

The Plight of Children in an Evacuation Camp: Exploring Their Biopsychosocial Well-Being

Karla Marie H. Tagaro¹, Helen L. Querubin, DSD²

¹*Master in Social Work, Professional Schools, University of Mindanao, Philippines*

²*Professor, Professional Schools, University of Mindanao, Philippines*

ABSTRACT: This study investigated the biopsychosocial well-being of children in an evacuation camp in Makilala, North Cotabato, focusing on those displaced by the 2019 earthquake in the Philippines. Specifically, it explored the experiences, coping mechanisms, and insights of children residing in an evacuation camp, shedding light on their plight. Employing a qualitative phenomenological approach, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews with twelve children aged 10-12 with the aid of a semi-structured interview guide. The data collected was manually transcribed and analyzed through thematic interpretation. The findings revealed that children experienced emotional and psychological impact, significant social and interpersonal relationships, and poor living conditions. However, they managed the challenges and difficulties through social coping mechanism, play and recreational activities, and parental and caregiver support. Additionally, their insights reflected strengthened faith and fervent prayers, dream and aim for a better future, and a commitment to personal growth and becoming a good child. These findings highlighted the crucial role of social workers in providing comprehensive support and advocated for collaborative efforts among local government units, government agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders to address the multifaceted needs of long-term displaced children. The study underscored the necessity for policies that prioritize child protection and well-being in evacuation camps, ensuring children receive the necessary resources and support for a stable and healthy upbringing during prolonged displacement.

KEYWORDS: *biopsychosocial, evacuation camp, phenomenology, plight of children, well-being*

I. INTRODUCTION

Natural disasters occur daily around the world, frequently placing individuals, particularly children, in vulnerable situations. Earthquakes are significant natural disasters that result in considerable damage to infrastructure and disrupt the lives of millions globally (Balbay et al., 2024). This has resulted in the displacement of the population and has a significant impact on the physical, psychological and social aspect of children worldwide. The Philippines, due to its location in the Pacific Ring of Fire, is especially susceptible to seismic activity. The country experiences 100 to 150 earthquakes annually, as estimated by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS), and faces a severe crisis with the highest global number of child displacements due to natural disasters, accounting for 9.7 million cases—22.5% of the global population of displaced children (Baclig, 2024; UNICEF, 2023).

The adverse effects of displacement on children are significantly more pronounced compared to adults. Children are particularly susceptible to the physical, emotional, and psychological toll of disasters, which can disrupt their developmental needs and expose them to further vulnerabilities. Separation from parents, destruction of schools and healthcare facilities, and exposure to exploitation further compound their challenges (Ozturk et al., 2023). Studies by Codreanu et al. (2014), Dyregrov et al. (2018), Kousky (2016), and Masten and Narayan (2012) emphasize the impacts of displacement, underscoring the enduring effects on children's biopsychosocial well-being.

Evacuation sites assure people's safety and security during an earthquake. In the Philippines, evacuation sites are categorized into camps and centers, providing immediate safety and security during emergencies. Evacuation camps serve as temporary accommodations for displaced individuals. These may consist of planned facilities, such as bunkhouses and tent cities, or self-settled camps that are established spontaneously by affected communities. An evacuation center is a designated facility, often operated by government or private entities, utilized as a shelter during emergencies. These centers frequently employ permanent facilities such as gymnasiums, barangay halls, churches, or, as a final option, schools (National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, 2022). Laws such as Republic Act 10821, or the Children's Emergency Relief and

Protection Act, ensures the safety and well-being of children in evacuation centers, mandating the provision of child-friendly spaces (CFS). These spaces offer psychosocial counseling, educational activities, art therapy, and play sessions, which have been shown to reduce stress and foster resilience in children (De Vera-Ruiz, 2019). Although efforts to provide psychosocial support services exist, gaps remain, particularly in regions such as Davao del Sur and Cotabato province, which have experienced significant earthquake activity since the year 2019.

The theoretical foundations of this study include Resilience Theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. Resilience Theory highlights the ability of individuals, particularly children, to adapt and recover from adversities through dynamic processes. This strength-based approach helps identify factors supporting the biological, psychological, and social resilience of children in evacuation camps (Li, 2024). Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory provides a holistic framework for understanding children's development by analyzing the interplay between individual and environmental factors. The theory's five systems—microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem—offer insights into how immediate environments, social systems, cultural norms, and life transitions collectively impact the well-being of displaced children (Guy-Evans, 2024).

Despite the identified vulnerabilities of children and the frequent displacement caused by natural disasters in the Philippines, limited research has focused on examining the biopsychosocial factors influencing their well-being in evacuation settings. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring their experiences, coping mechanisms, and insights of children in evacuation camp and shed light on their plight.

The global significance of this study lies in its potential to enhance the biopsychosocial well-being of displaced children, contribute to building resilient and sustainable communities, and support global climate adaptation efforts. By addressing SDGs 3, 11, and 13, the study can inform policies and interventions to promote better developmental outcomes, sustainable communities, and improved disaster response mechanisms. The findings aim to shape international humanitarian efforts, advocate for global mental health, and provide a framework for addressing the needs of vulnerable populations due to prolonged displacement.

The primary beneficiaries of this study are the children themselves. This study can give them an opportunity to express their feelings, emotions, and experiences. This act of sharing allows them to express their concerns and viewpoints and can help children feel heard, understood, and valued, thereby enhancing their sense of self-worth and dignity. It provides them with a sense of control over their lives even under difficult circumstances. Above all, this study can instill hope in children by emphasizing the importance of their well-being and demonstrating efforts to comprehend and address their difficulties. This study can serve as a valuable resource for parents as well, offering guidance on how to ensure their children have a comfortable experience while staying in the evacuation camp. Additionally, it provides strategies for parents to support their children during challenging circumstances.

Moreover, this study can aid government agencies and other stakeholders. Through this study, MSWDO, MLGU, Local Organizations, Non-Government Organizations, Government Agencies, and Other Stakeholders will fully understand their roles and responsibilities to optimize their effectiveness, provide guidance, and facilitate favorable results for the biopsychological well-being of children residing in evacuation camps. This study provides them with valuable knowledge and tools that enable them to make a lasting impact on the lives of vulnerable children.

The results of the study could also provide valuable insights for aspiring or practicing social workers. It serves as a helpful reference for community research related to the challenges faced by children due to long-term displacement.

Lastly, the result of the study would be essential for the university, particularly for future student researchers to provide a future consumption of review of related literature and further understanding and analysis relative to the study of the plight of children in an evacuation camp. This study has the potential to serve as a catalyst for ongoing research, innovation, and improvement in understanding and addressing the biopsychological well-being of children in evacuation camps.

II. METHOD

This section of the study presents the discussion pertaining to the study participants, materials and instruments, and design and procedure employed in the conduct of the study.

2.1 Study Participants

The study comprised a total of twelve (12) children. In particular, the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with children from the biggest evacuation camp for earthquake-displaced people from Barangay Luayon of the Municipality of Makilala which is the Flortam Camp. With these numbers of respondents, the researcher gathered data that answered the question concerning the plight of children in the evacuation camp exploring their biopsychosocial well-being. Bernard (2013) suggested that there is increasing support for the idea that having 10-20 key research participants is sufficient to uncover and comprehend the major issues in any study

involving lived experience. Morse (1994) also recommended a minimum of six participants for phenomenological studies.

The researcher utilized a purposive sampling approach to select study participants. According to Bernard (2002), the purposive sampling technique, also known as judgment sampling, involves intentionally selecting participants based on specific qualities they possess. In essence, the researcher takes on the responsibility of determining the necessary information and actively seeks out individuals who possess the knowledge or experience to provide it, ensuring their willingness to share it.

For the inclusion criteria for the participants of the study, using the purposive sampling technique, the 12 study participants were affected by the 2019 powerful earthquake, aged ten (10) to twelve (12) years old, male or female, currently studying and living in an evacuation camp in the town of Makilala since the year 2019, and belonging to low-income families. For exclusion criteria, the study should not include those who are out-of-school children. Also, children who had not stayed in the evacuation camp since 2019, as assessed by the stated criteria, should be excluded. Participants may, however, voluntarily withdraw from the study at any time if they are uncomfortable with or believe the questions are inappropriate, including after the interview has concluded. The participants are not otherwise required to provide a reason for withdrawal.

