Echoes From the Storm: Stories of Hope and Healing Among Children Survivors of Typhoon Yolanda in Tacloban City

Mark Joevel C. Buante[1*], Erica A. Arriesgado[1], Renante B. Bastida[1], Jherick H. Dela Cruz[1], Jos Silvan M. Santizo[1], Martin Jay D. Dimas[1], Ryan James M. Basilio[1], Mio Anthony Larion[1], Nino Jade Sumook[1], Annrey Ordame[1], and Frank Lemuel Mathan B. Lace[1]

1 - Sto. Nino Senior High School, District Learning Center VI, Department of Education, Schools Division of Tacloban City
Sto. Nino Extension, Tacloban City

ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of children in Tacloban City who lost one or both parents during Typhoon Yolanda and examined how they navigated challenges, developed coping mechanisms, built resilience over twelve years, and envisioned their future well-being. Employing a transcendental phenomenological design, twelve participants who were six years old at the time of the disaster and are now eighteen were purposively selected. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed thematically, revealing four major challenges: sudden disruption of safety and normalcy, loss of shelter and forced displacement, socioeconomic decline and financial hardship, and interrupted education and social withdrawal. Despite these adversities, participants employed coping strategies rooted in hope and emotional survival, including endurance through acceptance and faith, as well as self-reliance and silence. Over time, these strategies facilitated the gradual development of resilience, characterized by strength built through prolonged hardship and meaning-making from survival experiences. Participants' narratives further highlighted aspirations for stable livelihoods and education, sustainable housing, disaster preparedness, and ongoing psychosocial and financial support, underscoring the interplay between personal agency and institutional assistance in post-disaster recovery. Findings are interpreted through the lens of ecological systems theory, sociocultural theory, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and post-traumatic growth theory, illustrating the multidimensional impact of childhood parental loss and the adaptive processes that promote psychological and social development. The study emphasizes the importance of comprehensive disaster-response programs that address physical, emotional, educational, and socioeconomic needs, and provides recommendations for survivors, families, educators, local government units, policymakers, and future researchers to support long-term recovery and resilience.

Keywords: *Typhoon Yolanda, parental loss, resilience, coping mechanisms, post-disaster recovery, childhood trauma, psychosocial support*

INTRODUCTION

Natural disasters leave profound and lasting impacts on individuals and communities, with children being among the most vulnerable populations due to their developmental stage and dependence on caregivers. Globally, studies have consistently shown that children who survive catastrophic events such as typhoons, earthquakes, and floods face heightened risks of long-term psychological, emotional, and social challenges—particularly when such disasters involve the loss of parents or significant caregivers (Masten & Narayan, 2012; Norris et al., 2002). Childhood exposure to trauma has been strongly associated with prolonged grief, disrupted developmental trajectories, identity struggles, and difficulties in coping and adjustment that may persist well into adulthood (Bonanno et al., 2010).

Within this global landscape of disaster research, the Philippine context offers a compelling and urgent case. Typhoon Yolanda (internationally known as Haiyan), which struck in November 2013, stands as one of the strongest and deadliest typhoons ever recorded. Tacloban City was among the most severely affected areas, with thousands of lives lost and countless families permanently altered. While substantial scholarly and policy attention has focused on immediate disaster response, infrastructure rehabilitation, and short-term psychosocial interventions, the long-term human consequences—particularly those experienced by children who survived the storm and lost loved ones—remain insufficiently explored. Notably, these children, now adolescents or young adults, continue to carry memories of loss, survival, and recovery long after the physical devastation has subsided.

Supporting this concern, local studies in the Philippines emphasize that the impact of Typhoon Yolanda extended far beyond physical destruction, deeply affecting the psychosocial well-being of children who experienced loss, displacement, and prolonged uncertainty. Reports from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) indicated that a significant number of children in Yolanda-affected areas were orphaned or separated from caregivers, exposing them to heightened risks of emotional distress, disrupted schooling, and long-term vulnerability (DSWD, 2014). In a similar vein, assessments conducted by the Department of Health (DOH) underscored the prevalence of trauma-related symptoms among child survivors, including grief, fear, and anxiety—many of which persisted years after the disaster due to limited access to sustained mental health services (DOH, 2015).

