

Schools as Evacuation Centers: Psychological Well-Being, Learning Environment, Experiences, and Performance of Learners

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the psychological well-being, learning environment, experiences, and academic performance of learners in schools utilized as evacuation centers following disaster-related disruptions, and examined the relationships among these variables. Using a descriptive-correlational research design, the study involved 205 Grade 6 learners in a local public elementary school in Negros Occidental during the School Year 2025–2026. Data were collected using a researcher-modified, validated, and reliable questionnaire. The findings revealed that learners demonstrated good psychological well-being, a highly supportive learning environment, positive adaptive experiences, and outstanding academic performance despite studying in schools used as evacuation centers. Furthermore, psychological well-being was significantly associated with the learning environment and academic performance, while the learning environment was likewise significantly related to academic performance. The findings underscore the importance of maintaining supportive learning environments and accessible psychosocial support for learners during and after disaster-related disruptions, while recognizing that the correlational design does not establish causal relationships among the variables.

Keywords: Psychological Well-Being; Learning Environment; Adaptive Experiences; Academic Performance; Evacuation Centers; Disaster-Related Disruptions.

INTRODUCTION

Schools are commonly utilized as temporary evacuation centers during natural disasters because of their accessibility, available facilities, and capacity to accommodate displaced populations. While this practice provides immediate protection to affected communities, it often disrupts the educational process and transforms learning spaces into environments that are no longer conducive to teaching and learning. Studies have shown that prolonged school closures and the use of schools as shelters can negatively affect learners' academic progress, emotional stability, and overall well-being. Learners exposed to disrupted educational settings frequently experience stress, anxiety, difficulty concentrating, and reduced motivation, which may consequently influence their academic performance. Moreover, evidence from international research suggests that interruptions in regular schooling can result in significant learning losses and psychological challenges among students, particularly those already vulnerable to disaster-related experiences (Mazrekaj & De Witte, 2023; Abrigo et al., 2024).

In the Philippines, the recurring occurrence of typhoons, floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and other calamities has led to the frequent use of public schools as evacuation centers. As one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, the nation continually faces the challenge of balancing emergency response efforts with the uninterrupted delivery of quality education. Research conducted in the Philippine context revealed that the temporary conversion of schools into evacuation shelters contributes to class suspensions, delayed school reopening, reduced student engagement, and lower academic achievement. Findings further indicate that even short-term school closures associated with shelter use can substantially affect learning outcomes. Additionally, disaster-related disruptions often expose learners to emotional distress and psychosocial difficulties that may

hinder their ability to adapt to changing learning conditions and maintain satisfactory academic performance (Abrigo et al., 2026).

At the local level, many schools in disaster-prone communities continue to serve as evacuation centers during emergencies, resulting in overcrowded classrooms, damaged facilities, altered learning environments, and interruptions in educational activities. Although previous studies have examined school closures and learning outcomes, limited research has comprehensively explored how the use of schools as evacuation centers influences learners' psychological well-being, learning environment, lived experiences, and academic performance simultaneously. Most existing investigations focus primarily on infrastructure concerns, disaster preparedness, or learning losses, leaving a gap in understanding the holistic impact of evacuation-center utilization on learners. Given the increasing frequency of disasters and the continuing reliance on schools as temporary shelters, there is a need to generate empirical evidence that captures learners' perspectives and experiences (Mulyasari et al., 2021; Alarte, 2024; Abrigo et al., 2026).

Hence, this study was conducted to examine the psychological well-being, learning environment, experiences, and performance of learners in schools used as evacuation centers, providing insights that may guide educational leaders, policymakers, and disaster management practitioners in developing responsive interventions that protect both learning continuity and student welfare.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive–correlational research design to determine the relationship among psychological well-being, learning environment, experiences, and academic performance of Grade 6 learners in schools utilized as evacuation centers during the aftermath of Typhoon Tino. The respondents were 205 Grade 6 learners from three cluster schools whose schools were utilized as evacuation centers during the School Year 2025–2026. From a total population of 420 Grade 6 learners, the sample size of 205 was determined using Yamane's formula with a 0.05 margin of error. Simple random sampling was employed to select the respondents, ensuring that every learner in the population had an equal chance of being included in the study.

Data were gathered using a modified questionnaire composed of two main sections: Part I measured the psychological well-being of learners in terms of emotional regulation, self-awareness, and resilience, while Part II assessed the learning environment in terms of physical environment, social environment, and curriculum resources. The indicators were measured using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5. The open-ended responses describing learners' experiences were analyzed using a systematic coding procedure. First, the responses were reviewed repeatedly to identify meaningful words, phrases, and ideas related to the learners' experiences while their schools were used as evacuation centers. Second, similar responses were assigned initial codes. Third, related codes were compared and grouped into broader categories based on conceptual similarity. The categories were reviewed for consistency and were subsequently organized into overarching experience themes. Frequency counts and percentages were then computed for the coded responses. To preserve the learners' perspectives, the original meaning of their responses was retained during the coding process. The questionnaire was grounded in established theories and empirical studies concerning school utilization as an evacuation center, psychological well-being, learning environment, and academic performance, with the psychological well-being component guided by Carol Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Theory. The questionnaire underwent content validation by a panel of five experts composed of three school principals and two education supervisors, yielding a Content Validity Ratio (CVR) of 1.00 based on Lawshe's formula, indicating excellent validity. Reliability was established through a pilot test with 30 non-sample respondents, obtaining Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.944 for psychological well-being and 0.935 for learning environment, with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.960, demonstrating excellent internal consistency. Learners' academic performance was measured using the learners' official academic grades obtained from the school records, subject to the permission of the appropriate school authorities and applicable ethical and data-privacy requirements. The academic performance measure represented the learners' general academic achievement during the specified grading period covered by the study. The grades were classified according to the applicable Department of Education grading descriptors: Outstanding (90–100), Very Satisfactory (85–89), Satisfactory (80–84), Fairly Satisfactory (75–79), and Did Not Meet Expectations (below 75). The use of official

academic records was intended to provide an objective measure of academic performance rather than relying solely on learners' self-reports.