2.2 Materials and Instruments

The researcher prepared an interview guide to conduct extensive and in-depth interviews (IDI) with the 12 selected children. The instrument utilized in the study was an interview guide questions. The researcher prepared the interview guide questions and had them checked by her research adviser, who is a faculty member at UM Professional Schools and a co-author of the study at the same time. Subsequently, panel experts also reviewed and validated the interview guide based on the three criteria namely: ethics, artistry and rigor. The researcher utilized a semi-structured interview guide with three main questions, each accompanied by 1–2 probing questions. This approach enabled the collection of reliable and comparable data while allowing for follow-up questions to explore participants' responses in greater depth.

2.3 Design and Procedure

This research is a phenomenological inquiry that made use of a qualitative study design to describe the plight of children in terms of their biopsychosocial well-being in an evacuation camp in the municipality of Makilala. It focuses on the study of an individual's lived experiences (Van Manen and Van Manen, 2014; Neubauer et. al, 2019). Furthermore, Yüksel and Yıldırım (2015) accentuated that the primary objectives of phenomenological research are to explore the lived experiences and emotions of individuals and to generate detailed descriptions of the phenomenon being studied. This can be seen as a way of structuring and organizing experiences and consciousness. The purpose of this design is to collect data and information relevant to the study. Thus, it is phenomenological to understand and describe the actual experiences of displaced children while living in their evacuation camp, exploring their biopsychosocial well-being.

In qualitative research, the researcher's job is to make an effort to understand the participants' thoughts and feelings. As it entails asking people to discuss topics that may be extremely personal to them, this is not a simple task. In some cases, the participant's memories of the experiences being studied are current, while in other cases, it may be challenging to revisit the past. The researcher's first duty is to protect participants and their data, regardless of how the data are being gathered. Prior to the start of the research, a relevant research ethical review board must approve the mechanisms for such safeguarding and make them explicit to participants. Before starting a qualitative research project, researchers and practitioners who are new to the field should consult an experienced qualitative researcher (Sutton & Austin, 2015).

The researcher coordinated with the University of Mindanao Ethics Review Committee (UMERC) and sought their approval to conduct the study. After receiving approval, the researcher sent out a preliminary letter that provided an explanation of the study's significance and goals to the Local Government Unit (LGU) by contacting the Municipal Social Welfare Officer of the municipality of Makilala. The purpose was to request authorization to conduct the study in the Flortam Evacuation Camp. Then, the researcher proceeded to the Barangay Local Government Unit (BLGU) and provided a letter of request to the Barangay Chairman in Barangay Luayon, asking permission to carry out the study. Then, the researcher was given access to talk about the objectives of the study after getting the required ethical approvals and authorization.

The researcher employed purposive sampling by initially requesting a list of children residing in the evacuation camp for earthquake-displaced families. This process involved close coordination with the Barangay and the Evacuation Camp Manager to identify participants who met the specific inclusion criteria: children aged 10 to 12 years who were affected by 2019 earthquake, male or female, currently studying, living in the evacuation camp in Makilala since 2019, and from low-income families. Based on this process, a total of 12 participants were carefully shortlisted. The collaboration with the Evacuation Camp Manager also ensured that the selected children were willing and prepared to volunteer for the study, aligning with the research objectives.

With the Barangay Chairman's consent, 12 parents and/or guardians of the study participants received letters outlining the objectives of the study. Also, the parents of the participants were provided with comprehensive information regarding the research. The parents/guardians were given assent forms, which they signed to indicate their approval for their children to participate in the study. They were assured that their information would be treated with the highest level of confidentiality in accordance with ethical considerations. The 12 selected school children were provided with comprehensive information about the research and were asked about their willingness to participate. The researcher emphasized that participants' involvement was voluntary and would be kept confidential and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any point without facing any negative consequences.

After the parental/guardian consent forms were delivered to and signed by the parents affirming their consent for their children to participate in the study, an interview was carefully planned the schedule using semi-structured face-to-face interviews. The interviews with the children took place on weekends. The interviews began with creating a safe and supportive environment, using a friendly tone, and sitting at the children's level. The researcher asked simple and friendly questions to build rapport with the study participants. Questions like "unsa imuhang pangalan?" (What is your name?) and "pila na imuhang edad?" (How old are you?), to mention a few, were used to make the children feel comfortable and ease them into the conversation. The researcher also provided light snacks to create a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere. Once rapport was established, the researcher asked a series of open-ended questions that were relevant to the study being conducted. These questions allowed the children to share their experiences in a way that encouraged them to engage in deeper storytelling. A token of appreciation for their participation, incentives in the form of school supplies were provided after the interview.

In addition, the researcher gathered comprehensive data on the issue by utilizing a digital audio or video recorder and taking field notes with the participant's consent. This was done to document any relevant activities and ensure that the interviewee felt comfortable during the process. Typically, each participant underwent interviews lasting 45-90 minutes. Additionally, the in-depth interview took place in their Purok.

Once the data were collected, the audio recordings were securely stored after each interview. After the recording, the audio files will be added to a password-protected archival folder (.zip) and uploaded to my personal OneDrive account, which I have access to only. This way, the files will be protected by two different passwords and encrypted while stored in the archival folder. Also, they were appropriately labeled with special participant identifiers to maintain privacy. The verbatim transcription of the recordings preserved all the details of the conversation. To ensure the accuracy of the data, a comprehensive transcription process was conducted, and the data was subsequently analyzed using thematic analysis. The thematic analysis involves the process of identifying significant categories or themes within a given set of data (Fulcher, 2010).

According to Howitt and Cramer (2010), the researcher's role in thematic analysis is to identify a small number of themes that accurately represent the textual data. A theme refers to a group of connected categories that share similar meanings. It typically emerges through the inductive analytic process, which is a characteristic of the qualitative paradigm. When examining a text, the researcher seeks to identify recurring themes that can be abstracted from the content. Familiarizing oneself with the data is crucial for conducting thematic analysis. After becoming familiar with the subject matter, the researcher proceeded to code the data. The report's results section presents the collated and reported themes. The study identified various themes, which were thoroughly analyzed and reported. Additionally, conclusions and recommendations were provided based on the findings.

Meanwhile, in this study, the researcher applied the main principle of "truthfulness" in order to achieve the objectives of conducting qualitative research. Creating a reliable and effective research output requires trustworthiness. Trustworthiness was demonstrated by employing four elements, which include credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

To ensure the credibility of the study, qualitative researchers have the option to utilize data triangulation, method triangulation, or investigator triangulation, as suggested by Denzin (2015). Researchers can establish the validity of their findings by employing one or more triangulation techniques. In this study, the researcher engaged a group of 12 credible study participants, and their results were validated by experts.

In terms of transferability, the researcher's task is to assist readers in comprehending whether the interpretations and insights of the study can be applied to comparable situations (Riazi et al., 2023). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), qualitative research requires adequate details and evidence to assess the transferability of results to other conditions. A comprehensive description of the participants' lived experiences provides readers with a clear understanding of the study being examined, enabling them to compare the phenomenon with similar occurrences they have observed in their own contexts.

Meanwhile, dependability pertains to the consistency of data across time and study conditions (Polit & Beck, 2014). In this study, the researcher ensured careful documentation of the procedures for generating and interpreting the results. In some ways, it is synonymous with the second definition of reliability, which is to provide comprehensive and detailed documentation and explanations of coding and data analysis. This study was also reviewed by professional peers, who examined and responded to the collected data and conducted their own

independent analysis. The researcher considered peer scrutiny to have been instrumental in establishing trust among readers.

Finally, to establish the confirmability of the study depends on how objectively the researcher reported the results. Reflexivity strategies allow researchers to disclose and assess their views, judgments, and behaviors as researchers and how they may have affected the study process and results (Olmos-Vega et al., 2022, as cited in Riazi et al., 2023). This study ensures that the findings reflect the experiences and perspectives of the study participants, rather than those of the researcher.

