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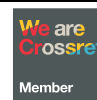
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Original Article

Resilience, Academic Stress, and Mental Well-Being Among Senior High School Students: Basis for a School-Based Mental Health Program

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Abstract. This study examined the relationships among resilience, academic stress, and positive mental well-being among Senior High School (SHS) students at Elizabeth Seton School and used the findings as a basis for developing a school-based mental health program. A mixed-methods research design was employed, combining a quantitative descriptive-correlational approach with a qualitative interview component. The quantitative phase involved 162 SHS students from the STEM, ABM, and HUMSS strands who participated through total enumeration sampling, while 10 students participated in semi-structured interviews through convenience sampling. Quantitative data were collected using the Perception of Academic Stress Scale (PAS), Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS), and Resilience Scale (RS-23). Frequencies, percentages, weighted means, standard deviations, and Spearman's rank-order correlation were used to analyze the quantitative data, while thematic analysis was used to examine the qualitative interviews. The findings showed that students experienced high academic stress ($M = 3.44$, $SD = 1.08$), moderate positive mental well-being ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 1.11$), and moderate-to-high resilience ($M = 5.06$, $SD = 1.49$). Resilience had a weak positive but statistically non-significant relationship with academic stress ($\rho = .136$, $p = .082$), whereas it had a strong positive and statistically significant relationship with positive mental well-being ($\rho = .745$, $p < .001$). Qualitative findings highlighted academic overload, parental and societal expectations, limited rest, peer and family support, religious or spiritual coping, goal-focused persistence, disengagement, and technology use as important aspects of students' experiences. Overall, the findings suggest that resilience should not be viewed as a mechanism that necessarily reduces academic stress but may be more closely associated with students' positive mental well-being. The findings served as the basis for a proposed school-based mental health program integrating academic stress management, resilience-building, positive mental well-being promotion, and healthy coping strategies.

Keywords: Resilience; Academic Stress; Positive Mental Well-Being; Coping Strategies; School-Based Mental Health Program

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Introduction

Senior High School (SHS) is an important developmental period in which Filipino adolescents manage increasing academic demands while preparing for higher education, employment, and adult responsibilities. Academic and psychosocial experiences during this period are closely connected with students' well-being. In a large study of Filipino secondary school students, [Buenconsejo and Datu \(2024\)](#) examined two independent samples of Grade 11 and Grade 12 students with 2,283 students in the cross-sectional sample and 1,620 in the

longitudinal sample. Their findings showed that positive youth development was associated with both positive outcomes such as school engagement and psychological needs satisfaction, and negative outcomes, including depression, anxiety, and stress. The longitudinal findings further showed that positive youth development predicted later school engagement, contribution and negative mental health through psychological needs satisfaction. These findings indicate that adolescent well-being cannot be understood through academic performance alone because students' psychological resources and social environments also shape how they experience school.

Academic stress is therefore an important concern among high school students. A recent systematic review by [Jagiello et al. \(2025\)](#) which examined 31 studies from 13 countries, found that academic stress is common during high school and is heightened around high-stakes assessments. The review also showed that school-based interventions can reduce or prevent academic stress, although the quality of existing intervention studies varies and stronger evidence was found for cognitive-behavioral approaches. Similarly, a meta-analysis of 55 randomized controlled studies found small but significant effects of school-based interventions on stress and coping/resilience that suggests that stress management and resilience-focused programs can be useful when appropriately designed ([Juhász et al., 2024](#)).

Resilience has received increasing attention as a potential protective resource for adolescents experiencing adversity. However, the relationship between resilience and academic stress is not consistently negative. Resilience is a complex construct that has been conceptualized as a personal characteristic, a process that develops over time or an outcome reflected in successful adaptation following adversity ([Anderson & Priebe, 2021](#)). An integrative systematic review likewise identified both individual and environmental factors contributing to resilience among children, adolescents, and also young adults that emphasizes that resilience develops through the interaction between personal resources and environmental supports ([Listosella et al., 2022](#)). Consequently, students with greater resilience may be better able to adapt to stressful academic situations, but resilience does not necessarily mean that they experience less stress. A student may remain highly resilient while still experiencing substantial workload, examination pressure or fear of failure.

Among 611 Filipino nursing students, [Berdida and Grande \(2023\)](#) found that academic stress was negatively related to quality of life and resilience, while resilience mediated the relationship between academic stress and quality of life. A systematic review of Chinese high school students also identified resilience, family relationships, school climate, grades, gender, and personal relationships among important potential moderators of academic stress and internalizing problems ([Wen & Hu, 2023](#)). The direction and strength of the relationship may depend on the type and intensity of stressor, social support, school context, developmental stage, and how resilience is defined and measured. Methodological differences are also important because recent reviews have identified substantial variation in the conceptualization and measurement of resilience among young people ([Zhang et al., 2023](#)).

Resilience should also be distinguished from mental well-being. While academic stress refers to the pressure or strain associated with academic demands, mental well-being reflects positive psychological functioning and the capacity to feel and function well. This distinction is particularly important in the present study because the Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) used in the research measures positive mental well-being rather than mental health problems or psychological distress. Contemporary psychometric research confirms that the Warwick–Edinburgh measures are designed to assess positive aspects of mental health and well-being, with higher scores representing higher levels of mental well-being ([Hanzlová & Lynn, 2023](#); [Hanzlová & Kudrnáč, 2024](#)). Therefore, resilience may have a different relationship with stress than with well-being: resilience may coexist with substantial academic stress while still being associated with students' ability to maintain positive functioning and psychological well-being; perhaps, this distinction provides a clearer basis for interpreting the relationship examined in the present study.

Resilience may theoretically function as a moderator, meaning that it changes the strength of the relationship between academic stress and well-being; it may function as a mediator, meaning that it helps explain how stress is associated with later outcomes; or it may simply be a correlate that is associated with stress or well-being without establishing a causal pathway. Existing research provides examples of these different possibilities. For instance, [Berdida and Grande \(2023\)](#) specifically tested resilience as a mediator, whereas [Wen and Hu \(2023\)](#) identified resilience as one possible moderator of academic stress-related internalizing problems. The present study uses a cross-sectional descriptive-correlational design; therefore, it is most appropriate to examine resilience as a correlate of academic stress and mental well-being rather than claim that it mediates or moderates their relationship. Thus, determining mediation or moderation would require explicit statistical testing and, preferably, longitudinal or experimental data.

The Philippine context makes this issue particularly important. Recent local evidence shows that Filipino adolescents experience mental health concerns within interconnected family, peer, school, and social environments. [Mallari and Peltzer \(2025\)](#), using data from 10,175 Filipino school-going adolescents in the Philippine Global School-based Health Survey, reported that 27.8% experienced psychological distress. Their findings also identified parental understanding and close friendships as protective factors, while experiences such as bullying and physical attacks were associated with greater psychological distress. These findings highlight the importance of social relationships and school-based support when addressing adolescent mental health in the Philippines. Further, [Buenconsejo and Datu \(2024\)](#) provide particularly relevant evidence because their participants were Filipino Grade 11 and Grade 12 students, the same educational level examined in the present study. Their longitudinal findings demonstrate that positive youth development can predict later school engagement and mental health outcomes, but the pathways involve psychological needs satisfaction rather than a simple direct relationship.

Despite these developments, important questions remain unanswered. Existing Philippine studies have examined adolescent psychological distress, positive youth development, coping, and resilience, while other studies have examined academic stress and resilience among specific student populations such as nursing students. However, there remains limited evidence specifically examining how resilience, academic stress, and positive mental well-being are related within the same group of Filipino Senior High School students in a private school setting. More importantly, previous research has not clearly established whether resilience has the same relationship with students' academic stress as it has with their positive mental well-being.

The present study addresses this gap by examining these variables together among Grade 11 and Grade 12 students at Elizabeth Seton School. The study does not assume that resilience reduces academic stress or that it causes better well-being; instead, it examines whether the variables are statistically associated and uses students' qualitative accounts to provide context for these relationships.