For data collection, the researcher first obtained approval from the Schools Division Superintendent through a formal letter of request duly endorsed by the Dean of the Graduate School to conduct the study among the Grade 6 learners in the identified cluster schools. With the permission and support of the school authorities, the researcher conducted an orientation regarding the purpose and significance of the study and administered the questionnaire to the selected respondents. Clear instructions were provided to ensure that the respondents properly understood how to accomplish the instrument. Informed consent was secured, and the respondents were informed of their rights as participants, including voluntary participation, confidentiality of responses, and secure handling of information. The researcher personally administered and retrieved the questionnaires after completion. To ensure ethical compliance, the collected questionnaires were checked, organized, and securely stored, while the gathered information was treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for the purposes of the study. The data were retained in accordance with institutional requirements and securely disposed of upon completion of the prescribed retention period. The collected data were systematically organized, tabulated, and analyzed to answer the research questions of the study. Mean and standard deviation were utilized to determine the levels of learners' psychological well-being, learning environment, experiences, and academic performance. Spearman's Rank-Order Correlation Coefficient was employed to determine the significant relationship between learners' psychological well-being and learning environment, psychological well-being and academic performance, and learning environment and academic performance. The findings served as the basis for understanding the conditions and experiences of learners in schools utilized as evacuation centers and for providing appropriate implications for supporting their well-being, learning environment, and academic performance during disaster-related disruptions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Level of Psychological Well-Being of Learners During the time that the schools are used as Evacuation Centers

Table 1. Level of Psychological Well-Being of Learners During the Time that the Schools are Used as Evacuation Centers When Taken as a Whole, and in Terms of Emotional Regulation, Self-Awareness, Resilience.

Statements	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Emotional Regulation	3.75	0.62	Good
1. I feel calm even when I remember what happened in our school.	3.51	0.97	Good
2. I can manage my worries about what happened to our school, which was used as an evacuation center.	3.91	0.97	Good
3. I can adjust myself when I feel scared about the situation in our school.	3.84	0.86	Good
4. I am worried about my feelings when something reminds me of our school being used as an evacuation center.	3.56	0.91	Good
5. I can stay positive even when I think about the difficulties that I have experienced in school.	4.03	0.86	Good
6. I feel hopeful about my situation, which I am facing in our school, which is used as an evacuation center.	3.75	1.08	Good
7. I feel emotionally okay even after there are a lot of changes in our face-to-face classes.	3.64	1.11	Good
8. I feel okay most of the time, coping with the changes that occur during school days.	3.77	0.91	Good
9. I can still enjoy school activities even after our school was used as an evacuation center.	3.77	1.18	Good

10. I can calm myself when I feel nervous about the present situation of my school, which is being used as an evacuation center.	3.77	0.91	Good
Self-Awareness	3.75	0.51	Good
1. I am aware when I feel worried or uneasy in our new classroom during our scheduled face-to-face class.	3.57	1.06	Good
2. I can tell when I feel safe or unsafe in school, even it was used as an evacuation center.	3.80	0.81	Good
3. I understand why I feel different in school after it was used as an evacuation center.	3.93	0.85	Good
4. I can identify when I feel stressed because of changes in the school environment.	3.62	0.98	Good
5. I notice how my thoughts change when I am in school, even though it was used as an evacuation center.	3.60	1.06	Good
6. I can recognize when I am thinking too much about the situation and past events in school.	3.63	1.02	Good
7. I notice changes in my behavior when I am in school during our scheduled face-to-face classes.	3.65	0.93	Good
8. I am aware of how I act when I feel uncomfortable in school, and I am used to using it as an evacuation center.	3.85	0.86	Good
9. I reflect on how I react to different situations in school, which is used as an evacuation center.	3.89	0.70	Good
10. I understand what I need to feel better and learn well in school, despite the situation that it was used as an evacuation center.	3.92	1.08	Good
Resilience	3.84	0.66	Good
1. I can handle my feelings when something stressful happens in class.	3.97	0.81	Good
2. I try to stay positive even when school conditions are difficult.	3.80	1.05	Good
3. I do not easily give up when I feel upset and cannot finish my task inside the classroom.	4.09	0.98	Good
4. I can manage my fears when I feel uncomfortable in school.	3.80	0.90	Good
5. I look for solutions when I face problems in school.	3.85	1.07	Good
6. I ask for help from my teachers when things are hard for me related to my studies.	3.44	1.33	Good
7. I can focus on my studies despite the distractions that are happening in our school.	3.65	1.23	Good
8. I try to do my best even when conditions are not normal.	4.04	0.98	Good
9. I believe I can overcome difficulties in school after it was used as an evacuation center.	3.89	0.96	Good
Psychological Well-Being Overall Mean	3.78	0.52	Good