The researcher ensured strict adherence to ethical principles and guidelines throughout the study, as mandated by the UM Ethics Review Committee and other relevant regulations. Ethical considerations included securing informed consent from participants and their guardians, ensuring data confidentiality, managing participants sensitively, and minimizing potential harm during data collection and analysis. Semi-structured interviews with 12 study participants at Flortam Evacuation Camp in Makilala Municipality were conducted respectfully, with participants assured anonymity using pseudonyms. As a token of gratitude, school supplies were provided to participants during data collection. The study complied with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (RA 10173), with all data securely stored for five years in password-protected files and secured cabinets. Recognizing the participants' vulnerability, the researcher conducted pre- and post-participation sessions to provide adequate study information and ensure participants' emotional well-being, offering access to professional support if needed. Participation was voluntary, with no financial burden placed on participants, and parental consent was obtained for children, respecting their rights in accordance with ethical research practices (Kennan, 2015). Furthermore, the study complied with RA 9262, protecting women and children from violence and exploitation. Measures were taken to avoid any misconduct, misrepresentation, or data falsification, with findings rooted in empirical evidence and analyzed with integrity. Tools like Grammarly and Turnitin ensured clarity and originality, and all sources and theories were accurately credited. To uphold research ethics, all procedures were conducted in accordance with the protocols set by the UM Ethics Review Committee. A Certificate of Approval, with UMERC Protocol No. UMERC-2024-114 was secured prior to data collection, confirming compliance with the required ethical standards.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the results of the data analysis conducted with reference to study objectives. First are the experiences of children in the evacuation camp affecting their biopsychosocial well-being in the evacuation camp, second is the coping mechanisms of the children toward their experiences, and third, the insights of these children on their experiences in the evacuation camp. Every research question has three themes based on the result of the thematic analysis. In terms of shared experiences of children affecting their biopsychosocial well-being in the evacuation camp, the themes that flourished were: emotional and psychological impact; social and interpersonal relationships; and poor living conditions. In terms of the coping mechanisms of children, the themes are social coping mechanism; play and recreational activities; and parental and caregiver support. Lastly, for the insights are strengthened faith and fervent prayers; dream and aim for a better future; and grow as a good child.

3.1 Experiences of Children Affecting Their Biopsychosocial Well-Being in the Evacuation Camp

3.1.1 Emotional and Psychological Impact

The results of the study revealed that children experienced a significant emotional and psychological impact in the Flortam evacuation camp. This result was prominently reflected in the participants' responses, as they shared how was their life as displaced children in evacuation camp following the devastating earthquake in 2019. The responses serve as a clear manifestation of participant's varied experiences living in the evacuation camp for a prolonged duration that affects their biopsychosocial well-being.

One participant, Ken (pseudonym), who has been living in Flortam Camp for nearly five years, shared that since the 2019 earthquake, he continues to experience fear and anxiety whenever there are quick or minor tremors in the area. The possibility of a strong earthquake recurring adds to his worries, resulting in heightened fear and anxiety. Despite knowing that they are now safe in the Flortam evacuation camp, Ken struggles to shake off thoughts of the worst-case scenario. The impact of the powerful earthquake and their subsequent life in the evacuation camp has significantly affected him. This aligns with Danese et al., (2020), who noted that childhood exposure to adversity can lead to various behavioral and emotional challenges, including the emergence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a major concern highlighted by Lewis et al., (2019).

In Jak's (pseudonym) case, he expressed that they have witnessed neighbors frequently fighting or bickering, which has been disturbing, particularly when children and adults are involved in quarrels. The situation worsens when mothers are part of the arguments, as children may either witness or become directly involved in these conflicts, heightening their emotional distress. Research consistently shows that high levels of parental conflict can negatively affect various aspects of children's lives, including their emotional, psychological, social, and physical well-being (Soni & Parmar, 2024). Jak also mentioned instances where neighbors almost resorted to

physical violence, often involving machetes when intoxicated and angry. On one occasion, he was forced to hide in their tent, his heart pounding with fear as he heard shouts and threats echoing through the camp. He feared that someone might get seriously hurt. The constant threat of violence made him feel unsafe, highlighting the immediate and real dangers to children's safety and well-being in the evacuation camp. Lalor (2013) emphasized that when violence is a risk in the environment, it can have a severely detrimental impact on children.

Based on the results of the study, there is an exposure to frequent quarrels and conflicts which leave children feeling afraid, anxious and uncertain. The chronic instability and uncertainty in the evacuation camp have a profound emotional and psychological impact, making them worry about how long they will have to remain in such conditions.

3.1.2 Social and Interpersonal Relationships

The social and interpersonal relationships among children in the Flortam evacuation camp are profoundly shaped by their shared experiences of displacement and uncertainty. Despite the challenges they face, children demonstrate a remarkable ability to form and maintain meaningful relationships that help alleviate stress and foster a sense of belonging within the camp. Research by Doom et al., (2017), as cited in Cuncic (2024), suggests that children who spend time with friends during stressful situations show lower levels of cortisol, a hormone linked to the stress response. Furthermore, children who talk with a good friend after a negative experience tend to return to a state of relaxation more quickly than those who do not engage in such conversations.

Based on the study's findings, Rena (pseudonym), fondly recalled the excitement and joy that filled the atmosphere during Christmas, especially as children. One of the highlights of the holiday season for her was playing various parlor games. While simple, these games were a source of great fun and helped bring them closer together. In addition to the games, the act of exchanging gifts added even more joy to their Christmas celebrations. Rena expressed that the happiness of both receiving and giving gifts made the holiday season especially meaningful for them. The laughter and enjoyment shared during this time have become some of her most cherished childhood memories. Christmas, she reflected, is a time for creating lasting memories, establishing traditions, exchanging gifts, and experiencing joy (Murphy, 2022).

Meanwhile, Abe excitedly shared how the presence of many children in the Flortam evacuation camp creates a lively and dynamic environment that encourages fun and the development of peer relationships. She finds happiness and comfort through social interactions with other children, especially during the difficult times in the camp. The large number of children in the camp provides opportunities for playing a variety of games, such as tumbang-presyo, bahay-kubo, Chinese garter, taguan, and dampa. These games are not only entertaining but also vital for social and interpersonal development. Play plays a crucial role in a child's mental and physical health, particularly in fostering healthy social growth. Regular involvement in active, unstructured group play helps enhance a child's social skills (Shenfield, 2023).

Wendy also shared her happiness about having more friends to play with in the Flortam evacuation camp, indicating that the children have successfully expanded their social circles since arriving there. Making new friends in such a setting can be especially beneficial. Research shows that children's well-being is significantly impacted by their friendships (Holder & Coleman, 2015). Furthermore, a Harvard study, highlighted by Gostick (2024) in Forbes, emphasized that close relationships and social connections are crucial for well-being as we age. Even amidst displacement and hardship, the abundance of peers, opportunities for socialization, and the formation of friendships in the evacuation camp play a key role in fostering a sense of happiness and belonging among the children.

Children in the evacuation camp formed friendships and companionships, which had a positive effect on their biopsychosocial well-being. The presence of many peers for interaction, opportunities for socialization, and the development of meaningful friendships all contributed to the children's sense of happiness and belonging in the camp, even in the face of displacement and hardship. According to the study by Erdley & Day (2017), Hartup et al. (1988), Newcomb & Bagwell (1995), and Wentzel et al. (2018), as cited in Afshordi & Liberman (2021), friendship plays a significant role from early childhood. Friendships have a positive impact on children's social and emotional well-being, as well as on their academic performance.

3.1.3 Poor Living Conditions

Based on the general responses of the participants during the interview in this study, most of them shared the same sentiments that residents of the Flortam evacuation camp often face significant financial difficulties. In the study of Luhmann (2017), as cited in Lindberg et al., (2020), it was demonstrated that financial stress has a negative impact on children's subjective wellbeing.

The study by Treanor and Troncoso (2022) found that inadequate employment and limited resources are linked to higher levels of emotional and behavioral issues in children. Similarly, the study highlighted that a major factor contributing to the financial challenges faced by residents in the evacuation camp is the lack of stable employment opportunities. During the pandemic, families with young children were severely impacted, as parents

struggled to address basic needs amidst job insecurity, income loss, health concerns, and the closure of childcare, schools, and essential support services (Masten et al., 2021). According to the child interviewed, most residents work as rubber tappers on a rubber farm, but rubber tapping does not provide a stable or sufficient income. This makes it difficult for families to achieve financial security and meet their basic needs. Without a consistent income, families struggle to provide essential necessities, such as food, clothing, and healthcare. As a result, children are significantly affected, experiencing issues such as poor nutrition, inadequate medical care, and a lack of daily essentials.

Due to the financial struggles faced by families in the Flortam evacuation camp, food insecurity has become a significant issue. Yaz (pseudonym) shared that there is a particular shortage of staple foods like rice, which has led to frequent hunger, as the participant sadly disclosed. She explained that there are times when they can only manage to eat two meals a day instead of the typical three, often skipping lunch. This reduction in meal frequency is a result of the lack of money to purchase essential goods, such as rice. The Philippines is one of the countries where 65 percent of children experience severe food poverty, with approximately 18 percent, or 2 million children, facing this dire issue (UNICEF, 2024).

