

Emotional Loneliness and Resilience among College Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

The study utilized the sequential-explanatory research design in assessing the relationship between emotional loneliness and resilience of college students, along with their personal experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data for both methods were collected using standardized tests and semi-structured interviews, respectively. These data were then analyzed with the help of statistical analysis tools and Braun and Clarke's method in the thematic analysis method. The quantitative study results showed no significant difference in the degree of emotional loneliness among college students. At the same time, it identified a significant difference in their level of resilience. The overall quantitative results indicated that there was indeed a significant relationship between emotional loneliness and the resilience of college students. It was also complemented by the qualitative study results, in which it explored the personal experiences of the participants. The thematic analysis presented two (2) main themes and seven (7) subthemes: affective states during the pandemic and empowering resilience in times of crisis. Both results of the study confirmed the relationship between emotional loneliness and resilience. The risk experiences in the form of difficult experiences during the pandemic helped nurture resilience within the participants.

Keywords

COVID-19, emotional loneliness, resilience, risk experiences, personal experiences, college students

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic signifies a great hurdle to the economy, society, and health systems throughout the globe. The pandemic in Europe has altered and stretched all health systems, with some almost collapsing at the height of the first and second waves (Zapata et al., 2021; Mercier et al., 2020).

The virus has impacted the physical aspects of human interaction and behavior, but it has also

had a significant impact on humans' mental and psychological aspects. For instance, according to Mann et al. (2017), the construct of loneliness is a subjective feeling stemming from an incongruity between a person's desired level of meaningful relationships and what they see that they have maybe felt by people due to the experience of the pandemic. One of the traits present in every human being is the resilience to bounce back from struggles and setbacks one experiences in life. Richardson (2002)

explained that resilience varies according to specific experiences people encounter in their lives. He added that being exposed to certain risk levels can help build resilient factors and develop resilience. Concerning the current situation caused by the pandemic, people have varying reactions and experiences, leading them to fortify their resilience factors.

A local study conducted by Labrague et al. (2020) about social and emotional loneliness among college students during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines states the results of the study that loneliness was common among college students during the lockdown period.

With the world being in the middle of a global pandemic, a rise in psychological problems encountered by people as a result of the virus was observed. Additionally, the effects of lockdowns, social distancing, and other protocols have significantly impacted people who can no longer hug or do other physical actions. In this study, the constructs of emotional loneliness and resilience will be analyzed to see if there may be associations between the two to contribute new information and knowledge to the field of psychology. Moreover, the study aims to explore the participants' experiences, thereby relating these experiences to the quantifiable data gathered. With the limited local studies present, the questions in mind, and observations made, this study intends to offer new information and analyze whether the results of studies abroad are relevant in the Philippine setting. Hence, this study was conducted.

This study aimed to determine the relationship between emotional loneliness and resilience among college students. Moreover, this study also explored the participants' individual experiences during the pandemic.

The study utilized the Resilience Theory of Dr. Michael Rutter (2006) to determine the relationship between emotional loneliness and resilience among college students.

As cited in Smith-Osborne et al. (2017), the Resilience Theory of Rutter had an interactive and robust concept of resilience as a dynamic process and mixture of profound risk experiences and psychologically positive results in the face of those experiences.

Based on his studies, Rutter's theory indicates that being resilient does not come from specific psychological traits or the more excellent functioning of individuals. However, it is a normal adaptation that utilizes the correct resources available (Rutter, 2012b). He stated that a person could exhibit resilience at different points in their lives to varying degrees, emphasizing that individual differences cause differences in the way individuals respond to potential risks and protective factors.

He believed that being exposed to lower levels of risk would help build up resistance and help them cope. It can be compared to being vaccinated; to become resistant to certain viruses, one must be exposed to them to a certain degree. Avoidance of risks will develop vulnerability instead of resilience (Shean, 2015; Rutter, 2012b). He also reminded us that stressful experiences should be controllable because uncontrollable ones can lead to unwanted outcomes.

Another core discussion aspect of Rutter's theory is the protective factors for mental functioning. He proposes that people who possess these have control and can successfully change actions. Furthermore, he suggests that these mental features change the individual's reaction to struggles rather than the environment itself and its factors (Rutter, 2012b).