Legend: (4.21 – 5.00)-Very Good; (3.41 – 4.20)-Good; (2.61 – 3.40)-Fair; (1.81 – 2.60)-Poor; (1.00 – 1.80)-Very Poor

Table 1 presents the level of psychological well-being of learners during the period when their schools were utilized as evacuation centers, as measured in terms of emotional regulation, self-awareness, and resilience. Among the three dimensions, resilience obtained the highest mean ($M = 3.84$, $SD = 0.66$), interpreted as good. This indicates that despite the disruptions and challenges brought about by the use of schools as evacuation centers, learners were generally able to adapt, recover, and continue functioning positively in their academic

environment. The highest-rated indicator was not easily giving up when feeling upset and unable to finish classroom tasks ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 0.98$), followed by trying to do their best even when conditions were not normal ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 0.98$). These findings suggest that learners possess a positive capacity to persevere and cope with difficulties despite experiencing changes in their school environment. Such resilience may help learners maintain their academic engagement, manage stress effectively, and continue participating in school activities despite adverse circumstances.

The findings support the study of Klainin-Yobas et al. (2021), which found that resilience serves as an important protective factor that strengthens psychological well-being and enables individuals to cope effectively with stressful situations and life disruptions.

In terms of emotional regulation, the dimension obtained a mean of 3.75 ($SD = 0.62$), interpreted as good. This indicates that learners were generally capable of managing their emotions and maintaining emotional stability despite the effects of studying in a school that had been used as an evacuation center. The highest-rated indicator was staying positive when thinking about the difficulties experienced in school ($M = 4.03$, $SD = 0.86$), followed by managing worries about what happened to their school ($M = 3.91$, $SD = 0.97$). These results suggest that learners were able to regulate negative emotions and maintain a hopeful outlook despite experiencing disruptions in their learning environment. The findings imply that emotional regulation plays a significant role in helping learners adjust to challenging situations, reduce emotional distress, and maintain their focus on learning and daily school activities.

This result is consistent with the findings of Otgaar et al. (2021), who emphasized that learners exposed to disaster-related experiences may experience emotional challenges, but the ability to manage emotions and maintain positive coping responses contributes to better psychological adjustment and well-being following disruptive events.

Likewise, self-awareness obtained a mean of 3.75 ($SD = 0.51$), also interpreted as good. Learners generally demonstrated awareness of their emotions, thoughts, and reactions while studying in an environment affected by disaster-related circumstances. The highest-rated indicator was understanding why they felt different in school after it was used as an evacuation center ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 0.85$), followed closely by understanding what they needed to feel better and learn well despite the situation ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 1.08$). These findings indicate that learners are capable of recognizing their emotional and psychological responses to environmental changes. Such awareness may help them identify coping strategies, seek appropriate support, and adjust more effectively to altered school conditions. The results further imply that self-awareness serves as an important foundation for emotional management and resilience during periods of disruption.

The findings are supported by Pacheco et al. (2022), who emphasized that schools play a vital psychosocial role in helping children understand, process, and respond to their experiences during and after disaster situations. The study highlighted that learners' awareness of their feelings and experiences contributes to stronger adaptation and resilience in disaster-affected school environments.

Overall, psychological well-being obtained a mean of 3.78 ($SD = 0.52$), interpreted as good. This indicates that learners generally maintained positive psychological functioning despite the challenges associated with attending schools that had been utilized as evacuation centers. Although learners experienced adjustments in their learning environment, they demonstrated the ability to regulate emotions, understand their feelings, and remain resilient in coping with difficulties. The findings suggest that learners possess important psychological strengths that enable them to continue learning and adapting even during periods of disruption.

The findings revealed that learners exhibited a good level of psychological well-being across all dimensions, with resilience emerging as the highest-rated aspect. This suggests that while the use of schools as evacuation centers may create emotional, social, and academic challenges, learners are generally capable of adapting to these circumstances and maintaining positive psychological functioning. The results further imply that strengthening psychosocial support programs, resilience-building activities, and learner-centered interventions may further enhance the well-being of learners in disaster-affected schools.

The findings support the work of Pacheco et al. (2022), which emphasized that schools serve as critical spaces for promoting psychosocial recovery and resilience among children affected by disasters. Similarly, Nakum et al. (2022) highlighted that resilient school environments contribute significantly to learners' capacity to cope with disruptions and maintain their well-being during and after disaster-related events.

Level of Learning Environment of Learners during the time that the schools are used as Evacuation Centers

Table 2. Level of Learning Environment of Learners During the Time that the Schools are Used as Evacuation Centers When Taken as a Whole and in Terms of Physical Environment, Social Environment, and Curriculum Resources.