Children experiencing food insecurity often struggle to function physically, socially, and psychologically (Velardo et al., 2021). Additionally, Healthy People 2030 (2022) notes that food insecurity is linked to negative health outcomes in children, potentially leading to academic difficulties. Yaz (pseudonym) further shared that she coped with hunger by playing with other children using playtime as a distraction. Despite these hardships, there were times when their neighbors generously shared food with them, ensuring they would not go hungry and would have something to eat. This illustrates a strong sense of community support, highlighting the solidarity and resilience of people in the evacuation camp, even amid financial struggles. It also underscores the importance of social connections in providing both emotional and practical support during challenging times.

Moreover, due to limited resources, theft has become a common issue within the evacuation camp, with individuals resorting to stealing money and food from sari-sari stores. This situation highlights a significant problem that goes beyond mere criminal behavior; it underscores the desperate circumstances faced by displaced people. Lack of access to basic necessities, such as food and financial resources, can drive individuals who would typically follow the law to resort to theft in order to survive. This issue is not limited to the Philippines but is a global concern. For example, in the UK, more than 120,000 young people live in extreme poverty, leading some hungry children to turn to food theft (Bancroft, 2023).

The study's findings further revealed that the financial strain in this case extends beyond the immediate family to include grandparents, who also face debts at sari-sari stores. This highlights that financial difficulties affect the entire family unit, creating a persistent and dominant issue that impacts interpersonal interactions and family dynamics. Many low-income households struggle with debt, which can be a major barrier to achieving self-reliance (Ng et al., 2021). Financial insecurity often leads to increased tension and conflict as family members work to manage their limited resources, further complicating their efforts to achieve stability and harmony.

3.2 Coping Mechanisms of Children Toward Their Experiences

3.2.1 Social Coping Mechanism

Based on the findings of the study, the first theme that emerged under coping mechanisms for children in the evacuation camp is social coping. A recent study by Gurvich et al., (2021) emphasized that coping involves using strategies to effectively alleviate psychological stress. In the experiences shared by the participants, it is through social coping—seeking support—that the children were able to reduce stress by reaching out for emotional and practical assistance from their community.

Yaz (pseudonym) shared that other children often actively engage in helping each other with school projects, fostering a supportive environment where they exchange knowledge and skills. They dedicate their time and effort to assist one another in completing these tasks, demonstrating a sense of camaraderie and mutual assistance within the community. Friendships serve as essential support networks that encourage collaboration, knowledge-sharing, and student motivation, all of which contribute to improved academic performance (Alotaibi et al., 2023). These collaborative efforts not only enhance their academic and learning skills but also create a supportive atmosphere where children feel valued and empowered. Additionally, they receive emotional support from the community, especially from their peers, which strengthens their bonds and encourages both personal and academic growth.

Meanwhile, in the case of Ken (pseudonym), he proudly shared that his parents are his primary source of emotional and practical support, offering him comfort and stability. Parents, guardians, and family members play a crucial role in providing emotional support and security, offering appropriate emotional responses, and creating a safe environment for children to express their feelings. This support helps Ken feel comforted, secure, and valued, especially when he faces conflicts with other children, enabling him to cope with the challenges of life in an evacuation camp. Communities, including schools and societal structures, are also essential in providing resources and fostering environments that prioritize children's emotional well-being (Murphy, 2024).

Lastly, Yaz (pseudonym) shared a valuable practice in the evacuation camp where older children take on the role of teachers, helping younger children by engaging in activities like "teacher-teacher." In this practice, older children teach basic math concepts to younger children, typically aged 4-5 years old, ensuring they understand fundamental ideas and build knowledge in the subject. This cross-age peer mentoring not only reinforces the older children's understanding but also creates a supportive learning environment that enhances the educational experience for younger children. Research has shown that cross-age tutoring, where students from different grade levels are paired, has a positive impact on students' attitudes toward reading. The most significant benefit observed was an increase in self-esteem, as students gained a sense of self-worth through the experience (Khan & Bin, 2016). Furthermore, the social interactions between older and younger children are essential for the younger children's development of foundational social skills. Social development is a crucial aspect of early childhood, significantly affecting how children engage with their surroundings (Montessori Academy, 2024).

3.2.2 Play and Recreational Activities

Based on the findings of the study, it was highlighted that dancing and playing parlor games during birthday parties serve as important coping mechanisms for children living in evacuation camps, as shared by Rena (pseudonym). These activities not only provide children with enjoyable experiences but also help them manage stress and emotions. Calica and Lobo (2023) noted that dancing has positive effects on mental health, alleviating stress, anxiety, and depression. Moreover, dancing offers a chance for in-person social interaction, further strengthening children's sense of connection and overall well-being.

These activities foster a sense of community and belonging by enabling children to form strong social connections and enjoy themselves in a supportive environment. Through playful interactions with their peers, children not only have fun but also build meaningful relationships and develop crucial social skills. Research indicates that children's playfulness is linked to essential characteristics and skills, such as active coping, emotional regulation, prosocial behavior, and creativity (Ata & Macun, 2022; Ruckser-Scherb, 2010; Trevlas et al., 2003, as cited in Rüdüsüli et al., 2024). Additionally, recent studies emphasize the role of playfulness in predicting children's future cognitive and social-emotional development (Fung & Chung, 2022; Waldman-Levi et al., 2022, as cited in Rüdüsüli et al., 2024). These social connections are crucial for helping children overcome challenges by reducing feelings of isolation and providing emotional support.

A study found that incorporating music into the education of children aged 3 to 12 can have a positive impact on their emotional development. It was shown to support the development of emotional intelligence, particularly in the ability to regulate emotions (Blasco-Magraner et al., 2021). Additionally, the study revealed that engaging with music significantly enhances emotional well-being. Recent research underscores the role of music in mood regulation (Gustavson et al., 2021, as cited in Reynolds, 2023). Xavier (pseudonym) shared that listening to his favorite songs and singing along provided comfort and lifted his spirits during challenging times. He explained that music helped him shift his focus from negative thoughts to more positive and enjoyable ones. Integrating music and singing into his daily routine became a consistent method for improving his mood and coping with difficulties, highlighting how children can use music to enhance their emotional state.

3.2.3 Parental and Caregiver Support

The study's findings revealed that for Xavier (pseudonym), regular communication with his father played a vital role in coping while living in the Flortam evacuation camp. Despite his father being away for work as a construction worker, the consistent calls from him to check on Xavier provided a strong sense of support and reassurance. These interactions not only strengthened their bond but also gave Xavier the motivation to tackle the challenges of daily life. Research shows that effective communication and trust in parental support are strongly linked to children's ability to develop coping mechanisms (Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2017, as cited in Zimmer-Gembeck et al., 2023). In Xavier's case, the emotional support conveyed through these regular conversations provided more than just casual greetings—it was a meaningful expression of love and care, helping him navigate the difficulties of their living situation.

This aligns with Yang (2023), who highlighted the importance of having a warm and responsive parent for a child's overall social and emotional development. A secure parent-child relationship is fundamental, as it promotes open communication where children can express their emotions and learn emotional regulation skills. Consistent emotional support is vital for managing stress, especially in the face of life's unpredictability. Children who perceive that their parents or caregivers genuinely care about their well-being and are available to provide guidance tend to feel more emotionally stable and secure. As Yang (2024) further emphasizes, children who receive emotional support are better equipped to regulate their emotions and cope with stress and anxiety. This emotional foundation empowers children to face challenges with greater confidence and resilience.

The study results revealed that parents play a crucial role in the lives of children, as they assume an active caregiver role, shaping their emotional and social well-being (Rafferty et al., 2020). Wendy (pseudonym) shared that whenever she faced personal or academic challenges, she would turn to her parents for support. They are the

first people she approaches when dealing with issues, highlighting the vital influence of parents on a child's life. Research by Rees and Dinisman (2015) and Fallesen and Ghler (2019) further reinforces that parents are central to children's well-being, with children instinctively seeking comfort, help, and guidance. Whether dealing with emotional struggles, social conflicts, or academic difficulties, children often rely on their parents to navigate and resolve these challenges.

Lastly, it was revealed that for Josh (pseudonym), attending church services with his family every Sunday has become a significant source of support. These shared experiences provide him with spiritual comfort and moral guidance, helping him cope with the challenges of living in the evacuation camp. Studies, such as those by The Bible Society of South Africa (2023), have demonstrated that parental involvement plays a crucial role in shaping a child's relationship with religion. The active participation of Josh's parents and caregivers in these services underscores their commitment to shared values and beliefs, modeling the importance of faith and community. This involvement strengthens Josh's spiritual foundation, offering him a sense of purpose and support in difficult times.