The second factor he highlighted was the social relationships an individual has. A mother's warmth, sibling care, and a loving and positive atmosphere can shield the child or individual from psychological distress and behavioral disturbance. In the study by Liebenberg et al. (2017), they cited the study by Rutter and his colleagues on the orphaned and later adopted Romanian children. Before being adopted,

these children were exposed to extreme physical and emotional deprivation and showed significant developmental delays by the time they were adopted. Another research by Rutter et al. (2012a) described that being exposed to familial relationships and having access to different environmental resources showed notable gains for the child's physical growth and the I.Q. and academic achievement.

The last protective factor in Rutter's theory is the importance of «turning point experiences,» which are moments in an adult's life when there is a break with their past, the removal of bad choices, and a path for good options for constructive changes (Shean, 2015; Rutter, 2012b). It is where adults can exhibit resilience even though they have not experienced resilient outcomes in their lives. In past research results, it has been shown that isolation (in the case of quarantine) can cause different psychological problems, like heightened feelings of loneliness, and can reduce one's well-being (Gubler et al., 2021; Brooks et al., 2020).

As the World Health Organization declared the COVID-19 pandemic on March 11, 2020, public life restrictions were implemented by the governments of different countries, resulting in lockdowns and social distancing (WHO, 2020). According to Loades et al. (2020), prolonged physical isolation from the community and the environment negatively affects adolescents and children.

According to McNabb-Baltar et al. (2020), as cited in Labrague et al. (2020), multiple studies have also evaluated at least 38% to 50% of young individuals aged 18 to 24 years old, having experienced higher levels of loneliness during the quarantine period, while in terms of sex, women may have a higher possibility of experiencing loneliness than men. As a result of the authority-imposed lockdowns, protective factors against stressful events and adversities, such as personal resilience, social support, and coping abilities, were identified. They may help individuals

reduce their experience of loneliness.

Mushtaq et al. (2014) considered loneliness as a human emotion, a shared feeling; however, it produces an intricate and inimitable experience for each person. Several types of loneliness were felt during the pandemic outbreak due to the restrictions instructed by the government (Tiwari, 2013). The author claimed that it is common, especially with students, to feel guilty and lonely due to financial incapability and poor coping strategies in situations resulting in isolation.

Moreover, in the study of Loades et al. (2020), there may be possible sex differences, suggesting that loneliness experienced by females is more strongly associated with depression symptoms and in males with elevated social anxiety.

In an Australian study led by Franklin et al. (2019), recent studies indicated that men were more susceptible to severe and protracted loneliness episodes. Both men and women encounter the concept of loneliness, though the extent of their experiences differs from one another. Another study cited by Franklin et al. (2019) is that of Franklin and Tanter (2010), which found that men feel they cannot communicate about their loneliness, which results in their being unable to talk about it when it gets worse. In their 2008 study, results showed that 33% reported that loneliness was a severe problem.

Another study done by Cao et al. (2020) in China stated that the continuous spread of the epidemic, strict measures of isolation, and delays in school openings across the country were expected to influence the mental state of college students. Another perspective by Dagne and Dagne (2019) is that, aside from second-year and above students, first-year students had a 2.47 chance of loneliness. Moreover, it suggested that the year level of the students was associated with loneliness. Hence, it is asserted that the brief length of time and incapacity to remain in the university and adjust to the new

surroundings trigger the progression of loneliness among first-year students.

In the Philippines, the government has implemented various protocols and guidelines to help protect the public from being infected with the virus. Loneliness among young people has been identified as a possible outcome of the mandatory stay-at-home protocol put in place by the government to mitigate the transmission and infection of the virus. Available studies also show that people with an adequate support system and resilient individuals have lower chances of being stressed or feeling lonely during stressful events. It is hypothesized that younger adults, specifically college students, are intensely impacted by contamination control strategies that prevent those aged 21 and under from heading outside, thus increasing social segregation, bringing about the decency of their connections to their friends, and making them powerless against enthusiastic dejection (Matthews et al., 2016).

The worldwide episode of COVID-19 is a phenomenal debacle in humanity's set of experiences. Despite the presence of the virus, one requirement is to adapt to progressing stressors and figure out how to keep mental pain at the very least. A few cross-country cross-sectional investigations have recorded depression and anxiety side effects among individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic (Wang et al., 2020). According to Bonanno and Chen (2020), research has revealed that the most resilient individuals are those who have confronted profoundly aversive life events. Correspondingly, resilience depends on numerous hazardous and defensive aspects of individual modifications.

As the COVID-19 pandemic gradually affects people's lives, it is rational to experience unpleasant feelings such as stress and anxiety, and it is also possible for people to exhibit high resilience during this emergency. According to Li et al., (2021), social support and psychological resilience are two assets

that protect the public's mental health in stressful events. His study highlighted the importance of social support as one of the solutions towards the resiliency of individuals.