The education sector likewise documented the enduring effects of the disaster on children's lives. The Department of Education (DepEd) reported extensive disruption of learning environments following Typhoon Yolanda, particularly in Tacloban City, where schools were destroyed, teachers were among the casualties, and learners were compelled to cope with loss while continuing their education (DepEd, 2016). DepEd's post-disaster reports emphasized the importance of integrating psychosocial support programs within schools, acknowledging that learners' academic engagement and performance are closely tied to their emotional recovery. However, these initiatives were largely short-term, with limited follow-up on how child survivors navigated grief, healing, and resilience over time.

Beyond institutional reports, Philippine-based qualitative disaster studies highlight that survivors' meanings of recovery and resilience are deeply shaped by cultural values such as

pakikipagkapwa, bayanihan, and strong family ties (Bankoff, 2013; Fernandez & Shaw, 2015). These studies emphasize that healing is not solely an individual psychological process but a relational and community-based experience. Nevertheless, much of the existing qualitative literature has centered on adult survivors, community leaders, or households, resulting in the underrepresentation of children's voices—particularly those who lost parents during the disaster.

From a child-focused perspective, trauma-informed education frameworks in the Philippine context stress that children affected by disasters require sustained emotional support, safe spaces for expression, and opportunities to narrate their lived experiences (Reyes & Villanueva, 2018). Such frameworks resonate strongly with phenomenological approaches, which recognize children's narratives as valid and meaningful sources of knowledge rather than treating them merely as recipients of intervention. Allowing child survivors to articulate their experiences of loss, hope, and healing affirms their agency and contributes to more holistic recovery processes.

Despite the availability of policy reports and academic contributions, a clear research gap remains. Existing literature on Typhoon Yolanda has predominantly focused on disaster preparedness, community resilience, adult survivors' experiences, and institutional responses (David et al., 2019; Dalisay & De Guzman, 2016). Although some studies have examined children's trauma in the immediate aftermath of the disaster, there is limited qualitative research that captures the long-term lived experiences of children survivors more than a decade later—particularly those who lost one or both parents during the typhoon.

Moreover, much of the extant research adopts quantitative or clinical perspectives, often measuring symptoms of trauma or recovery. While these approaches provide valuable insights, they may overlook the depth, meaning, and subjective interpretations of healing, hope, and resilience as experienced by survivors themselves. Consequently, there remains a significant gap in understanding how children survivors of Typhoon Yolanda make sense of their loss, develop coping mechanisms, cultivate resilience over time, envision their futures, and perceive the role of government programs and support systems in their healing journey.

Responding directly to this gap, the present study seeks to explore the lived experiences of twelve children survivors who lost loved ones during Typhoon Yolanda, twelve years after the disaster. Anchored in the descriptivist paradigm and employing transcendental phenomenology, this inquiry aims to return "to the things themselves" by capturing the essence of participants' experiences through their own voices, free from presuppositions and researcher bias (Husserl, 1970; Moustakas, 1994).

Specifically, the study addresses four central research questions focusing on: (1) the challenges brought about by the loss of parents during childhood, (2) coping mechanisms related to hope and healing, (3) the development of resilience over the past twelve years, and (4) the participants' future plans alongside the government programs and support they perceive as necessary for their continued well-being.