By spending quality time together and participating in shared experiences, parental involvement strengthens family ties and creates a dependable and comforting support system. Engaging in religious activities such as reading scriptures, praying, attending worship services, and among others, creates valuable opportunities for parents and children to spend meaningful time together (Kelley et al., 2020). These shared practices not only deepen family bonds but also foster a sense of unity and mutual support. Together, these experiences offer both emotional and spiritual comfort, empowering children to navigate difficulties with greater strength and confidence.

3.3 Insights of Children on Their Experiences in the Evacuation Camp

3.3.1 Strengthened Faith and Fervent Prayers

Based on the results of the study, Eron (pseudonym) emphasized the role of faith and prayer in overcoming life's challenges while living in the Flortam evacuation camp. During interviews, he shared that daily prayer and unwavering belief in God's guidance have helped him navigate the hardships brought by displacement. Prayer evokes positive emotions and acts as a coping mechanism during challenging life situations (Del Castillo et al., 2023), enabling Eron to maintain a positive outlook on life despite the difficulties he faces. His experience illustrates the strength and resilience that faith provides, offering hope and support even in the most adverse circumstances.

From an early age, children in the Flortam evacuation camp are introduced to religious practices by their families. Parents play a pivotal role in their children's faith formation, as noted by Murray (2023). By incorporating prayer and faith into daily routines, attending church, and teaching their children to trust in God, parents instill a foundation of spirituality. This early exposure encourages children to embrace prayer and develop a reliance on faith as a source of comfort and guidance.

The shared religious environment within the community further reinforces these values, providing children with a strong foundation of faith. This aligns with the findings of Del Castillo et al., (2020), which emphasized the significant number of religiously committed Filipinos, further accentuating that Christianity continues to thrive in the country (Del Castillo, 2021). By observing family members and neighbors turning to prayer during challenging times, children learn the importance of resilience and the sustaining power of faith. This supportive framework not only nurtures their spirituality but also instills hope and strength, allowing them to navigate life's difficulties with confidence rooted in their beliefs.

The significance of religion to many Filipinos is evident in their regular participation in weekly religious services (Social Weather Stations, 2019, p. 1). This strong connection to faith is further reflected in the active involvement of children in church activities, which play an important role in fostering their spiritual growth. Structured programs such as Sunday school, youth groups, and church services provide children with meaningful opportunities to engage with their faith, helping them develop a strong moral foundation and deepen their understanding of spiritual teachings. Church leaders offer consistent support, guiding children as they grow in their faith.

Furthermore, research by Edara et al., (2021) highlights the link between resilience and faith in God. This is aligned with the way children, through their involvement in religious activities, develop a resilient outlook on life, firmly rooted in their belief in God. These spiritual practices not only strengthen their faith but also provide children with the resilience needed to face life's challenges with hope and confidence.

3.3.2 Dream and Aim for a Better Future

The study revealed the clear and deeply personal dreams and aspirations of Henry (pseudonym) and Wendy (pseudonym) for a better future. Both recognize the transformative power of education in achieving their goals and shaping their lives. As Lane (2022) emphasizes, education is essential in shaping a child's future, equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate the complexities of life.

The study revealed that Henry (pseudonym) is deeply motivated by his personal ambitions and a strong sense of responsibility toward his family. He recognizes that education serves as the key to unlocking opportunities and achieving his dreams of a stable and fulfilling career. This perspective aligns with Al-Shuaibi's (2014) assertion that education is a vital aspect of life, acting as a gateway to success and new opportunities. Henry's vision for the future extends beyond personal success; he is driven by a desire to support his parents and create a fulfilling life for himself. He also values the mutual support within his family, often turning to his older siblings for assistance with school assignments. This dynamic has strengthened their bond, fostering trust and teamwork among them. Moreover, consistent family support in a school-age child's education significantly shapes their behavior and academic achievements, as highlighted by Puspitarini et al., (2023).

Similarly, Wendy (pseudonym), the top student in her class, views education as a vital tool for achieving her goals and improving her life. Despite facing obstacles, she remains unwavering in her dedication to her studies. Aspiring to become a flight stewardess, Wendy understands that education is essential to reaching this dream. Her commitment to academic excellence reflects her strong character and determination to build a brighter, more successful future. As highlighted by Areepattamannil and Freeman (2008), as cited in Bunengi and Dagogo (2020), academic achievement plays a crucial role in laying the foundation for future success.

3.3.3 Grow as a Good Child

This study revealed that Xavier (pseudonym) expressed his dedication to obeying his parents, believing they deserve a respectful and well-behaved child. He values and appreciates the hard work and sacrifices his parents have made in raising him. To show his gratitude, Xavier strives to be obedient and demonstrate his respect through meaningful actions. One simple yet impactful way he does this is by taking afternoon naps when encouraged by his parents. This practice not only reflects his willingness to follow their guidance but also supports his biopsychosocial well-being. By adopting such healthy habits, Xavier not only shows respect and obedience to his parents but also promotes his overall health and development. This aligns with the biblical teaching in Ephesians 6:1 as cited in Obielosi and Ihetu (2022), "Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do."

Taking an afternoon nap is essential for enhancing children's biopsychosocial well-being. Naps provide the necessary rest for physical growth, as deep sleep stimulates the production of growth hormones that help rebuild and develop muscles, tissues, and organs. Additionally, this rest period boosts the immune system by promoting the production of cytokines, which play a key role in fighting off infections and illnesses (Nudd, 2021; Osberthicks, 2022).

Psychologically, naps play a crucial role in enhancing learning and memory. Research shows that napping helps children retain and access information learned earlier in the day, thereby boosting their academic performance. Additionally, maintaining a consistent nap schedule supports better nighttime sleep, helping children wake up rested and ready to face the day. This not only promotes cognitive health but also contributes to emotional well-being and overall sleep quality (Osberthicks, 2022).

From a social perspective, maintaining a regular nap schedule can positively influence children's behavior by reducing irritability and enhancing their ability to focus and concentrate on tasks (Chan, 2023). Naps are essential for children's biopsychosocial well-being, promoting physical growth, improving cognitive abilities, and supporting emotional stability and social well-being. By adhering to his nap schedule, Xavier is learning valuable lessons in self-discipline and the importance of maintaining a balanced routine. Developing these habits will benefit him in the long term, fostering a lifestyle that prioritizes rest and overall well-being.

The study results also revealed that Henry (pseudonym) learned the importance of avoiding physical fights and retaliation, recognizing that such actions are inherently wrong and can cause both physical and emotional harm. This lesson is valuable as it promotes empathy, helping him understand the impact of his actions on others, and encouraging kindness and thoughtfulness. As Kelly (2024) emphasizes, an empathetic child can recognize and appreciate the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of others. By learning to avoid conflict through physical altercations, children are better equipped to develop healthier ways of resolving disputes, such as discussing problems or seeking adult guidance. Developing conflict resolution skills early is essential for children, as unresolved conflicts can damage relationships and lead to various challenges (Vallejo, 2024). These skills not only help children prevent immediate harm but also develop emotional intelligence and social competencies, which are fundamental in cultivating strong, healthy relationships. By embracing these principles, children grow into responsible, compassionate individuals who value peace and the well-being of others.

IV. IMPLICATION AND CONCLUDING REMARKS

4.1 Implication for Practice

Social work is an essential profession that is committed to protecting children and improving their well-being. Social workers are renowned for being on the front lines of helping vulnerable children, particularly those who are displaced. In the context of Flortam evacuation camp, social work plays an essential role in addressing

the needs of these children due to their delicate and vulnerable nature. Considering the issues that displaced children face and the vulnerable state of children, the results of this study reveal significant implications for the practice of social work supporting children in evacuation camps. Given the prolonged displacement and ongoing challenges these children face, it requires a holistic and adaptive approach to social work practice. To effectively support these underprivileged groups, this emphasizes the need for more collaborative efforts by various entities such as local government units, Non-Government Organizations, government agencies, and other private stakeholders to address and improve the plight of displaced children and eventually eliminate it. These efforts should be proactive. Without such collaboration, support systems become fragmented and inefficient, leading to gaps in service that hinder to cater the comprehensive needs of displaced children. Social workers may facilitate communication and collaboration among these stakeholders to ensure a unified and effective response, creating strong, encouraging communities that enable children to overcome displacement challenges and thrive in adversity.