Understanding these relationships is important that develops appropriate school-based mental health support. Recent reviews have found that school-based resilience and stress-management interventions can produce beneficial outcomes, although their effectiveness varies according to intervention design, target population, and implementation approach ([Jagiello et al., 2025](#); [Juhász et al., 2024](#); [Llistosella et al., 2023](#)). In the Philippine context, the need for school-based support is further reinforced by evidence of psychological distress and the protective contribution of supportive relationships among Filipino adolescents ([Mallari & Peltzer, 2025](#)). Thus, examining resilience alongside academic stress and mental well-being may provide a more balanced understanding of students' needs and inform a school-based mental health program that addresses both academic pressures and psychological resources.

Accordingly, the present study focuses on resilience, academic stress, and mental well-being among Senior High School students at Elizabeth Seton School. That's why treating resilience as a correlate rather than assuming a causal or moderating role, and by conceptualizing

WEMWBS scores correctly as indicators of positive mental well-being, the study seeks to clarify how these three constructs are related in a Philippine SHS context. The findings may contribute local evidence to an area where international research has produced varied results and may provide a more appropriate empirical basis for developing a school-based mental health program responsive to students' academic, emotional, and social needs.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

This research was grounded in key theoretical frameworks that explain the relationship between resilience level and academic stress as well as mental well-being in the overall well-being of Senior High School (SHS) students. The two major independent variables were (1) the level of academic stress and (2) the perceived level of mental well-being while the dependent variable was the level of resilience.

Resilience theory supports the research paradigm in this study through its capacity to understand how individuals adapt and recover from stressors and adverse situations; hence, it explains the promotive factors that counteract negative effects of stress that are categorized into two such as assets or the internal qualities and external resources or the support systems of an individual (Zimmerman, 2014). This theory is related to the dependent variable in this study which is the level of resilience among Senior High School (SHS) students who are enrolled in Elizabeth Seton School. In response to this theory, the study identified the internal assets and external resources that neutralize academic stress among respondents. It is aligned to develop mental health program for Senior High School (SHS) students in dealing with their academic stress and mental well-being to promote high resilience level and positive outcomes.

Meanwhile, the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping support the independent variable and Senior High School (SHS) students' academic stress level since this model was first conceptualized by Lazarus and Folkman in 1984, that entails individuals' primary and secondary appraisal processes to categorize their stressors (Berjot & Gillet, 2011). This helps to determine the level of academic stress of respondents inside their learning environment and the coping mechanisms as adolescents; whereas this theory works with resilience theory to assess the significant relationship of resilience level to the academic stress level of Senior High School (SHS) students.

Self-determination theory (SDT) aids to understand the perceived mental well-being of respondents as an independent variable in this study. This theory explains that the psychological well-being of individuals is relevant in satisfaction of three (3) basic needs such as autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Legault, 2017). For this study, SDT assisted in describing the mental well-being of the respondents that they experienced within their environment and relationships inside and outside their school premises. This matches the resilience theory in finding of perceived mental well-being to the level of resilience among respondents.

Research Paradigm of the Study

The resilience theory supports the level of resilience among respondents which allows them to understand how their internal or personal qualities can be used to adapt to their own stressors that is related to their academic goals and activities. This theory is relevant to the proposed mental health program that fosters social connection, deeper religious affiliation, and teaching effective coping strategies. It is complementary to the Transactional Model of Stress and Coping that helps to design effective appraisal techniques for Senior High School (SHS) students to encourage positive reframing of stressful academic situations.

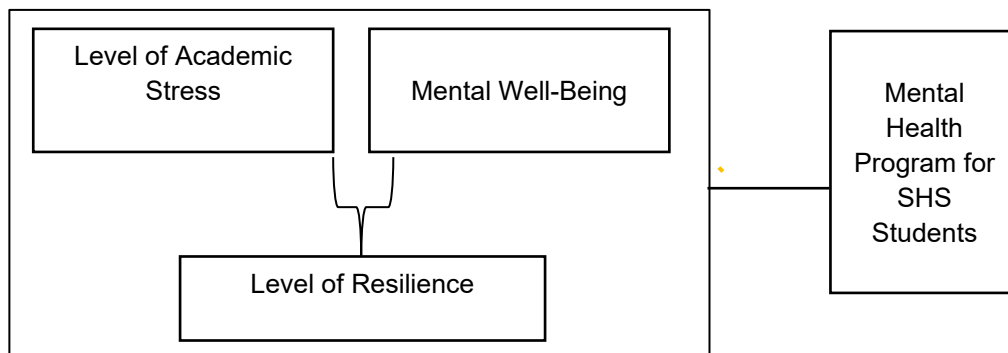


Figure 1. Research Paradigm of the Study

Moreover, the SDT works with the other theories to deeply understand the psychological needs of the respondents and navigate their perception towards mental well-being. Implementing SDT-informed interventions can result to student-centered learning environment in Elizabeth Seton School which caters autonomy in academic choices while nurturing sense of belongingness through collaborative projects. This will guide the enhanced mental health program for Senior High School (SHS) students to elevate competence and emotional well-being.

Objectives of the Problem

The study aimed to determine the levels of academic stress, mental well-being, and resilience among Senior High School (SHS) students at Elizabeth Seton School as the basis for developing a mental health program. Specifically, it sought to determine the level of academic stress among SHS students, identify their perceived mental well-being affecting their general well-being, and assess their level of resilience. The study also aimed to examine the significant relationship between the students' level of resilience and their level of academic stress, as well as between their level of resilience and their perceived mental well-being. In addition, it sought to explore how SHS students perceive and cope with academic stress and mental well-being. Based on the findings, the study further aimed to develop a mental health program designed to address the needs of Senior High School students.

Hypothesis of the Study

The study utilized 0.05 level of significance to test the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between the level of resilience and level of academic stress among Senior High School (SHS) students at Elizabeth Seton School.
2. There is no significant relationship between the level of resilience and perceived mental well-being among Senior High School (SHS) students at Elizabeth Seton School

Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study focused on 162 Grade 11 and Grade 12 Senior High School students enrolled in the Accountancy, Business and Management (ABM), Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), and Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) strands at Elizabeth Seton School, Las Piñas Campus, during School Year 2024–2025. The study examined three primary variables: academic stress, resilience, and mental well-being. It determined the students' levels of these variables and examined the relationships between resilience and academic stress and between resilience and mental well-being. The study also included qualitative interviews with 10 selected students to obtain additional information about their experiences of academic stress, coping strategies, and well-being. Thus, the quantitative and qualitative findings served as the basis for developing a proposed school-based mental health program for SHS students.

The study has several limitations. First, the participants were drawn from only one private school and were limited to Grade 11 and Grade 12 students in the ABM, STEM, and HUMSS strands. Therefore, the findings may not be generalized to all Filipino SHS students that includes students from public schools, other private schools, other geographical areas, or other academic strands. Second, the study used self-reported questionnaires which may be affected by recall, response, or social-desirability bias. Third, the study did not include other relevant factors such as family background, socioeconomic status, school climate, teacher support or other contextual characteristics that may be associated with academic stress, resilience, or mental well-being. Fourth, because the quantitative component used a cross-sectional descriptive-correlational design, the findings indicate statistical associations but cannot establish causality. And in particular, the study cannot determine whether resilience mediates or moderates the relationship between academic stress and mental well-being; whereas, such mechanisms would require specific mediation or moderation analyses and, ideally, and longitudinal or experimental designs.

Finally, the use of the WEMWBS means that the mental health-related variable in this study represents positive mental well-being rather than mental health problems or psychological distress. Higher WEMWBS scores indicate higher positive mental well-being. Therefore, the findings that concerns this variable should be interpreted as relationships with mental well-being and should not be interpreted as evidence that students have more or fewer mental health disorders or challenges

Method

Participants

The participants of this study were all Senior High School (SHS) students enrolled at Elizabeth Seton School–Las Piñas Campus during the School Year 2024–2025. A total of 162 students participated in the quantitative phase of the study which represents the entire population of Grade 11 and Grade 12 students. Since all eligible students participated in the survey, the study achieved a 100% participation rate for the quantitative component.

