

Relationship Between Spirituality and Resilience among Nursing Students of Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Studies have shown that the psychological well-being of nursing students during the pandemic is critical for their academic success and that spirituality has been a key aspect of fostering resilience and growth through challenging circumstances. This research is a descriptive correlational study that aimed to determine the correlation of the respondents' demographic profile, their level of spirituality, and their level of resilience. The Spirituality and Resilience Assessment Packet by Kass and Kass (2000) was used to assess the respondents' level of spirituality and resilience. Through an online form, the data was collected and was analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation coefficient test, and T-test. Results of the study show that the respondents have a high level of spirituality and low level of resilience. Findings revealed that there is a positive linear correlation between spirituality and the respondents' age and sex with females being more spiritually inclined than males and between resilience and the respondents' age and year level. Moreover, results also revealed that there is a positive correlation between the respondents' spirituality and their level of resilience. While this study offers insights into the important role of spirituality and resilience in helping nursing students during a pandemic, additional research is needed to further our understanding of the relationship between these two factors and their impact on health and well-being. Recommendations for future research

might include expanding this study to a regional or national perspective.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, nursing students, resilience, spirituality

Introduction

Student nurses have unique stressors that increase their likelihood of negative outcomes in addition to the developmental challenges that all students face. A recent study unveiled the high stress levels of nursing students had a negative impact on their psychological well-being (Li & Hasson, 2020). Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, brought forward more challenges to the nursing students including mental health problems, fear of the virus, and feelings of isolation (Kerbage et al. (2021). Other sources of stress included lack of access to a computer or the internet at home, high study workloads, without a private area to study, and financial burden in maintaining a stable internet connection as classes transitioned from traditional face-to-face to online (Masha'al et al., 2020). All of the aforementioned challenges and stressors faced by the nursing students result in a buildup of stress and anxiety which can have an impact on the mental or psychological health and overall well-being of the students.

The psychological well-being of nursing students during the pandemic is critical for their academic success (Kim et al., 2021). Thus, an assessment of the nursing students' resilience is necessary. Since studies have shown that spirituality has an impact on resilience (Roberto et al., 2020), this study is pursued, with the main goal of determining the relationship between the level of spirituality and the level of resilience of the students of MSU-IIT College of Nursing.

Objectives of the Study

The main goal of this undertaking is to determine the relationship between the level of spirituality and the level of resilience of the students of MSU-IIT College of Nursing. This study also aims to:

1. Determine the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of the following:

- a. Age;
 - b. Sex;
 - c. Religion; and
 - d. Year Level
2. Identify the level of spirituality of the respondents.
 3. Identify the level of resilience of the respondents.
 4. Determine if there is a significant relationship between the respondents' demographic profile (age, sex, religion, and year level) and their level of spirituality.
 5. Determine if there is a significant relationship between the respondents' demographic profile (age, sex, religion, and year level) and their level of resilience.
 6. Determine if there is a significant relationship between the respondent's level of spirituality and their resilience level.

The Theory of Human Caring

This study is anchored on Jean Watson's Theory of Human Caring. The four key concepts in Watson's theory are person, health, nursing, and environment. In this study, person refers to the nursing students that need to be cared for, nurtured, and assisted. The concept of nursing which is caring will be addressed by determining the nursing students' spirituality. The students' spirituality is deemed to be the health that needs to be nourished and looked after. The healthy spirituality of the nursing students is assumed to empower them to cope with the varied stressors in life. The nursing students' stressors such as academic or personal competition, social anxieties, and heavy workloads are considered to be the environment of this undertaking.

Watson's Theory of Human Caring (2015) is composed of the ten Caritas Processes, the caring occasion, transpersonal caring relationship, and caring-healing modalities. The specific foundation for this study is Watson's Caritas Process three (3), which states that cultivation of one's own spiritual practices opens one's heart to others with compassion and sensitivity. Embracing, and deepening one's spirituality will help build resilience in facing life's varied challenges and stressors. A nursing student can easily be overwhelmed with life's challenges and stressors if he/she considers doing all the school tasks without a sense of purpose or fulfillment. The journey of becoming a nurse can be rewarding if it becomes more aligned with nursing students' values to serve humanity with sensitivity and compassion.