Social workers have always been dedicated to helping displaced people, utilizing their knowledge and skills to address their needs. However, the scope of social work services provided to this population in the Philippines is limited. Moreover, social welfare services often lack professionals with enhanced training, particularly evident in the areas requiring effective crisis intervention techniques and skills to handle emergency situations due to natural disasters. Also, social workers often face uncertainty when it comes to the roles they should fulfill before, during, and after natural disasters. As such, it is highly recommended that social workers are provided with a clear articulation of roles to effectively assist displaced children especially during long-term displacement. Also, they find themselves taking on multiple responsibilities that increase the likelihood of burnout. Their dedication to helping vulnerable populations of natural disasters was truly commendable. To address these challenges, it may be necessary for the LGUs and DSWD to hire additional personnel, including social workers and support staff who possess the necessary skills to ensure the efficient and effective provision of services to these vulnerable populations.

Securing sustained funding and resources for long-term displacement is quite challenging. Immediate post-disaster relief efforts often receive significant attention and funding, while the long-term needs that arise afterwards are unfortunately overlooked. Priority should also be given to the needs of displaced children. Amidst prolonged displacement, much more needs to be done to ensure the effective support of children in evacuation camps. The current predicament in the evacuation camp, particularly concerning children, requires a thorough reassessment to determine the potential contributions of the government, agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders in supporting them. Currently, social services primarily prioritize providing in-kind support to internally displaced people. Local level social welfare services have limited impact on the development of comprehensive and empowering strategies to address prolonged displacement. The approach should incorporate psychosocial support services, especially for children and employment support programs for adults due to prolonged displacement. This multifaceted strategy would better address the diverse needs of those affected by displacement and promote long-term recovery and stability.

Later, some displaced individuals in the camp may express a desire to return to their original area of habitation or relocate elsewhere. However, without the necessary skills for self-support, their path to recovery could be significantly hindered. Therefore, it is important to provide a range of support services to ensure a sustainable livelihood for displaced individuals. Interventions aimed at developing the skills of displaced persons are crucial for achieving long-term solutions to displacement. To address this, social workers could collaborate to create innovative solutions and any long-term development programs that can foster a certain degree of independence and self-sufficiency should also be involved. They could create training programs aimed at developing employment skills and support community development projects for livelihood opportunities. Social workers with group work and community development skills can effectively cultivate partnerships between government, non-government organizations and other key stakeholders for this purpose. As a result, parents may achieve self-sufficiency and can adequately care for their children, supporting their children's sense of safety and stability. In light of this, social workers, undoubtedly, have an indispensable role to play in ensuring the comfort and biopsychosocial well-being of displaced people, especially children in evacuation camps.

Lastly, as a social work student at the University of Mindanao, I recommend that the University of Mindanao Professional Schools Master in Social Work – Direct Social Work Practice program place greater emphasis on psychosocial support services by integrating training in psychosocial interventions and crisis management into the curriculum. These areas are essential for equipping future social workers with the skills needed to address the complex challenges faced by vulnerable groups, particularly those affected by displacement and emotional distress. Additionally, I suggest enhancing field education by offering students hands-on experience with agencies that serve displaced communities, providing them with practical opportunities to apply their knowledge in real-world contexts. By combining theoretical learning with practical training, students would be better prepared to deliver effective psychosocial support, ultimately making a meaningful impact on the lives of those in need.

4.2 Implication for Future Research

Given that this study is limited to a few numbers of children residing in the evacuation camp in Makilala, North Cotabato, it is recommended that future research be conducted. Since the findings are not generalizable among the twelve participants, future research should explore the plight of children in an evacuation camp, particularly their biopsychosocial well-being to strengthen and validate these findings.

Moreover, considering the vast number of children affected by displacement and the scarcity of literature on the subject, future research is highly recommended including the voices and perspectives of displaced children in the evacuation camp. Furthermore, there is a need for research that includes assessing, monitoring and evaluating essential support services provided to affected children during long term displacement. Research that also focuses on the impact of social work services to overall well-being of displaced children should also be carried out. Further studies could also be considered in older students, particularly high school or college students. Future research could explore the experiences of displaced children living in evacuation centers/camps affected by natural calamities in different regions of the country. This would enhance the existing research foundation, gather more comprehensive information, and provide deeper insights relevant to the study.

Future research could involve re-interviewing selected participants from the study to assess improvements or deteriorations in their situations. The study delved into the plight of children in evacuation camp through qualitative analysis of their lived experiences. Employing quantitative methods in future research could further substantiate and authenticate the findings of this study.

4.3 Concluding Remarks

This study offers a unique contribution to understanding the plight of children in evacuation camp and offers guidance for the targeted enhancement of services for internally displaced persons particularly children. Based on the findings above, as a researcher, I can say that all the cited theories strongly support the results of the study. The experiences of children in the Flortam evacuation camp, as explored through Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, significantly affect their biopsychosocial well-being. It provides an understanding of the factors which affect displaced children. The children's interactions within the immediate settings of their families, peers, along with broader influences from the community and societal norms, collectively shape their experiences, coping mechanisms and personal insights. Their emotional and psychological challenges and poor living conditions profoundly affect their well-being.

Drawing on the resilience theory, we can derive the remarkable adaptability and resourcefulness of children despite their challenges in the Flortam evacuation camp. Their resilience is shown by their capacity to create meaningful relationships and find joy in small activities like playing games, recreational activities, and celebrating birthdays and holidays. The support systems they built with family, peers, and community played an indispensable role in helping them navigate with their challenges in life. Observing the children in Flortam Camp, I saw firsthand how resilience is not just an inherent trait but is significantly influenced by supportive relationships and the environment. The role of community, family, faith in God, and positive social interactions are instrumental in helping these children navigate their plight. This experience reinforced my belief in the power of social support systems in building resilience and the importance of promoting such environments to help individuals recover and grow from difficult experiences.

Moreover, this study stresses the critical need for comprehensive and supportive interventions to enhance the biopsychosocial well-being of children in such vulnerable environments. Also, the findings emphasize to the necessity for policies that prioritize the protection and well-being of children in evacuation camps, ensuring they receive the resources and support needed for a stable and healthy upbringing for a prolonged displacement. This study implies social workers and policymakers should prioritize creating structured social and recreational activities in evacuation camps to foster a sense of normalcy and community among displaced children.

V. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my thesis adviser, Dr. Helen L. Querubin, whose patience, support, expertise, and guidance have been instrumental throughout this research journey. Her insightful feedback and encouragement were vital to my success in completing this study.

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to my defense panelists, headed by Dr. Minda B. Brigoli, with members Dr. Joel B. Tan, Dr. Girlie E. Amarillo, and Dr. Abdul Rahman S. Alongan, for sharing their technical insights and valuable knowledge to enrich my paper.

My appreciation also extends to the MSWDO of Makilala, for giving the consent to conduct this study. I am also grateful to my respondents from the Flortam evacuation camp who shared their experiences, and allowing their full cooperation to make this thesis possible.

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation for my ever-supportive friends—Sharmaine, Zenny, Sheila, Mary Mae, and Jorgen—whose sincerity, love, care, and unwavering presence have been a constant source of encouragement. I would also like to honor my good friend, Annie Rose, who passed away during my

research study; her memory made my master's journey even more memorable. Their companionship has uplifted me and brought joy to this journey, and I am deeply grateful for each of them.

My heartfelt thanks to my dearest love, Nicolaj, for his steadfast love, constant encouragement, patience, and understanding. Your unwavering support and belief in me have inspired me and helped me to persevere through every challenge. I am always grateful for having you by my side.

This study would have been impossible without my beloved family, particularly my parents and sisters, whose unconditional love, encouragement, and untiring support have been my strongest source of strength and motivation in all my endeavors. To my mother, Mrs. Violeta Tagaro, and in loving memory of my father, Mr. Noel Tagaro, who now rests with our Creator and whose memory has added profound meaning to my academic journey—you have been my rock and driving force to always persevere through challenges and inspiring me to reach for my goals in life. Your enduring love and sacrifices illuminate my path and guide me through life. This journey is as much yours as it is mine.