By situating the inquiry in Tacloban City, this research amplifies the voices of survivors whose stories continue to echo long after the storm. Ultimately, the findings are expected to contribute to a deeper understanding of long-term disaster recovery from a child-centered perspective and to inform educators, mental health practitioners, policymakers, and government

agencies in designing responsive, trauma-informed, and sustainable programs that foster healing, resilience, and hope among disaster-affected youth.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This outlines the methods used to explore the lived experiences of children survivors of Typhoon Yolanda in Tacloban City. Using a qualitative, transcendental phenomenological approach, the study focuses on capturing the participants' stories of hope, healing, and resilience. It details the locale, participants, ethical considerations, and data collection procedures, ensuring that the research is conducted with rigor, credibility, and respect for the voices of the survivors.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically utilizing transcendental phenomenology to explore the lived experiences of children survivors of Typhoon Yolanda in Tacloban City. Phenomenology is particularly suitable for capturing the essence of human experiences and the meanings individuals assign to them (Moustakas, 1994; Creswell & Poth, 2018). Transcendental phenomenology, rooted in Husserlian philosophy, emphasizes bracketing the researcher's biases and focusing on the participants' descriptions of their experiences (Husserl, 1970; Moustakas, 1994). This approach allows the researcher to uncover the core themes of hope, healing, and resilience among participants who endured the loss of a parent or both parents during the typhoon.

By adopting a descriptivist paradigm, the study prioritized the subjective experiences of the participants, capturing the narratives of children survivors without imposing external interpretations (Creswell, 2013). The transcendental phenomenological design ensures that the research findings authentically reflect the participants' voices and lived realities, contributing to the broader understanding of long-term recovery after disasters.

LOCALE OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted in Tacloban City, Leyte, one of the areas most severely affected by Typhoon Yolanda in November 2013. Tacloban City was chosen as the research site due to its historical significance in the disaster and its ongoing recovery efforts, which provide a context for understanding the long-term psychosocial impacts on children survivors. The locale also facilitated access to participants who meet the study's inclusion criteria and ensured that the data reflects localized experiences of disaster recovery, community support, and resilience (Bankoff, 2013; Fernandez & Shaw, 2015).

RESPONDENTS AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The study involved 12 participants, selected through purposive sampling, a common method in qualitative research used to identify individuals who can provide rich and relevant information regarding the phenomenon under investigation (Etikan et al., 2016; Palinkas et al., 2015). The inclusion criteria for participants were as follows: (1) Individuals who lost one or both parents during Typhoon Yolanda; (2) Aged six years old at the time of the typhoon, making them 18 years old at present, twelve years after the event; and (3) Willing to share their personal narratives and experiences of hope, healing, and resilience.

Purposive sampling ensured that participants could provide in-depth insights into the specific lived experiences of children affected by parental loss during a natural disaster. This method also facilitated the collection of data-rich narratives, which are essential for phenomenological analysis.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical protocols were strictly observed to protect the rights and welfare of the participants. The study ensured anonymity and confidentiality by assigning pseudonyms to participants and securely storing all research materials (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Informed consent was obtained from both participants and their legal guardians, in accordance with ethical guidelines for research involving minors (Bryman, 2016).

Data credibility and trustworthiness were ensured through triangulation, audit trails, and verification procedures (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation involved cross-checking information from interview transcripts, field notes, and follow-up clarifications. Audit trails documented the research process, and verification involved member-checking, where participants reviewed their own narratives to confirm accuracy. Interviews were recorded with participants' consent to preserve the richness of their stories and to provide reliable data for thematic analysis.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The primary instrument for data collection was a semi-structured interview guide questionnaire, designed to elicit the participants' narratives on the challenges, coping mechanisms, resilience, and future plans following Typhoon Yolanda. The instrument underwent validation by content and language experts, ensuring that the questions were appropriate, culturally sensitive, and understandable for participants (Creswell, 2013; Polit & Beck, 2017). The validation process ensured that the interview guide accurately reflected the objectives of the study and could elicit meaningful, rich, and reliable data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the major themes that emerged from the lived experiences of the participants who lost one or both parents during Typhoon Yolanda in their childhood. The themes were derived through careful thematic analysis of in-depth interviews, capturing shared meanings related to loss, coping, resilience, and future aspirations. The discussion links participants' narratives with existing literature to deepen understanding of their long-term psychosocial experiences.