The participants consisted of 88 Grade 12 students (54.32%) and 74 Grade 11 students (45.68%). Of the total respondents, 88 (54.32%) were male and 74 (45.68%) were female. The students were between 16 and 18 years of age which is the typical age range for Senior High School students in the Philippines. All participants were enrolled in a private secondary educational institution and shared similar educational experiences and academic requirements. These characteristics made them appropriate participants for examining academic stress, mental well-being, and resilience among Senior High School students.

For the qualitative phase of the study, ten (10) Senior High School students participated in individual interviews. These participants were selected from the quantitative respondents and

voluntarily agreed to participate. The interview participants represented students from both Grade 11 and Grade 12 and provided detailed accounts of their experiences with academic stress, mental well-being, resilience as well as coping strategies. Participation in both phases of the study was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained before data collection. No incentives, monetary compensation, or other forms of payment were provided to the participants.

Table 1. Gender and Age Profile of Senior High School (SHS) Students

Grade Level	Male	Female	Age Range (Years)	Total
Grade 11	43	31	16–17	74
Grade 12	45	43	17–18	88
Total	88	74	16–18	162

Sampling Procedures

The quantitative component of the study employed total enumeration sampling, a non-probability sampling technique in which every member of the target population who met the inclusion criteria was invited to participate in the study. According to Laerd Dissertation (2022), total enumeration sampling is needed when the target population is relatively small and all members possess characteristics relevant to the research objectives. Because the Senior High School population at Elizabeth Seton School consisted of only 162 students, all enrolled Grade 11 and Grade 12 students were included in the survey. Of the 162 eligible students approached, all 162 agreed to participate, resulting in a 100% response rate.

For the qualitative component, convenience sampling was employed to select participants for the interviews that's why students who had completed the survey and were available and willing to share their experiences were invited to participate. A total of ten (10) students voluntarily selected themselves into the interview phase which this number was considered adequate to obtain rich descriptions of students' experiences regarding academic stress, mental well-being, resilience, and coping strategies.

On the other hand, the data collection was conducted at Elizabeth Seton School–Las Piñas Campus in designated classrooms and other appropriate school facilities during scheduled periods approved by the school administration. The quantitative data were collected through self-administered survey questionnaires while the qualitative data were gathered through face-to-face semi-structured interviews conducted in a quiet and private setting within the school to make sure confidentiality and encourage open discussion.

Participation in both phases of the study was entirely voluntary. And prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the school administration and informed consent was secured from all participants; whereas, and for participants below the age of 18 years, parental or guardian consent and student assent were obtained in accordance with institutional ethical guidelines. Participants were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. No financial incentives, gifts, or other forms of compensation were provided for participation.

Materials and Apparatus

Three standardized and validated instruments were used to collect the quantitative data. First is the academic stress was measured using the Perception of Academic Stress Scale (PAS) developed by Bedewy and Gabriel (2015). Second, the PAS consists of 18 items covering four dimensions: (1) pressure to perform, (2) perceptions of workload, (3) academic self-perception, and (4) time restraints. Lastly, the Responses were rated using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree) with a reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.70, indicating acceptable internal consistency.

Table 2. Perception of Academic Stress Scale (PAS) Interpretation

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation	Descriptive Interpretation
5	4.21–5.00	Strongly Agree	Very High
4	3.41–4.20	Agree	High
3	2.61–3.40	Moderately Agree	Moderate
2	1.81–2.60	Disagree	Low
1	1.00–1.80	Strongly Disagree	Very Low

Mental well-being was assessed using the Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS). The instrument consists of 14 positively worded items designed to assess positive mental well-being. Each item is rated using a 5-point response scale, ranging from 1 (None of the time) to 5 (All of the time). The instrument has a reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.89, indicating good internal consistency.

Importantly, WEMWBS measures positive mental well-being rather than mental health challenges or psychological distress. Therefore, higher WEMWBS scores represent higher levels of positive mental well-being. This distinction was applied consistently in the present study when interpreting the instrument and its relationship with resilience. The manuscript's revised conceptualization follows this interpretation rather than treating WEMWBS scores as an indicator of the presence or severity of mental health problems.

Table 3. WEMWBS Response Scale

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation
5	4.21–5.00	All of the time
4	3.41–4.20	Often
3	2.61–3.40	Some of the time
2	1.81–2.60	Rarely
1	1.00–1.80	None of the time

The total WEMWBS score ranges from 14 to 70, interpreted as follows:

Table 4. WEMWBS Total Score Interpretation

Total Score	Interpretation
14–28	Very Low Mental Well-being
29–42	Low Mental Well-being
43–56	Moderate Mental Well-being
57–70	High Mental Well-being

On the other hand, the students' resilience was measured using the 23-item Resilience Scale (RS-23) adapted from [Wagnild and Young \(1993\)](#). The instrument uses a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). Hence, possible scores range from 23 to 161, with higher scores indicating greater resilience.

Table 5. Resilience Scale (RS-23) Interpretation

Scale	Range	Verbal Interpretation	Resilience Level
7	6.00–7.00	Strongly Agree	Extremely Resilient
6	5.00–5.99	Agree	Very Highly Resilient
5	4.00–4.99	Somewhat Agree	Highly Resilient
4	3.00–3.99	Neutral	Moderately Resilient
3	2.00–2.99	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Resilient
2	1.00–1.99	Disagree	Low Resilience
1	0.00–0.99	Strongly Disagree	Very Low Resilience

A researcher-developed semi-structured interview guide was used during the qualitative phase to gather detailed information with regards to students' academic stress experiences, perceived mental well-being, and coping strategies. Nonetheless, the permission to use all standardized instruments was obtained from their respective developers prior to data collection.

Procedures

The study employed a mixed-methods research design that combines a quantitative descriptive-correlational component with a qualitative interview component. After securing approval from the school administration and that obtains informed consent from the participants, the quantitative questionnaires were administered to all 162 Senior High School (SHS) students enrolled in Grades 11 and 12 at Elizabeth Seton School–Las Piñas Campus during School Year 2024–2025. Because the entire eligible population was included, total enumeration sampling was used for the quantitative component.

The respondents completed the 18-item Perception of Academic Stress Scale (PAS), 14-item Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS), and 23-item Resilience Scale (RS-23). The instruments measured academic stress, positive mental well-being, and resilience, respectively. For the qualitative component, 10 students were selected from the quantitative respondents through convenience sampling and participated in individual semi-structured interviews. The interviews explored students' experiences of academic stress, resilience, positive mental well-being, and coping strategies. Participation was voluntary, and confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the data collection process. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study without penalty.

Design or Data Analysis

The study used a mixed-methods design integrating a descriptive-correlational quantitative approach and a qualitative descriptive interview approach. Quantitative data from the 162 respondents were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, weighted means, and standard deviations to describe the levels of academic stress, positive mental well-being, and resilience. Spearman's rank-order correlation coefficient (Spearman's rho) was used to determine whether significant relationships existed between resilience and academic stress and between resilience and positive mental well-being with the level of significance set at $\alpha = .05$. Nonetheless, these analyses examined associations among the study variables and were not intended to establish causal relationships.

For the qualitative component, interview data from the 10 participants were analyzed using thematic analysis. The interview responses were reviewed and coded to identify the recurring patterns and categories related to students' academic stress experiences, resilience, positive mental well-being and coping strategies. Related codes were organized into broader themes that represented common experiences and perspectives among the participants; hence, the qualitative findings were first examined to identify students' reported experiences and coping patterns and were then considered alongside the quantitative findings to provide a more comprehensive interpretation of the relationships among academic stress, resilience, and positive mental well-being. The combined findings served as the basis on how to develop the proposed school-based mental health program.

Results and Discussions

This section presents the results of the Rasch analysis, including unidimensionality, item fit statistics, and Differential Item Functioning (DIF) across gender, ethnicity, and age.