Statements	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Physical Environment	3.57	0.73	Good
1. The school surroundings are properly maintained after being used as an evacuation center.	3.42	1.18	Good
2. The school is free from dangerous objects or materials.	3.33	1.23	Fair
3. The school buildings, such as classrooms and playgrounds, are still in good condition.	3.51	1.01	Good
4. Emergency exits are clear and accessible for our safety.	3.83	0.96	Good
5. School facilities (e.g., library, comfort rooms) are usable and accessible.	3.81	0.99	Good
6. The school has enough space for our school activities during our scheduled face-to-face classes.	3.59	1.15	Good
7. The physical condition of the school helps me learn better, even though it was used as an evacuation center.	3.71	0.95	Good
8. Our school has enough classrooms to cater to all students to have our face-to-face classes.	3.58	1.00	Good
9. The comfort rooms (toilets) have enough water supply for our personal necessities.	3.43	1.09	Good
10. Drinking water is safe and available in our classrooms.	3.45	1.14	Good
Social Environment	3.90	0.71	Good
1. My teachers are approachable when I have problems with my modules/learning activity sheets.	3.92	1.06	Good
2. Teachers encourage me to do my best even if I feel worried and don't understand my lessons.	3.92	1.03	Good
3. Teachers help me adjust to changes in the school after it was used as an evacuation center.	3.83	1.06	Good
4. I can rely on my friends for support if I have difficulties understanding our lessons.	3.94	0.96	Good
5. I feel connected with my classmates and teachers when I feel discouraged with the present situation at my school.	3.98	1.02	Good
6. I can work well with my classmates when we have our group activities during our lessons.	4.04	0.85	Good
7. I feel that my classmates treated me fairly. If I cannot connect with the present situation in school.	3.77	0.97	Good
8. I can solve school problems with my classmates peacefully without worrying.	3.74	0.91	Good
9. Conflicts with my classmates in school are handled properly and respectfully with the help of our teachers.	3.86	1.02	Good

10. I can respect others' ideas even if they are different from mine during class discussions.	4.00	0.91	Good
Curriculum and Resources	3.92	0.73	Good
1. The school provides enough resources and learning materials for me despite the new situation.	3.84	0.91	Good
2. The learning materials provided in school help me understand my lessons better.	3.72	0.93	Good
3. I have access to learning materials that help me with my lessons.	3.90	0.85	Good
4. Learning resources (Modules, Learning Activity Sheets) are easy to use.	3.84	0.94	Good
5. The school provides me with what I need to learn well.	4.00	0.96	Good
6. I can access the internet for schoolwork when required to answer our modules.	3.83	1.05	Good
7. The use of technology helps me understand lessons better.	3.93	1.00	Good
8. Our teachers guide us on how to use learning tools effectively.	4.05	0.81	Good
9. Learning aids are in good condition and accessible according to our needs.	4.04	0.84	Good
10. Teachers make use of curriculum resources creatively to help us cope with our lessons.	4.06	1.02	Good
Learning Environment Overall Mean	3.78	0.52	Good

Legend: (4.21 – 5.00)-Very Good; (3.41 – 4.20)-Good; (2.61 – 3.40)-Fair; (1.81 – 2.60)-Poor; (1.00 – 1.80)-Very Poor

Table 2 presents the level of learning environment of learners during the period when their schools were utilized as evacuation centers, as measured in terms of physical environment, social environment, and curriculum and resources. Among the three dimensions, curriculum and resources obtained the highest mean ($M = 3.92$, $SD = 0.73$), interpreted as good. This indicates that learners generally perceived that the school continued to provide adequate learning materials, instructional support, and educational resources despite the challenges brought about by the use of the school as an evacuation center. The highest-rated indicator was that teachers make use of curriculum resources creatively to help learners cope with their lessons ($M = 4.06$, $SD = 1.02$), followed by teachers guiding learners on how to use learning tools effectively ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 0.81$). These findings suggest that teachers remained committed to ensuring continuity of learning by maximizing available resources and adapting instructional practices to the situation. Such efforts may help learners remain engaged in their studies, improve lesson comprehension, and minimize the negative effects of educational disruptions.

These findings are consistent with the study of Reimers and Marmolejo (2022), which emphasized that the availability of learning resources and teachers' ability to adapt instructional materials are essential in maintaining learning continuity and supporting student achievement during periods of crisis and disruption.

In terms of social environment, the dimension obtained a mean of 3.90 ($SD = 0.71$), interpreted as good. This indicates that learners generally experienced positive relationships with their teachers and peers despite the changes in the school setting. The highest-rated indicator was the ability to work well with classmates during group activities ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 0.85$), followed by respecting others' ideas during class discussions ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 0.91$) and feeling connected with classmates and teachers when discouraged by the present situation ($M = 3.98$, $SD = 1.02$). These results suggest that supportive interpersonal relationships remained evident even during challenging circumstances. The findings imply that positive social interactions within the school community help learners feel supported, strengthen their sense of belonging, and encourage active participation in learning activities. A supportive social environment may also reduce feelings of isolation and anxiety among learners affected by disaster-related disruptions.

The findings support the study of Cefai et al. (2021), which highlighted that positive teacher-student and peer relationships contribute significantly to learners' emotional well-being, engagement, and academic adjustment, particularly in challenging educational contexts.

Meanwhile, physical environment obtained a mean of 3.57 (SD = 0.73), interpreted as good. Although it received the lowest mean among the three dimensions, learners still generally perceived the physical conditions of the school as satisfactory. The highest-rated indicator was that emergency exits were clear and accessible for safety (M = 3.83, SD = 0.96), followed by the usability and accessibility of school facilities such as libraries and comfort rooms (M = 3.81, SD = 0.99). However, the indicator stating that the school is free from dangerous objects or materials received the lowest rating (M = 3.33, SD = 1.23), interpreted as fair. These findings suggest that while learners generally viewed the school environment as conducive to learning, concerns regarding safety and physical conditions remained. The results imply that continuous rehabilitation, maintenance, and safety monitoring are necessary to ensure that school facilities fully support learners' academic and psychological needs after being used as evacuation centers.