Conceptual Framework

In this study's conceptual framework, different concepts were combined to serve as its anchor. Based on the different concepts that were gathered, the framework of this study was conceptualized on the basis of the interconnection of the respondents' level of spirituality and their level of resilience. The first set was the respondents' level of spirituality which served as the study's independent variable. The second set was the respondents' level of resilience, with the subsets Life Purpose and Satisfaction (LPS) and Self-Confidence during Stress (SCDS), which served as the study's dependent variable. The third set included the respondents' demographic profile, specifically, their age, sex, religion, and year level which served as the study's intervening variables.

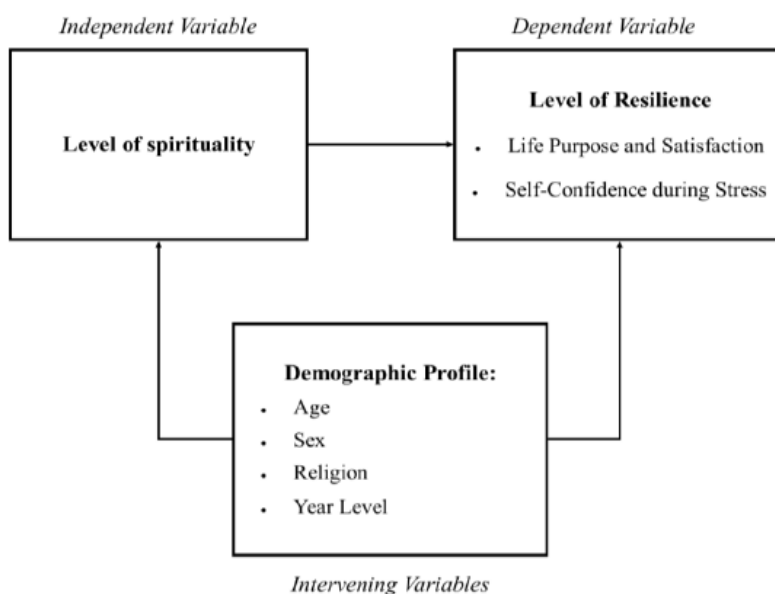


Figure 1. Shows the interplay of the independent variable, dependent variable, and intervening variables

As shown in Figure 1 in the previous page, the researchers assumed that the respondents' level of spirituality affects their level of resilience. Furthermore, the respondents' demographic profile, specifically their age, sex, religion, and year level may have a significant relationship towards the respondents' level of spirituality and level of resilience.

Methodology

The Research Design

A descriptive correlational research design was used to identify the significant relationships between the respondents' level of spirituality and their level of resilience as well as the significant relationships between the respondents' demographic profile, specifically their age, sex, religion, and year level.

The Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the College of Nursing, Mindanao State University - Iligan Institute of Technology located in Andres Bonifacio Avenue, Tibanga, Iligan City, Lanao del Norte, Philippines. In 1986 under the provision of the Republic Act 5363, Mindanao State University - Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT) was developed. MSU-IIT is a university dedicated to providing globally competitive and quality education to its students (Ortega et al., n.d.). In 2004, The College of Nursing (CON) was established as an extension unit of the Mindanao State University (MSU) Main Campus's College of Health Sciences (CHS) and offers one program, Bachelor of Science in Nursing.



Figure 2. Map of Mindanao State University - Iligan Institute of Technology (Image source: Google pictures)

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study were second year to fourth year nursing students from Mindanao State University - Iligan Institute of Technology officially enrolled in the first semester of the Academic Year 2021-2022. The first year nursing students were excluded in the study since they are yet to start their nursing student journey and have not experienced much rigor in the curriculum. For this study, a sample size with 95% confidence level were taken from the total population of 378 nursing students from second-year to fourth-year. This is equivalent to 191 students who served as the respondents of the study. Thirty four (34) are second-year nursing students, 84 respondents are third-year nursing students, and 73 are fourth-year nursing students.

