Resiliency, Happiness and Mental Health Assessment of Grade 12 and College Students

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Abstract

Filipinos as a people are known to be resilient and happy individuals (Reyes, 2021). However, despite these characteristics, mental health problems among Filipinos still exist and are getting worse. This situation offers an opportunity to examine the correlation among resiliency level, perceived sense of happiness, and personal assessment of the respondents' mental health. Using a standardized survey questionnaire of 40 items, assessment on resiliency, happiness and mental health was conducted by the Guidance Office as part of its Annual Survey of Needs. Data gathered are utilized for the study.

This study yields that mental health is rated *average* by 82% Senior High Students and 72.94% college students. Moreover, it supports the notion that resilience, happiness, and mental health assessments have a positive association with one another, which implies that if a person has good mental health, his/her resilience level is higher. The more resilient an individual is, the happier he/she becomes. This study recommends that interventions such as development and nurturing programs may be administered to enhance resiliency and promote a positive outlook in life of the students. Particularly, overcoming adversity is connected to resilience, which must be operationalized as a life-skill.

Keywords: *resiliency, happiness, subjective well-being, mental health, personal assessment*

Introduction

*O*ne of the most pressing issues parents and educators are facing in these grim times is whether children can live in this evolving society when violence pervades every aspect of it –with the least amount of harm and injury (Arastman & Balci, 2013). A student's experience at university may be challenging. Students are accustomed to feeling stress because it is viewed as a shared experience among them; as they deal with

academic expectations, home issues, and social pressures. Despite the challenges outlined above, which are pervasive in the design of today's society, some children and teens can endure and engage with the environment successfully (Laidlaw *et al.*, 2016). However, students may struggle to recuperate or bounce back from these circumstances if stress is too intense and is improperly controlled, particularly when unfavorable events emerge. Sadly, this lack of adaptability can result in detrimental mental health outcomes, including despair and anxiety (Beiter *et al.*, 2015).

Studies examining the positive sides of students' psychological health, like life satisfaction, happiness and resilience, are relatively rare. From this perspective, exploring the relationship among the students' resilience, happiness, and mental health is essential. The World Health Organization (2020) states that people between the ages of 15 and 29 are the most vulnerable group worldwide, with mental health-related mortality ranking as this age group's second-most prevalent cause of death. Nevertheless, the ability of the Filipino people to rise above tragedy has been referred to as "resilience" in many contexts. Filipinos have mastered the ability to value what they have, maximize it, and put up with setbacks. Thus, Filipino identity is fundamentally characterized by resilience, which fosters a sense of belonging and compassion (Warren, 2021).

Talking about "resilience," this term is frequently used in conjunction with "student welfare." Resilience refers to the capacity to respond effectively to adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even severe levels of stress (APA, 2014). Considering this, a resilient student embodies a set of identified traits, referred to as "internal factors" in this context, and uses them to recover from setbacks and challenging circumstances. Vitally, some environmental or external protective factors must also exist in order to preserve resilience. The

establishment of a Resilience Index, which has a strong positive link with life happiness, results from both factors (McIntosh & Shaw, 2017).

Another aspect to consider is happiness. Happiness incorporates several factors, including positive emotion, low depression, and mood. It is also associated with adequate rest, psychological well-being, memory, and social life (Aboalshamat *et al.*, 2018). Additionally, the idea of happiness is sometimes known as subjective well-being in literary works (Yirci *et al.*, 2022). Happiness is becoming an increasing concern for academic, managerial, and national research in the modern world (Veenhoven, 2015). Someone who is happy benefits himself and those around him, allowing diverse efficiency to be attained. A person's motivation will undoubtedly be positively impacted if they feel good and joyful. High happiness levels will simultaneously boost motivation and rank among the most critical elements in achieving success. Accordingly, the happy brain produces a strong catalyst, which propels a person to carry out (Özgün *et al.*, 2017).