This result is consistent with the findings of Kousky (2020), who emphasized that safe and well-maintained school environments play a crucial role in supporting learning continuity, student well-being, and disaster recovery efforts in affected communities.

Overall, the learning environment obtained a mean of 3.78 (SD = 0.52), interpreted as good. This indicates that learners generally perceived their school environment as supportive of learning despite the challenges associated with the use of schools as evacuation centers. The results show that learners continued to benefit from positive social relationships, accessible learning resources, and reasonably functional school facilities. These factors may have helped sustain learners' engagement, participation, and academic adjustment during a period of disruption.

The findings revealed that learners perceived the learning environment as high across all dimensions, with curriculum and resources emerging as the most highly rated aspect. This suggests that schools and teachers were able to sustain learning opportunities and provide the necessary support despite the limitations brought about by the evacuation center situation. The results further imply that strengthening school facilities, maintaining supportive relationships, and ensuring the continuous availability of quality learning resources are essential in promoting effective learning and positive learner outcomes in disaster-affected schools.

The findings support the study of UNESCO (2021), which emphasized that access to quality learning resources, supportive school relationships, and safe educational environments are critical factors in sustaining educational continuity and promoting learner success during and after emergencies. Similarly, the work of Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) highlighted that supportive learning environments significantly contribute to students' academic engagement, well-being, and overall educational development.

Experiences of Learners during the Time that the Schools are used as Evacuation Centers

Table 3. Experiences of Learners During the Time that the Schools are Used as Evacuation Centers.

	Experiences	f	%
Describe your experience at school when it was used as an evacuation center.	Accepted the situation	15	7.32
	Adjusting new schedule	19	9.27
	Community helping others	9	4.39
	Continuing despite challenges	10	4.88
	Feeling grateful always	9	4.39
	Feeling sad initially	9	4.39
	Feeling sad yet understanding	6	2.93
	Helping evacuee families	8	3.90

	Helping evacuees happily	6	2.93
	Hoping for normal classes	23	11.22
	Learning was disrupted	14	6.83
	Limited face-to-face classes	8	3.90
	Missing classmates daily	8	3.90
	No strong feelings	11	5.37
	School became shelter	9	4.39
	Thankful for teachers	17	8.29
	Thankful to teachers	10	4.88
	Understanding evacuees' situation	14	6.83
	Total	205	100.00

Table 3 presents the experiences of learners during the time that their schools were used as evacuation centers. The results reveal a variety of responses that reflect both the challenges encountered by learners and their ability to adapt to the situation. Among the identified experiences, hoping for normal classes emerged as the most frequently mentioned response, with 23 learners (11.22%). This finding indicates that many learners desired the restoration of regular school operations and learning conditions. The disruption caused by the use of schools as evacuation centers may have created uncertainty and changes in daily routines, leading learners to look forward to returning to a more familiar and stable learning environment. This suggests that maintaining normalcy in education remains important for learners' sense of security, motivation, and academic engagement during disaster-related situations.

This finding is supported by the study of Pacheco et al. (2022), which emphasized that children affected by disasters often seek stability and routine, and that schools play a vital role in restoring a sense of normalcy that promotes psychosocial recovery and resilience.

The second most common experience was adjusting to a new schedule, reported by 19 learners (9.27%). This indicates that learners had to adapt to changes in class schedules, learning arrangements, and school routines resulting from the use of the school as an evacuation center. Likewise, 17 learners (8.29%) expressed being thankful for their teachers, suggesting that educators played an important role in helping learners cope with the challenges they encountered. These findings imply that flexibility, adaptability, and teacher support were essential factors that enabled learners to continue their education despite disruptions. The presence of supportive teachers may have helped learners adjust more effectively and maintain positive attitudes toward learning.

The findings are consistent with the study of Mutch (2021), which found that teacher support and adaptive school practices contribute significantly to students' ability to cope with educational disruptions and recover from disaster-related experiences.

Several learners also reported experiences that reflected understanding and empathy toward others. Fourteen learners (6.83%) mentioned understanding the situation of evacuees, while nine learners (4.39%) described community members helping others, and eight learners (3.90%) reported helping evacuee families. These responses indicate that learners developed social awareness and compassion while sharing their school environment with displaced families. Such experiences may have strengthened values related to cooperation, empathy, and community responsibility. The findings suggest that challenging situations can also provide opportunities for learners to develop positive social and emotional competencies that extend beyond academic learning.

This result supports the work of Peek and Richardson (2020), who emphasized that disaster experiences can foster empathy, social responsibility, and community connectedness among children and adolescents when adequate support systems are present.

On the other hand, some learners described difficulties associated with the situation. Fourteen learners (6.83%) stated that learning was disrupted, while eight learners (3.90%) mentioned limited face-to-face classes and another eight learners (3.90%) reported missing their classmates daily. Additionally, nine learners (4.39%) shared that they initially felt sad, and six learners (2.93%) reported feeling sad but understanding the situation. These findings indicate that the use of schools as evacuation centers affected not only learning opportunities but also learners' emotional well-being and social interactions. The results imply that disruptions in classroom routines and reduced opportunities for peer interaction may create academic and emotional challenges for learners, highlighting the need for psychosocial and educational support during such circumstances.