Research Instrument

The researchers made use of a two-part questionnaire. The first part was designed to identify the respondents’ demographic profile, specifically, their age, sex, religion, and year level. The second part is a standardized questionnaire designed to gather the data needed to determine the level of significance among the independent and dependent variables of this study.

In the second section of the questionnaire, the researchers employed "The Spirituality and Resilience Assessment Packet" by Jared and Lynn Kass (2000) to gauge the respondents' level of resilience and spirituality. The questionnaire has two parts, the first part being “The Inventory of Positive Psychological Attitudes (IPPA)” which has two subscales. The Life Purpose and Satisfaction (LPS) subscale has 15 items, while the Self-Confidence During Stress (SCDS) subscale has 17 items. In total, the respondents answered 32 questions that helped the researchers determine how resilient the respondents' worldview were. Each question was rated by the respondents on a 7-point Likert scale from very low possibility of the statement (1) to a very high possibility of the statement (7). The answers were then added and based on table 1.

Table 1. Interpretation of Scores for IPPA

Score	Level of Resilience
1.00 - 2.49	LOW
2.50 - 4.00	MEDIUM LOW
4.01 - 5.50	MEDIUM HIGH
5.51 - 7.00	HIGH

The respondents’ level of spirituality was measured using the “Index of Core Spiritual Experiences (INSPIRIT)”. The first part is experiential where personal encounters that strengthen one's belief in God’s existence is evaluated. The second part is relational that evaluates the respondents’ frame of mind and conduct that gives an insight on the individual’s perspective on their closeness to God or the

spirit of life. Each question was rated by the respondents on a 4-point Likert scale, from never having this experience (1) to convincing me of God's existence (4). The answers were then added and based on table 2.

Table 2. Interpretation of Scores for INSPIRIT

Score	Level of Spirituality
7 – 10	LOW
11 – 17	MEDIUM LOW
18 – 24	MEDIUM HIGH
25 – 28	HIGH

Data Gathering Procedure

The MSU-IIT CON Ethical Review Committee's ethical approval and study permission were initially sought prior to the data collection. Due to the limitations brought about by the current pandemic, data gathering was done solely online. The respondents were provided with a Google Form link, which included the informed consent. In the link, they were also provided with a two-part questionnaire that enabled the researchers to retrieve the needed data for the study.

Statistical Tool and Analysis

In achieving the objectives of the study, different statistical methods were used. Descriptive statistics was performed, specifically, frequency and percentage were used in the presentation of the demographic profile, particularly the respondents' age, sex, religion, and year level. Tabular and summary calculations were then utilized to present data or information. Correlation analysis, specifically, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to determine if there is a significant relationship between the respondents' demographics and level of spirituality; significant relationship between respondents' demographics and level of resilience; and significant relationship

between the respondents' level of spirituality and level of resilience. To further understand the significant difference between the spirituality levels of the two sexes, a two-sample T-test was also performed.

Results and Discussion

The respondents' demographic profile in terms of age, sex, religion, and year level are shown in Table 3. It shows that most of the respondents are 21 years old which comprise about 40.8% (78), and the minority of the respondents are 23 years old which comprise only of 1.6% (3). Also, there were more female respondents comprising of 75.9% (145) than males which is only 24.1% (46). This means that the results were interpreted in the context that the majority of the participants are female. This may be due to the fact that nursing remains to be a female-dominated profession (U2B, 2020). The majority of religious affiliation among the respondents are Roman Catholic comprising 62.8% (120). This may be due to the fact that the Philippines is the world's third largest Catholic country and one of Asia's two predominantly Roman Catholic nations. (Labrague et al., 2015). However, one respondent does not believe in the existence of God. Finally, the majority of respondents (44% (84) of the total) are third-year nursing students, and the minority (17.8%) are second-year nursing students.

