moreira (2023), examining peer facilitation of emotion regulation, titled *"The Role of Peer Networks in Building Resilience Among Adolescents from Disrupted Homes,"* explored the impact of peer support groups on students from broken families and highlighted their significance in fostering resilience. The research found that peer networks provided a safe and supportive environment where adolescents could openly share their experiences, emotions, and struggles, reducing feelings of isolation and loneliness. This sense of belonging played an important role in helping these students process their emotions and develop a more positive outlook on their circumstances. The findings further indicate that adolescents who actively participate in peer networks develop stronger emotional resilience, higher self-esteem, and improved coping mechanisms. This means that having positive peer relationships helps these students manage stress and emotional challenges more effectively. The study underscores how peer interactions can act as a protective factor against the negative effects of family instability, providing emotional and psychological stability.

Additionally, the research calls for the implementation of structured peer mentoring programs within schools and communities. By formalizing peer support, institutions can ensure that struggling adolescents receive consistent guidance and emotional support. Such programs could include group counseling, mentorship initiatives, and activities that encourage open communication and trust among peers.

Overall, the work of Silvers and Moreira (2023) reinforces the idea that social connections, especially among peers, are essential for adolescent well-being. It highlights the need for schools, families, and communities to recognize the power of peer support in promoting resilience and emotional growth among young individuals facing family challenges.

Fancourt et al. (2021), in a study on leisure and emotional well-being, noted that *"Mindfulness practices and emotional well-being in adolescents from separated families"* examined the impact involving mindfulness exercises and other forms of emotional regulation, for use in youngsters whose parents are separated. Their study concluded that mindfulness did enhance quality of student's emotional health since it lowered stress and anxiety among the students. These techniques also raised students' attentiveness and hope in cases of family difficulties and dilemmas. The results thus top up mindfulness as a useful technique, empowering the optimistic emotional regulation and general mental health among youth coming from separated families.

In a study by Valladolid (2021) on coping strategies among Filipino students, *"Coping Strategies of Filipino Students from Single-Parent Households"* attempts to describe the ways how students coming from single-parent families handle stress stating that in order to overcome it these people turn to emotional detachment, friends, as well as additional activities in which they participate. These strategies help them manage the

complex issues they face in their Homes and families and continue with their learning. They discover inner strength and independence through their coping strategies. Their difficult circumstances teach them valuable life skills such as adaptability, self-reliance, and emotional control. Instead of being consumed by stress, they find ways to manage it—whether through emotional detachment, friendships, or participation in extracurricular activities. These strategies not only help them survive their challenges but also prepare them for future hardships, making them more capable individuals.

The common thread between these studies is that adversity, while challenging, can shape individuals into stronger, more resilient people. The silver lining in the struggles of these adolescents is their ability to grow, develop meaningful relationships, and discover their own inner strength. Their hardships do not define them; rather, their ability to overcome these struggles and thrive despite them becomes their defining trait.

Ultimately, these findings emphasize that while family challenges may cause difficulties, they also serve as catalysts for personal growth and transformation. By fostering supportive environments in schools and communities, we can help these students not only cope with their circumstances but also see the silver lining—that through hardship comes strength, and through struggle, they find resilience and hope.

Impact of Family Instability on Academic Performance

Garay et al. (2022) underscored the resilience of Filipino youth facing family instability. Their research, *“Resilience in Filipino Adolescents from Broken Families: “Streets: The Role of Community and School Support”*. The silver lining in the study lies in the resilience and growth that adolescents from broken families develop despite their hardships. While losing a parent or experiencing family instability is a painful experience, the research highlights how these students find strength and support through their schools, communities, and peer networks. Instead of being consumed by their struggles, these adolescents can turn their challenges into opportunities. The presence of support groups, school programs, and community initiatives allows them to build emotional resilience and develop effective coping strategies. Through these resources, they gain valuable life skills such as perseverance, self-reliance, and emotional intelligence—qualities that will serve them well in adulthood.

Moreover, the study underscores that hardships do not define these students; rather, their ability to overcome them does. The silver lining is found in the realization that adversity can be a source of personal growth and empowerment. By engaging in school activities, forming friendships, and receiving guidance from teachers and mentors, they not only survive their difficulties but also thrive and succeed in ways they may not have thought possible.

Finally, the work of Garay et al. (2022) reinforces a powerful message: struggles can shape individuals into stronger, more resilient people. While the loss of a parent or family instability is undoubtedly challenging, it also opens the door to newfound strength, support, and personal development. The silver lining is that these experiences, though difficult, help shape a future filled with resilience, determination, and success.

Ungar (2021) synthesized the effects of multisystemic support on vulnerable students, including those from disrupted families. Key findings of that work *‘Mentorship as a Social Support Mechanism for vulnerable Youths’* highlights a silver lining in the lives of vulnerable students, particularly those from broken families, through community-based mentorship programs. Despite facing personal hardships, these students find hope, guidance, and emotional security in mentorship relationships, which provide them with much-needed social support. One of the key takeaways from the study is that mentors serve as role models and support systems, helping students develop coping strategies to navigate personal adversity. This mentorship acts as a stabilizing force, offering encouragement and practical guidance that helps students build resilience, confidence, and a sense of belonging. Instead of feeling isolated due to family challenges, these students gain new perspectives and motivation to work toward a better future. While family struggles may create emotional distress, mentorship provides a positive and transformative influence. It helps students redirect their pain into purpose, equipping them with life skills that foster personal growth, academic success, and emotional well-being. With the right mentors, these students learn not only to cope with challenges but also to turn their struggles into stepping stones toward a brighter future. Finally, mentorship is a beacon of hope, showing that no matter how

difficult life circumstances may be, supportive relationships and guidance can help vulnerable youth rise above adversity and thrive.

Malin et al. (2017) described how students navigating family adversity develop leadership and purpose. Their study, *“Turning Adversity into Opportunity: Still the cross-sectional qualitative study, “Growth Experiences of Adolescents from Separated Families”*, confirmed that explanatory and leadership abilities among such students improve due to the had coping with the experience of the family separation. Mastery of these coping opportunities makes the students strong-willed, and ready to face the leadership challenges when confronted by complex or changing conditions. The study shows that there are basically opportunities of transforming the past experiences resulting from disrupted families into positive aspects for their future lives and education.

Tedeschi et al. (2018), in examining posttraumatic growth, noted in their study *“Academic resilience in students from broken families”* examined the effect of family difficulties on academic recovery among learners from non-intact families. According to their research, when students transform their experiences into motivational aspects with students’ academic performance, they get better results, and they are more resilient. In addition, these students find meaning in their struggles and get to stand for something – a reality that has an unwritten, direct impact on their academic performances. As seen in this study the students can transform for example, negative family situations into positive results in their academic performance.

Newcomb et al. (2019) investigated how students construct resilience from adversity. Their study, *“Using Adversity as Motivation: Success Strategies of Students from Broken Families”*, found that these students often focus on their future goals and channel the challenges they face into developing a strong sense of determination and ambition. It shows that the former converts their challenges into strength so that they compel themselves to perform well. Likewise, Masten (2020) in their work *‘The Personal Growth of Children from Divorced Families’* found out that majority of the students studied consider their difficulties as opportunities. These behaviors prepare them not only for classroom performance but also all the other activities they are ever likely to engage in, socially and personally. In both studies, authors emphasize the role of stressors in positive development of purposeful achievement motivation to students from broken families.

Furthermore, David et al. (2021), in a study on student support systems in the Philippines, found that *“Extended Family Support and Academic Performance in Students from Divorced Families”* emphasized the vital role that extended family members, particularly grandparents and other close relatives, play in supporting students from divorced families. The research found that these family members provided both emotional and financial assistance, helping students navigate the challenges brought about by parental separation. One of the key findings of the study was that emotional support from extended family members played a significant role in stabilizing students’ mental and emotional well-being. With the absence of one or both parents due to divorce, students often experienced feelings of loneliness, abandonment, and distress. However, when extended family members, such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles, stepped in to offer encouragement, guidance, and affection, students exhibited improved resilience and a more positive outlook on life. Financial support was another factor highlighted in the study. Many students from divorced families faced financial difficulties due to the division of parental income and, in some cases, the lack of financial contributions from one parent. Extended family members often stepped in by assisting with school-related expenses such as tuition fees, school supplies, and other educational needs. This financial assistance alleviated stress and allowed students to focus better on their studies.

Furthermore, the study revealed that the presence of a strong extended family network contributed to a sense of security and belonging. Students who had regular interactions with their relatives reported higher levels of confidence and motivation to excel academically. This sense of belonging helped mitigate the negative effects of family separation, leading to better concentration, increased participation in school activities, and overall improved academic performance.

In conclusion, David et al. (2021) highlighted that institutional and family support is a crucial buffer for Filipino students facing family instability. Emotional encouragement, financial assistance, and a sense of belonging provided by relatives played a significant role in maintaining students’ academic success and well-being despite the challenges of parental separation. The study suggested that strengthening extended family

ties and fostering supportive environments within communities could help students from divorced families thrive academically and emotionally.

Resilience and positive growth among students facing adversity have been widely examined in various studies, each highlighting distinct but interconnected factors that contribute to their ability to overcome challenges. While some studies emphasize psychological attributes such as mindset and perseverance, others focus on social support systems, family stability, and environmental influences.

Ungar (2021) and Masten (2020), both studies emphasize the role of external and internal support systems in fostering resilience. Ungar (2021) underscores the importance of therapy, mentorship, and peer support in helping individuals build coping mechanisms, while research on growth mindset highlights the power of believing abilities can develop, which enables students to view challenges as opportunities rather than obstacles. Although both studies recognize the significance of overcoming adversity, Ungar (2021) focuses on structured interventions, while Masten (2020) attributes resilience partly to an individual's mindset and adaptive capacity.