The findings align with UNESCO (2021), which reported that educational disruptions during emergencies often affect learners' emotional well-being, social connections, and academic participation, emphasizing the importance of support mechanisms that address both learning and psychosocial needs.

Overall, the findings reveal that learners experienced both challenges and positive opportunities while their schools were used as evacuation centers. Although many learners encountered disruptions in learning and emotional difficulties, they also demonstrated adaptability, gratitude, empathy, and resilience. The predominance of responses related to hoping for normal classes, adjusting to new schedules, and appreciating teacher support suggests that learners remained committed to their education despite the circumstances. These findings imply that schools, teachers, and communities play a critical role in helping learners adapt to disaster-related situations while maintaining their well-being and educational development.

Level of Academic Performance

Table 4. Level of Academic Performance of Learners.

Level of Academic Performance	f	Mean	SD	Interpretation
Outstanding	129	90	2.26	Outstanding
Very Satisfactory	73			
Satisfactory	3			
Fairly Satisfactory	0			
Did Not Meet Expectations	0			
Total	205			

Legend: (90-100)-Outstanding; (85-89)-Very Satisfactory; (80-84)-Satisfactory; (75-79)-Fairly Satisfactory; (Below 75)-Did Not Meet Expectations

Table 4 presents the level of academic performance of learners whose schools were utilized as evacuation centers. The results show that the majority of learners achieved an Outstanding level of academic performance, with 129 learners falling under this category. Meanwhile, 73 learners obtained a Very Satisfactory rating, and only 3 learners were classified as Satisfactory. No learners were categorized as Fairly Satisfactory or Did Not Meet Expectations. The overall mean grade of 90 (SD = 2.26) was interpreted as Outstanding, indicating that learners generally demonstrated a high level of academic achievement despite the challenges associated with studying in schools that had been used as evacuation centers.

The relatively high academic performance observed in the study should be interpreted with caution. Academic grades are classroom-based measures that may reflect not only learners' mastery of academic competencies but also teacher-developed assessments, performance tasks, participation, submitted outputs, and other components of the grading system. In a disaster-disrupted context, schools may also implement flexible or contextualized assessment practices to accommodate learners' circumstances. Thus, the reported academic grades may not be directly equivalent to standardized achievement-test scores. Future studies may strengthen the assessment of academic performance by incorporating standardized achievement measures, common assessment tools, or multiple indicators of learning outcomes.

The findings suggest that learners were able to maintain strong academic performance even while experiencing changes in their learning environment. This may indicate that learners successfully adapted to the disruptions brought about by the evacuation center situation and continued to meet academic expectations. The results further imply that the support provided by teachers, schools, families, and the community may have contributed to sustaining learners' academic engagement and achievement despite the difficulties encountered. The relatively low standard deviation also indicates that learners' grades were generally consistent, reflecting stable academic performance across the group.

These findings are consistent with the study of Hammerstein et al. (2021), which found that while educational disruptions may affect learning conditions, learners can continue to achieve positive academic outcomes when appropriate instructional support and learning opportunities are provided. The study emphasized the importance of school-based interventions and teacher support in minimizing the negative impact of disruptions on academic performance.

The high level of academic performance may also reflect the learners' resilience, adaptability, and commitment to learning despite experiencing disaster-related challenges. The ability of most learners to attain outstanding and very satisfactory grades suggests that they remained motivated and engaged in their studies even under non-ideal circumstances. This finding highlights the importance of maintaining educational continuity and providing supportive learning environments during emergencies, as these factors help learners remain focused on their academic goals.

The result supports the findings of Engzell et al. (2021), who emphasized that learners who receive adequate support from schools and families are more likely to sustain academic progress despite disruptions in regular schooling. Similarly, UNESCO (2021) noted that the continuity of learning resources, teacher guidance, and supportive educational practices are critical factors in helping learners maintain academic achievement during periods of crisis and educational interruption.

Overall, the findings reveal that learners demonstrated an outstanding level of academic performance despite studying in schools that were used as evacuation centers. This suggests that the challenges brought about by the situation did not significantly hinder learners' academic achievement. The results imply that strong learner resilience, effective teacher support, and the continued provision of learning opportunities played important roles in sustaining educational outcomes. These findings further emphasize the need to strengthen educational support systems and learning continuity measures to ensure that learners can continue to succeed academically even during times of disruption and disaster.

Relationship between the Level of Psychological Well-Being of Learners and their Level of Learning Environment

Table 5. Relationship between the Level of Psychological Well-Being of Learners and the Level of Learning Environment.

Variable	Test Statistics ($\square_{\square}$)	p-value	Decision for H_0	Interpretation
Psychological Well-Being vs. Learning Environment	.599**	<.001	Reject H_0	Significant

Table 5 presents the relationship between the learning environment of learners and their psychological well-being using Spearman's rho correlation. The analysis yielded a correlation coefficient of ($r_s = .599$) with a p-value of less than .001. Since the p-value is lower than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that there is a significant positive relationship between the learning environment and the psychological well-being of learners.

The result suggests that improvements in the learning environment are associated with higher levels of psychological well-being among learners. The moderate positive correlation indicates that learners who perceive

their school environment as supportive, safe, and resourceful are more likely to demonstrate positive emotional regulation, self-awareness, and resilience. This finding highlights the important role of the school environment in shaping learners' emotional and psychological adjustment, particularly in situations where schools are utilized as evacuation centers. A positive learning environment may help learners feel secure, supported, and motivated despite the disruptions and challenges brought about by disaster-related circumstances.