Sarmiento et al. (2021) recommended the very idea that concerning sex, both the male and female students showed comparative levels of control under tension in a tough spot. Thus, researchers proved that both genders are resilient because of the interplay of defensive variables in unlikely circumstances, as recognized by different studies that characterize it as a cycle that tells notwithstanding difficulty.

The abrupt event of the COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally changed the existence of masses of individuals around the world, including college students. According to Abelskamp et al. (2020), the institution's educational system condition was critically affected, forcing institutions to hastily adjust to change, transitioning from traditional education to limited online education.

The study by Napoli and Bonifas (2011) claimed that students are better able to regulate emotions and are more open to diverse perspectives if their degree program continuously teaches them to become mindful. The authors added that teaching them mindfulness can improve self-care and is the first step toward developing empathy.

However, Stamelos (2021) established that Generation Z students are more resilient to the said education system transition because they are digitally more literate than previous generations. Considering that psychology students' preparation is centered on proficient execution and investigation, various theories taught in their degree programs assist them in fostering their adapting systems and resiliency (De Almeida Santos & Soares, 2018). Improving the ability through certain activities for agriculture students has undoubtedly contributed to building their adapting capacity and decreasing their adverse reactions to the remarkable circumstances brought about by the

pandemic (Dhumantarao et al., 2020).

The related literature shows that numerous studies and research have been conducted to present the current situation regarding emotional loneliness and resilience as separate variables. Studies have shown that the ongoing pandemic has caused significant distress and loneliness worldwide. Resilience has also become an essential trait at this time; now, people are starting to bounce back from the struggles caused by the virus. The literature also presented a connection between the two variables, but some studies have expounded on their relationship. This study aims to understand the relationship between emotional loneliness and resilience among college students, especially in a local study, to contribute to the existing information collection in this field of study.

The findings of this study will be beneficial to students, for the study's results may help them acquire knowledge of their emotional state and will allow them to change their outlook on life. Also, this study will promote personal growth and overall well-being for students. It may benefit the teachers as well. The results of this study may allow them to find alternatives to ease the students' workloads, which may aid them in alleviating the stress that may affect their emotional well-being. This research could help teachers guide students who are having difficulty coping with problems at school. School administrators will also greatly benefit from this study, for they will be able to monitor the teachers' strategic plans in their methods of instruction and distribution of student workload. The study's results may provide new insights and techniques for overseeing teacher performance.

Moreover, this study may provide parents with knowledge that will allow them to adjust their parenting styles and to better assist their children's needs. Parents may provide a pleasant environment for their children to be holistically healthy. This research study may also serve as a way for guidance counselors

to address the student's mental health concerns by conducting activities that provide knowledge and strategies for the students to manage their emotional aspects. They may also generate online activities to divert students' attention from stress and enhance their ability to cope with or recover from difficulties.

Furthermore, the research study results may enable mental health professionals to improve and develop intervention programs that could support students in managing emotions and coping with dreadful experiences. This study may help provide beneficial online programs to students with emotional issues. Moreover, this may guide future researchers to produce a more comprehensive research evaluation of students' emotional loneliness and resilience. It could also serve as a reference for future research into the topic, which could benefit the work of other researchers in the area.

METHODOLOGY

A mixed-method research design was used in this study. Mixed-method design is defined as the process of accumulation, analysis, and integration of a certain stage of the research investigation of a study to gain an improved understanding of the problem (Ivankova et al., 2005; Tashakkori & Teddie, 2003).

Specifically, this study employed the Sequential Explanatory Design. This research design combines qualitative and quantitative methods using various data-gathering instruments to answer a research question and reduce biases from studies applying only one method (Wipulanusat et al., 2020; Creswell, 2013).

The participants were the officially enrolled college students of specific degree programs at a university in Bacolod City for the first semester of the Academic Year 2021-2022. This study used the stratified random sampling method to choose the research study participants. Stratified random sampling is when a

Table 1
Demographic Profile of the Participants

Variables	n	%
Sex		
Male	67	28.5
Female	168	71.5
Degree Program		
B.S. Psychology	110	46.8
B.S Social Work	57	24.3
B.S. Agriculture	51	21.7
BS MassCom/BA Communication	17	7.2
Year Level		
First Year	94	40.0
Second Year	41	17.4
Third Year	51	21.7
Fourth Year	49	20.9
As a whole	235	100.0

particular population is divided into separate "strata." Individuals from each group are selected randomly to create a per-stratum sample and are then combined with the stratified random sample (Nguyen et al., 2020).