The Level of Academic Stress of Senior High School (SHS) Students

There is a complex level of confidence and anxiety when it comes to the academic stress level among Senior High School (SHS) students at Elizabeth Seton School. Indicators were ranked and it emphasized that the topmost stress of Senior High School (SHS) students was to fail their entire course or strand and followed by fear of being jobless. Their worries were relevant in passing their exams but being incompetent to secure jobs or careers in the future as second stressor. The third stressor was the stressful examination in every subject, yet the fourth highest indicator highlighted their high confidence of being a successful student. While the 5th highest indicator explained that respondents were stressed by critical teachers in term of their performance either written or non-written works.

Table 6. Academic Stress Levels Among Senior High School (SHS) Students

ITEM	STATEMENT	MEAN	SD	STRESS LEVEL	RANK
1	I am confident that I will be a successful student.	3.70	0.88	High	4
2	I am confident that I will be successful in my future career.	3.66	0.88	High	6
3	I can make academic decisions easily.	3.34	1.03	Moderate	11
4	The time allocated to classes and academic work is enough.	3.13	1.05	Moderate	15
5	I have enough time to relax after work.	2.80	1.17	Moderate	17
6	My teachers are critical of my academic performance.	3.68	0.95	High	5
7	I fear failing courses this year.	4.19	1.11	High	1
8	I think that my worry about examinations is a weakness of character.	3.42	1.28	High	10
9	Teachers have unrealistic expectations of me.	2.70	1.08	Moderate	18
10	The size of the curriculum (workload) is excessive.	3.59	0.92	High	8
11	I believe that the amount of work assignments is too much.	3.63	0.96	High	7
12	I am unable to catch up if I get behind the work.	3.23	1.21	Moderate	14
13	The unrealistic expectations of my parents stress me out.	2.88	1.39	Moderate	16
14	Competition with my peers for grades is quite intense.	3.28	1.13	Moderate	13
15	The examination questions are usually difficult.	3.46	0.91	High	9
16	Examination time is short to complete the answers.	3.32	1.20	Moderate	12
17	Examination times are very stressful to me.	3.93	1.17	High	3
18	Even if I pass my exams, I am worried about getting a job.	4.05	1.17	High	2

As shown in Table 6, the highest-rated academic stress indicator was fear of failing courses ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 1.11$) that followed by worry about obtaining a job even after passing examinations ($M = 4.05$, $SD = 1.17$), and examination-related stress ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.17$). These results suggest that academic stress among the respondents was strongly associated with concerns about academic performance and future career outcomes. The findings also show that students' academic concerns extend beyond immediate school requirements because future employment was among the most highly rated sources of concern.

Workload and performance-related demands were also prominent. The students reported high levels of agreement that the amount of work assignments was excessive ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 0.96$), that the curriculum workload was excessive ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 0.92$) and that teachers were critical of their academic performance ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 0.95$). These findings indicate that academic stress was not limited to examinations but also involved the volume of academic requirements and students' perceptions of performance evaluation. In contrast, students reported moderate levels for having enough time for classes and academic work ($M = 3.13$, $SD = 1.05$) and being able to relax after academic work ($M = 2.80$, $SD = 1.17$). hence, the latter was one of the lowest-rated items that suggests that opportunities for rest and recovery may be limited within students' academic routines.

The results also reveal an important distinction between academic confidence and academic stress. Students reported high confidence in becoming successful students ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 0.88$) and successful in their future careers ($M = 3.66$, $SD = 0.88$). Therefore, the presence of high academic stress should not automatically be interpreted as a lack of confidence or inability to succeed. Rather, students may feel capable of achieving their goals and experience substantial pressure in meeting the academic requirements necessary to reach those goals. This interpretation is consistent with the present study's broader finding that resilience and academic stress were not significantly associated where it suggests that having stronger personal coping resources does not necessarily mean that students experience lower levels of academic demand.

The qualitative findings provide further context for the quantitative results. Students described academic workload, overlapping requirements, and limited time as important experiences associated with academic stress. One participant described academic stress as related to the “*workload of senior high school*” (P1) while another explained that stress occurs when “*there are a lot of activities or topics that are piling up to one another within such a short time*” (P8). These accounts correspond with the quantitative findings showing high ratings for excessive assignments and curriculum workload. Another participant reported reduced communication during periods of stress, stating, “*I don't really communicate much when I have stress*” (P5). This qualitative response illustrates how academic pressure may also be reflected in students' day-to-day behavioural and interpersonal experiences.

Nevertheless, the findings show that the respondents experienced high academic stress in relation to fear of failure, examinations, future employment concerns, workload, and perceived academic evaluation. At the same time, the students retained relatively high confidence in their academic and career prospects. This suggests that academic stress and positive expectations can coexist rather than represent opposite conditions. The findings therefore support the need for school-based interventions that address the academic demands and environmental sources of stress that includes workload management, examination preparation, time management, and also opportunities for adequate rest. Such interventions are consistent with recent evidence that academic stress is a significant concern among high school students and that school-based stress-management interventions can provide useful support when implemented (Jagiello et al., 2025; Juhász et al., 2024).

Perceived Mental Well-Being in General the Well-being of Senior High School (SHS) Students

The Warwick–Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS) results indicate that the Senior High School (SHS) students at Elizabeth Seton School demonstrated an overall moderate level of positive mental well-being ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 1.11$). Because WEMWBS is positively worded, higher scores indicate more frequent experiences of positive mental well-being. The results therefore describe the extent to which students experienced positive emotions, psychological functioning, energy, confidence, and social connectedness rather than the presence or severity of mental health problems. Among the indicators, students reported the highest levels of feeling loved and feeling close to other people, while feeling relaxed, having energy to spare, and thinking clearly received comparatively lower ratings.

Table 7. Perceived Mental Well-Being in General the Well-being of Senior High School (SHS) Students

ITEM	STATEMENT	MEAN	SD	VERBAL INTERPRETATION	DESCRIPTIVE INTERPRETATION	RANK
1	I've been feeling optimistic about the future.	3.34	1.09	Some of the time	Moderate	7
2	I've been feeling useful.	3.24	1.11	Some of the time	Moderate	10
3	I've been feeling relaxed.	2.79	1.13	Some of the time	Low	14
4	I've been feeling interested in other people.	3.46	1.13	Often	Moderate	4
5	I've had energy to spare.	2.81	1.07	Some of the time	Low	13
6	I've been dealing with problems well.	2.95	1.10	Some of the time	Low	11
7	I've been thinking clearly.	2.84	1.03	Some of the time	Low	12
8	I've been feeling good about myself.	3.00	1.14	Some of the time	Low	9
9	I've been feeling close to other people.	3.74	1.09	Often	Moderate	2
10	I've been feeling confident.	3.21	1.10	Some of the time	Moderate	11
11	I've been able to make up my own mind about things.	3.38	1.11	Some of the time	Moderate	6
12	I've been feeling loved.	3.80	1.16	Often	Moderate	1
13	I've been feeling interested in new things.	3.52	1.18	Often	Moderate	3
14	I've been feeling cheerful.	3.22	1.15	Some of the time	Moderate	9

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation. Higher WEMWBS item scores indicate more frequent experiences of positive mental well-being.

As shown in Table 7, the highest-rated indicator was “*I've been feeling loved*” ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 1.16$), followed by “*I've been feeling close to other people*” ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.09$) and “*I've been feeling interested in new things*” ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 1.18$). These results indicate that positive interpersonal experiences and social connectedness were among the stronger aspects of

the respondents' well-being. The relatively high ratings for feeling interested in other people ($M = 3.46$) and feeling interested in new things ($M = 3.52$) further suggest that many students continued to experience engagement with people and activities in their environment.