The findings further imply that creating and maintaining a conducive learning environment should remain a priority for school administrators, teachers, and stakeholders. Ensuring the availability of learning resources, promoting positive relationships among learners and teachers, and maintaining safe and functional school facilities may contribute significantly to improving learners' psychological well-being. In disaster-affected schools, interventions that strengthen both the physical and social aspects of the learning environment may help learners cope more effectively with stress, adapt to changing circumstances, and sustain positive mental health outcomes.

The moderate strength of the relationship also suggests that while the learning environment is an important factor influencing psychological well-being, other variables may likewise contribute to learners' psychological adjustment. Factors such as family support, personal coping strategies, community assistance, and previous disaster experiences may also affect how learners respond emotionally and psychologically to challenging situations. Nevertheless, the findings demonstrate that the learning environment remains a significant factor that can either support or hinder learners' well-being during periods of educational disruption.

This finding is consistent with the study of Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), which emphasized that supportive learning environments positively influence students' social, emotional, and psychological development. Similarly, Pacheco et al. (2022) found that schools play a critical role in fostering resilience, emotional recovery, and psychological well-being among learners affected by disasters. Their study highlighted that safe school environments, supportive relationships, and access to educational resources contribute significantly to learners' ability to adapt and recover from disruptive experiences. These findings suggest that strengthening the quality of the learning environment is essential in promoting the overall well-being of learners, particularly in schools that serve as evacuation centers during emergencies.

Relationship between the Level of Psychological Well-Being of Learners and their Level of Academic Performance

Table 6. Relationship between the Level of Psychological Well-Being of Learners and the Level of Academic Performance.

Variable	Test Statistics ($\square_\square$)	p-value	Decision for H_0	Interpretation
Psychological Well-Being vs.	.085*	.013	Reject H_0	Significant
Academic Performance				

Table 6 presents the relationship between the level of psychological well-being of learners and level of academic performance using Spearman's rho correlation. The analysis yielded a correlation coefficient of ($r_s = .085$) with a p-value of .013. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between learners' psychological well-being and their academic performance.

The result reveals a correlation, suggesting that learners with higher levels of psychological well-being tend to demonstrate better academic performance. This means that learners who are able to regulate their emotions, understand their feelings, and remain resilient despite challenges are more likely to perform well academically. The finding highlights the important role of psychological well-being in supporting learners' ability to focus, participate in classroom activities, complete academic tasks, and achieve positive learning outcomes. In the context of schools used as evacuation centers, maintaining learners' emotional and psychological health appears

to be closely associated with their capacity to succeed in their studies despite experiencing disruptions and environmental changes.

The findings further imply that promoting psychological well-being should be considered an essential component of educational recovery and continuity efforts in disaster-affected schools. Programs that strengthen emotional regulation, self-awareness, resilience, and psychosocial support may not only improve learners' mental health but also contribute to enhanced academic achievement. School administrators, teachers, and stakeholders should therefore provide interventions that address learners' emotional needs alongside their academic requirements. Creating a supportive and nurturing school environment may help learners cope more effectively with stress while maintaining their motivation and engagement in learning.

The strong correlation also suggests that psychological well-being serves as a critical factor influencing academic success. Learners who feel emotionally secure, resilient, and capable of managing challenges are more likely to develop positive attitudes toward learning and demonstrate persistence in accomplishing school-related tasks. Conversely, learners who experience emotional distress and difficulty coping with disruptions may encounter challenges that affect their academic performance. These findings emphasize the importance of integrating mental health and well-being initiatives into school programs, particularly in communities affected by disasters and emergencies.

This finding is consistent with the study of Suldo et al. (2021), which found that positive psychological well-being is strongly associated with higher academic achievement, school engagement, and overall student success. Similarly, Dixon and Worrell (2022) reported that learners with stronger emotional well-being and resilience tend to exhibit greater academic motivation, persistence, and performance. These studies support the present finding that psychological well-being is a significant factor in promoting positive educational outcomes and helping learners maintain academic success despite challenging circumstances.

Relationship between the Level of Learning Environment of Learners and Level of Academic Performance

Table 7. Relationship between the Level of Learning Environment of Learners and Level of Academic Performance.

Variable	Test Statistics (χ^2)	p-value	Decision for H_0	Interpretation
Learning Environment vs. Academic Performance	.616*	.035	Reject H_0	Significant

Table 7 presents the relationship between the learning environment of learners and their academic performance using Spearman's rho correlation. The analysis yielded a correlation coefficient of ($r_s = .616$) with a p-value of .035. Since the p-value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that there is a significant positive relationship between the learning environment and the academic performance of learners.

The result reveals a correlation, suggesting that learners who perceive their learning environment more positively tend to demonstrate higher academic performance. This means that improvements in the physical environment, social environment, and curriculum resources are associated with better academic outcomes among learners. Despite the challenges brought about by the use of schools as evacuation centers, learners who experienced supportive relationships, adequate learning resources, and conducive school conditions were more likely to achieve higher academic performance. The finding highlights the important role of the school environment in supporting learners' academic success, especially during periods of disruption and recovery.

The findings further imply that maintaining a positive learning environment is essential for sustaining educational achievement in disaster-affected schools. Schools that provide accessible learning materials,

supportive teacher-student relationships, and safe learning spaces create conditions that enable learners to focus on their studies and remain engaged in classroom activities. Strengthening these aspects of the learning environment may help minimize the negative effects of educational disruptions and contribute to improved academic outcomes. The result also suggests that investments in school facilities, instructional resources, and supportive school practices can have a meaningful impact on learners' academic development.