Similarly, Estacio (2020) and Masten (2001) examine resilience from different angles. Estacio (2020) emphasizes that resilience is cultivated through external support, such as family and community engagement, particularly among Filipino high school students. Masten (2001) highlights the long-term role of ordinary adaptive processes and protective relationships in building resilience. Both studies agree that resilience is not solely innate but is shaped by social interactions and environmental stability. However, Estacio places greater weight on present-day institutional support, while Masten (2001) stresses the foundational role of consistent caregiving and community resources.

Additionally, Garay et al. (2022) and Theron (2017) both explore how students turn adversity into motivation for success. Garay et al. examine how students from broken families use education as a tool for change, while Theron (2017) highlights how adolescents use community enablers to build resilience. Although both perspectives reveal that adversity can motivate students, Theron (2017) places greater weight on cultural and social enablers, while Garay et al. (2022) emphasize the psychological characteristics that enable Filipino students to persevere.

Zhou et al. (2022) and Tedeschi et al. (2018) both discuss how students cultivate resilience and growth in response to adversity, but they differ in their focus. Zhou et al. (2022) introduce the concept of grit and posttraumatic growth, demonstrating how students facing hardship—particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic—develop life satisfaction and perseverance. Meanwhile, Tedeschi et al. (2018) examine posttraumatic growth, emphasizing how individuals develop new perspectives and personal strength after navigating significant adversity. While both studies highlight the positive outcomes of hardship, Zhou et al. frame resilience as an ongoing developmental process, while Tedeschi et al. (2018) focus on the transformative psychological changes that emerge after navigating significant adversity.

Another point of comparison is found in Silvers and Moreira (2023) and Fancourt et al. (2021), both of which highlight social support as a key component of resilience. Silvers and Moreira (2023) emphasize peer relationships as crucial support systems for adolescents, whereas Fancourt et al. (2021) focus on leisure and emotional regulation activities as a strategy to enhance emotional well-being among students from separated families. While both approaches promote emotional stability, Silvers and Moreira (2023) suggest that peer interactions foster a sense of belonging, whereas Fancourt et al. (2021) propose that structured leisure activities foster internal emotional regulation.

Further examining coping strategies, Valladolid (2021) and Malin et al. (2017) illustrate how students turn challenges into personal growth. Valladolid (2021) explores how Filipino students rely on social support and active coping strategies to manage stress, while Malin et al. (2017) argue that students who experience adversity often develop stronger purpose and character. While both studies agree that resilience leads to personal development, Valladolid focuses on immediate coping responses, while Malin et al. stress long-term character and purpose outcomes.

Furthermore, David et al. (2021) and Newcomb et al. (2019) examine the role of external support in fostering resilience. David et al. (2021) emphasize the role of institutional and family support in helping Filipino students persist despite socioeconomic challenges, while Newcomb et al. (2019) highlight how students construct resilience from their lived experiences of adversity. Although both perspectives recognize the importance of external influences, David et al. focus on institutional support structures, while Newcomb et al. emphasize the student's own meaning-making process as a driver of resilience.

Finally, while these studies differ in their approaches to understanding resilience, they collectively reinforce the idea that adversity, when met with the right support systems and personal mindset, can serve as a catalyst for growth. Whether through external interventions, psychological attributes, or social networks, resilience emerges as a dynamic process shaped by various influences, each contributing to students' ability to navigate challenges and achieve success.

Conceptual Framework

This study was anchored on certain concepts, process, and relationships. It served as a lens to examine individual experiences, focusing on how students find positive growth and silver linings through adversity. The silver lining perspective highlights the unexpected positive outcomes that arises from challenges, such strengthened resilience, emotional maturity, and personal growth.

The contextual factors or the background influences refers to the external and internal conditions that shape student's experiences and influence their ability to cope with adversity. The contextual factors frame the student's experiences with adversity and influence their ability to discover silver linings through resilience and support system.

The adversity or the challenging experiences represents the difficult circumstances students encounter in their academic and personal lives. Adversity acts as the trigger for students' coping strategies and the eventual emergence of silver linings.

Furthermore, the coping mechanisms or the response adversity refer to the strategies and support systems students use to manage adversity. Effective coping mechanisms help students process adversity, allowing them to recognize silver linings and foster positive growth.

Moreover, the silver lining effect represents the positive realizations and benefits that emerge from difficult experiences. The silver lining turns adversity into a source of growth by allowing students to discover hidden benefits, such as increased wisdom and empathy.

Lastly, positive growth outcomes of the development and empowerment refers to the long-term benefits and development that students experience after discovering silver linings. Positive growth represents the transformation that occurs when students recognize the silver linings in their struggles.

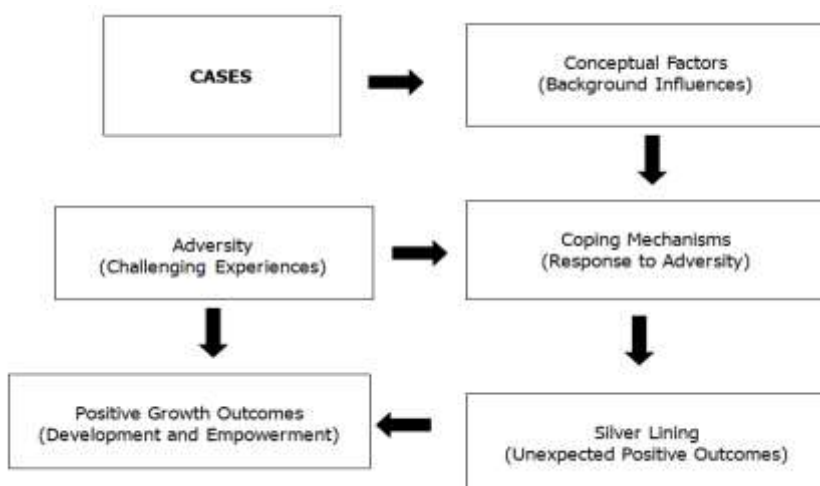


Figure 1. Paradigm for the Silver Lining and Positive Growth Amidst Adversity

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents research design, population of participants, data gathering instruments, data gathering procedures and statistical treatment.

Research Design

The researcher employed the case study method of research. A Case study research design is a qualitative approach that allowed researchers to explore complex phenomena within real-life contexts by using multiple sources of evidence (Gallagher, 2024). This methodology is particularly useful when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are not clearly defined, making it an effective tool for investigating intricate social, organizational, and behavioral issues.

This research method focused on a particular subject, event, organization, or individual, using multiple data sources such as interviews, observations, and documents. Case studies can be exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory, depending on the research objectives.

A case study method focused on providing of a specific subject, including a person, organization, group or event. It is aimed at describing the properties, characteristics, context, and phenomena surrounding the subject in detail without qualitative analysis or essentially explaining causation. This type of case study often used to document and understand real-life scenarios in depth, relying on data collected through methods such as interviews, observations, and document reviews.

Since the primary focus of the study is to determine the findings the silver lining of student positive growth amidst adversity in the Municipality of Nampicuan, Nueva Ecija, a case study method is considered appropriate.

Subjects of the Study

Participants of the study came from the school of Nampicuan Christian Academy and Nampicuan National High School located in the municipality of Nampicuan, Nueva Ecija. All the participants are recommended by the school's guidance designate in consultation with the researcher. The process of selecting appropriate participants adhered to ethical considerations, ensuring confidentiality throughout the selection process.

This study employed purposive sampling, where the researcher selected participants based on their ability to provide information-rich accounts directly relevant to the research questions. Participants were chosen because they had experienced significant and varied adversities, could articulate their coping experiences, and were available and willing to participate. The sample size of seven participants was determined by the principle of informational adequacy: data collection continued until recurring themes emerged consistently across participants, indicating thematic sufficiency (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In qualitative case study research, a small purposive sample of this size is appropriate when the goal is depth of understanding rather than statistical generalization, provided that the selected cases are information-rich and contextually relevant (Yin, 2018). The diversity in school type (public and private) and in the nature of adversities experienced further strengthened the breadth of perspectives captured.

Data Gathering Instrument

A multi-level interview guide served as the primary data gathering instrument. The guide was structured in three integrated layers to balance methodological consistency with the depth required in qualitative case study inquiry. First, structured questions were applied consistently across all seven participants to ensure comparability of responses on the three core research questions: adversities encountered, silver linings discovered, and transformative growth experienced. Second, semi-structured probes followed each structured question, allowing the researcher to seek clarification, request elaboration, and explore emerging ideas particular to each participant's situation. Third, unstructured prompts were introduced when participants raised topics outside the guide's scope, enabling authentic narrative expression and deeper exploration of personal

meaning. This three-layer integration is consistent with Yin's (2018) case study protocol for data collection, which calls for guided inquiry that is both systematic and flexible.

The questionnaire addressed three thematic areas: adversities encountered by the participants, how they found the silver lining amidst adversities, and how they transformed their experiences into opportunities for personal and academic growth.

Data Gathering Procedure

A case study survey employed multiple sources to ensure comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Permission obtained from the Executive Director, Research Adviser, Specialization Chair, Program Dean, the Office of the Principal and Office of the Guidance Designate for the floating of the interview questionnaire for the need data.

Document analysis included reviewing academic records, counseling reports, and personal journals to provide an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences and backgrounds. Additionally, artifacts like essay, artwork, and projects are analyzed to uncover creative expressions and deeper meanings relevant to the study.

Further, the interview guide questionnaire that was devised shown to the Adviser and Panel members for comments and suggestions as bases in improving the final draft of the instrument.

Furthermore, after the questionnaire simplified, improved and refined. The questionnaire was subject to content validation. The four (4) experts in the field of Guidance and Counseling and Specialized in Education will determine the content validity of the instrument.