On the other hand, the participants for the qualitative data of this study were twelve (12) individuals taken from the sample population using purposive sampling. It is deliberately choosing a participant based on their qualities (Etikan et al., 2016). Moreover, the inclusion criteria for the selection of qualitative interview participants were as follows: (1) a college student who is officially enrolled in a university for the 1st semester of the A.Y. 2021-2022 and (2) must be a resident in Negros Occidental.

The research instrument used in this study was composed of four (4) parts. The first (1) section included the demographic characteristics of the participants. At the same time, the second (2) and third (3) sections consisted of standardized instruments that are objective by nature and designed to measure emotional loneliness and resilience among college students independently. The fourth (4) part contained the guide questions for the semi-structured interview to collect qualitative data about their lived experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Since the study used a mixed-method

approach, it was divided into two phases. The quantitative phase of the study took place first. Data was gathered and analyzed as soon as the participants were done with the surveys.

To measure emotional loneliness experienced by college students during the COVID-19 pandemic, the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) developed by Russell (1996) was utilized. A reliability test was conducted with thirty (30) local respondents not included in the final roster of participants to answer the instrument. The reliability index of the instrument was 0.852.

However, the Brief Resilience Scale was utilized to measure resilience as the ability to bounce back from stressful events among college students (Smith et al., 2008). Previously, research has shown the unfailing reliability of the instrument, with a score of 0.91 (Labrague & De Los Santos, 2020). In addition, in the new study, the reliability index of the instrument was 0.87.

After the statistical treatment of the quantitative data, the study's second phase, which is the qualitative method, was conducted. In this study, semi-structured interviews were used to explore the participants' experiences related to the study. The semi-structured interviews were used to create a flexible interview protocol and were supplemented

with probing questions.

For data gathering, a letter was first sent to the Dean of the chosen college asking for approval to conduct the study. After obtaining the Dean's approval, letters were sent to the Department Heads informing them and asking for their permission to conduct the study on their respective students.

After permission from the Dean was obtained, the students were given an orientation that they had been selected as part of the sample population. After that, the survey was administered via Google Forms. After the participants answered the questionnaires, the data was gathered, classified, tabulated, and summated for statistical treatment.

Twelve (12) participants from the sample population were then chosen for the semi-structured interviews on their experiences during the time of a global pandemic.

The researchers contacted and discussed the schedules of the selected participants for the interview. Informed consent was obtained, and a briefing on the current study was given to them. Due to the ongoing pandemic, all interviews were conducted through the use of online video conferencing applications such as Zoom Video Conferencing or Microsoft Teams, with the convenience of the participants in mind. All the data was transcribed and analyzed using the iterative process to identify themes that may or may not support the gathered quantitative data. Saturation of the qualitative data was also observed. After observing the six steps of thematic analysis, the quantitative and qualitative results were synthesized and triangulated. Furthermore, the ethical issues of privacy, confidentiality, and informed consent were observed to protect the participants' identities and information.

The data that was gathered from the participants was analyzed accordingly. For descriptive analysis, the mean interpreted and standard deviation were used for the college students' emotional loneliness and

resilience. For the comparative analysis, the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and the Independent Samples T-test were utilized. For the correlational analysis, the researchers employed the Pearson-Product Moment Correlation.

The qualitative analysis involved the following steps: Braun and Clarke (2006).

Step 1: Familiarizing the data- these required researchers to be thoroughly drenched and effectively occupied with the information by first interpreting the associations and then perusing (and once again perusing) the records and paying attention to the recorded videos.

Step 2: Generating initial codes – when acquainted with the data, researchers began distinguishing initial codes, which are the highlights of the information that seem intriguing and significant.

Step 3: Searching for themes – it alludes to the beginning of the interpretive investigation of the gathered codes, and the essential information extricated was arranged within the recognized themes.

Step 4: Reviewing themes- a more profound survey done by the researchers where the information within the theme ought to adhere together genuinely, while there ought to be a clear and recognizable differentiation between each theme.

Step 5: Defining and naming themes - the significant themes related to the study were then analyzed and defined together with the participants' statements. A theme summary table was also constructed, which included the final themes, the responses, and the pseudonyms of each participant.

Step 6: Producing the report - the theme summary served as the result of qualitative data that enabled the researchers to analyze, compare, and relate the findings to the quantitative data to construct reliable and valid conclusions for the study.