The moderate strength of the relationship indicates that while the learning environment significantly influences academic performance, it is not the sole factor affecting learners' achievement. Other variables such as psychological well-being, family support, study habits, motivation, and individual learning abilities may also contribute to academic success. Nevertheless, the findings demonstrate that the learning environment remains a critical factor in helping learners perform well academically, particularly in situations where normal school operations have been affected by disasters and emergencies.

This finding is consistent with the study of Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), which emphasized that supportive and well-resourced learning environments positively influence student engagement, learning outcomes, and academic achievement. Similarly, OECD (2021) reported that positive school climates, quality educational resources, and supportive relationships within schools are strongly associated with improved academic performance and student success. These studies support the present finding that a favorable learning environment contributes significantly to learners' academic achievement, even in challenging educational contexts.

CONCLUSIONS

Learners maintained a good level of psychological well-being despite studying in schools that were used as evacuation centers, with resilience emerging as their strongest psychological attribute.

Learners perceived their learning environment as highly supportive, particularly in terms of curriculum resources and positive social relationships, which helped sustain learning during disruptions.

Although learners experienced academic and emotional challenges while their schools served as evacuation centers, they demonstrated adaptability, resilience, gratitude, and empathy throughout the experience.

Learners achieved an outstanding level of academic performance despite the disruptions caused by the use of schools as evacuation centers.

A positive learning environment was significantly and positively associated with learners' psychological well-being

Psychological well-being was significantly and positively associated with academic performance among the learners.

The learning environment was significantly and positively associated with learners' academic performance.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and limitations of the study, the following recommendations are offered.

For the Department of Education. The Department of Education may strengthen policies and operational guidelines for the use of schools as evacuation centers by ensuring that educational continuity, learner safety, psychosocial support, and post-evacuation school recovery are addressed simultaneously. Disaster preparedness frameworks may include clearer protocols for restoring classrooms, sanitation facilities, learning materials, and other essential resources immediately after evacuation use. DepEd may also strengthen the integration of psychosocial support, resilience-building activities, and referral mechanisms within disaster risk reduction and management programs.

For School Administrators. School heads may establish school-specific continuity plans that identify alternative learning spaces, protect essential instructional resources, and provide procedures for the rapid restoration of

classrooms after evacuation use. Regular safety inspections may also be conducted to identify hazardous materials, damaged facilities, inadequate water supply, and other physical conditions that may affect learners' safety and learning.

For Teachers. Teachers may continue to provide flexible and learner-centered instructional strategies during periods of disruption while maintaining reasonable academic expectations. They may also monitor learners who demonstrate emotional distress, difficulty adjusting to changed schedules, or reduced participation and coordinate with appropriate school personnel when additional psychosocial support is needed.

For Guidance and Psychosocial Support Personnel. Schools may strengthen age-appropriate psychosocial interventions focusing on emotional regulation, self-awareness, resilience, peer support, and coping strategies. Referral systems may be made readily accessible for learners who require more specialized assistance.

For Parents and Communities. Parents, community leaders, and other stakeholders may be encouraged to participate in disaster preparedness and learning-continuity activities. Collaborative support can help learners maintain routines, access learning resources, and cope with the social and emotional challenges associated with disaster-related disruptions.

For Future Researchers. Future studies may use larger and more diverse samples across different regions, grade levels, and types of disasters. Longitudinal and mixed-methods approaches may also be considered to examine changes in psychological well-being, learning environments, experiences, and academic performance over time. Researchers may further incorporate standardized achievement measures, teacher reports, school records, interviews, and focus group discussions to strengthen measurement and triangulation.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings of this study. First, the study employed a descriptive-correlational design; therefore, the observed relationships among psychological well-being, learning environment, and academic performance should not be interpreted as evidence of causation. The cross-sectional nature of the data also limits the ability to determine how these variables may change over time as learners recover from disaster-related disruptions.

Second, the respondents were limited to 205 Grade 6 learners from selected cluster schools in Negros Occidental whose schools were utilized as evacuation centers. Consequently, the findings may not be generalizable to learners from other grade levels, geographical areas, school types, or disaster contexts.

Third, psychological well-being and learning environment were measured through a modified self-report questionnaire. Although the instrument underwent validation and reliability testing, self-reported responses may still be influenced by social desirability, recall, or learners' individual interpretations of the items.

Fourth, academic performance was represented by school-based academic grades. Such grades may reflect multiple components of classroom assessment and may be influenced by contextualized or flexible assessment practices during disaster-related disruptions. Hence, the findings should not be interpreted as equivalent to results from standardized achievement assessments.

Fifth, learners' experiences were obtained through an open-ended response and subsequently categorized by the researcher. Although systematic coding can organize these responses, the approach may not capture the full depth, complexity, and context of learners' lived experiences. More extensive qualitative methods, such as focus group discussions, individual interviews, or repeated qualitative data collection, may provide richer insights.

Finally, the study did not examine potential mediating or moderating mechanisms among the variables. Although the observed correlations provide evidence of association, the pathways through which the learning environment, psychological well-being, and academic performance may be connected remain uncertain. Future research may address these limitations through longitudinal, mixed-methods, and multivariate research designs.

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