In contrast, several indicators received comparatively lower ratings. *"I've been feeling relaxed"* had a mean of $M = 2.79$ ($SD = 1.13$), while *"I've had energy to spare"* had a mean of $M = 2.81$ ($SD = 1.07$). Similarly, *"I've been thinking clearly"* ($M = 2.84$, $SD = 1.03$) and *"I've been dealing with problems well"* ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 1.10$) received relatively lower scores. These findings suggest that although students reported positive social experiences, aspects related to relaxation, energy, cognitive functioning, and managing problems were less consistently experienced. This pattern is particularly relevant when considered alongside the study's finding of high academic stress, as students may maintain positive social connections while still experiencing pressure and fatigue associated with academic demands.

The findings also show that students reported moderate levels of optimism, confidence, and personal functioning. Feeling optimistic about the future received a mean of $M = 3.34$ ($SD = 1.09$), while feeling confident received $M = 3.21$ ($SD = 1.10$). The item concerning making independent decisions received $M = 3.38$ ($SD = 1.11$). These results indicate that students experienced these positive psychological states some of the time rather than consistently. Thus, the overall moderate level of mental well-being reflects a combination of relatively strong social connectedness and less consistent experiences of relaxation, energy, cognitive clarity, and problem management.

The qualitative findings provide additional context for these results. Some participants described experiences of anxiety, stress, fatigue, and burnout when academic responsibilities became difficult to manage. One participant explained, *"at times I get anxious and sometimes I feel some sort of stress because of thinking what I have to do with the work"* (P1), while another described the effects of excessive academic work by stating, *"from working too much you get burned-out and you get to the point you are not able to work"* (P3). Another participant reported a tendency to withdraw when overwhelmed, stating, *"I just want to be alone most of the time... I think it's easier for me to cope on my own"* (P8). These accounts provide context for the comparatively lower scores on relaxation, energy, and dealing with problems well. At the same time, the high ratings for feeling loved and close to others are consistent with interview accounts emphasizing the importance of family, peers, and other support systems in coping with academic difficulties.

For such reason, social interactions and school organizations have significant relationship to depression levels because it mitigates negative effects of stress and anxiety especially when peers and teachers at school assist in improving quality of life since it was proven to be significantly correlated (Cleofas, 2019). This phenomenon, such as in Elizabeth Seton School, requires key changes in addressing mental health issue through program visibility, stronger stakeholder collaboration, and mental health expert consultation (Gonzalo and Alibudbud, 2024).

Frequency Distribution of the Scores in the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)

Table 8. Frequency Distribution of the Scores in the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale (WEMWBS)

SCORE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Low Well-Being	13	8.03 %
Moderate Well-Being	54	33.33 %
High Well-Being	73	45.06 %
Very High Well-Being	22	13.58 %
Total	162	100 %

Table 8 shows the distribution of WEMWBS scores among the 162 SHS students where the largest group consisted of students with high mental well-being (45.06%), followed by those with moderate mental well-being (33.33%). A further 13.58% of students were classified as having very high mental well-being, while 8.03% were classified as having low mental well-being. Overall, the distribution indicates that most respondents were within the moderate-to-high ranges of positive mental well-being, although a smaller group reported lower levels that may warrant attention and additional school-based support.

The distribution is consistent with the item-level findings in Table 7. Students generally reported stronger positive experiences in areas of social connectedness and interpersonal relationships, while lower scores were observed in relaxation, energy, clear thinking and problem management. This pattern suggests that positive mental well-being among SHS students should be understood as multidimensional. That's why having strong social relationships does not necessarily mean that students consistently experience energy, relaxation, or effective problem management. Therefore, school-based support should strengthen existing social resources while also provides the students with opportunities to develop stress-management, emotional-regulation, and coping skills.

The findings are also important when considered alongside the study's correlation results. Resilience demonstrated a strong positive and statistically significant relationship with mental well-being ($p = .745$, $p < .001$) which this means that students with higher resilience scores also tended to report higher levels of positive mental well-being. However, because the study used a descriptive-correlational design, this relationship should be interpreted as an association rather than a causal effect. The findings do not establish that resilience causes higher mental well-being, nor do they establish that increasing resilience will necessarily produce improvements in well-being.

This distinction is important because the study found a different pattern between resilience and academic stress. Resilience had only a weak positive and non-significant relationship with academic stress ($p = .136$, $p = .082$). Taken together, these findings suggest that resilience may be more closely associated with students' positive psychological functioning and well-being than with the amount of academic stress they experience. In other words, students can demonstrate resilience and maintain positive well-being while still experiencing substantial academic demands because this supports the need for a school-based program that does not rely on resilience-building alone but also addresses the academic sources of stress.

The presence of students in the moderate and low well-being categories indicates that some respondents may still experience difficulties maintaining positive mental health despite the overall trend toward higher well-being. Social support and school-based mental health initiatives can help strengthen student well-being and address early signs of psychological difficulties (Aguinaldo & Garcia, 2024).

The Level of Resilience Among Senior High School (SHS) Students

Table 9 posted that the top indicator was that respondents were highly resilient and eager to be their own person if they left with no choice. Second, they were very highly resilient that they keep interested in things or activities that they recognized as important. Also, Senior High School (SHS) students showed resiliency through laughing about something to ease their emotions. Another indicator pointed out that it was alright to be disliked by somebody and they have acceptance over it. The fifth highest rank referred to respondents' disposition on being confident to hard experience that they already handled before. Based on the interview, the most common sources of mental distress or mental well-being among Senior High School (SHS) students were parental and societal pressure and lack of rest that leads to burnout. They felt that, as Senior High School (SHS) students, they were obliged to be always on top of their class because it was their parents' expectations.

Table 9. Mean, Standard Deviations, and Interpretations of RS-23 Items

Item	Statement	MEAN	SD	Verbal Interpretation	Resilience Level	Rank
1	When I make plans, I follow through with them.	4.76	1.29	Somewhat Agree	Highly Resilient	17
2	I usually manage one way or another.	5.32	1.23	Agree	Very Highly Resilient	6
3	I can depend on myself more than anyone else.	5.27	1.50	Agree	Very Highly Resilient	10.5
4	Keeping interested in things is important to me.	5.66	1.38	Agree	Very Highly Resilient	2
5	I can be on my own if I must.	5.74	1.40	Agree	Very Highly Resilient	1
6	I feel proud that I have accomplished things in life.	5.27	1.57	Agree	Very Highly Resilient	10.5
7	I usually take things in my stride.	4.99	1.26	Somewhat Agree	Highly Resilient	14.5
8	I am friends with myself.	5.04	1.68	Agree	Very Highly Resilient	13
9	I feel that I can handle many things at a time.	4.22	1.63	Somewhat Agree	Highly Resilient	22
10	I am determined.	5.03	1.56	Agree	Very Highly Resilient	15
11	I can get through difficult times because I've experienced difficulty before.	5.34	1.36	Agree	Very Highly Resilient	5
12	I have self-discipline.	4.51	1.57	Somewhat Agree	Highly Resilient	19
13	I keep interested in things.	4.99	1.41	Somewhat Agree	Highly Resilient	14.5
14	I can usually find something to laugh about.	5.62	1.39	Agree	Very Highly Resilient	3
15	My belief in myself gets me through hard times.	4.86	1.54	Somewhat Agree	Highly Resilient	16
16	In an emergency, I'm somebody people generally can rely on.	5.17	1.35	Agree	Very Highly Resilient	12
17	I can usually look at a situation in a number of ways.	5.31	1.36	Agree	Very Highly Resilient	8
18	Sometimes I make myself do things whether I want to or not.	5.27	1.46	Agree	Very Highly Resilient	10.5
19	My life has meaning.	5.11	1.76	Agree	Very Highly Resilient	13
20	I do not dwell on things that I can't do anything about.	4.23	1.99	Somewhat Agree	Highly Resilient	21
21	When I am in a difficult situation, I can usually find my way out of it.	4.87	1.44	Somewhat Agree	Highly Resilient	15
22	I have enough energy to do what I have to do.	4.37	1.57	Somewhat Agree	Highly Resilient	20
23	It's okay if there are people who don't like me.	5.40	1.68	Agree	Very Highly Resilient	4

Also, respondents shared that their living environment, other relatives, and their community saw them as highly performing at school. Even though they stated that they were always sleepless and were unable to afford rest even weekends because they spent it for their homework and projects. At some instances, weekends became their schedule for group meetings and consultation.