Aside from happiness, numerous research concentrates on resilience's ability to predict mental health indicators. Consequently, most of the intervention research focuses on how resilience training enhances mental health status. For instance, a meta-analysis indicated that resilience-focused interventions, mainly based on cognitive-behavioral therapy, were effective relative to a control in lowering depressive and anxiety symptoms in children and adolescents (Dray *et al.*, 2017). According to Waugh and Koster (2015), there is evidence that interventions using positivity training to improve resilience, well-being, and positive emotions are effective in treating depression. Resilience is favorably connected with good indications of mental health, such as life satisfaction, subjective well-being, and positive

emotions, and negatively correlated with indicators of mental illness, such as depression, anxiety, and negative emotions (Hu *et al.*, 2015).

With the Philippines being known as a center for natural catastrophes and contemporary economic and healthcare issues, Filipinos are frequently thought of as resilient people. However, despite this feature, mental health issues are nonetheless present and getting worse. This predicament creates a space for an investigation into how the current perception of Filipino resilience is portrayed. Hence, the Guidance Center of St. Paul University Dumaguete spearheaded a Guidance Assessment, which is part of the Annual Survey of Needs, through a survey on the students' resiliency level, self-perceived sense of happiness, and mental health awareness, to be able to provide intervention programs as needed.

This inventory is beneficial, especially in assisting students with personal, social, and mental health concerns. In particular, this study strives to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of resiliency and perceived sense of happiness of respondents?
2. What is the personal assessment of respondents' mental health status?
3. Is there a significant relationship among the participants' resiliency level, self-perceived happiness, and personal mental health assessment?

Methodology

The study aimed to assess the relationship between students' resiliency level, perceived sense of happiness, and personal assessment of their mental health. Thus, data collection was conducted utilizing a descriptive correlational research design through a standardized survey tool divided into three parts, wherein two are adapted from various sources. Comprised of a total of 40 items, the first part required the respondents to rate their own mental health status according to their personal assessment with a three-point scale: Very Good, Average, and Poor. Next, the participants answered the Subjective Well-Being (SWB) quiz (30 items) developed by Richard E. Hamon II (2009). The inventory intends to aid respondents in identifying positive aspects of life and changes they yearn to see. Lastly, to determine the resilience rates, the last items focus on the resiliency level quiz (9 items) adapted from Al Siebert.

This research included a total of 1,799 participants from the Senior High School (332) and College (1,467) students at St. Paul University Dumaguete. All sections from the said levels were given the opportunity to answer the survey questionnaires facilitated by the Guidance Personnel. Additionally, the paper underwent ethical considerations in its testing procedures, containing background information about the study, informed consent, rights to confidentiality. Afterwards, responses were tabulated and analyzed using frequency distributions and percentages for the statistical treatment.

Results

Table 1. *Mental Health Assessment rating*

Level	Very Good		Average		Poor		Total	
	f	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*	*f*	*%*
Senior High	39	12	273	82	20	6	332	100
College	236	16.09	1070	72.94	161	10.97	1467	100
TOTAL							1799	100

N=1799

Results in the first table show that most of the respondents' personal assessment regarding their mental health is in the average rating. Students were explicitly asked: "Based on your personal assessment, rate your mental health." Among the Senior High students, 82% rate their mental health state as *average*. On the other hand, only 6% rate their mental health status as *poor*. Similarly, the college students have the same results as the previous level, 72.94% agree that their mental health is in the *intermediate state*, and only a few of them (10.97%) consider their mental health status *poor*.