Finally, begins with preparation of a structured interview guide to maintain consistency while allowing flexibility for in in-depth responses. Observations are carried out in natural setting, such as classrooms and family environments, to capture authentic behaviors and interactions. Interviews were scheduled at a time convenient for each participant and conducted in a safe, private setting to ensure comfort in sharing personal experiences. Structured questions were posed consistently across all participants to address the three core research questions, followed by semi-structured probes to seek clarification and elaboration, and unstructured prompts to allow authentic narrative expression when participants raised issues outside the guide's scope. Audio recordings, with prior written consent, were taken during each interview to ensure accuracy. After the interviews, recordings were transcribed verbatim while maintaining the anonymity and confidentiality of each participant. The transcriptions were then organized for thematic analysis, where recurring themes and patterns were identified and categorized.

Data Analysis

After the data gathering process, all data collected through the case study method underwent a systematic six-phase thematic analysis following the framework of Braun & Clarke (2006). In Phase 1, the researcher familiarized herself with the data by reading all transcripts repeatedly and taking initial notes. In Phase 2, initial codes were generated by identifying meaningful features across the entire dataset. In Phase 3, codes were sorted into potential themes by grouping related patterns together. In Phase 4, themes were reviewed by re-reading the coded data to ensure coherence and distinction. In Phase 5, themes were defined and named, and clear descriptions were developed for each. In Phase 6, the final report was produced by selecting representative participant quotations to support each theme. Data management involved transcribing interviews verbatim, organizing observational notes, and maintaining a coded data file for systematic retrieval. To strengthen trustworthiness, the study applied three validation strategies: (1) triangulation, by cross-referencing data from interviews, observation notes, document reviews, and artifacts; (2) member checking, by sharing initial themes with two participants to confirm whether the interpretations reflected their lived experiences; and (3) peer debriefing, by presenting the emerging themes to the research adviser and panel members for external verification of analytical consistency. These measures ensured that the findings were credible, transferable to similar contexts, and dependable in their systematic derivation.

All data collected from the chosen participants were handled with strict confidentiality. The researchers also took deliberate steps to eliminate bias by maintaining reflexive journals and ensuring that interpretations were grounded in participant data rather than prior assumptions.

Presentation, Analysis And Interpretation Of Data

The result of the data analysis is presented in this chapter. Discussions are provided for a thorough explanation of the themes that emerged in response to the study’s objectives.

The Profile Of The High School Students

The narratives of the participants reveal the intersection of poverty, family instability, trauma, and resilience among Filipino youth. Most participants come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, with families relying on low-income livelihoods such as selling (e.g., balut, chicharon, puto) and farming. The burden of financial hardships often leads to students engaging in income-generating activities at night which limits their time for academic preparation and participation in extracurricular activities.

Several participants also come from broken families or have lost a parent, which exacerbates emotional and psychological stress. Research shows that Filipino students from disrupted family structures often experience lower academic engagement and diminished emotional support. Despite these challenges, many participants excel academically, a phenomenon supported by research showing that intrinsic motivation (Garay et al., 2022) and family responsibilities often drive underprivileged students to perform well in school as a form of social mobility.

Participants also faced psychological challenges. One participant experiences bullying due to alopecia, reflecting the documented psychological toll of physical differences in adolescent peer groups. Another participant has experienced sexual violence and public scandal, resulting in homeschooling, an indication of how trauma can disrupt traditional educational pathways (Navarro et al., 2023).

Furthermore, coping mechanisms among participants include listening to music, drawing, exercising, breathing techniques, and isolation. These reflect the use of creative and physical outlets to manage stress among Filipino adolescents. Additionally, involvement in school leadership organization (e.g., SSLG and BERT) demonstrates the role of school-based support systems in fostering resilience.

Despite significant barriers, ranging from poverty and family instability to personal trauma, many of these students exhibit academic resilience, which is defined by Masten (2020) as “ordinary magic” or the capacity of individuals to adapt well in the face of adversity. This resilience is critical to understanding the lived experience of at-risk students in the Philippine context.

Adversities Encountered

The adversities experienced by students fall into three primary domains: emotional, financial, and academic.

Table 1 presents the different themes that can be derived from adversities encountered by the participants.

Table 1 Themes derived from Adversities Encountered by the Participants

Themes	Description	Sample Statement	Cases
EMOTIONAL DISTRESS	Many of them experienced significant emotional adversity due to the death of a loved one, parental separation,	“Naghiwalay po kasi yung pamilya ko... Namatay po si kuya ko.”	Jenna
		“Namatay po si mama... iniisip ko nalang po na nag abroad siya.”	Princess

	or family conflict. These emotional struggles often led to sadness, anxiety, or loss of focus in school.	“Yung mama ko... iniwan po ako sa tatay ko... nung namatay po yung Papa ko, relatives ko na lang po ang tumutulong saakin.”	Christian
		“Kapag nagaaway po kami ni mama or kuya, minsan nadadala ko po sa school.”	Alias Captain
FINANCIAL CONSTRAINTS	They often faced economic hardship, which made it difficult for them to pay for school fees, projects, uniforms, or transportation. In some cases, they had to work or rely on external help to continue schooling.	“Nahhirapan po kami kapag may babayaran sa school.”	Pam
		“Nag titinda po kami sa gabi... kapos po kami kapag may babayaran sa school.”	Jenna
		Paano na po yung gastusin ko sa school... wala na po si tita.”	Christian
		“Yung expenses din po nila sa akin... nakakadrain po yung session.”	EJ
ACADEMIC CONSTRAINTS	Students encountered difficulties in meeting academic requirements due to limited time, lack of resources, and external responsibilities. These challenges often resulted in late submissions, missed classes, or poor academic performance.	“Hindi po ako makapag-review... inaantok na po ako.”	Jenna
		“May mga babayaran po... tapos kailangan ko din po maging active sa student leadership... minsan po parang nasasabay sabay na po lahat.”	Pam
		“Hirap po akong habulin yung mga lessons po... bumagsak ako sa TLE.”	Christian
		“Hindi po ako maka focus... nahihiya lang po talaga ako makipag communicate.”	Razea

The adversities faced by students are multi-dimensional—deeply rooted in emotional, financial, and academic domains, often interlinked.

Emotional Distress

Emotional distress caused by family breakdown, parental absence, and loss of loved ones emerged as a major form of adversity. Students expressed feelings of abandonment, grief, and emotional turmoil, which directly affected their academic focus and motivation.

Many of the participants experienced family-related distress, particularly loss or separation from parents. For example, Jenna spoke about her parents’ separation and the death of her older brother, which left an emotional void. She explained that because her father was no longer present and did not provide financial support, she and her mother had to sell balut at night to cover school-related expenses. This greatly affected her ability to focus on assignments and rest, leading to academic fatigue. Princess endured the trauma of her mother’s sudden death and the accompanying community gossip, which wrongly blamed local politics for her mother’s passing. “Iniisip ko nalang na nag-abroad si Mama,” (I was just thinking that Mom went abroad) she said, to shield herself emotionally. The grief made it difficult for her to concentrate in school or feel comfortable engaging socially.

Similarly, Christian highlighted the devastating loss of his only stable guardian—his aunt—who passed away after illness. Christian had already been abandoned by both parents. He said, “Nung namatay po yung Papa ko, si Tita nalang ang kasama ko. Pero nung siya rin ay nagkasakit at namatay, ako nalang po.” (When my father

died, only my aunt was with me. But when she also got sick and died, it was just me.) With no consistent support, he found himself on the verge of dropping out. Also, as for Alias Captain when they have misunderstanding in the family, “*Kapag nagaaway po kami ni mama or kuya, minsan nadadala ko po sa school.*” (When my mom or older brother and I fight, sometimes I take that mood to school). These cases exemplify what Capurso et al. (2021) call “emotional dislocation”—a state in which trauma from familial loss impairs a student’s ability to remain emotionally engaged in schoolwork. The emotional void caused by broken or absent families makes it difficult for learners to concentrate and sustain academic engagement. Navarro et al. (2023) further stress that students from disrupted homes are more prone to depression and experience lower academic persistence unless emotional support systems are present.

These narratives show how emotional distress is not just an internal problem—it permeates students' academic lives, social participation, and long-term self-esteem.

Financial Constraints

Most participants described economic hardships as a consistent barrier to fully participating in school activities. These included not being able to pay for projects, uniforms, materials, and transportation. In extreme cases, students had to work or rely on others to continue schooling.

Pam articulates a silent but deeply felt exclusion—she is academically capable and motivated but barred from opportunities due to lack of money, “*Nahhirapan po kami kapag may babayaran sa school.*” (We have a hard time paying for school.) Her dream of joining contests, often key for scholarships and self-esteem, is constantly postponed. Research notes that school competition fees, though often small, are *symbolic gatekeepers* of opportunity for low-income youth. Pamela’s line—“*Masakit po sa part ko*” (“It hurts on my part”)—captures the emotional toll of this economic exclusion.

Jenna’s financial struggle intersects directly with her academic capacity. Selling balot at night reflects her family’s dependence on her for survival, “*Nag titinda po kami sa gabi... kapos po kami kapag may babayaran sa school.*” (We sell at night... we are short when it comes to paying for school.) The consequence: exhaustion and poor academic preparation. Her response showcases a form of time poverty—where financial need limits the hours available for rest and study (Ungar, 2021). Her resilience is evident, but her learning conditions are far from ideal, and without structured aid, she risks underperforming despite high potential.

Christian reveals a multi-layered economic hardship: not only is he financially unstable, but he also experiences emotional restraint in asking for help due to his orphaned status, “*Paano na po yung gastusin ko sa school... wala na po si tita.*” (How will I pay for school expenses... Auntie is gone.) This results in unmet educational needs and internalized stress. His situation reflects the findings of Capurso et al. (2021), who emphasize that grief combined with financial instability leads to academic neglect if no alternative guardian or school support steps in. Christian’s struggle is both financial and relational—he lacks someone to advocate for his needs.