Table 9 presents that 162 respondents from the study had moderate to high levels of resilience with most indicators having high mean scores above 5 (Agree) and few items were slightly behind the threshold (somewhat Agree). The average mean of all items was 5.06 with an SD value of 1.49 which shows that Senior High School (SHS) students were highly resilient with their academic obligations or challenges and their personal conflicts. Essentially, students strongly agreed that they can manage themselves, if necessary (mean=5.74), keep interested in things (mean=5.66), and could usually find something to laugh about (mean=5.62).

But there were areas where resilience could be further improved. For instance, indicators such as *“I feel that I can handle many things at a time”* (mean=4.22) and *“I do not well on things that I can’t do anything about”* (mean=4.23) obtained lower mean scores. The relatively higher standard deviations for these indicators (SD=1.63 and SD=1.99) also confirmed that there was significant variability in students’ coping abilities which need differentiated, customized, and group-aligned programs or interventions for mental health and resilience building. Moreover, there were findings in table 4 such as respondents tend to rely on themselves more than others (mean=5.27) and they often show determination (mean=5.03) which explains their strong sense of agency and responsibility. The students’ belief in their ability to overcome difficult times due to past experiences or events (M=5.34) further supported their adaptive capacity. Apparently, respondents expressed moderate agreement on the indicators about energy (mean=4.37) and self-discipline (mean=4.51).

The qualitative interview responses reflected varied perceptions of resilience among students where some participants described resilience as the ability to continue functioning despite difficulties such as one student who shared, *“I know what I want to do and I prioritize everything that needs to be finished, then that’s when I process the emotions I need to feel”* (P1). Others emphasized the role of support systems in helping them cope, with a participant explaining, *“I think I’m a resilient person because I have a solid support system... I know the problems won’t last forever”* (P6). But a few students expressed uncertainty about their resilience such as one participant who stated, *“sometimes I feel resilient and sometimes I’m not... there are times that I can’t handle it”* (P2).

Regardless of gender, high school students were moderately resilient (Faturromah & Sagita, 2023). That’s why resilience specifically academic factors could be maintained at a higher and desirable level when there is high academic self-efficacy (Cassidy, 2015). Senior High School (SHS) students at Elizabeth Seton School showed high resilience level and little room for improvement in times of adversity. Students with low resilience primarily warrant attention before it proceeds into anxiety and depression (Yosep et al., 2024).

Table 10. Frequency Distribution of the Scores in the RS-23 Items

Descriptive Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low Resilience	2	1.23 %
Moderate Resilience	31	19.14 %
High Resilience	111	68.52 %
Very High Resilience	18	11.11 %
Total	162	100 %

Table 10 shows that the largest group of respondents, 111 students (68.52%), were classified as having high resilience. Another 18 students (11.11%) were classified as having very high resilience. Meanwhile, 31 students (19.14%) had moderate resilience and 2 students (1.23%)

had low resilience. Thus, most respondents were classified within the high to very high resilience categories, although a smaller proportion demonstrated moderate or low resilience.

The qualitative findings provide further context for these results. Students described resilience in terms of continuing to function despite difficulties, prioritizing responsibilities, reflecting on problems, and seeking support. One participant explained, “*I know what I want to do and I prioritize everything that needs to be finished, then that's when I process the emotions I need to feel*” (P1). Another participant associated resilience with having a reliable support system, stating, “*I think I'm a resilient person because I have a solid support system... I know the problems won't last forever*” (P6). However, resilience was not experienced consistently by all participants. One student acknowledged, “*sometimes I feel resilient and sometimes I'm not... there are times that I can't handle it*” (P2). These accounts demonstrate that resilience may vary depending on the situation and available resources rather than functioning as a fixed characteristic that students possess at all times.

The interviews also identified academic workload, parental and social expectations, and limited opportunities for rest as experiences that students had to manage. These experiences are relevant to resilience because students described using prioritization, reflection, social support and other coping strategies when facing academic demands. Importantly, these qualitative accounts do not demonstrate that resilience reduces academic stress. Instead, they provide context for understanding how students attempt to adapt while academic stress is present. The dimensions of resilience such as acceptance, religiosity, optimism, purpose, and persistence were high even with students facing extreme adversity and not only in urban area, but rural locations in the Philippines (Estacio, 2020).

Nevertheless, the findings indicate that the respondents demonstrated moderate-to-high resilience, with particularly strong ratings in self-reliance, persistence, maintaining interests, positive reframing and drawing on previous experiences. At the same time, lower ratings in managing multiple demands, maintaining energy, and disengaging from uncontrollable situations identify areas that may be strengthened through targeted school-based activities. These findings support the inclusion of resilience-building activities in the proposed mental health program that recognizes that resilience should be strengthened alongside not instead of strategies that address students' academic stressors.

Spearman's Rank Correlation Between Resilience and Academic Stress

Table 11. Spearman's Rank Correlation Between Resilience and Academic Stress

Variable 1	Variable 2	N	Spearman's Rho	p-value	Interpretation
Resilience Score	Academic Stress	162	0.136	0.082	Weak positive correlation, not significant

The computed results from table 11 proposed a weak positive correlation (Spearman's Rho = 0.136) between resilience and academic stress among Senior High School (SHS) students at Elizabeth Seton School with a p-value of 0.082 which is not statistically significant. This correlational data proves that, among the 162 respondents, higher resilience level does not correspond to a significant decrease in academic stress, nor does it strongly predict lower stress levels. The weak positive correlation shows that as resilience level increases, academic stress also accelerates slightly but the relationship is not strong because of its p value which is not statistically significant. Thus, the correlational value in the table above reveals that issues related to interview's results such as time management and prioritization, seeking support systems, spiritual and emotional anchoring and mental diversion through leisure and online gaming were necessary to showcase weak positive relationship between resilience and academic stress.

To support this, the interview responses provided additional context to these findings by showing how students experience academic workload and stress in their daily academic life. For example, one participant shared that academic workload can be “demotivating” (P1), while another stated that it is “tiring” (P2) and “really drains me” (P3). Similarly, another respondent emphasized the difficulty of balancing multiple responsibilities, explaining that academic requirements, family concerns, and personal life “go hand in hand” and make it challenging to manage stress (P5). Other participants described how they continue to manage their responsibilities despite experiencing stress; whereas, one respondent noted that although the workload is heavy, they try to view it as preparation for future academic demands, stating that they feel “grateful... because at least when I go to college, I’m already used to it” (P6). Another participant explained that the academic workload can reach “12 out of 10” in terms of stress level and can affect mental, physical, and emotional well-being (P8).

The high resilience level of Senior High School (SHS) students has strong positive relationship to academic stress which it was justified that high resilience lowers academic stress resulting to high academic achievement and ranking in a classroom setting. Singh (2022), validated that male and female students have no significant difference in terms of academic stress, opening them to equal source of stressor although they differed in physical stress and motivational factor. Although data supported that academic stress was a significant predictor of low resilience and negative self-concept. Resilience level emitted stronger significant effect to academic achievement and was more correlated to academic self-esteem, self-efficacy, strong support system at school and at home, teacher emotional support, and school engagement (Radhamani & Kalaivani, 2021).

Spearman’s Rank Correlation Between Resilience and Perceived Mental Well-Being

Table 12. Spearman’s Rank Correlation Between Resilience and Perceived Perceived Mental Well-Being

Variable 1	Variable 2	N	Spearman’s Rho	p-value	Interpretation
Resilience Score	Perceived Mental Well-Being	162	0.745	< 0.001	Strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship

The calculated Spearman’s rank correlation coefficient (ρ) is 0.745 with its p-value of < 0.001 which states that there is significant and strong positive relationship between resilience level among Senior High School (SHS) students at Elizabeth Seton School and their perceived mental well-being. The strong significant association between the variables explicitly unveiled that their high scores in resilience level distinguished better or stable mental health. Senior High School (SHS) students were able to function in multiple environments with their family, friends, and school; whereas, the same environment could trigger increased stress, burnout, and emotional exhaustion among vulnerable and unprepared students.