Table 2.1. *Happiness Rating of Senior High Students*

Indicators	Yes		No		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. I am basically happy with who I am.	278	84	54	16.2	332	100
2. I have plenty of good relationships.	280	84.3	52	15.6	332	100
3. I am happy with my educational level.	301	91	31	9.3	332	100
4. I am friendly and outgoing.	278	84	54	16.2	332	100
5. I am mostly positive about the present and optimistic about the future.	262	79	70	21	332	100
6. I seek new experiences.	315	94.8	17	5.12	332	100
7. I live in a country where my individual rights are protected, and I have ample access to services.	311	93.6	21	6.32	332	100
8. I feel I'm always learning and growing.	318	95.7	14	4.2	332	100
9. I listen as much as I talk.	302	90.9	30	9	332	100
10. I have good health or take care of my health needs as best I can.	290	87.3	42	12.6	332	100
11. I am making progress toward my dreams.	310	93.3	22	6.6	332	100
12. I enjoy being alone at times.	314	94.5	18	5.4	332	100
13. I feel connected to something greater than myself (my Higher Power, the cosmic universe, nature, etc.)	257	77.4	75	22.6	332	100
14. I enjoy good relationships with family members.	303	91.2	29	8.7	332	100
15. I am happily married or in a happy romantic relationship.	64	19.2	268	80.7	332	100
16. I always try to learn from and correct my mistakes.	327	98.4	5	1.5	332	100
17. I feel a deep sense of gratitude for my blessings.	324	97.5	8	2.4	332	100
18. I apologize when I should and offer forgiveness when needed.	321	96.7	11	3.3	332	100
19. I don't tend to hold grudges.	321	96.7	11	3.3	332	100
20. I believe giving is more precious than receiving.	321	96.7	11	3.3	332	100
21. In general, I see the world as a good enough place.	270	81.3	62	18.7	332	100
22. Although I am not perfect, I respect myself.	327	98.4	5	1.5	332	100
23. When others around me are pessimistic, I find a way to be positive and optimistic	307	92.4	25	7.5	332	100
24. I try to find the good in others, and I realize everyone has faults.	319	96	13	3.9	332	100
25. I am good at finding the silver lining in any cloud.	227	68.37	105	31.6	332	100

26. I love to let go and have fun.	294	88.6	38	11.4	332	100
27. I am aware of the many good deeds others do for me and say "thank you" often.	330	99.3	2	0.6	332	100
28. I often go out of my way to make other people feel good.	291	87.7	41	12.3	332	100
29. I take care of myself (manage stress and get plenty of rest and relaxation) without feeling guilty about it.	257	77.4	75	22.5	332	100
30. I do not blame others for my disappointments or failures.	315	94.8	17	5.1	332	100

The table above indicates the different indicators of happiness wherein respondents would agree or not. Significantly, the greater the number of *Yeses*, the greater the sense of the students' positive outlook. Most of the SHS students answered *Yes* to Item 27, which signifies that 99.3% of them practice the act of gratefulness by saying *"thank you"* to recognize the good deeds of others. Followed by Items 16 and 22, garnering 98.4% of *Yeses*, implying that they are willing to accept and better themselves if they experience mistakes in their life. Also, despite knowing they are not perfect, they are still aware that they are worthy of respect. However, among the indicators, item 15 got a total response of 80.7% for *No*. Since the participants are adolescents, their response denotes that many are unmarried or not yet in a romantic relationship.

Table 2.2. Happiness Rating of College Students

Indicators	Yes		No		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1. I am basically happy with who I am.	1230	83.84	237	16.15	1467	100
2. I have plenty of good relationships.	1232	83.98	235	16.01	1467	100
3. I am happy with my educational level.	1287	87.73	180	12.26	1467	100
4. I am friendly and outgoing.	1235	84.18	282	19.22	1467	100
5. I am mostly positive about the present and optimistic about the future.	1193	81.32	274	18.67	1467	100
6. I seek new experiences.	1387	94.54	80	5.45	1467	100
7. I live in a country where my individual rights are protected, and I have ample access to services.	1436	97.98	31	2.11	1467	100
8. I feel I'm always learning and growing.	1444	98.43	23	1.56	1467	100
9. I listen as much as I talk.	1443	98.36	24	1.63	1467	100
10. I have good health or take care of my health needs as best I can.	1430	97.47	37	2.52	1467	100
11. I am making progress toward my dreams.	1452	98.97	15	1.02	1467	100
12. I enjoy being alone at times.	1457	99.31	10	0.68	1467	100
13. I feel connected to something greater than myself (my Higher Power, the cosmic universe, nature, etc.)	1426	97.20	41	2.79	1467	100
14. I enjoy good relationships with family members.	1450	98.84	17	1.15	1467	100
15. I am happily married or in a happy romantic relationship.	1409	96.04	58	3.95	1467	100
16. I always try to learn from and correct my mistakes.	1462	99.65	5	0.34	1467	100
17. I feel a deep sense of gratitude for my blessings.	1459	99.45	8	0.54	1467	100
18. I apologize when I should and offer forgiveness when needed.	1457	99.31	10	0.68	1467	100
19. I don't tend to hold grudges.	1434	97.75	33	2.24	1467	100
20. I believe giving is more precious than receiving.	1457	99.31	10	0.68	1467	100
21. In general, I see the world as a good enough place.	1434	97.75	33	2.24	1467	100
22. Although I am not perfect, I respect myself.	1457	99.31	10	0.68	1467	100
23. When others around me are pessimistic, I find a way to be positive and optimistic	1436	97.98	31	2.11	1467	100
24. I try to find the good in others, and I realize everyone has faults.	1448	98.70	19	1.29	1467	100