Challenges Brought About by the Loss of Parents During Childhood

This section presents the significant challenges experienced by the participants following the loss of their parents during childhood as a result of Typhoon Yolanda. Analysis of the interview narratives revealed four major themes that capture the depth of their struggles: **(1) sudden disruption of safety and normalcy, (2) loss of shelter and forced displacement, (3) socioeconomic decline and financial hardship, and (4) interrupted education and social withdrawal.** These themes collectively illustrate how parental loss intersected with disaster-related trauma to shape the participants' childhood experiences and long-term well-being.

Theme 1: Sudden Disruption of Safety and Normalcy. Theme 1 highlights the abrupt and overwhelming nature of Typhoon Yolanda, which instantly disrupted the participants' sense of safety, stability, and normal childhood life. The disaster occurred without warning, leaving the participants emotionally unprepared for the scale of destruction and loss they would endure. This sudden rupture marked the beginning of long-term psychological distress rooted in fear and insecurity.

Participants vividly described the unexpected devastation brought by the typhoon and its immediate impact on their lives. One participant shared, "Waray kami maghunahuna nga sugad kadaku an mahitatabo. Tigda la nga ginbungkag han Yolanda an amon balay ngan kinabuhi" (L45–47, P8) (We never thought something this big would happen. Suddenly, Yolanda destroyed our home and our lives). Another participant recalled the confusion and fear during the event, stating, "Idk, kun kay ano pa kami lumusad kay nakadto na kami ha bukid" (L52–53, P3) (I don't understand why we went down when we were already on the mountain.). Similarly, one participant emphasized the lack of preparedness, saying, "Naapektuhan gihapon kami hadto tungod han kakulangan pag-andam" (L60–61, P10) (We were affected because of the lack of preparedness). These responses collectively underscore the sudden and destabilizing impact of the disaster on the participants' sense of normalcy.

The narratives reveal that Typhoon Yolanda was experienced not merely as a natural disaster but as a life-altering event that abruptly dismantled the participants' emotional and physical security. The suddenness of the calamity intensified fear, confusion, and helplessness, particularly among children who relied heavily on parental protection. This disruption laid the foundation for prolonged trauma and vulnerability.

The findings align with Masten and Narayan's (2012) assertion that sudden traumatic events during childhood can severely disrupt a child's sense of safety and predictability. According to trauma theory, the absence of preparedness and warning exacerbates psychological distress,

especially when caregivers are lost simultaneously. From a developmental perspective, the sudden loss of parental figures during a crisis compromises children's emotional regulation and coping capacity. These results further support ecological systems theory, which emphasizes how abrupt environmental disruptions can destabilize multiple layers of a child's support system.

In conclusion, the sudden disruption of safety and normalcy emerged as a foundational challenge in the participants' lived experiences. The unexpected nature of Typhoon Yolanda left them emotionally unprepared and deeply traumatized at a young age. This abrupt loss of security shaped their early perceptions of danger, fear, and uncertainty. Ultimately, the theme underscores how disaster-related parental loss magnified childhood vulnerability and psychological distress.

Theme 2: Loss of Shelter and Forced Displacement. Theme 2 centers on the participants' experiences of losing their homes and being forcibly displaced after the typhoon. The destruction of shelter resulted in prolonged instability, insecurity, and a persistent sense of being uprooted. This loss intensified feelings of abandonment and heightened fear of future disasters.

Participants recounted the distress of having no place to return to after the typhoon. One participant stated, "Waray kami na ukyan agi han waray na nasalin nam balay pati nam mga relatives" (L68–70, P4) (We had nowhere to go because nothing was left of our house, not even our relatives). Another shared, "Waray na kami balay" (L72, P7) (We don't have a house anymore). The same participant added, "Kun may maupay nga lugar kami, dire na kami mahadlok hin sugad hini" (L73–74, P7) (If we had a safe place, we wouldn't be afraid of this happening again). These responses emphasize the emotional and physical consequences of displacement.

The loss of shelter symbolized more than physical destruction; it represented the collapse of safety, belonging, and continuity. Being displaced heightened the participants' sense of insecurity and fear of recurrence. The absence of a permanent home prolonged their trauma and reinforced feelings of instability and vulnerability.