Table 2
Degree of Emotional Loneliness of College Students

Variables	M	SD	Interpretation
Sex			
Male	2.29	0.43	Moderately Low
Female	2.29	0.43	Moderately Low
Degree Program			
B.S. Psychology	2.31	0.42	Moderately Low
B.S Social Work	2.30	0.44	Moderately Low
B.S. Agriculture	2.26	0.42	Moderately Low
B.S. MassCom/B.A. Com	2.21	0.47	Moderately Low
Year Level			
First Year	2.33	0.39	Moderately Low
Second Year	2.31	0.39	Moderately Low
Third Year	2.31	0.52	Moderately Low
Fourth Year	2.16	0.41	Moderately Low
As a whole	2.29	0.43	Moderately Low

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on the study conducted, the following are the quantitative results: The data showed that the degree of emotional loneliness ($M=2.29$, $SD=0.43$) is moderately low when taken as a whole. When grouped according to sex, males and females have moderately lower emotional loneliness. All degree programs have had moderately low results when grouped according to degree programs. Moreover, the same results can be seen as a moderately low level of emotional loneliness in the participants' year levels.

Furthermore, no gap between the two sexes could have affected their degree of emotional loneliness, considering that more female participants answered than male participants.

Moreover, the result confirms the discoveries of Bu et al. (2020), who revealed that students with enough emotional provision experienced a lessened level of emotional loneliness in contrast with those who saw less emotional help. Other than the positivity it

provides against loneliness through the COVID-19 pandemic, preceding studies by Xiao et al., 2020 Labrague & De Los Santos, 2020 perceived the significance of a sufficient emotionally supportive network in upgrading emotional state, mental prosperity, and psychological well-being among people.

An independent sample t-test was used to determine the significant difference in the degree of emotional loneliness when grouped according to sex. There was no difference in the degree of emotional loneliness when grouped according to sex [$t(233)=0.003$, $p=0.998$]. Correspondingly, analysis of variance was used to determine the significant difference in the degree of emotional loneliness when grouped according to a degree program and year level. There was no significant difference in the degree of emotional loneliness of students when grouped according to degree program [$F(3, 231)=0.379$, $p=0.769$] and year level [$F(3, 231)=1.925$, $p=0.126$].

Table 3
Difference in the Degree of Emotional Loneliness of College Students according to Sex

Variable	Sex		t	df	p
	Male	Female			
Loneliness	2.29 (0.43)	2.29 (0.43)	0.003	233	0.998

Note: the difference in the means is significant when $p \leq 0.05$

Table 4

Difference in the Degree of Emotional Loneliness of College Students according to Degree Program and Year Level

Variable	Degree Program				F	df	p
	BS Psychology	BS Social Work	BS Agriculture	BS MassCom/BA Com			
Loneliness	2.31 (0.42)	2.30 (0.44)	2.26 (0.42)	2.21 (0.47)	0.379	3, 231	0.769
	Year Level				F	df	p
	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year			
	2.33 (0.39)	2.31 (0.39)	2.31 (0.52)	2.16 (0.41)	1.925	3, 231	0.126

Note: the difference in the means is significant when $p \leq 0.05$

On the contrary, it was stated in the study by Dagne and Dagne (2019) that aside from second-year and above students, first-year students had a 2.47 chance of loneliness. Moreover, it suggested that the year level of the students was associated with loneliness. Hence, asserting that the brief length and incapacity to remain in the university to adjust to the new surroundings triggers the progression of loneliness among first-year students.

On the other hand, the data results showed that the level of resilience among students ($M=3.10$, $SD=0.52$) is normal when taken as a whole. When grouped

according to sex, male and female participants have a normal level of resilience. When grouped according to degree programs, only B.S. Agriculture ($M= 2.93$, $SD= 0.41$) was seen to have a low level of resilience, in contrast to the normal resilience level of the other three programs. Lastly, when grouped according to year level, the level of resilience among students is also normal.