25. I am good at finding the silver lining in any cloud.	1429	97.40	38	2.59	1467	100
26. I love to let go and have fun.	1438	98.02	29	1.97	1467	100
27. I am aware of the many good deeds others do for me and say "thank you" often.	1461	99.59	6	0.40	1467	100
28. I often go out of my way to make other people feel good.	1442	98.29	25	12.3	1467	100
29. I take care of myself (manage stress and get plenty of rest and relaxation) without feeling guilty about it.	1429	97.40	38	2.59	1467	100
30. I do not blame others for my disappointments or failures.	1450	98.84	17	1.5	1467	100

Conversely, most college students say *"Yes"* to Item 16, with the highest response of 99.65%. Just like the SHS students, they are willing to learn from and correct their mistakes. Likewise, it is prevalent that the participants are appreciative of acts of good deeds and have a sense of gratitude, as 99.59% agreed to Item 27 and 99.45% to Item 17. Unlike the SHS students, all Items received a greater response for *Yes* than *No*, which suggests that college students have a higher perception of their sense of happiness.

Table 3.1. *Resiliency Level of Senior High Students*

Items	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. I'm usually optimistic. I see difficulties as temporary and expect to overcome them.	3.46	Agree
2. Feelings of anger, loss, and discouragement don't last long.	3.39	Neutral
3. I can tolerate high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty about situations.	3.13	Neutral
4. I adapt quickly to new developments. I'm curious. I ask questions.	3.45	Agree
5. I'm playful. I find humor in rough situations, and can laugh at myself.	3.63	Agree
6. I learn valuable lessons from my experiences and from the experiences of others.	4.06	Agree
7. I'm good at solving problems. I'm good at making things work well.	3.24	Neutral
8. I'm strong and durable. I hold up well during tough times.	3.47	Agree
9. I've converted misfortune into good luck and found benefits in bad experiences.	3.34	Neutral
TOTAL	3.46	Agree

N=332

Results from Table 3.1 reveal that the SHS students are adequately resilient, with a total average mean of 3.46. Mostly, participants rated four (*Agree*) in Item 6, with a weighted mean of 4.06. It implies that SHS students value learning from their experiences as well with the experiences of others. Yet, out of the nine items, four were rated 3 (*Neutral*) by most of the students. Among them is Item 2, which expresses that situations may vary on how their emotions toward anger, loss, and discouragement would last.

Table 3.2. *Resiliency Level of College Students*

Items	Weighted Mean	Verbal Description
1. I'm usually optimistic. I see difficulties as temporary and expect to overcome them.	3.62	Agree
2. Feelings of anger, loss, and discouragement don't last long.	3.45	Agree
3. I can tolerate high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty about situations.	3.33	Neutral
4. I adapt quickly to new developments. I'm curious. I ask questions.	3.61	Agree
5. I'm playful. I find humor in rough situations, and can laugh at myself.	3.65	Agree
6. I learn valuable lessons from my experiences and from the experiences of others.	4.11	Agree
7. I'm good at solving problems. I'm good at making things work well.	3.41	Neutral
8. I'm strong and durable. I hold up well during tough times.	3.62	Agree
9. I've converted misfortune into good luck and found benefits in bad experiences.	3.54	Agree
TOTAL	3.59	Agree

N=1,467

Similarly, the table above presents how college students have the same resiliency level among the SHS participants. With a weighted mean of 3.59, the majority are classified as *adequately resilient*. Mostly, the participants answered 3 (*Agree*) to Item 6 as well. Both levels agree that valuable lessons from experiences matter. It is important to note that many of the participants rated 4 (*Agree*) to Item 5, which stands for their ability to find humor in rough situations. Contrary to the SHS students, only two Items were rated as 3 (*Neutral*). Thus, college students have higher resiliency.