Table 3. Respondents’ Demographic Profile

Demographic Variables		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	19	18	9.4
	20	46	24.1
	21	78	40.8
	22	46	24.1
	23	3	1.6
Sex	Female	145	75.9
	Male	46	24.1
Religion	Roman Catholic	120	62.8
	Islam	29	15.2
	Protestant	20	10.5
	Pentecostal (Born Again/ Evangelical)	21	11.0
	Atheist/No Denomination	1	0.5
Year Level	Second Year	34	17.8
	Third Year	84	44.0
	Fourth Year	73	38.2

Table 4 shows that most of the respondents have a medium high level of spirituality. The two questions that obtained a high response from the respondents are - “Have you ever had an experience that has convinced you that God/spirit of life exists?” and “Indicate whether you agree or disagree with this statement: God dwells within you.” The first question may imply that most of the respondents have had an experience that convinced them of the presence of God or the spirit of life– an indication that most of the respondents are firm believers of God or the spirit of life. The second question, on the other hand, may imply that the respondents behave in such a way that they keep God in their mind at all times. These findings support the study of Kowalczyk et al. (2020), where it was revealed that in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, most people are much more open to faith as well as prayer and through spirituality, they are able to find meaning in their situation (Bayod, 2020).

Table 4. Level of Spirituality of the Respondents

Spirituality Questions	Student Response Average	Remarks
Have you ever had an experience that has convinced you that God/spirit of life exists?	4	High
Indicate whether you agree or disagree with this statement: "God dwells within you."	4	High
How strongly religious (or spiritually-oriented) do you consider yourself to be?	3	Medium High
About how often do you spend time on religious or spiritual practices?	3	Medium High
How often have you felt as though you were very close to a powerful spiritual force?	3	Medium High
How close do you feel to God/the spirit of life?	3	Medium High
<i>More specific questions</i>		
An experience of profound inner peace	3	Medium High
An overwhelming experience of love	3	Medium High
A feeling of unity with the earth and all living beings	3	Medium High
An experience of complete joy and ecstasy	3	Medium High
Meeting or listening to a spiritual teacher or master	3	Medium High

Table 4. (Cont'd)

An experience of God's energy or presence	3	Medium High
An experience of a great spiritual figure (e.g. Jesus, Mary, Elijah, Muhammad, Buddha)	3	Medium High
A healing of your body or mind (or witnessed such a healing)	3	Medium High
An experience with near death or life after death	3	Medium High
A miraculous (or not normally occurring) event	2	Medium Low
An experience of angels or guiding spirits	1	Low
An experience of communication with someone who has died	1	Low

As shown in Table 5 on the next page, the average mark for all the questions and responses in the survey for the INSPIRIT is 19, which is interpreted that most of the respondents have a medium high level of spirituality during the COVID-19 pandemic. This means that the respondents have a close and intimate relationship with the spirit of life, however, not consistently (Kass & Kass, 2000). This result is in line with the findings of Vitales, et al. (2020), who found that the main psychological-spiritual coping technique of Filipinos of all ages during the COVID-19 pandemic is "prayer and keeping in mind to implore God to end COVID-19 pandemic so that people will not suffer." Moreover, Absari, et al. (2021) discovered that the COVID-19 pandemic strengthened the Filipino high school students' trust in God.

Table 5. Level of Spirituality Final Assessment Result

Spirituality Assessment	Average Mark	Remarks
7 Questions	19	Medium High

Table 6 reveals that the question "During stressful moments in my life, I never worry about the future" had the lowest rating out of the 32 questions with a medium low response. This shows that most respondents are more worried about their future, especially given that they are having difficulties dealing with the stress brought on by the pandemic. The study by Chakraborty & Chatterjee (2020), which showed that the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on the respondents' mental health since their lives were in great risk, is supported by these data. Wright et al. (2021) also found a connection between feelings of hopelessness and anxiety and concerns about potential pandemic hardships.