EJ’s situation shows how financial adversity extends beyond tuition and food. After experiencing trauma, she shifted to homeschooling and therapy—both financially demanding. “*Nakakadrain po yung session, tapos may mga gastos pa po sa homeschool. Wala akong sariling cellphone kaya hindi ako makapasok sa ibang class.*” (The session is draining, and then there are the costs of homeschooling. I don’t have my own cellphone so I can’t go to other classes.) The lack of a personal phone restricted her access to online learning. Her case highlights the intersection of digital inequality and mental health expense, reflecting research showing that marginalized students in the post-pandemic era suffer from both emotional burnout and digital exclusion (Valladolid, 2021). EJ’s adversity is intensified by the inability to afford healing and learning tools.

Academic Constraints

Academic difficulties were often a consequence of competing priorities, including family responsibilities, employment, and lack of access to learning resources. These struggles led to missed deadlines, incomplete projects, and reduced engagement in academic activities.

Jenna's academic difficulties are a consequence of time poverty—she works late nights to support her family, sacrificing her ability to review or rest, “*Hindi po ako makapag-review... inaantok na po ako. Kasi po nagtitinda kami ng balot sa gabi.*” (I can't review... I'm sleepy. Because we sell balut at night.) Despite her intellect and potential, the demands of economic survival directly interfere with learning. This reflects the documented risk that working students face fatigue-induced academic decline (David et al., 2021). Jenna's exhaustion is both a physical and cognitive barrier, highlighting the cost of survival on student achievement.

Pam's academic struggle stems from role overload. She juggles leadership duties, household responsibilities, and academic performance, “*Kapag stress ako sa academics, parang nasasabay-sabay na. Kasi student leader po ako tapos may responsibilidad pa sa bahay. Minsan po, nagkakasabay sabay yung gawain.*” (When I'm stressed about academics, it seems like I'm doing it all at the same time. Because I'm a student leader and I also have responsibilities at home. Sometimes, the work all goes together.) Her situation illustrates what Capurso et al. (2021) call “*role strain*”—a state where multiple social roles create psychological and cognitive tension that reduces learning efficiency. Her stress is not from inability, but from competing demands on her time and energy. This may also lead to burnout or academic disengagement if not addressed with proper time management guidance and support.

Christian's academic failure is a direct result of caregiving obligations. As a young guardian, his school attendance became secondary to his role as a family caretaker, “*Nahuli ako sa lessons, bumagsak ako sa TLE. Kasi po inalagaan ko si Tita habang may sakit siya. Pag wala akong pasok, ako po ang bantay.*” (I was late for lessons, I failed TLE. Because I took care of Auntie while she was sick. When I wasn't in school, I was her caregiver.) This reflects the reality of many “child-headed households” in lower-income areas. According to UNESCO (2023), caregiving responsibilities in adolescents—especially when unsupported—lead to frequent absenteeism, incomplete work, and emotional fatigue. Christian's case shows how family roles can displace academic responsibilities, even among dedicated students.

Razea's academic challenges are tied to emotional and social anxiety caused by alopecia and peer ridicule, “*Nahihirapan po ako mag focus. Hindi po ako maka-recitation kasi po nahihiya ako. Minsan po parang ayaw ko na lang pumasok.*” (I have a hard time focusing. I can't recite because I'm shy. Sometimes I feel like I don't want to go to school.) Her lack of focus and avoidance of class participation indicate performance anxiety and self-protective withdrawal, which are common among bullied students. According to Navarro et al. (2023), bullying and shame lower students' engagement, class attendance, and confidence, leading to poor academic outcomes. Her response—“*ayaw ko na lang pumasok*”—highlights the psychosocial dimension of academic failure, where emotional distress erodes motivation and disrupts cognitive functioning.

These narratives reflect and support Masten's (2021) theory of developmental resilience, which posits that adverse life experiences - such as bereavement, family breakdown, or ongoing financial hardship - can deeply disrupt a student's psychological and cognitive development. Such disruptions may manifest in difficulties with concentration, emotional regulation, and motivation, all of which are critical to academic success. Masten emphasizes that these challenges are not merely temporary setbacks but can alter the trajectory of a young person's development if not adequately addressed through supportive interventions.

In a similar, UNESCO (2023) underscores the persistent and systemic nature of poverty as a major barrier to equitable education. Poverty affects students on multiple levels: it limits access to essential resources like nutritious food, safe housing, and school supplies, and often coincides with poor health outcomes and social exclusion. When poverty intersects with other vulnerabilities - such as disability, mental health challenges, or community violence - learners face compounded disadvantages that hinder their ability to thrive in educational settings.

Further, highlighting the compounding impact of adversity, Theron (2017) caution that unresolved trauma, particularly stemming from exposure to violence, chronic neglect, or social marginalization, can result in long-term educational consequences. Students who experience trauma without appropriate psychosocial support are at increased risk for poor academic performance, diminished self-confidence, and disengagement from school. This is especially pronounced among marginalized learners, who often lack access to mental health resources

and supportive networks. Altogether, these perspectives emphasize the urgent need for holistic educational approaches that address both the academic and socio-emotional needs of vulnerable students.

Cross Sectional Analysis for Themes derived from adversities encountered by the participants

The results of this study reveal that student adversity is multifaceted, interconnected, and deeply rooted in structural and emotional realities. Through the cross-sectional analysis of the participants' narratives, three dominant themes emerged: (1) emotional distress (2) financial constraints and (3) academic constraints. While each theme represents a distinct form of adversity, their impact is often cumulative, reflecting the complex interplay between a student's personal, social, and academic life.

Table 2 Cross Sectional Analysis for Themes Derived from Adversities Encountered by the Participants

Participants	Emotional Distress	Financial Constraints	Academic Constraints
Jenna	X	X	X
Pam		X	X
Princess	X		
Christian	X	X	X
Razea			X
Alias Captain	X		
EJ		X	

This cross-sectional analysis reveals that the adversities experienced by students are rarely isolated. Emotional distress, financial constraints, and academic constraints, creating a cycle of vulnerability that limits academic performance, mental wellness, and personal growth. For many of these students, school is both a sanctuary and a battlefield—a place where they are expected to excel while silently managing complex life circumstances.

The participants' resilience is admirable, yet their narratives underscore a critical truth: resilience is not a substitute for support. These findings support the call for trauma-informed, equity-driven educational interventions that address both emotional and economic realities. Schools must not only accommodate academic needs but also become compassionate institutions capable of nurturing the whole learner.

In conclusion, the cross-sectional analysis of these three themes illustrates that Filipino students' adversities are not purely academic challenges—they are lived experiences shaped by emotional grief, economic hardship, and survival-driven time constraints. Without responsive and inclusive educational systems, these adversities will continue to widen the gap between potential and performance.

However, these same narratives also affirm the transformative potential of education when paired with empathy, flexibility, and strategic support. The findings demand a reimagining of education as not just a transmission of knowledge, but a space for healing, empowerment, and social equity.

Finding The Silver Lining Amidst Adversities

This section presents the different silver linings found by the participants through resilience-building strategies. Table 3 contains the data that address the second research objective.

This section examines how the student participants navigated personal struggles and, in the process, uncovered sources of strength, hope, and transformation. Their narratives reveal a range of internal and external

resources; including supportive relationships, faith, creativity, and self-motivation, that enabled them to persevere in many cases and thrive despite adverse circumstances.

Table 3 Themes derived from Finding the Silver Lining Amidst Adversities

Themes	Description	Sample Statement	Cases
ANCHOR HAVEN	They found strength and hope through their immediate support systems—especially family members, friends, and mentors. These relationships provided encouragement, advice, and comfort, helping them remain resilient amidst emotional and academic turmoil.	“ <i>Kay mama po... nag bibigay ng advice at sa mga kapatid ko po.</i> ”	Jenna
		“ <i>Yung girlfriend ko po nagbibigay po siya ng advice sa akin at comfort.</i> ”	Christian
		“ <i>Kapag na stress po ako... nagpapa comfort ako sa kanila [friends], para mabawasan yung lungkot ko.</i> ”	Pam
		“ <i>Yung mga teacher ko po sa NCA willing po silang mag-extend ng time.</i> ”	EJ
ALCHEMY OF RESILIENCE	Several students turned to personal hobbies and talents such as drawing, exercise, music, and prayer to deal with stress. These outlets provided emotional release and helped students regain focus and motivation.	“ <i>Gumagawa po ako ng iba’t-ibang aktibidad tulad ng pagguhit.</i> ”	Pam
		“ <i>Kapag na stress po ako sa classroom, I draw.</i> ”	Razea
		“ <i>Ngayon po ang pinaglilibangan ko po ay pagpapalakas ng katawan, nag ba-barbel.</i> ”	Christian
		“ <i>Tuloy pa rin po ako sa pagtuturo ng sayaw sa mga bata... nakalimutan ko din po mga iniisip ko.</i> ”	EJ
BROKEN GOLD	They reframed their negative experiences as sources of strength and purpose. Grief, failure, or trauma became catalysts for determination, self-improvement, and renewed academic focus.	“ <i>Ginawa kong inspiration po si kuya... para maging proud po siya.</i> ”	Jenna
		“ <i>Ginamit ko po yung bagay para mas kayanin at makabawi sa pag-aaral.</i> ”	Princess
		“ <i>Kapag tinatamad na po akong mag-aral... sinasabi ko po sa sarili kong dapat galingan ko pa po.</i> ”	Pam
		“ <i>I’ll take it as stepping stone po para sa success ko po.</i> ”	Alias Captain

Despite the depth of their struggles, participants identified sources of hope and strength—what they referred to as “silver linings.” These were often relational, spiritual, or creative outlets that allowed them to cope with overwhelming emotions.