Table 4.1. Correlation among Resiliency, Happiness and Mental Health of Senior High Students

Variable	M	SD	Resiliency	Happiness	Mental Health Assessment
Resiliency	3.46	0.591			
Happiness	26. 0	3.40	0.339***		
Mental Health Assessment	1.04	0.478	0.217***	0.381***	

*Note: * = p<.05;** = p<.01;*** = p<.001*

To analyze the correlation among the three variables, namely the students' resiliency, personal rating of their mental health, and self-perception of their happiness, the matrix *(Pearson Correlation)* displayed above discloses the relationship between each variable. The analysis reveals that resiliency has a significant relationship with both happiness *(r = 0.339, p<.001)* and mental health *(r = 0.217, p<.001)*. This implies that as the SHS students' resiliency level increases, their sense of happiness and personal assessment will also increase. Likewise, happiness has a significant relationship with mental health *(r = 0.381, p<.001)*, which hints that when students have higher sense of happiness, their mental health status also increases.

Table 4.2. *Correlation among Resiliency, Happiness and Mental Health of College Students*

Variable	M	SD	Resiliency	Happiness	Mental Health Assessment
Resiliency	3.60	0.655			
Happiness	26. 2	3.91	0.394***		
Mental Health Assessment	1.05	0.518	0.301***	0.383***	

*Note: * = p<.05;** = p<.01;*** = p<.001*

Data from the correlation matrix for the College students have the same results as the SHS students. Correspondingly, resiliency has a significant positive relationship with both happiness (r = 0.394, p<.001) and mental health assessment (r = 0.301, p<.001). Despite the age gap among the SHS students, the higher the College students' resiliency level is, the more likely their personal rating of their mental health and self-perception of happiness will increase. Furthermore, the increase in their positive outlook or happiness will also lead to a rise in their mental health assessment.

Discussion

This study is designed to present a more detailed picture than survey research alone could, as well as a more reproducible explanation of the correlation among the students' resiliency level, subjective well-being or happiness, and self-perceived mental health status. The findings reveal that students' positive outlooks in different aspects may correlate when calculated and placed in numbers. As McIntosh & Shaw (2017) notes, higher personal fulfilment is

associated with greater resilience. Notably, resiliency is anchored to overcoming hardship, which must be operationalized as a trait or capability.

With the first variable, both college (72.94%) and SHS (82%) students identified their mental health status as *Average level*. With these data, it can be inferred that the participants believe their mental health is vital even though they occasionally experience mental breakdowns due to various life events. The adaptation and development of an individual depend heavily on their mental health. Certain papers (Goldstein *et al.*, 2013; Vitale, 2015; Satici, 2016) confirmed that resilience could predict mental health status. It is mentioned as well in the study of Hu *et al.* (2015) that numerous empirical studies have discovered a positive correlation between trait resilience and signs of mental health. Similarly, in Wu *et al.* (2020), increased resilience is related to better mental health. In sum, their studies hint preliminary evidence of a mutually reducing relationship between resilience and mental ill-being and a mutually enhancing relationship between resilience and positive mental health in the short term of 1 year, and the significant influence of mental health level on resilience was presented in the long period of 2 years.

Meanwhile, following the results of the participants' sense of well-being, the two levels disclosed high scores for most of the items. Considering this, the SHS and College students can be perceived as happy and fulfilled. Although happiness is higher among college students, similar indicators show an increased number of *Yeses* for items 27 and 16, which proves that they are prepared to admit they made mistakes and make improvements. Additionally, it is common for participants to express gratitude and appreciation for kind gestures.