Table 6. Level of resilience of the respondents

Resilience Questions	Student Response Average	Remarks
<i>A. Life Purpose and Satisfaction (LPS)</i>		
Deep inside myself I feel loved.	5.19	Medium High
When I think deeply about life, I feel there is a purpose.	5.12	Medium High
When I think about the problems that I have, I feel very hopeful.	4.94	Medium High
I feel that the work I am doing is of great value.	4.89	Medium High
I feel joy in my heart all the time.	4.80	Medium High
At this time, I have clearly defined goals.	4.71	Medium High

Table 6. (Cont'd)

When I think about what I have done with my life, I feel worthwhile.	4.44	Medium High
As a whole, my life seems vibrant.	4.38	Medium High
When sad things happen to me or other people, I continue to feel positive.	4.30	Medium High
My present life satisfies me.	4.22	Medium High
My daily activities are a source of satisfaction.	4.13	Medium High
I wish I were different from who I am.	4.12	Medium High
During most of the day, my energy level is very high.	3.97	Medium Low
I feel that my life so far has been productive.	3.82	Medium Low
I feel trapped by the circumstances of my life.	3.82	Medium Low
When I think about my past, I feel no regrets.	3.68	Medium Low
I have come to expect that every day will be new and different.	3.39	Medium Low
<i>B. Self-confidence During Stress (SCDS)</i>		
When I need to stand up for myself, I can do it quite easily.	4.53	Medium High
In a difficult situation, I am confident that I will receive the help that I need.	4.32	Medium High
When I need to relax during stressful times, I experience peace and free of	4.09	Medium High

Table 6. (Cont'd)

thoughts and worries.		
In really difficult situations, I feel able to respond in positive ways.	3.86	Medium Low
I feel less than adequate when I am in difficult situations.	3.71	Medium Low
When I am in a frightening situation, I remain calm.	3.70	Medium Low
I react to problems and difficulties with no frustration.	3.62	Medium Low
During times of stress, I feel isolated and alone.	3.61	Medium Low
When there is a great deal of pressure being placed on me, I remain calm.	3.51	Medium Low
When I have made a mistake during a stressful situation, I continue to like myself.	3.29	Medium Low
When a situation becomes difficult, I find myself worrying that something bad is going to happen to me or those I love.	3.06	Medium Low
During stressful circumstances, I am fearful.	2.98	Medium Low
In a stressful situation, I can concentrate easily.	2.94	Medium Low
During stressful circumstances, I never experience anxiety.	2.71	Medium Low
During stressful times in my life, I never worry about the future.	2.66	Medium Low

Table 7 on the next page shows the respondents' level of resilience. For the First Part: Life Purpose and Satisfaction (LPS), the respondents scored an average mark of 4.35 which is interpreted as "Medium High". This implies a high level of resilience of the respondents in terms of their life purpose and satisfaction. This suggests that during crisis, they preserve a sense of meaning and purpose in their life (Kass & Kass, 2000). This is supported by Duong (2021), where it was found that despite exposure to the threat of COVID-19 pandemic and enduring strict social and physical distancing, the nursing students have maintained a high life satisfaction and recognized the real values of life. The Second Part: Self-Confidence During Stress (SCDS), on the other hand, scored an average mark of 3.51, with an interpretation of "Medium Low." This indicates a low level of self-view within the respondents. This finding implies that the respondents had low self-confidence when faced with adversity in utilizing their own resources and those of their support network to overcome it. This is in line with a study by Xie et al. (2020), which discovered that the majority of nursing students are losing confidence as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Inventory of Positive Psychological Attitudes Self-Test Version (IPPA-32R) survey's average interpretation for all the questions and answers is "Medium Low." This result suggests that the respondents had a low level of resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is supported by the study of Kerbage et al. (2021), where it was found that the nursing students' resilience scores were low during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Kass & Kass (2000), if a person's LPS and SCDS scores differ significantly, this may indicate that one aspect of the respondent's worldview is more resilient than the other. The respondents in this study exhibit a high confidence in life, but low self-confidence. This suggests that, despite the respondents' strong sense of purpose, they nevertheless exhibit a significant lack of self-confidence in their ability to handle the hardships and trials of daily life.