Above all, I sincerely thank the most gracious Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, for the countless blessings that have sustained me through this journey. Thank You, dear Lord, for the gift of life, wisdom, courage, and guidance that has illuminated each step. In moments of doubt and weariness, You granted me the strength and resilience to persevere, reminding me that all things are possible with faith. I am forever grateful for Your steadfast presence and unconditional love and for walking beside me through every challenge and triumph. *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam.*

REFERENCES

- [1] Balbay, E. G., Kayalar, Ö., Balbay, Ö., Dikensoy, Ö., Arbak, P., & Bayram, H. (2024). Impact of Earthquakes on Lung Health. *Thoracic Research and Practice*, 25(2), 89–98. <https://doi.org/10.5152/ThoracResPract.2024.23059>
- [2] Baclig, C. E. (2024). PH lands on list of countries most prone to quakes. *INQUIRER.net*. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1923394/ph-lands-on-list-of-countries-most-prone-to-quakes>
- [3] UNICEF (2023). Children displaced in a changing climate | UNICEF. www.unicef.org. <https://www.unicef.org/reports/children-displaced-changing-climate>
- [4] Ozturk, E., Akis A.D., Derin, G., & Erdogan, B. (2023). Social trauma and disaster psychology: The impact of earthquakes on children's mental health from the perspective of dissoanalysis theory and modern psychotraumatology. *Novel Forensic Research*, 2(3), 57–57. <https://doi.org/10.5455/nofor.2023.07.010>
- [5] Codreanu, T., Celenza, A., & Jacobs, I. (2014). Does disaster education of teenagers translate into better survival knowledge, knowledge of skills, and adaptive behavioral change? A systematic literature review. *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine*, 29(6), 629–642.
- [6] Dyregrov, A., Yule, W., & Olf, M. (2018). Children and natural disasters. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 9(Supplement 2). Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/20008198.2018.1500823>
- [7] Kousky, C. (2016). Impacts of natural disasters on children. *Future Child*, 26, 73–92.
- [8] Masten, A., & Narayan, A. (2012). Child development in the context of disaster, war, and terrorism: Pathways of risk and resilience. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 63, 227–257.
- [9] National Disaster Risk Reduction Management and Council (2022). *Joint Memorandum Circular No. 02, s. 2021 regarding Guidelines on Camp and Coordination and Camp Management and Internally Displaced Persons Protection*. https://ndrrmc.gov.ph/attachments/article/4180/NDRRMC_Memorandum_No_083_s_2022.pdf
- [10] De Vera-Ruiz, E. (2019). DSWD provides for child, women friendly spaces in evacuation centers. *Manila Bulletin*. Retrieved from <https://mb.com.ph/2019/11/24/dswd-provides-for-child-women-friendly-spaces-in-evacuation-centers/?amp>
- [11] Li, P. (2024). *Resilience Theory in Psychology (Definition & Characteristics)*. Parenting for Brain. <https://www.parentingforbrain.com/resilience-theory/>
- [12] Guy-Evans, O. (2024). Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. *Simply Psychology*. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/Bronfenbrenner.html>
- [13] Bernard, H. (2013). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. California: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- [14] Morse, J.M. (1994). Designing funded qualitative research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp.220-235). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- [15] Bernard, H. R. (2002). *Research methods in anthropology: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (3rd ed.). Walnut Creek, CA: Alta Mira Press
- [16] Van Manen M., & Van Manen M. (2014) Phenomenology. In D. Phillips (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of educational theory and philosophy* (Vol. 1, pp. 611-616). SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781483346229.n253>

- [17] Neubauer, B., Witkop, C., & Varpio, L. (2019). How Phenomenology Can Help Us Learn from the Experiences of Others. *Perspectives on Medical Education*, 8(2), 90–97. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-0509-2>
- [18] Yüksel, P., & Yıldırım, S. (2015) Theoretical frameworks, methods, and procedures for conducting phenomenological studies in educational settings. <https://www.tojqi.net/index.php/journal/article/view/102>
- [19] Sutton, J., & Austin, Z. (2015). Qualitative Research: Data Collection, Analysis, and Management. *The Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy*, 68(3), 226–231. NCBI. <https://doi.org/10.4212/cjhp.v68i3.1456>
- [20] Fulcher, R. 2010. Critical Discourse Analysis. London and New York. Longman
- [21] Howitt, D., & Cramer, D. (2010.) Introduction to Research Methods in Psychology. 2nd edition. Harlow. Pearson Education Limited
- [22] Lincoln, Y.S., & Guba, E.G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Sage. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767\(85\)90062-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/0147-1767(85)90062-8)
- [23] Denzin, N.K. (2015). Triangulation. Ritzer G. (Ed.), The Blackwell encyclopedia of sociology, John Wiley & Sons (2015), pp. 5083-5088
- [24] Riazi, A.M., Rezvani, R., & Ghanbar, H. (2023). Trustworthiness in L2 writing research: A review and analysis of qualitative articles in the Journal of Second Language Writing. *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*, 2(3), 100065–100065. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rmal.2023.100065>
- [25] Polit, D.F., & Beck, C.T. (2014). Essentials of nursing research: Appraising evidence for nursing practice (8th ed.). Philadelphia, PA: Wolters Kluwer/Lippincott Williams & Wilkins
- [26] Kennan, D. (2015). Understanding the ethical requirement for parental consent when engaging youth in research. In *SensePublishers eBooks* (pp. 87–101). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-6300-052-9_5
- [27] Danese, A., McLaughlin, K. A., Samara, M., & Stover, C. S. (2020). Epidemiological and treatment research on trauma-related psychopathology in children pinpoints barriers to clinical implementation. *British Medical Journal (BMJ)*.
- [28] Lewis, S. J., Arseneault, L., Caspi, A., Fisher, H. L., Matthews, T., Moffitt, T. E., Odgers, C. L., Stahl, D., Teng, J. Y., & Danese, A. (2019). The Epidemiology of Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in a Representative Cohort of Young People in England and Wales. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 6(3), 247–256. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s2215-0366\(19\)30031-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/s2215-0366(19)30031-8)
- [29] Soni, M., & Parmar, C. (2024). A Study on “The Impact of Parental Conflict on Children.” *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews Journal Homepage: Wwww.ijrpr.com*, 5. <https://ijrpr.com/uploads/V5ISSUE3/IJRPR24277.pdf>
- [30] Lalor, K. (2013). “Children, Violence, Community and the Physical Environment: Foreword to the Special Issue.” *Children, Youth and Environments* 23(1): i-vii. <https://www.jstor.org/action/showPublication?journalCode=chilyoutenvi>
- [31] Cuncic, A. (2024). *6 friendship benefits: Why it's important to stay close to your friends*. Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/the-importance-of-friendship-3024371>
- [32] Murphy, J. (2022). *Considering Inclusion of All Children at Christmas in Early Years Settings*. Portobello Institute. <https://blog.portobelloinstitute.com/the-concept-of-christmas-from-a-childhood-perspective>
- [33] Shenfield, D. T. (2023). *The Importance of Play in Social Skills Development*. Child Psychology Resources by Dr. Tali Shenfield. <https://www.psy-ed.com/wpblog/play-and-social-skills-development/>
- [34] Holder, M. D., & Coleman, B. (2015). Children’s Friendships and Positive Well-Being. In *Springer eBooks* (pp. 81–97). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9603-3_5
- [35] Gostick, A. (2024). Harvard research reveals the #1 key to living longer and happier. *Forbes*. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/adriangostick/2023/08/15/harvard-research-reveals-the-1-key-to-living-longer-and-happier>
- [36] Afshordi, N., & Liberman, Z. (2021). Keeping friends in mind: Development of friendship concepts in early childhood. *Social Development*, 30(2), 331–342. <https://doi.org/10.1111/sode.12493>
- [37] Lindberg, M., Nygård, M., Nyqvist, F., & Hakovirta, M. (2020). Financial Stress and Subjective Wellbeing among Children -Evidence from Finland. *Child Indicators Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12187-020-09779-9>
- [38] Treanor, M., & Troncoso, P. (2022). Poverty, parental work intensity and child emotional and conduct problems. *Social Science & Medicine*, 312, 115373. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2022.115373>
- [39] Masten, C., Lombardi, J., & Fisher, P. (2021). *Helping Families Meet Basic Needs Enables Parents to Promote Children’s Healthy Growth, Development*. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/poverty-and-inequality/helping-families-meet-basic-needs-enables-parents-to-promote>
- [40] UNICEF. (2024). *1 in 4 children globally live in severe child food poverty due to inequity, conflict, and climate crises – UNICEF*. [www.unicef.org](https://www.unicef.org/philippines/press-releases/1-4-children-globally-live-severe-child-food-poverty-due-inequity-conflict-and). <https://www.unicef.org/philippines/press-releases/1-4-children-globally-live-severe-child-food-poverty-due-inequity-conflict-and>