Anchor Haven

Amid emotional distress, academic constraints, and financial constraints, the participants found strength and hope through consistent anchor haven from family members, friends, and school figures. These relationships became their stabilizing forces, offering encouragement, reassurance, and a sense of belonging during periods of crisis. Anchor haven act as protective buffers, helping adolescents cope more effectively with stress and preventing emotional breakdowns or academic withdrawal.

This theme aligns with Ungar (2021), who describes resilience as the product of both internal coping and external support. Students who maintain close, affirming relationships are more likely to adapt positively to adversity, especially when those support systems validate their feelings and encourage forward motion.

Jenna's coping and transformation were deeply rooted in the emotional stability provided by her mother and twin sibling, "*Kay mama po... nag bibigay ng advice at sa mga kapatid ko po, kasi yung kakambal ko po ay laging nakakaintindi sa akin.*" (To my mother... who gives advice and to my siblings, because my twin always understands me.) After the death of her brother and family separation, her mother's advice and her sibling's empathy became her emotional foundation. Jenna's trust in her family allowed her to maintain hope and direction. According to Capurso et al. (2021), strong familial ties enhance emotional recovery and can restore psychological equilibrium even amid grief or poverty. Jenna's ability to become Top 1 in class reflects the power of emotionally available support figures.

Christian, having lost his parents and later his aunt (guardian), was vulnerable to emotional collapse, "*Yung girlfriend ko po nagbibigay po siya ng advice sa akin at comfort. Minsan po kasi parang gusto ko nang huminto ng tuluyan sa pag-aaral.*" (My girlfriend gives me advice and comfort. Sometimes I feel like I want to stop studying altogether.) However, the empathy and encouragement of his girlfriend became a stabilizing influence. This relational support offered both emotional validation and motivational encouragement, which kept him in school despite immense grief. His case supports research showing that adolescents in grief recover more effectively when peer-based emotional scaffolding is present (Matsui et al., 2023). Christian's ability to return to his studies and graduate with honors demonstrates how even one consistent emotional anchor can counteract the impact of loss.

Pam's emotional resilience was reinforced by positive peer relationships. While struggling with comparison and academic pressure, she turned to her friends for emotional comfort, "*Kapag na stress po ako... nagpapa comfort ako sa kanila [friends], para mabawasan yung lungkot ko. Parang sila po yung dahilan kung bakit ako nagiging masaya sa school.*" (When I'm stressed... I want my friends to comfort me to ease my sadness. It's like they're the reason why I'm happy at school.) This enabled her to reframe stress as manageable and even find joy in school. Research on peer facilitation of emotion regulation shows that peer connection reduces internalized academic pressure and creates a shared emotional space where students feel understood and accepted (Silvers & Moreira, 2023). Pam's response shows that her friendships act not just as distraction but as emotional regulators—critical for maintaining mental health and focus.

EJ's case is particularly profound because of her complex trauma—including a public scandal and mental health crisis. Yet she found resilience through a dual support system: her teachers and her aunt, who provided emotional reassurance, "*Yung mga teacher ko po sa NCA willing po silang mag-extend ng time. 'Yung tita Karla ko po, laging kinakausap ako para hindi ko na isipin yung problema.*" (My teachers at NCA are willing to extend the time. My aunt Karla always talks to me so I don't have to think about the problem.) This demonstrates multi-source support—a model consistent with research showing that academic flexibility and personal affirmation create strong recovery paths for traumatized students. Elle's story reinforces that educational institutions must act as emotional ecosystems, especially for students navigating extreme stress or social stigma.

As Ungar (2021) asserts, students with access to caring adults and affirming peers are better able to convert adversity into meaningful action. These support systems do more than soothe—they serve as launchpads for recovery, decision-making, and resilience-building.

Alchemy of Resilience

Amid adversity, participants adopted alchemy of resilience an internal coping methods that helped them manage stress, trauma, and emotional distress. These included drawing, exercise, prayer, music, and mindfulness, functioning not only as distractions but as meaningful, self-directed tools for emotional processing, regulation, and empowerment. These strategies allowed participants to regain control over their experiences and provided a pathway to recovery and reflection, even when external support was limited.

This theme aligns with findings that creative expression and personal routines provide adolescents with a safe outlet for navigating emotional pain (Fancourt et al., 2021). Similarly, Ungar (2021) notes that resilience is contextually expressed, and youth often create unique, culturally grounded coping strategies when formal resources are inaccessible.

Pam's response reveals how creative expression—specifically drawing—became a therapeutic release. Rather than acting out or withdrawing, she channels her emotional stress into productive, imaginative work. Drawing becomes both a self-soothing tool and a medium for personal achievement, allowing her to discover and nurture a skill that boosts her confidence, *“Kapag stress po ako, nag do-drawing po ako. Gumagawa po ako ng iba't-ibang aktibidad tulad ng pagguhit... Mas lalo ko po naipapakita yung creativity ko.”* (When I'm stressed, I draw. I do different activities like drawing... I can express my creativity more.) Her transformation aligns with research on creative resilience, which shows that the arts foster emotional regulation, identity formation, and academic engagement among adolescents facing chronic stress (Fancourt et al., 2021).

Pam also mentioned sharing her drawings with classmates, indicating that her private coping mechanism evolved into a form of social connection, reinforcing both her confidence and her role as a peer leader.

Razea, who struggled with bullying and low self-esteem due to alopecia, used drawing not just as distraction, but as emotional affirmation, *“Nagdo-drawing po ako para makalimot sa stress... Kapag napapansin ng iba, natutuwa rin po ako kasi parang na-aappreciate po ako kahit papaano.”* (I draw to forget about stress... When others notice, I feel happy because it feels like I am appreciated somehow. In her case, creative coping helped rebuild her sense of self-worth. Each drawing not only calmed her but served as evidence of her capability—a counter-narrative to the ridicule she experienced. According to Navarro et al. (2023), marginalized students who create visible artifacts of personal skill (e.g., art, music, design) experience faster emotional recovery and social reintegration.

Razea's story demonstrates that creative acts offer more than relief—they become statements of presence and identity in an environment that previously silenced her.

Christian turned to physical fitness as a coping mechanism. After the death of his aunt, his primary guardian, he faced loneliness and emotional exhaustion. Gym workouts and lifting weights became a way to regain physical and emotional agency—an embodied response to the helplessness caused by grief, *“Ngayon po ang pinaglilibangan ko po ay pagpapalakas ng katawan, nag ba-barbel po ako. Kapag nasa gym ako, parang nakakalimutan ko po yung mga problema ko.”* (Now my hobby is bodybuilding, I lift barbells. When I'm at the gym, I seem to forget about my problems.) Research shows that exercise builds not only physical discipline but also mental structure, helping grieving adolescents manage emotions, improve sleep, and reduce anxiety (Malin et al., 2017).

Christian's choice of coping reflects active emotional regulation—he directs his energy into building something (his body) as a metaphor for reclaiming personal strength amid loss.

EJ combined movement (dance) and spiritual practice (church participation) as her coping strategies following a traumatic scandal and social isolation. Teaching dance became an act of reconnection and purpose—a way to serve others while healing herself, *“Tuloy pa rin po ako sa pagtuturo ng sayaw sa mga bata... tuwing ginagawa ko po yun, nakalimutan ko din po mga iniisip ko. Tapos po nag cha-church kami kahit wala kaming maayos na damit.”* (I still continue to teach dance to children... whenever I do that, I forget my thoughts. Then we go to church even though we don't have proper clothes.) The act of dancing also helped her ground her emotions physically, consistent with somatic healing frameworks which suggest that trauma recovery is often non-verbal and embodied (Tedeschi et al., 2018).

Her participation in church, despite economic hardship, reflects spiritual resilience—using faith as a stabilizing force during emotional disruption. EJ's coping is multifaceted: it is creative, spiritual, communal, and embodied—illustrating the complexity of student-led healing.

Broken Gold

This theme centers on the ability of students to extract purpose and personal motivation from their hardships. Rather than viewing their struggles as defeat, these participants internalized the lessons of adversity and used them to fuel their academic drive, shape their goals, and strengthen their identity. This process of meaning-making transforms suffering into direction—turning trauma into resilience, and pain into performance.

Meaning-making in youth is a critical step toward identity development and long-term resilience, particularly in contexts of chronic stress (Malin et al., 2017).

Jenna's brother's death was a devastating emotional loss, yet she converted her grief into a purpose-driven mindset, "*Ginawa kong inspirasyon po si kuya... kahit wala na yung taong nag-eencourage sa akin, tutuparin ko po ito.*" (I made my brother my inspiration... even if the person who encouraged me is no longer here, I will fulfill this.) Her statement demonstrates an emotional transformation—from sorrow to determination. Rather than using the loss as an excuse to disengage, she reframed it as motivation to succeed academically, eventually becoming Top 1 in her class. This reflects Victor Frankl's (revisited by Villanueva, 2023) assertion that "those who have a 'why' can bear almost any 'how.'" Jenna's "why" is to honor her brother, which anchors her in commitment and future-oriented thinking.

Her meaning-making is both emotional and moral: she wants to live in a way that would have made her brother proud.

Princess turned the grief of losing her mother into a long-term aspiration—becoming a flight attendant to support her family, "*Ginamit ko po yung pagkawala ni mama para mas kayanin at makabawi sa pag-aaral... gusto ko pong maging flight attendant para matulungan ko din yung pamilya ko.*" (I used my mother's absence to be more resilient and catch up on my studies... I want to become a flight attendant so I can help my family.) Her response shows clear goal orientation, emerging from the emotional wreckage of loss. Instead of internalizing despair, she found meaning in self-improvement and familial responsibility. Youth who develop future-oriented goals in the wake of adversity demonstrate stronger academic persistence and resilience (Malin et al., 2017).

Princess's transformation highlights a constructive grief response—rather than suppressing her emotions, she integrates them into her ambitions. This meaning-making process provides both emotional closure and practical direction.