Table 7. Level of Resilience Final Assessment result

Resilience Assessment	Over-all Average	Remarks
Part 1: Life Purpose and Satisfaction	4.35	Medium High
Part 2: Self-Confidence During Stress	3.51	Medium Low
Overall Resilience Level	3.96	Medium Low

Table 8 demonstrates a significant correlation between respondents' age and level of spirituality. As a result of the fairly positive linear association that the degree of significance suggests, students' levels of spirituality rise as they age. This result is in line with research by Ziapour et al. (2017), which found that the mean scores for spiritual well-being varied significantly with age. This implies that when students get older, their spiritual well-being will likewise advance.

Table 8. Level of significance between the respondents' level of spirituality and their demographic profile (age, sex, year level, and religion)

		Age	Sex	Year Level	Religion
Level of Spirituality	Pearson Correlation	0.15**	0.16**	0.09	0.11
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.038	.027	0.216	0.130
	N	191	191	191	191

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

p-value<0.05= sig.

Table 9. Difference of the Level of Spirituality among Sexes

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Mean	2.64848	2.86092
Variance	0.406129	0.298917
Observations	46	145
Pooled Variance	0.324443	
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	189	
t Stat	-2.20401	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.014366	
t Critical one-tail	1.652956	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.028732	
t Critical two-tail	1.972595	

Table 10 shows that age and year level have a significant relationship with their level of resilience. As age and year level value increases, so does the level of resilience. This finding is consistent with the studies conducted by Eshel et al. (2016) where it was found that as a person grows in age and experiences more adversities, the further their level of resilience strengthens and Lekan et al. (2018) where results revealed that senior students are more resilient than their juniors.

Table 10. Level of significance between the respondents' level of resilience and their demographic profile (age, sex, year level, and religion)

		Age	Sex	Year Level	Religion
Level of Resilience	Pearson Correlation	0.22**	-0.05	0.22**	-0.03
	Sig. (2-tailed)/p-value	0.002	.492	0.002	0.680
	N	191	191	191	191

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

p-value<0.05= sig.

In Table 11, it is indicated that the respondents' level of resilience have a significant relationship with their level of spirituality. Since $r = 0.32$ and $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis is rejected. Although the association is positively significant, the level of significance is weak since the measure of resilience is low. The two factors, namely amount of spirituality and level of resilience, nevertheless have a positive link even though the relationship is not very strong. As a result, people become more resilient as their level of spirituality rises. This finding is congruent with that of the Gülerce and Maraj study from 2021, which showed that spirituality significantly affects resilient behavior and lowers hopelessness.

Table 11. Correlation between the respondents' level of resilience and their Spirituality

		Level of Resilience
Level of Spirituality	Pearson Correlation	0.32**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.00001
	N	191

p-value<0.05= sig.

Conclusion

The results revealed that there is a significant relationship between the respondents' level of spirituality and their level of resilience. This indicates that the higher their level of spirituality, the higher their level of resilience. However, it should be taken into consideration that despite the high level of spirituality, the self-confidence during stress is low.

The results of the study support Caritas Process 3 of Jean Watson's Theory of Human Caring. Nursing students must develop their own spiritual practices in order to provide their future patients with holistic care. They use this as their main coping mechanism during crises like the COVID-19 outbreak, which helps them build resilience (Cueto & Agaton, 2021). Hence, the importance of fostering spirituality among nursing students must be further promoted and reinforced as it does have an impact on their resilience.

Recommendations

The results suggest that appropriate preparations be developed for psychological education and health promotion programs focused at fostering resilience and spirituality among nursing students in order to assist the development of good coping strategies that will enhance their mental health and wellbeing. It is recommended that the Guidance Counseling Center offer online symposiums to encourage spiritual exploration and expression on campus. For the college of nursing to facilitate strategies that maintain and improve resilience among nursing students, it is recommended to apply the 5-week Resilience Program of the Stanford University. For the future researchers to expand the scope of the respondents in terms of the locale of the study to include other nursing schools within and outside the city and to include different colleges in MSU-IIT to determine if college courses can affect students' level of spirituality and resilience.

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