Relating to Rutter's theory, an individual can manifest resilience in different aspects of life to varying degrees (Rutter, 2012b). The theory also emphasized that individual differences cause dissimilarities in the way

Table 5

Level of Resilience among College Students and Year Level

Variables	M	SD	Interpretation
Sex			
Male	3.20	0.49	Normal
Female	3.06	0.53	Normal
Degree Program			
B.S. Psychology	3.16	0.53	Normal
B.S. Social Work	3.07	0.54	Normal
B.S. Agriculture	2.93	0.41	Low
B.S. MassCom/B.A. Com	3.23	0.55	Normal
Year Level			
First Year	3.00	0.44	Normal
Second Year	3.05	0.51	Normal
Third Year	3.12	0.65	Normal
Fourth Year	3.30	0.47	Normal
As a whole	3.10	0.52	Normal

Table 6

Difference in the Level of Resilience among College Students according to Sex

Sex		t	df	P
Male	Female			
3.20 (0.49)	3.06 (0.53)	1.892	233	0.060

Note: the difference in the means is significant when $p \leq 0.05$

people respond to potential risks and protective factors, which relates to the data result because it displayed a difference in the level of resilience among college students from different degree programs. Although the college students from a specific degree program showed a low level of resilience, it is evident that more students are exposed to lower levels of risk, indicating a higher coping ability and resistance.

An independent sample t-test was used to determine the significant difference in resilience among college students. When grouped according to sex, there is no significant difference in the level of resilience [$t(233)=1.892$, $p=0.060$]. Sarmiento et al. (2021) recommended the very idea that concerning sex, both the male and female students showed comparative levels of control under tension in a tough spot. Thus, researchers proved that both genders are resilient because of the interplay of defensive variables in unlikely circumstances, as recognized by

different studies that characterize it as a cycle that tells notwithstanding difficulty.

Analysis of variance was used to determine the significant difference in the level of resilience when grouped according to a degree program and year level. There was a significant difference in the level of resilience when grouped according to degree program [$F(3, 231)=2.790$, $p=0.041$] and year level [$F(3, 231)=3.852$, $p=0.010$]. A post hoc test revealed that B.S. Agriculture students have significantly lower resilience than BS MassComm/B.A. Comm students. In addition, 1st and 2nd-year students have shown significantly lower resilience than 4th-year students.

The study by Napoli and Bonifas (2011) claimed that students are better able to regulate emotions and are more open to diverse perspectives if their degree program continuously teaches them to become mindful. The authors added that teaching them mindfulness can improve self-care and is the first step

Table 7

Difference in the Level of Resilience among College Students according to Degree Program and Year Level

Variable	Degree Program				F	df	p
	BS Psychology	BS Social Work	BS Agriculture	BS MassCom/ BA Com			
Resilience	3.16 (0.53)	3.07 (0.54)	2.93 (0.41)	3.23 (0.55)	2.790*	3,231	0.0441
	Year Level				F	df	p
	First Year	Second Year	Third Year	Fourth Year			
	3.00 (0.44)	3.05 (0.51)	3.12 (0.65)	3.30 (0.47)	3.852*	3,231	0.010

Note: the difference in the means is significant when $p \leq 0.05$

toward developing empathy. Moreover, concerning the academic year students are in, the study of Sarmiento et al. (2021) contrasts the above results, indicating that 4th year and 2nd-year students are the year levels that achieved the most extraordinary level of low resilience. At the same time, the most elevated level of high resilience was found among 1st and 3rd-year students.

Lastly, a Pearson product-moment correlation was used to determine the significant relationship between emotional loneliness and resilience among college students. There was a significant relationship between emotional loneliness and resilience [$r(233)=-0.258$, $p=0.000$] among college students. In their study, Jakobsen et al. (2020) mentioned that all aspects of resiliency were significantly associated with loneliness. As a result, higher levels of loneliness were associated with lower levels of resiliency, demonstrating that students who demonstrated a high level of resilience would, similarly, feel less lonely.

The quantitative data analysis results show that students had a moderately low level of emotional loneliness. During the semi-structured interviews conducted, the participants expressed that they had experienced feelings of loneliness to some bearable degree. The quantitative data analysis also shows that, overall, college students possessed normal levels of resilience during this pandemic. In the interviews, the participants conveyed that they have had experiences of resilience in facing their experiences and overcoming their struggles.

Based on the study conducted, the following themes were culled from the interview's transcriptions:

The first central theme is that the affective states faced during the pandemic are culled from the transcriptions with two subthemes related to it. The first is "Stress experienced brought on by the pandemic."

According to WHO (2020), the emergence of a pandemic causes stress at various levels of society. Many challenges were formed and confronted by students daily (August & Dapkewicz, 2021). To avert the spread of the pandemic, WHO (2020) recommends discontinuing events that allow mass gatherings. For this reason, traditional learning was put on hold, making way for the application of online learning as an alternative method of learning (Pragholapati, 2020).