Pam's adversity, rooted in self-comparison and financial difficulty, becomes the spark for academic self-discipline, "*Kapag tinatamad na po akong mag-aral... sinasabi ko po sa sarili kong dapat galingan ko pa po. Kahit na maraming challenges, gusto ko pong maging scholar.*" (When I feel lazy about studying... I tell myself that I should do better. Even though there are many challenges, I want to be a scholar.) Her internal dialogue—positive self-talk—is her coping mechanism and her source of drive. She transforms her stress and emotional fatigue into fuel for achievement through reflection and motivation. As Reivich & Gillham (2013) emphasize, cognitive reframing—how one mentally interprets stress—strongly predicts academic success.

Pam's desire to earn a scholarship isn't just about ambition; it's her way of giving value to her struggle. She doesn't avoid or deny the adversity—she uses it as proof of her capacity to overcome.

Alias Captain presents a philosophical and empowered stance: adversity is a stepping stone, not a barrier, "*I'll take it as stepping stone po para sa success ko po.*" (I'll take it as a stepping stone for my success.) Her ability to contextualize pain as part of a broader journey speaks to advanced emotional maturity and reflective processing. Her statement, "*nasa tao parin kung paano nila tatanggapin,*" (It's still up to the person how they accept it,) aligns with the core tenets of narrative therapy and existential psychology, where one's interpretation of events is more powerful than the event itself.

According to Ungar (2021), resilience is most sustainable when built on self-generated narratives of agency and control. Alias Captain’s reflection shows she sees herself as the author of her story, which is central to lasting transformation and mental well-being.

These strategies exemplify Ungar’s (2021) concept of “resilience pathways,” which emphasizes that resilience is not a one-size-fits-all process but rather a dynamic, context-dependent journey shaped by the interplay between individual agency and the availability of external resources. According to Ungar, resilience emerges when individuals can navigate their environments successfully and access culturally and contextually relevant support systems—such as family, peers, educators, and community networks - that enable them to cope with adversity and sustain their development. The participants in this study demonstrated varied resilience pathways, drawing on personal strengths and accessible support structures to adapt to their unique challenges.

In addition, Tedeschi et al., (2018) assert that engaging in creative and social activities plays a pivotal role in fostering post-traumatic growth. These activities allow individuals to reinterpret and reframe their traumatic experiences, effectively enabling them to “re-author” their life narratives with a renewed sense of purpose, identity, and agency. This transformative process was evident among the participants, many of whom turned to expressive outlets such as art, supportive friendships, and spiritual practices. Through these engagements, they not only managed to cope with their distress but also cultivated emotional resilience, self-awareness, and a deeper appreciation for their personal growth.

Despite their emotional wounds, the participants emerged with what can be described as stronger emotional scaffolding—internal and relational resources that now serve as buffers against future adversity. Their journeys reflect not just survival, but growth, demonstrating how adversity, when met with the right combination of support and agency, can become a catalyst for profound personal development.

Cross Sectional Analysis for Themes derived from Finding the Silver Lining Amidst Adversities

The findings of this study reveal that despite facing significant adversity—ranging from family loss and bullying to financial hardship and trauma—students demonstrated remarkable capacity to cope, grow, and transform their experiences. A cross-sectional analysis of the participants’ responses revealed three primary, interrelated pathways through which they found their “silver linings”: (1) anchors haven, (2) alchemy of resilience, and (3) broken gold.

Table 4 Cross Sectional Analysis for Themes derived from Finding the Silver Lining Amidst Adversities

Participants	Anchor Haven	Alchemy of Resilience	Broken Gold
Jenna	X		X
Pam	X	X	X
Princess			X
Christian	X	X	
Razea		X	
Alias Captain			X
EJ	X	X	

While each of these themes highlights a distinct coping pathway, they often intersect in practice. For example, support systems may empower creative expression, while meaning making is often reinforced by emotional validation from others. The interplay of external support, internal regulation, and cognitive reframing creates a

resilient framework that allows students not only to survive adversity but to transform it into academic achievement, emotional strength, and life direction.

The study illustrates that resilience is not a single trait but a dynamic, multi-layered process. Students draw strength from others, find solace in personal practices, and assign meaning to their hardships—often simultaneously. These insights suggest that resilience is best supported through holistic educational environments that nurture both interpersonal connection and self-agency.

This cross-sectional analysis affirms that adversity, while painful and disruptive, can become a turning point for personal and academic transformation when students are able to access meaningful relationships, express themselves creatively, and reinterpret their experiences through a purposeful lens. The participants' journeys from pain to purpose, silence to expression, and isolation to connection reflect the extraordinary inner resources of Filipino youth.

Educational institutions must recognize that students' emotional and academic development are interdependent. The silver linings observed in this study are not the result of mere perseverance but of supportive environments, culturally grounded coping strategies, and student-led meaning-making. Therefore, fostering resilience in learners requires more than academic instruction—it demands emotional scaffolding, creative outlets, and spaces for reflective growth.

Transforming Experiences Into Opportunities For Personal And Academic Growth

This section reveals the different transformation of the participants amidst their adversities. Table 3 presents a matrix of transformation through adversity.

While adversity is often viewed as a barrier to personal and academic success, it can also act as a powerful turning point that fosters resilience, self-discovery, and transformation. For many learners, the hardships they encounter - ranging from personal loss and trauma to social and economic difficulties - do not simply derail their progress but instead compel them to re-evaluate their goals, reframe their experiences, and cultivate new strengths. This transformation is not immediate nor uniform; it is shaped by everyone’s context, coping strategies, and access to supportive relationships. However, what becomes evident is that adversity, when navigated constructively, can lead to significant growth and empowerment.

This section presents how participants in the study transformed their painful experiences into opportunities for academic and personal development. Rather than succumbing to the weight of their circumstances, they channeled their grief, fear, and uncertainty into motivation and self-improvement. Whether through honoring a lost loved one, redefining success on their own terms, or embracing alternative educational pathways, each participant found ways to assert agency and rebuild their sense of purpose.

Every participant demonstrated an ability to transform adversity into fuel for growth. The process of change was not immediate; it was messy, nonlinear, and accompanied by setbacks. Yet, these youth showed that resilience is not just surviving—but becoming.

You can see on the table below the different themes generated from the narratives of the students who encounter different adversities and how their resilience transforms their adversities into positive growth.

Table 5 Themes derived from Transforming Experiences into Opportunities for Personal and Academic Growth

Themes	Description	Sample Statement	Cases
Transforming Suffering into Meaning	Some students transformed intense personal pain—especially from loss or trauma—into a clear sense of purpose. They channeled sorrow,	<i>“Ginawa kong inspirasyon po si kuya... kahit wala na yung taong nag-eencourage sa akin, tutuparin ko po ito.”</i>	Jenna

	grief, or hardship into fuel for ambition and commitment to their goals, often with the intent to honor someone they lost or to prove their resilience.	<p>“<i>Inspirasyon ko po yung mga bilin niya... magtapos daw ako... para matulungan ko rin po ang sarili ko.</i>”</p> <p>Christian</p>
		<p>“<i>Ginamit ko po yung pagkawala ni mama para mas pagbutihin ang pag-aaral.</i>”</p> <p>Princess</p>
Skill and Identity Building	Some of them focused on developing personal or academic skills to improve themselves and reshape how they see their identity. This transformation included leadership, creative arts, or refining coping skills that later contributed to academic or personal success.	<p>“<i>Nagbasa-basa po ako, nagdrawing ng mas upgrade yung skills ko... naging magandang halimbawa ako sa classmates ko.</i>”</p> <p>Pam</p>
		<p>“<i>Nag drawing po ako... mas na-express ko na po ang sarili ko sa kanila.</i>”</p> <p>Razea</p>
		<p>“<i>Mas naging responsible po ako... natuto akong makibagay at makisama sa classmates ko.</i>”</p> <p>Christian</p>
Acceptance and Advocacy	They learned to accept their limitations, physical conditions, or past experiences and used these as platforms to inspire and connect with others. Rather than internalizing shame or weakness, they chose advocacy, reflection, and peer support to transform their journeys into meaningful narratives.	<p>“<i>Na-bully po ako... pero hindi ako gumaganti... I think na-inspire ko sila.</i>”</p> <p>Razea</p>
		<p>“<i>Natuto akong huwag umasa sa iba... don’t lean too much on people.</i>”</p> <p>Alias Captain</p>
		<p>“<i>Mas naging open po kami sa family... kahit ang daming nagyari, hindi ako nagpatalo sa buhay.</i>”</p> <p>EJ</p>

Transforming Suffering into Meaning

This theme captures how students transformed painful life experiences—particularly loss, grief, and emotional suffering—into meaningful sources of academic and personal motivation. Rather than succumbing to adversity, these students drew strength from their trauma to push forward, creating a purposeful narrative out of hardship.

This process aligns closely with the Post-Traumatic Growth (PTG) framework proposed by Tedeschi et al. (2018), which suggests that individuals who experience intense emotional trauma may not only recover but also grow in strength, direction, and purpose. In educational contexts, this transformation is crucial: students who construct positive meaning from trauma exhibit greater emotional resilience, goal clarity, and academic persistence (Malin et al., 2017).

Jenna lost her brother, a deeply traumatic experience, especially for a young student already facing poverty and family separation. Instead of allowing this pain to immobilize her, she converted grief into motivation, using her brother’s memory as a compass for academic success. Her phrase “*tutuparin ko po ito*” (I will fulfil this) shows her alignment with her brother’s legacy and a deepened sense of life purpose.

Young individuals who ground their goals in the memory or guidance of a lost loved one are more likely to develop long-term commitment and emotional resilience. Jenna’s transformation is a prime example of adaptive mourning—where remembrance becomes action. Her growth is not merely academic, but moral and emotional: she honors her brother’s presence through purposeful achievement.