- [41] Velardo, S., Pollard, C. M., Shipman, J., & Booth, S. (2021). How Do Disadvantaged Children Perceive, Understand and Experience Household Food Insecurity? *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(8), 4039. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18084039>
- [42] Healthy People 2030. (2022). *Reduce household food insecurity and hunger* — NWS-01 - Healthy People 2030 | health.gov. Health.gov.<https://odphp.health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/browse-objectives/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/reduce-household-food-insecurity-and-hunger-nws-01>
- [43] Bancroft, H. (2023). *Hungry Children Stealing Food as Tens of Thousands Living in Extreme Poverty*. The Independent. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/child-poverty-destitution-dwp-benefits-b2395322.html>
- [44] Ng, I. Y. H., Tan, J. Q., Mathew, M., Ho, K. W., & Ting, Y. T. (2021). The Importance of Considering Debt and Young Children in Activation: A Survival Analysis of Return to Welfare. *Social Policy and Society*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1474746421000518>
- [45] Gurvich, C., Thomas, N., Thomas, E. H. X., Hudaib, A. R., Sood, L., Fabiatis, K., Sutton, K., Isaacs, A., Arunogiri, S., Sharp, G., & Kulkarni, J. (2021). Coping styles and mental health in response to societal changes during the COVID-19 pandemic. *The International Journal of Social Psychiatry*, 67(5), 540–549. [10.1177/0020764020961790](https://doi.org/10.1177/0020764020961790) [PubMed] [CrossRef] [Google Scholar]
- [46] Alotaibi, T. A., Alkhalifah, K. M., Alhumaidan, N. I., Almutiri, W. A., Alsaleh, S. K., AlRashdan, F. M., Almutairi, H. R., Sabi, A. Y., Alkawash, A. N., Alfaifi, M. Y., & Al-Mourgi, M. (2023). The Benefits of Friendships in Academic Settings: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *Cureus*, 15(12). <https://doi.org/10.7759/cureus.50946>
- [47] Khan, K., & Bin, M. (2016). EFFECTS OF CROSS AND SAME AGE PEER TUTORING ON READING ATTITUDES OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342453060_EFFECTS_OF_CROSS_AND_SAME_AGE_PEER_TUTORING_ON_READING_ATTITUDES_OF_PRIMARY_SCHOOL_STUDENTS
- [48] Murphy, N. (2024). *The Link Between Emotional Well-Being and Child Development*. CPD Online College. <https://cpdonline.co.uk/knowledge-base/mental-health/link-between-emotional-well-being-child-development/>
- [49] Montessori Academy. (2024). *The Benefits of Social Interaction In Early Childhood* | Montessori A. Montessori. <https://montessoriacademy.com.au/social-development-in-early-childhood/>
- [50] Calica, C. A., & Lobo, J. (2023). Dance and Its Effect on The Mental Health of Performing Arts Students: A Descriptive-Comparative Analysis. *International Journal of Education and Humanities*, 3(2), 122–131. <https://doi.org/10.58557/ijeh.v3i2.112>
- [51] Rüdüsüli, C., Duss, I., Lannen, P., & Corina Wustmann Seiler. (2024). Relations between teacher–child interaction quality and children’s playfulness. *Early Child Development and Care*, 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03004430.2024.2356242>
- [52] Blasco-Magraner, J. S., Bernabe-Valero, G., Marín-Liébana, P., & Moret-Tatay, C. (2021). Effects of the Educational Use of Music on 3- to 12-Year-Old Children’s Emotional Development: A Systematic Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(7), 3668. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18073668>
- [53] Reynolds, F. (2023). The transformative power of music in mental well-being. [www.psychiatry.org; American Psychiatric Association. https://www.psychiatry.org/news-room/apa-blogs/power-of-music-in-mental-well-being](https://www.psychiatry.org/news-room/apa-blogs/power-of-music-in-mental-well-being)
- [54] Zimmer-Gembeck, M. J., Skinner, E. A., Scott, R. A., Ryan, K. M., Hawes, T., Gardner, A. A., & Duffy, A. (2023). Parental Support and Adolescents’ Coping with Academic Stressors: A Longitudinal Study of Parents’ Influence Beyond Academic Pressure and Achievement. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 52(12), 2464–2479. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-023-01864-w>
- [55] Yang, Y. (2023). Parents should take care in how they handle their children’s emotions. *TODAY*. <https://www.todayonline.com/commentary/parents-should-take-care-how-they-handle-their-childrens-emotions-1878646>
- [56] Yang, C. (2024). Effects of Parenting Styles on Anxiety. *Journal of Education, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 29, 517–520. <https://doi.org/10.54097/p749vb20>
- [57] Rafferty, K. A., Beck, G., and McGuire, M. (2020). When facing hopeful and hopeless experiences: using snyder's hope theory to understand parents' caregiving experiences for their medically complex child. *J. Pediatr. Health Care* 34, 542–549. doi: 10.1016/j.pedhc.2020.06.003
- [58] Rees, G., and Dinisman, T. (2015). Comparing children's experiences and evaluations of their lives in 11 different countries. *Child Indicatr. Res.* 8, 5–31. doi: 10.1007/s12187-014-9291-1
- [59] Fallesen, P., and Ghler, M. (2019). Family type and parents time with children: longitudinal evidence for Denmark. *Acta Sociol.* 63, 000169931986852. doi: 10.1177/0001699319868522
- [60] The Bible Society of South Africa. (2023). The Profound Influence Parents Have on Children's Religious Beliefs. [Linkedin.com. https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/profound-influence-parents-have-](https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/profound-influence-parents-have-)

- childrens/
- [61] Kelley, H. H., Marks, L. D., & Dollahite, D. C. (2020). Uniting and dividing influences of religion on parent– child relationships in highly religious families. *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.1037/rel0000321>
- [62] Del Castillo, F., Darro, C., & Koenig, H. G. (2023). Associations between prayer and mental health among Christian youth in the Philippines. *Religions*, 14(6), 806–806. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14060806>
- [63] Murray, L. (2023). *Children's Faith Formation*. Childrens Ministry Basics. <https://childrensministrybasics.com/2022/04/19/childrens-faith-formation-2/>
- [64] Del Castillo, F., & Alino, M. A. (2020). Religious coping of selected Filipino Catholic youth. *Religions*, 11(9), 462.
- [65] Del Castillo, F. (2022). A Flourishing Faith: Celebrating 500 Years of Christianity in the Philippines. *Journal of the Evangelical Missiological Society*, 2(2), 90-92.
- [66] Social Weather Stations. (2019). Fourth Quarter 2019 Social Weather Survey: Record-high 83% of adult Filipinos say religion is "very important". Retrieved from <https://www.sws.org.ph/swsmain/artclidispagg/?artcsyscode=ART-20200412155426>
- [67] Edara, I. R., del Castillo, F., Ching, G. S., & del Castillo, C. D. (2021). Religiosity, Emotions, Resilience, and Wellness during the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Study of Taiwanese University Students. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(12), 6381. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18126381>
- [68] Lane, S. (2022). *Importance of Education for Children*. Eduedify. <https://eduedify.com/importance-of-education-for-children/>
- [69] Al-Shuaibi, A. (2014). The importance of education. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260075970_The_Importance_of_Education
- [70] Puspitarini N. A., Kumboyono K., & Hayati Y. S. (2023). Factors Influencing Family Support for Education Patterns in School-Age Children. *Jurnal Aisyah: Jurnal Ilmu Kesehatan*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.30604/jika.v8i1.1554>
- [71] Bunengi, H., & Dagogo. (2020). The student behavior and its relationship on academic achievement: A Study of Nigeria High Schools. Print) *International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, 8, 93–107. <https://www.researchpublish.com/upload/book/paperpdf-1603788630.pdf>
- [72] Obielosi, D. C., & Ihetu, J. C. (2022). AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF EPHESIANS 6:1-4 IN THE CONTEXT OF PARENTS-CHILDREN RELATIONSHIP IN IGBOLAND. *INTERDISCIPLINARY JOURNAL of AFRICAN & ASIAN STUDIES (IJAAS)*,8(1). <https://www.nigerianjournalsonline.com/index.php/ijaas/article/view/2304>
- [73] Nudd, S. (2021). *Understanding the importance of nap time for kids' early development*. Sleepably. <https://www.sleepably.com/understanding-the-importance-of-nap-time-for-kids-early-development/>
- [74] Osberthicks. (2022). *The benefits of afternoon sleep for children*. RosyCheeked. <https://www.rosycheeked.com/health/the-benefits-of-afternoon-sleep-for-children/>
- [75] Chan, K. (2023). *The role of sleep in kids' mental health*. Verywell Mind. <https://www.verywellmind.com/kids-sleep-and-mental-health-7095964>
- [76] Kelly, K. (2024). 8 ways to teach empathy to your child. Understood. <https://www.understood.org/en/articles/teaching-empathy-activities>
- [77] Vallejo, M. (2024). *A Guide to Conflict Resolution for Kids*. Mental Health Center Kids; Mental Health Center Kids. <https://mentalhealthcenterkids.com/blogs/articles/conflict-resolution-for-kids>