The participants encountered notable struggles during the pandemic, which caused them to experience significant stress. The testimonies resemble what was discussed in the cited studies; there were periods when the participants experienced struggles that affected their well-being. These were the similar struggles that plagued the thoughts and days of the participants, especially during the onset of the pandemic, causing them to experience feelings of loneliness that they were able to overcome and that have made them resilient.

Kohls et al. (2021) expressed the same belief, signifying that college students were struck in their daily social life by lockdown measures, as they prevented the majority of social experiences. The authors further added that students' levels of loneliness and self-efficacy were impacted.

The other culled theme from this central theme

Table 8
Relationship Between Degree of Loneliness and Level of Resilience

Variable	R	df	p
Loneliness x Resilience	-0.258*	233	0.000

Note: *the Correlation is significant when $p \leq 0.05$

is «Feelings of loneliness because of the difficult situation.» Knowing that loneliness is a shared feeling present in all individuals, the participants evidently felt feelings of loneliness. They described what made them feel significant yet tolerable degrees of emotional loneliness. The participants deal with these problematic situations and feelings of loneliness, enabling them to be empowered and foster the ability to bounce back from these hardships. Several types of loneliness were felt during the outbreak of the pandemic due to the restrictions implemented by the government (Tiwari, 2013). The author claimed that it is foreseen, especially with students, to feel guilty and lonely due to financial incapability and poor coping strategies in situations resulting in isolation.

The second central theme obtained from the participants' transcriptions is "Empowering Resilience in Times of Crisis." One of the culled themes regarding resilience is "Relievers for loneliness and stress."

As for the study by August and Dapkewicz (2021), they claimed that when an individual is continuously confronting stressors, for example, the global problems carried by the pandemic, discovering approaches to adapt to this crisis successfully is a vital worry for most. The authors also added that coping was believed to focus on directing trouble and overseeing issues. Moreover, reported utilization of the web, media, and different social networks like messenger, video, and music streaming is said to have increased during the pandemic by students (Kohls et al., 2021).

The participants devised ways and methods to invest their energy and time to help them process and face their respective stressors and struggles. An essential stage in nurturing resilience is facing and letting go of the stressors and causes of struggles in an individual's life. It is what the participants did that allowed them to move forward. The participants found solace and hope through various activities and realizations. Being invested in their respective coping

strategies helped them process their feelings, leading them to become stronger and improve their well-being.

Consultation, seeking information, and spiritual support are the most commonly used coping styles during the lockdown period. These coping strategies were classified as problem-focused behaviors because they target the source of stress (Labrague et al., 2020).

The next subtheme extracted is the "Aid of the degree program in developing resilience." Considering that psychology students' preparation is centered around proficient execution and investigation, various theories of thought in their degree program assisted them in fostering their own adapting systems and resiliency (De Almeida Santos & Soares, 2018). Improving the ability through certain activities for agriculture students has undoubtedly contributed to building their adapting capacity and decreasing their adverse reactions to the remarkable circumstances brought about by the pandemic (Thammi-Raju et al., 2020). A high level of competence and effectiveness in handling specific difficulties of this pandemic was primarily seen in Mass Communication students because of their continuous exposure to media presentation and advertising principles (Malaluan et al., 2020).

The participants have been able to recognize the assistance of their degree programs during this time. Applications of the lessons learned enable them to thrive, channel their negative feelings and stressors, and turn them into productive outcomes. Focusing on outputs, relating lessons to real-life applications, and managing themselves to be better is how their degree programs have helped them shape their level of resilience.

The study of Hussong et al. (2021) emphasized the inclusive response to and recovery from the difficulties that need a consolidated global approach. This approach foresees the impact of recovery and response measures for adolescents worldwide and

empowers adolescents in shaping their intervention responses to impending crises.

“Sources of support and motivation” is also an essential theme in the study. According to Zysberg and Zisberg (2020), social support serves as a mediator between worries felt by individuals, diminishing any domains that may indicate stress and anxiety. It is essential to recognize the significant individuals and groups and their contributions to growth. It is vital to have support and motivation to anchor oneself against overwhelming feelings and pressures. The participants named the essential people in their lives.

Talking and sharing their experiences and emotions with their friends was beneficial because they could vent their frustrations. Lockdown periods have also allowed them to be present and interact with their families. They were developing stronger relations and connections with them as their anchors in life. Recognizing the power of God and the importance of having a solid faith to overcome problems and become stronger individuals is a significant source of support and motivation from which the participants draw strength.