Christian's pain stems from the loss of both parents and his guardian aunt, who was his sole emotional and financial support. Amid this emotional vacuum, Christian anchored his direction on the last wishes of his aunt, turning a moment of deep vulnerability into a clear, moral obligation to succeed.

This transformation illustrates what researchers describe as moralized grief—when a student's commitment to educational success is tied to fulfilling the values or wishes of someone they've lost. Christian not only rebounded from academic failure (*"bumagsak ako noon"* – I failed before), but reached honors status, showing that pain, when framed as responsibility, can become a transformational driver. His emotional narrative shifted from despair to legacy.

Princess's response reflects how aspirational thinking emerged from her grief. Her mother's death created emotional void and family instability, but Princess filled that space with clear goals and service-oriented motivation, *"Ginamit ko po yung pagkawala ni mama para mas pagbutihin ang pag-aaral... gusto ko pong maging flight attendant para matulungan ko din yung pamilya ko."* (I used my mother's absence to improve my studies... I want to become a flight attendant so I can help my family.) Her desire to become a flight attendant is not just a career dream, but a symbolic resolution of loss—a way to restore the security and support she once received from her mother.

This aligns with Navarro et al. (2023), who found that bereaved adolescents often develop strong future goals when they feel emotionally connected to the idea of "finishing what their loved one started." Princess's transformation lies in her shift from grief to ambition rooted in healing—turning suffering into success not just for herself, but for her remaining family.

Skill and Identity Building

This theme highlights how students facing adversity began to discover, refine, or reclaim their skills, which in turn helped them rebuild their identity and sense of self-worth. Through art, leadership, physical fitness, or emotional strength, these participants used adversity as a catalyst for self-development. Their coping strategies became long-term capabilities, and their emerging identities reflected increased confidence, purpose, and social value.

This process aligns with the Self-Efficacy Theory of Bandura, which holds that adolescents in adversity build resilience by engaging in activities that allow them to master a skill, assume a role, and receive feedback. Skill-building, in this context, is not just survival—it's identity formation. Youth transformation is most sustainable when grounded in personal agency and contribution (Malin et al., 2017).

Pam's transformation involved turning a stress-relieving hobby (drawing) into a recognized personal strength, *"Nagbasa-basa po ako, nagdrawing ng mas upgrade yung skills ko... naging magandang halimbawa ako sa classmates ko."* (I read a lot, I drew, and my skills improved... I became a good example to my classmates.) She didn't just cope passively; she actively developed her artistic abilities and then shared them, influencing and inspiring her peers. In doing so, she moved from a space of comparison and insecurity to leadership and self-affirmation. Pam's identity shifted from "quiet achiever" to role model, a transformation supported by research showing that when adolescents share their creative outputs with peers, it enhances their confidence, communication, and sense of community (Fancourt et al., 2021).

Pam's growth also reflects the transformational value of being seen—her classmates' recognition reinforced her new identity as a capable, talented, and resilient student.

Razea, once silenced by bullying and social anxiety due to alopecia, used drawing as both an emotional outlet and a means of reclaiming her voice in the classroom. Her skill gave her something to contribute, which gradually replaced shame with pride, *"Nag drawing po ako... mas na-express ko na po ang sarili ko sa kanila... tumaas po ang self-esteem ko."* (I drew... I was able to express myself more with them... my self-esteem increased.) She transitioned from being afraid to speak to becoming a participant in class life, supported by the validating reaction of others. This aligns with Navarro et al. (2023), who explains that for stigmatized adolescents, skill visibility is a critical pathway to confidence and peer acceptance.

Razea's experience shows that mastery of a skill can restore personal narrative. Instead of being defined by her appearance or silence, she's now seen—and sees herself—as expressive, talented, and strong.

Christian, who faced grief, financial hardship, and academic setbacks, found growth by developing two interrelated skills: physical discipline and interpersonal maturity. His exercise routine (barbell training) helped him regulate emotions, build confidence, and reclaim a sense of control over his life, "*Mas naging responsible po ako... natuto akong makibagay at makisama sa classmates ko. Nag ba-barbel po ako, para mapalakas katawan ko at maalis yung stress.*" I became more responsible... I learned to adapt and get along with my classmates. I lift weights, to strengthen my body and relieve stress.) At the same time, he consciously practiced social adaptability, learning how to relate with peers and build relationships—something he struggled with after losing his aunt and emotional anchor.

This dual growth reflects what researchers have called "*resilience through self-reconstruction*", where identity is rebuilt through physical strength, social re-engagement, and a sense of purpose. Christian didn't just survive; he reshaped who he was, becoming emotionally stronger, socially active, and academically restored.

Acceptance and Advocacy

This theme captures how students went beyond personal survival and healing to achieve a deeper transformation of self-acceptance and social responsibility. These students learned to accept their flaws, conditions, or past experiences—some of which caused deep social or emotional pain—and instead of being defined by these, they used their stories as tools for inspiration, self-empowerment, and even advocacy for others. Their journeys reflect not only resilience, but the emergence of voice, agency, and leadership rooted in authenticity.

This process aligns with Empowerment Theory, which suggests that adolescents who integrate painful experiences into their self-concept and contribute positively to others through them experience higher levels of self-esteem and psychological well-being (Ungar, 2021). Such transformation represents the highest form of resilience—where the individual not only overcomes, but uplifts.

Razea, who was bullied due to alopecia, initially struggled with social anxiety and fear of ridicule, "*Na-bully po ako... pero hindi ako gumaganti. I think na-inspire ko sila kasi mas nagiging good example ako sa kanila. Natuto po ako magpatawad at mag-express.*" (I was bullied... but I don't retaliate. I think I inspired them because I became a better example for them. I learned to forgive and express myself.) However, over time, she not only learned to accept her condition but turned her response into a form of silent advocacy. By refusing to retaliate and continuing to show kindness, she became a role model for emotional maturity and forgiveness.

Her statement—"*na-inspire ko sila*" (I inspired them)—shows an awareness of her influence on others, which is a powerful indicator of transformation. She embodies what Navarro et al. (2023) terms "*vicarious resilience*"—when one's recovery becomes a source of strength for others. Razea's experience highlights that acceptance doesn't mean silence—it can be a quiet but powerful form of advocacy, especially for those who are often excluded or mocked.

EJ's transformation involved accepting her trauma, which included a public scandal and mental health struggle. Rather than hide or allow the situation to define her future, she made the bold choice to continue her education via homeschool, demonstrating resilience rooted in self-worth. Her phrase "*hindi ako nagpatalo sa buhay*" (I didn't give up on life) signals that she sees herself not as a victim, but as someone who still holds power and direction.

Students who confront and integrate trauma rather than avoid it show increased likelihood of emotional healing and advocacy (Tedeschi et al., 2018). EJ's renewed openness within her family and her spiritual involvement further strengthened her foundation. She may not speak loudly about her experience, but her decision to persist despite shame and stigma is itself a form of advocacy—it challenges the silence around gender-based and reputational trauma.

Alias Captain's transformation is explicitly anchored in reflection and leadership. Rather than being embittered by financial struggles, she reframed them as life lessons he could teach others, “*Matututo po ako sa hirap... kaya ko pong ituro yung natutunan ko sa iba. Natutunan ko rin na wag masyadong umasa sa ibang tao, maging independent. Be responsible.*” (I can learn from hardship... I can teach others what I have learned. I also learned not to rely too much on other people, to be independent. Be responsible.) This is a critical marker of post-adversity advocacy, where the learner becomes the guide. Her resolve to be independent and “responsible” shows not only personal growth but a strong sense of social responsibility.

This aligns with Ungar (2021) who suggests that when adolescents can transfer their coping lessons into messages for others, they become active participants in their communities. Alias Captain’s story demonstrates that resilience is multiplied when shared. She doesn’t just recover; he educates, which reflects the highest level of adaptive transformation.

These stories affirm Tedeschi et al.’s (2018) theory of post-traumatic growth, where individuals develop new perspectives, goals, and self-worth after navigating intense adversity. Research shows that youth who overcome hardships often evolve into agents of transformation—not only for themselves but for their communities. Each participant in this study embodies this truth.

Cross Sectional Analysis for Themes derived from Transforming Experiences into Opportunities for Personal and Academic Growth

The analysis of participant narratives reveals a compelling portrait of student transformation beyond resilience—a movement from adversity to empowerment, from emotional pain to purposeful action. Across the themes of transforming suffering into meaning, skill and identity building, and acceptance and advocacy, students demonstrated how adversity can be not only endured, but harnessed to foster academic progress, personal development, and social leadership.

These findings affirm the growing body of research (e.g., Tedeschi et al., 2018; Malin et al., 2017; Ungar, 2021) suggesting that student transformation is multidimensional. It occurs not just through overcoming challenges, but through constructing purpose, building capacity, and reclaiming one’s narrative.

Table 6 Cross Sectional Analysis for Themes derived from Themes derived from Transforming Experiences into Opportunities for Personal and Academic Growth

Participants	Transforming Suffering in Meaning	Skill and Identity Building	Acceptance and Advocacy
Jenna	X		
Pam		X	
Princess	X		
Christian	X	X	
Razea		X	X
Alias Captain			X
EJ			X

This cross-sectional analysis affirms that Filipino students possess the inner strength to convert adversity into academic achievement, personal development, and social impact. Their journeys from suffering to meaning, from insecurity to skill, and from shame to advocacy reflect the transformative potential of youth when provided with even minimal support and the space to grow.

The findings urge schools and communities to go beyond basic resilience-building. Institutions must intentionally create spaces for expression, skill cultivation, and identity recovery, especially for students dealing with trauma, stigma, or emotional hardship. Education must evolve into a transformational environment—one where learners are not merely equipped to survive, but empowered to lead, influence, and inspire.