Correspondingly, several studies examined the positive correlation between resiliency and happiness. From the research of Aboalshamat *et al.* (2018), resilience and happiness showed a strong association. High-resilience students are happier and more contented in life. Moreover, other studies (Miranda & Cruz, 2022; Benada & Chowdhry, 2017; Bajaj & Pande, 2016) support the said result, underlining the importance of resilience and its positive benefits on subjective well-being. Therefore, there are beneficial connections between happiness and resilience. Subjective well-being is regarded to be higher in those with higher resilience levels (Burns *et al.*, 2011).

On the other hand, without talking about happiness, which is the primary concern about mental health, positive psychology cannot be fully realized. Since happiness is an essential component of health and a universal goal, it is increasingly being highlighted by the World Health Organization. Henceforth, the correlation matrix exposed a significant positive relationship between happiness and mental health assessment. Babamiri *et al.* (2017) found that happiness and its elements were related to mental health status in female students, which conveys that increasing happiness may help to raise the general level of mental health. Despite having a subjective emotional component, happiness is generally associated positively with many mental disorders like stress, anxiety, and depression. In other words, joyful people are less likely to suffer from mental illnesses. They experience reduced stress, anxiety, and depression. They consequently experience physical and psychological wellness. Additionally, those who are content are more gregarious and have favorable social conditions. These cheerful folks are healthier than unhappy people in this aspect (Mahakud & Yadav, 2015).

Generally, the students' responses from both levels proclaim high resiliency. Incorporating this result supports the study of Sharma (2019), wherein there is a strong correlation between mental health and resilience, mental health and happiness, and resilience and happiness. Students with high personal ratings on their mental health and sense of happiness also determine themselves as resilient enough. The data signify that they constitute a self-motivated student who bounces back quickly from most difficulties. Students will be better equipped to discover greater joy in life, especially in the face of adversity, as a result of learning more about resilience and actively developing resiliency abilities.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Taking into account the positive facets of students' psychological well-being, this study offers a birds-eye perspective of the positive relationship among the three variables: resiliency and happiness; resiliency and mental health; and happiness and mental health. The following conclusions are drawn in order to address the research questions:

1. Based on the data collected, no differences appeared for the results coming from both levels. In their personal assessment of mental health, the SHS (82%) and college (72. 94%) students have high scores in the average rating. Likewise, for the students' self-perceived sense of happiness, the two levels displayed a higher number of *Yeses* than *Nos*. Finally, their resiliency level is similar according to their total weighted mean of 3.53, described as *Agree*.

2. Common indicators arise for the sense of happiness between the two levels. Item 16 receives the highest *"Yes"* response from college

students, with a response rate of 99.65%, indicating that, like SHS students with 98.4%, they are eager to learn from and remedy their errors. Equivalently, it is evident that participants value good deeds getting done and gratitude getting uttered because the SHS (99.3%) and the college (99.59%) students agreed with item 27.

3. The findings support the conclusion that all three of these variables have a positive correlation with one another. A person's resilience will be higher if they have good mental health. Despite the challenges in life, one will be more likely to adapt to his surroundings. A person with a good mental state will be contented and happy. The more resilient individual will also be happier. Therefore, it may be inferred that they are tied to one another and that if one increases, the other will do likewise.

The following recommendations are made in light of the study's findings:

1. Following the overall assessment, teachers or advisers of the students may be provided with copies of the results to ensure that they are aware of their current mental health status, sense of happiness, and resiliency level. The Senior High School Principal, College Deans, and faculty members must also receive the assessment results in order for them to consider and design different interventions that will boost the students' psychological well-being.

2. Further assessment can also be done, focusing on the mental health awareness of the students. It is recommended to adapt other assessment tools that would highlight specific factors that affect the mental health status of the learners, including the negative ones.

3. Since resilience can be a predictor of both mental health status and a sense of happiness among students, the school must consider a

development and nurturing program for resilience. Resilience is a transferable trait; encouraging its development can help students navigate challenging life experiences and demands from both inside and outside.

It is crucial to remember that developing the ability to become resilient over time is necessary. One must put in the effort to build resilience to encounter obstacles along the way confidently. It depends on one's actions and abilities (such as communication and self-esteem) and external factors (like social network and available resources). Even resilient people go through stress, emotional turmoil, and pain. Working through emotional pain and suffering is still a sign of resilience.

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