Social support has been established to guard individuals against the harmful outcomes of their psychological and physical well-being (Szkody et al., 2020). Having people and groups to support and motivate a person has proven to help boost their morale and nurture seeds of resilience to bloom and help them face struggles.

“Life lessons during the pandemic” is the theme for discussing what the participants have learned from their personal experiences during the pandemic. The rapid escalation of the COVID-19 pandemic created an impression on the student’s emotional responses and coping strategies (Pragholapati, A., 2020). Labrague et al. (2021) support the result of the study by stating that resiliency with the use of coping behaviors is significantly correlated with emotional loneliness. The participants expressed the lessons they learned

during the pandemic and what they took from these experiences and applied to their lives today.

The experiences and the overwhelming show of support and empowerment have led the participants to cherish the lessons they have acquired while experiencing the pandemic. This silver lining has helped them improve as individuals, making them more vital to face future challenges. The lessons gained from their experiences have prepared them to be more resilient people who possess positive life views.

According to a research study by Khan et al. (2020), mental health forms the foundation of a healthy lifestyle. Mental health plays a significant role in every aspect of everyone’s life. It influences the way people think, feel, perceive, and act. It determines how individuals handle stress, make choices, and relate to others.

“Adapting a positive mindset in dealing with tough situations” is the last theme discussed by the participants in their personal experiences. Gill & Orgad (2018) claimed that having a positive mindset enables individuals to become resilient, bounce back from fiction, and at times make those negative encounters reconsidered optimistically, which is very applicable to the current situation that the whole world, as well as the participants, are in.

Achor (2012) stated that individuals adapting to a positive mindset can deliver better performance, especially in tough circumstances. It agrees with the participants’ answers, in which it is evident that they have accepted a positive mindset to assist them in adapting and performing better in this new normal. After having gone through difficult situations, experiences of emotional loneliness, and detachment, the participants are now more resilient in facing the challenges in front of them. They were making them better individuals, aware of their capabilities and strengths.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the overall findings of the degree of emotional loneliness, researchers have observed that both male and female college students from different year levels and degree programs are less likely to feel lonely during the early months when the COVID-19 pandemic started. Some participants have commonly shared their experiences during the pandemic that limitations such as social distancing, home repression, quarantine, shutting down of schools, and personal and institutional activities have contributed significantly to their feelings of loneliness. College students were affected the most as they tried to cope with the online class setup, and it caused them to feel pressure. Others would say that they felt anxious. The researchers found out that although most college students have been emotionally affected by the pandemic, it is also evident in the results of the study that the longer students experience the effects of changes on their lives, whether they are beneficial or not, the adaptation and the development of resilience occur. Moreover, when grouped according to the same variables, there were no significant differences in the degree of emotional loneliness among college students.

Furthermore, at the level of resilience, there appeared to be no significant differences when grouped according to sex. However, in terms of the degree program, college students in a specific degree program appeared to have a low level of resilience compared to the other degree programs. On the other hand, when grouped according to year level, the 1st year and 2nd year college students have a lower level of resilience than the 4th year students. In addition, the researchers concluded that there is a significant relationship between emotional loneliness and resilience among college students. This conclusion is immensely evident in the interpreted quantitative and qualitative data, which indicates that students

who display a high level of resilience are most likely to feel less lonely.

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are formulated. Teachers may use the study's findings as they may be able to look for alternatives to minimize students' workloads to help them reduce the stress or anxiety that may affect their emotional well-being. Additionally, teachers may consider generating more effective learning styles to make students feel even more interested and motivated while studying at home.

Students can understand the importance of awareness of their emotional state in changing their outlook on life. It is also an opportunity for them to acquire lessons and realizations based on their own experiences during the pandemic for personal growth and overall well-being. This study could allow students to relate themselves to the respondents' statements and give them ideas on the different coping strategies that they can also apply personally.

Parents' willingness to improve or adjust their parenting styles is also necessary to consider themselves more observant and cautious in looking after their children's emotional needs.

The guidance counselors may utilize the findings of this study as the basis for addressing the students' mental health concerns. Conducting online activities such as webinars, dynamic group activities, and online group sessions can significantly impart knowledge and different approaches for students to manage emotions.

To further develop the studies in the field of research, the findings and conclusions formulated may serve as a guide to the studies of future researchers. An in-depth understanding is necessary for this specific topic as the pandemic continually affects the lives of individuals, especially in the emotional aspect. Therefore, conducting more research studies related to the researchers' findings is highly recommended.

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