Several participants described how resilience and academic or emotional pressures occur together in their experiences. One participant explained that when academic tasks accumulate, stress also increases which explains that “when it piles up, the academic stress goes high as well” (P1). Another participant shared that academic stress could feel overwhelming if it is not addressed early, noting that “you get drowned more and more if you don’t overcome it now” (P2). Similarly, one student explained that even when resilience is present, academic stress remains stating that “even if you have higher resilience, the academic stress will still stay” (P5). One respondent even shared that resilience makes coping with academic demands easier which explains that being resilient helps them manage stress and continue working without feeling

completely burned out (P6). Another student emphasized that resilience could influence how they view their workload, stating that “*the work doesn’t change but your resilience does*” (P10). This explains that while students acknowledge the presence of stress and mental well-being, they also attempt to cope and continue their responsibilities.

In this manner, inverse relationship was noticed to resilience level and stigma or awareness on mental well-being which testified that individuals with poor well-being have low help-seeking behavior in containing stigma and mental health problems (Goodwin et al., 2025).

Senior High School (SHS) Students’ Perception and Coping Strategies on Academic Stress and Mental Well-Being

The results of interview conducted among the 10 Senior High School (SHS) students at Elizabeth Seton School with regards to their perception on academic stress and well-being generally. It shows their responses on coping strategies or mechanisms that were part of their habit as students and were applicable in managing their relationships with their teachers, parents, peers, and community.

Table 13. Senior High School (SHS) Students’ Perception and Coping Strategies on Academic Stress and Mental Well-Being

Major Theme	Sub-Theme	Participant Statement
Academic Stress and Mental Well-Being	Academic Overload	“ <i>Ang dami pong sabay-sabay na requirements.</i> ”
	Parental and Societal Pressure	“ <i>Parang kailangan lagi akong top student kasi ‘yun ang expectation ng parents ko.</i> ”

The thematic analysis of the interview responses shows that there are recurring patterns in the experiences of senior high school students with regards to academic stress and coping. Under the major theme of academic-related issues and coping strategies, two (2) descriptive sub-themes emerged from the participants’ statements: academic overload and parental and societal pressure. Several students described experiencing multiple academic requirements at the same time, stated as “*Ang dami pong sabay-sabay na requirements*” which suggests that heavy workload and deadlines are perceived to be academic concerns. Thus, the participants’ statements also reflected awareness of expectations from parents and others with regards academic achievement as stated “*Parang kailangan lagi akong top student kasi ‘yun ang expectation ng parents ko.*”

These responses suggest that students perceive academic demands not only from school requirements but also from expectations within their social environment. Being that said, the narratives reveal that students recognize these pressures as part of their academic experience while they attempt to manage their responsibilities because the patterns observed in the responses addresses how students describe their academic challenges and the context in which they experience stress without implying direct causal relationships.

To support this, male and female Senior High School (SHS) students have moderate level of stress (Gomez et al., 2021). This observation was also perceived in this study, but male and female students were different in dealing with their problems and emotions. The coping strategies and academic stressors that materialized were also drawn from the findings of Arcillas (2024) which implied that coping strategies involved problem-solving and emotional support for male and female students.

Table 14. Academic Related Issues

Major Theme	Sub-Theme	Participant Statement
Academic Related Issues	Lack of Rest and Burnout	<i>“Lagi akong puyat, ‘di na ako nakaka-relax kahit weekends.”</i>

There is a pattern related to lack of rest and burnout among senior high school students because several participants described experiencing limited sleep and minimal time for relaxation due to academic requirements and school responsibilities. The statement *“Lagi akong puyat, ‘di na ako nakaka-relax kahit weekends”* reflects how some students perceive their academic schedule as leaving little opportunity for rest or recovery time. These responses suggest that students recognize exhaustion and limited downtime as part of their academic experience; hence, it reveals a pattern in which students describe staying awake late at night and having difficulty finding time to relax even during weekends.

Excessive screen use and combined with family expectations and peer pressure that disrupts study habits and worsens emotional instability (Zhou et al., 2023). Nevertheless, Senior High School (SHS) students experience high academic stress due to examinations, workload as well as fear of failure that manifest as burnout, sleep deprivation, and emotional exhaustion in their daily lives. Perhaps, these findings confirm that while students employ coping strategies, the cumulative nature of academic demands continues to compromise their rest and overall well-being that explains the necessity for interventions in the proposed Mental Health Program focusing on time management, sleep hygiene and balanced academic expectations.

Table 15. Coping Strategies for Student

Major Theme	Sub-Theme	Participant Statement
Coping Strategies for Student	Coping through Peer Support	<i>“Naglalabas ako ng sama ng loob sa mga kaibigan ko, malaking tulong ‘yun.”</i>
	Religious/Spiritual Anchoring	<i>“Nagdadasal ako lagi bago pumasok, parang mas kampante ako.”</i>
	Disengagement	<i>“Minsan tinatamad na lang ako kasi ‘di ko na kaya.”</i>
	Resilience through Goal Focus	<i>“Iniisip ko lagi na para ito sa future ko kaya kahit mahirap, laban lang.”</i>
	Technology as Both Coping and Distraction	<i>“Naglalaro muna ako para mawala stress pero minsan, ako rin napupuyat dahil sa phone.”</i>

The qualitative data in Table 14 address five (5) coping strategies that Senior High School (SHS) students from Elizabeth Seton School employed to manage academic stress: peer support, religious anchoring, disengagement, goal focus, and technology use. One pattern that appeared in the responses was peer support, where students expressed the need to share their concerns and frustrations with friends. The statement *“Naglalabas ako ng sama ng loob sa mga kaibigan ko, malaking tulong ‘yun”* explains how some students rely on their peers as an outlet for emotional expression. Another pattern that emerged was religious or spiritual anchoring as described by prayer as a practice that gives them a sense of reassurance before entering school.

Some participants described moments of disengagement where feelings of exhaustion or lack of motivation were expressed in statements such as *“Minsan tinatamad na lang ako kasi ‘di ko na kaya.”* At the same time, several students articulated goal-focused resilience that describes how thinking about their future motivates them to persist despite difficulties. The statement *“Naglalaro muna ako para mawala stress pero minsan, ako rin napupuyat dahil sa phone”* suggests that students sometimes use digital activities to manage stress while also recognizing its possible effect on their time and rest. But disengagement behaviors such as

procrastination and withdrawal were also reported (“*Minsan tinatamad na lang ako kasi ‘di ko na kaya’*”). These responses indicate maladaptive coping and lower resilience that contrasts with Table 4 results on self-discipline (Mean = 4.51, Somewhat Agree) and energy (Mean = 4.37, Somewhat Agree) where the students scored relatively lower compared to other resilience items. The students were motivated by long-term aspirations (“*Inisip ko lagi na para ito sa future ko kaya kahit mahirap, laban lang*”) that reflects high resilience indicators like “I am determined” (Mean = 5.03) and “*Sometimes I make myself do things whether I want to or not*” (Mean = 5.27).

The students reported the dual role of technology which is a coping tool for temporary relief and a stressor that disrupted sleep (“*Naglalaro muna ako para mawala stress pero minsan, ako rin napupuyat dahil sa phone*”). This mirrors Regalado’s (2024) assertion that students often worsen stress through overreliance on gadgets while Zhou et al. (2023) also discusses that excessive screen time is linked to avoidant coping and poor well-being. Being that said, table 10 demonstrates that Senior High School (SHS) students engaged in both adaptive coping strategies (peer support, faith, goal orientation) and maladaptive strategies (disengagement, overuse of technology).