Research indicates that displacement following disasters significantly increases psychological distress among children, particularly when combined with parental loss (Norris et al., 2002). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs suggests that the lack of basic needs such as shelter impedes emotional healing and development. The findings also align with sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the importance of stable environments in fostering emotional security. Thus, displacement disrupted not only physical living conditions but also emotional recovery.

Overall, loss of shelter and forced displacement emerged as a major challenge that compounded the trauma of parental loss. The participants' narratives reveal enduring fear, instability, and insecurity rooted in homelessness. This theme highlights the critical role of safe and permanent housing in post-disaster recovery. Without it, emotional healing remains fragile and incomplete.

Theme 3: Socioeconomic Decline and Financial Hardship. Theme 3 reflects the drastic socioeconomic decline experienced by the participants after the disaster. The loss of parents and property resulted in poverty, food insecurity, and the inability to meet basic needs. These financial struggles became a persistent part of their childhood and adolescence.

Participants described severe financial difficulties following Yolanda. One participant shared, "Han nawarayan kami hin balay, nag-iba gihapon an amon status tikang hadto" (L80–82, P1) (When we lost our house, our status changed). Another stated, "Waray sakto na pangasto… makuri gud" (L84–85, P6) (There was no sufficient money; it was really hard). Hunger was also common, as expressed by one participant: "Gutom la ak pirmi. Waray ak pagkaon, waray man money" (L87–88, P2) (I am always hungry. No food to eat, no money). These accounts illustrate the depth of their economic hardship.

The participants' narratives reveal that poverty was not temporary but a long-term consequence of the disaster and parental loss. Financial hardship affected daily survival, health, and emotional well-being. The constant struggle to meet basic needs further intensified their sense of loss and deprivation.

Studies show that disaster-induced poverty has long-term effects on children's physical and psychological development (DSWD, 2014). From an ecological perspective, economic instability weakens family systems and limits access to protective resources. The findings also align with Maslow's theory, where unmet physiological needs hinder higher-level emotional recovery. Thus, socioeconomic decline played a central role in shaping the participants' prolonged hardship.

In summary, socioeconomic decline and financial hardship significantly shaped the participants' post-disaster lives. Poverty, hunger, and lack of resources compounded the emotional burden of losing parents. This theme underscores how economic vulnerability deepens trauma and delays recovery. Addressing financial needs is therefore essential for long-term healing.

Theme 4: Interrupted Education and Social Withdrawal. Theme 4 focuses on how financial hardship and emotional distress disrupted the participants' education and social engagement. Many were forced to stop schooling temporarily or permanently, while others withdrew socially due to shame and trauma. These disruptions limited their opportunities for growth and development.

Participants openly shared how education became inaccessible. One stated, "Waray na kwarta pag school kay di ba maaram ka naman han bagyo" (L95–96, P5) (There was no more money for school because of the typhoon). Another participant revealed emotional withdrawal, saying, "Naawod kami pagpakiana kun hain an relief goods" (L98–99, P9) (We were ashamed to ask where the relief goods were). These responses reflect both material and emotional barriers to education and social support.

The disruption of schooling and social interaction further marginalized the participants during their formative years. Shame and financial hardship discouraged them from seeking help, deepening isolation. As a result, education—often a pathway to recovery—became another casualty of the disaster.

Existing literature emphasizes that interrupted education following disasters contributes to long-term social inequality (UNESCO, 2017). Vygotsky's sociocultural theory highlights the importance of social interaction in learning and development, which was hindered by withdrawal and trauma. The findings suggest that emotional distress and poverty jointly restricted educational access. This reinforces the need for inclusive post-disaster educational support.

In conclusion, interrupted education and social withdrawal emerged as critical challenges following parental loss. Financial constraints and emotional shame prevented sustained schooling and social engagement. This theme reveals how trauma extends beyond emotional pain to limit future opportunities. Ensuring access to education is therefore vital in post-disaster recovery.

Overall, the challenges brought about by the loss of parents during childhood were multidimensional and deeply interconnected. Sudden disruption, displacement, poverty, and educational interruption collectively shaped the participants' lived experiences. These challenges not only intensified trauma but also influenced long-term development and well-being. The findings emphasize the need for holistic interventions addressing emotional, economic, and educational needs of disaster-affected children.