Cross Sectional Analysis of the Themes Generated through the Narratives of the Participants

This section presents the results cross sectional analysis of themes generated through the narratives of the participants. The participants were assessed on various themes including multi-dimensional adversities, notable capacity for adaptive resilience and different transformation through adversity.

This study explored the adversities faced by selected junior and senior high school students, how they found silver linings amidst their challenges, and how these experiences were transformed into opportunities for personal and academic growth. Drawing from rich narrative accounts, three major insights emerge from the cross-sectional analysis.

Table 7 Cross Sectional Analysis of Themes Generated through the Narratives of the Participants

Participants	ED	FC	AC	AH	AR	BG	TSM	SIB	AA
1. Jenna	X	X	X	X		X	X		
2. Pam		X	X	X	X	X		X	
3. Princess	X					X	X		
4. Christian	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
5. Razea			X		X			X	X
6. Alias Captain	X					X			X
7. EJ		X		X	X				X

Legend:

ED – Emotional Distress AH – Anchor Haven TSM – Transforming Suffering into Meaning
 AA – Acceptance AC – Academic Constraints FC – Financial Constraints
 SIB – Skill and Identity Building AR – Alchemy of Resilience BG – Broken Gold

First, the participants encountered multidimensional adversities—primarily Emotional Distress, financial constraints, and academic constraints. Emotional distress struggles included grief from the loss of family members, separation of parents, social anxiety, and trauma from stigmatizing experiences. Financial constraints burdens were evident in students' inability to pay for school projects, join extracurricular activities, or even attend classes regularly due to household responsibilities. Academic constraints such as lack of time, motivation, or access to materials were closely tied to both emotional and financial instability. These findings reinforce the idea that adolescent educational engagement is deeply intertwined with personal and socio-economic realities, echoing the findings of Capurso et al. (2021).

Second, despite the depth of these adversities, participants demonstrated anchor haven by discovering personal strategies and external support systems that allowed them to persevere. Support from mothers, siblings, teachers, guidance counselors, and friends helped them reframe their hardships as motivation. Alchemy of

resilience —such as art, music, prayer, and self-talk—acted as protective psychological tools. This aligns with Ungar's (2021) resilience theory, emphasizing that young people thrive not solely due to internal strength but through access to meaningful support and opportunities for agency. The participants develop a view of broken gold, it's one's viewing their struggles not a defeat but extracts a sense of purpose.

Third, transformation emerged as a consistent theme across participants. Students did not merely survive hardship; they utilized it as a platform for growth. Emotional trauma became fuel for academic excellence. Rejection and isolation gave way to stronger peer relationships and leadership. Financial hardship inspired determination to pursue scholarships and future stability. These transformations illustrate Tedeschi and Calhoun's (2021) framework of post-traumatic growth and provide real-life evidence that adversity, when processed reflectively and supported appropriately, can foster profound personal and academic development.

In sum, this research affirms that while adversity remains an unavoidable part of many Filipino students' lives, it can become a powerful catalyst for transformation. Schools, families, and communities play a critical role in supporting this transformation by providing empathetic, inclusive, and responsive environments. Strengthening these ecosystems not only aids academic performance but nurtures resilient, purposeful learners capable of overcoming life's complex challenges.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains a study summary and the findings, the conclusions established, and the recommendations offered for consideration.

Summary Of Findings

This case study is undertaken to assess the "silver linings" - the transformative growth of the students that emerge from these difficult circumstances among high school students in Nampicuan, Nueva Ecija, both private and public. The study sought to understand how students achieve positive growth in the face of adversity.

Specifically, it sought to identify the adversities encountered by the participants; how the participants find the silver lining amidst adversities; and how students transform their experiences into opportunities for personal and academic growth.

The nature of the research is a case study involving seven (7) participants.

Adversities Encountered

Participants reported the following primary adversities: emotional hardships including grief from the loss of family members and experiences of emotional neglect; economic challenges such as poverty and unstable home environments; family-related stress from broken homes, parental separation, and strained relationships; and academic difficulties, including lack of motivation and discouragement from others.

Silver lining Amidst Adversities

Despite their struggles, participants found positive ways to cope like faith and spirituality served as sources of strength and hope, support from teachers, peers, and relatives played a key role in emotional recovery, self-reflection helped students appreciate their resilience and motivated them to work harder.

Transforming Experiences into Opportunities

The participants' experiences led to significant development such as improved academic performance and renewed commitment to education, increased personal responsibility, independence, and empathy and development of long-term goals inspired by their hardships.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were established, to wit:

Adversities Encountered

The participants in this study faced a multitude of challenges that disrupted both their academic progress and emotional well-being. Common adversities included the death of loved ones, abandonment, broken families, financial instability, bullying, and academic pressures. Many struggled with balancing school responsibilities with household duties, while others bore the weight of emotional pain stemming from parental loss, illness, or social rejection. These adversities often created a sense of isolation, helplessness, or low self-esteem, revealing the fragile conditions under which many Filipino students strive to learn.

Silver lining Amidst Adversities

Despite their circumstances, the students demonstrated remarkable resilience by seeking meaning and strength amidst adversity. They found the “silver lining” through various forms of support, including encouragement from family members, friendships that provided emotional refuge, guidance from teachers and counselors, and faith in God. Some used personal interests such as drawing, music, or sports as emotional outlets, while others relied on motivational memories or promises made to loved ones. These coping mechanisms helped them shift from despair to determination.

Transforming Experiences into Opportunities

From their hardships emerged transformative growth. Students developed stronger identities, became more independent and empathetic, and committed themselves more deeply to their academic pursuits. Experiences of pain became motivators for success. Many improved their grades, became more socially aware, and took on leadership roles in school and community activities. Their stories show that adversity, when met with support and reflection, can evolve into a powerful force for change—fueling not only personal development but also a desire to become agents of hope for others.

The insights gathered from these narratives are invaluable for educators, policymakers, and youth-serving institutions. They emphasize the need to listen to student voices, understand the contexts of their struggles, and design support systems that build resilience. These stories remind us that students are not merely passive recipients of education—they are active, capable individuals who can turn adversity into achievement when provided with empathy, guidance, and opportunity. This research serves as a call to action: to create safe, nurturing, and responsive environments where every learner has the chance not only to survive but to thrive.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn, the proponent offers the following recommendations for consideration:

1. Establish or reinforce guidance and counseling units in school with trained personnel who can address emotional, psychological, and academic concerns. Furthermore, create safe spaces where students can talk openly without fear of judgement or reprisal. Moreover, regular mental health check-ins and peer support groups can help normalize help-seeking behavior and reduce stigma.
2. Design specific modules or learning sessions that develop student’s coping mechanisms, emotional intelligence, problem-solving, and self-regulation. Moreover, include activities like journaling, mindfulness exercises, and role-playing real-life scenarios to build resilience and adaptability. Furthermore, encourage students to reflect on their challenges as learning experiences.
3. Provide professional development for teachers on identifying signs of trauma, understanding adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), and responding with compassion and appropriate support. Furthermore,

train educators to use positive discipline techniques and inclusive classroom practices that promote psychological safety.

4. Encourage upper-level students or student leaders to mentor those who are younger or struggling. Also, peer mentors can provide both academic and emotional encouragement, which helps build a sense of community and belonging in the school.
5. Create school-based programs for scholarships, subsidies, or access to free school supplies and materials, especially for students in vulnerable households. Moreover, partner with local government units, NGOs, and alumni networks to create funding channels or adopt-a-student schemes.
6. Organize seminars or workshops for parents and guardians to help them understand the emotional and developmental needs of their children. Also, promote positive parenting strategies, open communication at home, and how families can support student's educational journey regardless of financial status.
7. Offer regular opportunities for students to share their stories through school publications, forums, art exhibits, and student-led initiatives. Furthermore, recognize students' efforts and resilience through awards and public acknowledgements which help validate their experiences and encourage others to stay motivated.

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Interview Questionnaire

Finding The Silver Lining: Student Positive Growth Amidst Adversity

General Directions: Please answer the questions honestly and whatever perceptions you will disclose will be kept in strictly confidential and anonymity.

Interview Questions:

1. Can you tell me about yourself (age, grade level, school, academic background)

* *Maaari mo bang sabihin sa akin ang kaunti tungkol sa iyong sarili (edad, antas ng grado, background sa akademya)?*

2. How would you describe your typical school experience?

* *Paano mo ilalarawan ang iyong karaniwang karansan sa paaralan?*

3. What are some of the biggest challenges you have encountered as a student?

* *Ano ang ilan sa mga pinakamalaking hamon na naranasan mo bilang isang mag-aaral?*

4. Have you faced any academic struggles?

* *Nakaranas ka na ba ng anumang mga akademikong pakikibaka?*

5. Have you experienced personal or emotional struggles that affected your studies?

* *Nakaranas ka na ba ng mga personal o emosyonal na pakikibaka na nakaaapekto sa iyong pag-aaral?*

6. How do you usually handle stress and academic pressure?

* *Paano mo karaniwang pinangangasiwaan ang stress at pang-akademikong presyon?*

7. Who do you turn to for support when you face difficulties?

* *Kanino ka lalapit para sa suporta kapag nahaharap ka sa mga paghihirap ?*

8. Looking back, do you think facing these challenges has helped you grow as a person? In what ways?

* *Sa pagbabalik-tanaw, sa palagay mo ba nakatulong sa iyo ang pagharap sa mga hamong ito bilang isang tao? Sa anong mga paraan?*

9. Can you recall a specific hardship that later turned into an opportunity or a positive experience?

* *Naalala mo ba ang isang partikular na paghihirap na kalaunan at naging isang pagkakataon o isang positibong karanasan?*

10. How do you transform your experiences into opportunities for personal and academic growth?

* *Paano mo binabago ang iyong mga karanasan sa mga pagkakataon para sa personal at akademikong paglago?*