Proposed Mental Health Program for Senior High School (SHS) Students at Elizabeth Seton School

Action Plan for School Year 2025-2026

General Objectives:

The proposed program is designed to respond directly to the study's findings on high academic stress, moderate positive mental well-being, and moderate-to-high resilience among Senior High School (SHS) students at Elizabeth Seton School. Specifically, the program aims to:

1. Strengthen resilience among SHS students through practical coping skills, emotional regulation, problem-solving, and social-emotional learning activities.
2. Manage academic stress by developing students' time-management, study-planning, examination-coping, and problem-solving skills while encouraging supportive communication between students and teachers.
3. Promote positive mental well-being by supporting students' emotional, cognitive, social, and behavioural needs through accessible and school-based activities.
4. Strengthen healthy coping and help-seeking behaviours by encouraging students to use appropriate social support, guidance services, and other available school resources when experiencing academic or emotional difficulties.

Student Resilience and Stress Management Enhancement Program

The Student Resilience and Stress Management Enhancement Program is a structured school-based program developed from the findings of the study because recognizes that resilience and academic stress are not opposite conditions. The study found that students reported high academic stress despite showing moderate-to-high resilience, while resilience was strongly associated with positive mental well-being. Therefore, the program does not rely on resilience-building alone to reduce academic stress. Instead, it combines stress-management strategies with resilience-building and positive mental well-being activities.

Table 16. Program Matrix for the Proposed Program

Identified Stressor	Proposed Intervention	Implementing Personnel	Measurable Outcomes
Heavy academic workload and time pressure	Academic Survival Workshop (time management, study strategies, test anxiety coping)	Guidance Counselor and Teachers	80% of students demonstrate improved time management skills based on evaluation forms
Emotional exhaustion and burnout	Mind Gym Sessions (guided breathing, mindfulness, journaling) conducted during homeroom	Guidance Counselor and Class Advisers	At least 75% of students report improved stress awareness in post-activity survey
Difficulty managing academic stress	Resilience and Emotional Regulation Workshop (Feel to Heal)	Guidance Counselor, Invited Psychologist	Students demonstrate improved coping strategies during follow-up reflection
Limited help-seeking behavior due to stigma	Mental Health Awareness Campaign and Mental Health Week	Guidance Office, Student Council	Increased number of voluntary counselling consultations
Dependence on peers and difficulty balancing responsibilities	Peer Support Dialogue Sessions (STRANDTalks)	Teachers, Guidance Counselor	Students report increased perceived peer support

The proposed Student Resilience and Stress Management Enhancement Program is a comprehensive school-based mental health initiative designed for implementation at Elizabeth Seton School during the School Year 2025–2026. The program proposed to strengthen students' resilience, reduce academic stress, and promote positive mental well-being to address the major concerns identified in the study. It consists of evidence-based interventions that includes the Academic Survival Workshop, Mind Gym Sessions, Resilience and Emotional Regulation Workshop (Feel to Heal), Mental Health Awareness Campaign, and Peer Support Dialogue Sessions (STRANDTalks). These activities focus on improving students' time management, emotional regulation, stress awareness, coping skills, and help-seeking behaviours while fostering stronger peer support and collaboration among teachers, guidance counsellors, and school administrators; hence, the interventions are scheduled across four academic quarters to have a continuous and progressive support throughout the school year.

The program should also recognize the study's finding that resilience was not significantly associated with academic stress ($p = .136$, $p = .082$). Therefore, the program should not present resilience-building as a direct method on how to eliminate academic stress. Instead, academic stress should be addressed through interventions that consider students' actual academic demands, while resilience activities support students in adapting to challenges and maintaining positive functioning. At the same time, the strong positive association between resilience and positive mental well-being ($p = .745$, $p < .001$) provides a basis for including resilience-building activities as part of a broader well-being program.

To make sure the effectiveness and sustainability of the program, systematic monitoring and evaluation strategies will be implemented through attendance records, pre- and post-activity surveys, counselling records, reflection forms and evaluation questionnaires. Program success will be assessed using a rubric that measures student participation, satisfaction, improvement in coping strategies, and overall program feasibility and sustainability. Designed to be cost-efficient, the program utilises existing school resources with support from the Guidance Office, teachers, and invited mental health professionals that allows its integration into regular homeroom guidance and school wellness activities. Nevertheless, the implementation will strictly adhere to ethical standards that creates a confidentiality, voluntary participation, parental

consent when necessary, and the involvement of qualified mental health professionals, thereby providing a safe, supportive, and sustainable framework to improve the mental health and resilience of Senior High School students.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, several conclusions can be drawn regarding the academic stress, mental well-being, and resilience of Senior High School (SHS) students at Elizabeth Seton School. Senior High School (SHS) students experience a high level of academic stress in relation to fear of academic failure, examinations, workload, performance expectations, and concerns about future employment. The findings indicate that students may maintain confidence in their academic and career prospects while simultaneously experiencing substantial academic pressure. SHS students demonstrate a moderate level of positive mental well-being where their strongest areas were related to social connectedness feeling loved and feeling close to other people. However, comparatively lower ratings for relaxation, energy, clear thinking, and dealing with problems well indicate areas of positive mental well-being that may require further support. SHS students explain moderate-to-high levels of resilience with strengths in self-reliance, persistence, maintaining interests, positive perspectives, and drawing on previous experiences when facing difficulties. However, comparatively lower ratings in managing multiple demands, maintaining energy, and letting go of uncontrollable situations indicate areas where resilience-related skills may still be strengthened.

There is no statistically significant relationship between resilience and academic stress among the respondents ($\rho = .136, p = .082$). Therefore, the study does not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that resilience is associated with the level of academic stress experienced by the students. The weak positive direction should not be interpreted as evidence that higher resilience increases academic stress or that resilience reduces stress. There is a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship between resilience and positive mental well-being ($\rho = .745, p < .001$). This indicates that students with higher resilience scores tended to report higher levels of positive mental well-being but because the study used a correlational design, this finding represents an association and does not establish that resilience causes higher mental well-being.

SHS students use varied coping strategies when dealing with academic stress and challenges. The qualitative findings identified peer support, religious or spiritual practices, goal-focused persistence, disengagement, and technology use as reported coping approaches. These findings indicate that students use both potentially helpful strategies and coping responses that may have limitations when disengagement or technology use interferes with academic responsibilities or rest. The findings support the development of a structured school-based mental health program that addresses academic stress while strengthening resilience, positive mental well-being, and healthy coping strategies. The program should not rely on resilience-building alone to reduce academic stress because the present study found no significant relationship between the two variables. Instead, academic stressors and students' psychological resources should be addressed simultaneously.

Overall, the study explains that high academic stress can coexist with moderate-to-high resilience among SHS students. The absence of a significant relationship between resilience and academic stress suggests that resilience should not be understood simply as a mechanism that reduces the amount of academic pressure students experience. Academic stress may remain present because of workload, examinations, performance expectations and future career concerns even when students possess substantial personal coping resources. In contrast, the strong positive association between resilience and positive mental well-being suggests that resilience is more connected with students' positive psychological functioning in this sample. This distinction is important because it shows that resilience and academic stress are not

necessarily opposite conditions: students may be resilient while still experiencing considerable academic pressure.

The qualitative findings further explain that students respond to academic demands through different coping strategies that includes social support, faith-based practices, goal orientation, disengagement, and technology use. These findings reinforce the importance of providing students with practical opportunities to develop healthy coping and help-seeking skills. However, the qualitative findings should be interpreted as descriptions of students' experiences rather than evidence of causal relationships. Similarly, the present study did not test whether resilience functions as a mediator or moderator; therefore, no such causal or explanatory role can be concluded from the findings.

Taken everything into an account, the study provides local evidence from SHS students in a private Philippine school regarding the distinct relationships of resilience with academic stress and positive mental well-being. The findings suggest that resilience may be relevant to students' positive mental well-being, while academic stress requires attention to the academic and environmental demands experienced by students. The proposed school-based mental health program therefore appropriately combines academic stress management, resilience development, positive mental well-being promotion, social support, emotional regulation and healthy coping strategies. Rather than attempting to eliminate academic stress through resilience alone, the program provides a more comprehensive approach that addresses both students' academic environment and their psychological resources.

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