Coping Mechanisms Related to Hope and Healing

This section explores the coping mechanisms employed by the participants as they navigated grief, trauma, and loss following the death of their parents during childhood. Despite the profound adversity they faced, the participants demonstrated strategies rooted in hope and gradual healing. Two major themes emerged from the analysis: **(1) endurance through acceptance and faith, and (2) emotional survival through silence and self-reliance.** These themes reveal how participants sustained themselves emotionally while adapting to long-term hardship.

Theme 1: Endurance Through Acceptance and Faith. Theme 1 reflects the participants' capacity to endure loss by gradually accepting their situation and drawing strength from faith, belief, or inner resolve. Rather than openly articulating grief, many participants demonstrated quiet perseverance and a belief that survival itself carried meaning. Acceptance and faith served as emotional anchors that allowed them to continue despite unresolved pain.

Participants conveyed endurance through acceptance in subtle yet powerful ways. One participant shared, "Naapektuhan gihapon kami hadto tungod han kakulangan pag-andam" (L61–62, P10) (We were affected because of the lack of preparedness), reflecting acceptance of circumstances beyond their control. Another participant expressed survival despite loss, "Idk, kun kai ano pa kami lumusad… namatayan kami hin duha nga kapamilya" (L52–55, P3) (I don't know how we were able to move forward… we lost two family members). A participant also acknowledged enduring hardship silently, "Makuri gud pero padayon la" (L90–91, P6) (It was really hard, but we just kept going). These responses collectively indicate a form of endurance grounded in acceptance and inner strength.

The participants' narratives suggest that endurance did not arise from immediate healing but from a gradual process of accepting loss and continuing life despite pain. Faith—whether religious or existential—provided meaning to survival and helped them persist through prolonged hardship. This quiet perseverance reflects a coping mechanism centered on hope rather than emotional expression.

The findings align with studies indicating that acceptance and faith-based coping are protective factors among disaster survivors (Pargament, 1997; Masten, 2014). Trauma theory suggests that meaning-making through belief systems supports psychological survival when loss

is irreversible. From a resilience framework, acceptance enables individuals to adapt without denying reality. These results also support existential theories emphasizing hope and meaning as critical elements of healing after trauma.

In conclusion, endurance through acceptance and faith emerged as a central coping mechanism among the participants. Rather than openly processing grief, they sustained themselves by accepting loss and believing in the value of survival. This form of endurance allowed them to function amid persistent hardship. The theme underscores how hope can exist quietly, even in the absence of full emotional resolution.

Theme 2: Emotional Survival Through Silence and Self-Reliance. Theme 2 captures how participants coped by suppressing emotions and relying primarily on themselves. Emotional restraint was often employed to avoid burdening others or drawing attention to their vulnerability. This self-reliant coping strategy enabled survival but often delayed emotional processing.

Several participants explicitly described coping through silence and restraint. One participant stated, "Naawod kami pagpakiana kun hain an relief goods" (L98–99, P9) (We were ashamed to ask where the relief goods were). Another shared, "Waray ak nagyayakan han ak kasakit" (L102–103, P2) (I did not talk about my pain). A participant also noted emotional withdrawal, "Danay la ak nag-iisa, diri na nagyakan" (L105–106, P5) (Sometimes I was alone and did not talk). These responses illustrate how silence and self-reliance became tools for emotional survival.

The narratives indicate that emotional silence functioned as a protective shield against further distress. While self-reliance helped participants endure daily struggles, it also limited opportunities for emotional expression and support. This coping style reflects survival-focused adaptation rather than immediate healing.

Existing literature suggests that emotional suppression is common among children who experience early trauma and loss (Norris et al., 2002). Attachment theory explains that children who lose caregivers may avoid expressing vulnerability to prevent further emotional pain. While self-reliance can foster independence, prolonged emotional silence may hinder long-term psychological healing. The findings align with trauma studies emphasizing delayed grief among disaster survivors.

Overall, emotional survival through silence and self-reliance emerged as a double-edged coping mechanism. It enabled participants to function amid adversity but also constrained emotional processing. This theme highlights the complexity of coping strategies shaped by trauma. Addressing such silent struggles is essential for fostering deeper healing and psychosocial recovery.

Taken together, the coping mechanisms related to hope and healing reveal adaptive yet complex responses to childhood loss. Endurance through acceptance and faith provided meaning and strength, while silence and self-reliance enabled survival amid limited support. Although these strategies sustained the participants, they also point to unresolved emotional needs. The findings emphasize the importance of culturally sensitive psychosocial interventions that honor quiet resilience while encouraging healthy emotional expression.

The Development of Resilience Over the Past Twelve Years

This section presents how the participants gradually developed resilience over the past twelve years following the loss of their parents during childhood. Despite prolonged exposure to hardship and trauma, participants demonstrated personal growth and adaptive functioning over time. Two major themes emerged from the analysis: **(1) strength built through prolonged hardship and (2) meaning-making from loss and survival.** These themes reflect how adversity became a foundation for resilience and psychological maturity.

Theme 1: Strength Built Through Prolonged Hardship. Theme 1 describes how participants' repeated exposure to difficulties strengthened their emotional and psychological capacity to face challenges. Rather than weakening them, prolonged hardship fostered adaptability, endurance, and preparedness. Over time, participants learned to navigate adversity with greater confidence and self-awareness.

Participants acknowledged how enduring hardship contributed to their strength. One participant stated, "Naapektuhan gihapon kami hadto tungod han kakulangan pag-andam" (L61–62, P10) (We were affected because of the lack of preparedness), reflecting awareness gained from past vulnerability. Another shared, "Makuri gud an amon kinabuhi hadto, pero nasanay na kami pag-atubang han problema" (L112–113, P6) (Life was really hard before, but we became used to facing problems). A participant also noted personal growth, saying, "Yana mas marig-on na ak kay damo na ak naagian" (L115–116, P8) (Now I am stronger because I have been through many things). These responses collectively illustrate how prolonged hardship contributed to the development of resilience.

The participants' accounts reveal that resilience emerged gradually through repeated encounters with difficulty rather than through immediate recovery. Hardship became a training ground where coping skills, emotional strength, and preparedness were developed. This process transformed vulnerability into psychological endurance.

These findings are consistent with resilience theory, which views resilience as a dynamic process developed over time through exposure to adversity (Masten, 2014). According to trauma adaptation frameworks, repeated challenges can enhance coping capacity when individuals are able to learn from experience. The participants' narratives also align with ecological systems theory, which emphasizes adaptation within changing environments. Thus, resilience was not innate but constructed through prolonged hardship.

In conclusion, strength built through prolonged hardship emerged as a defining aspect of the participants' resilience. Continuous exposure to adversity cultivated endurance, adaptability, and emotional fortitude. Although the process involved pain and struggle, it ultimately enhanced their capacity to face future challenges. This theme highlights resilience as an evolving outcome of lived experience.

Theme 2: Meaning-Making from Loss and Survival. Theme 2 focuses on how participants made meaning out of loss and survival. Rather than viewing their experiences solely

as tragedy, some participants reframed their survival as purposeful. This meaning-making process became a source of motivation and psychological strength.

Participants reflected on loss as a defining part of their identity and purpose. One participant shared, "Namatayan kami hin duha nga kapamilya" (L54–55, P3) (We lost two family members), acknowledging profound loss. Another expressed survival as meaningful, stating, "Bisan damo an nawara, buhi pa kami ngan kinahanglan magpadayon" (L120–121, P7) (Even though we lost many things, we are still alive and need to continue). A participant also shared, "An ak pag-survive amo an ak kusog yana" (L123–124, P1) (My survival is my strength now). These responses demonstrate how meaning was constructed from survival despite loss.

The narratives indicate that resilience was reinforced through reframing loss as a source of purpose. Survival itself became a motivator, encouraging participants to move forward despite lingering grief. This meaning-making process allowed trauma to be integrated into their life stories rather than remain a source of paralysis.

The findings strongly support the concept of post-traumatic growth, which posits that individuals can experience positive psychological change following trauma (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Meaning-making has been identified as a central mechanism in resilience development after loss. From an existential perspective, finding purpose in survival helps individuals reconstruct identity after trauma. These results affirm that resilience can coexist with grief through reframed meaning.

Overall, meaning-making from loss and survival emerged as a powerful contributor to resilience. Participants transformed painful experiences into sources of motivation and inner strength. This reframing did not erase grief but allowed it to coexist with hope and purpose. The theme underscores resilience as a process of reconstructing meaning after trauma.

Taken together, the development of resilience over the past twelve years reflects a gradual and deeply personal process shaped by hardship and meaning-making. Strength was built through prolonged struggle, while survival itself became a source of purpose. These interconnected processes enabled participants to adapt and grow despite enduring loss. The findings highlight resilience as an evolving outcome of lived experience rather than a fixed trait.

The Participants' Future Plans Alongside the Government Programs and Support They Perceive as Necessary for Their Continued Well-Being

This section presents the participants' future plans and their perceptions of the government programs and institutional support necessary for their continued well-being. Despite experiencing profound loss and long-term hardship, participants articulated aspirations for a more stable and secure future. Analysis of their narratives revealed three major themes**: (1) aspiration for stable livelihood and education, (2) need for sustainable housing and disaster preparedness programs, and (3) desire for psychosocial and financial support systems.** These themes reflect both personal goals and expectations for responsive governance in post-disaster recovery.

Theme 1: Aspiration for Stable Livelihood and Education. Theme 1 highlights the participants' strong aspiration to pursue education and secure stable employment as pathways toward self-sufficiency and improved quality of life. Having experienced poverty and instability,

participants viewed education and livelihood as essential tools to prevent the repetition of past hardships. Their future plans centered on building independence and long-term security.

Participants consistently emphasized education and work as priorities for their future. One participant stated, "Gusto ko gud mag-eskwela ug magtrabaho para diri na maulit an ak naagian" (L130–131, P5) (I really want to study and work so that what I experienced will not happen again). Another shared, "An edukasyon amo la an paagi para makabangon kami" (L133–134, P1) (Education is the only way for us to rise again). A participant also expressed responsibility-driven motivation, saying, "Kinahanglan magtrabaho para may maupay nga pamumulaton" (L136–137, P8) (I need to work to have a better future). These responses collectively show that education and livelihood were viewed as foundations for stability and dignity.

The narratives reveal that future-oriented thinking emerged from past deprivation and struggle. Education and employment were not merely personal ambitions but coping responses shaped by lived hardship. By investing in these goals, participants sought to regain control over their lives and secure a more stable future.

These findings align with human capital theory, which emphasizes education as a critical driver of socioeconomic mobility. Studies on disaster recovery also highlight livelihood restoration as central to long-term resilience (UNDP, 2018). From Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, aspirations for education and employment reflect efforts to move beyond survival toward self-actualization. The participants' narratives demonstrate how future planning functions as both resilience and recovery.

In conclusion, aspiration for stable livelihood and education emerged as a dominant future-oriented goal among participants. Their plans reflect lessons drawn from past hardship and a determination to avoid intergenerational vulnerability. Education and employment symbolized hope, independence, and empowerment. This theme underscores the importance of accessible educational and livelihood programs in post-disaster contexts.

Theme 2: Need for Sustainable Housing and Disaster Preparedness Programs. Theme 2 centers on the participants' continued concern over housing insecurity and disaster vulnerability. Having experienced displacement and fear, participants emphasized the need for permanent housing and stronger disaster preparedness measures. Safe shelter was viewed as essential for peace of mind and long-term well-being.

Participants openly expressed their desire for secure housing. One participant stated, "Kun may maupay nga lugar kami, dire na kami mahadlok" (L72–73, P7) (If we had a safe place, we would not be afraid anymore). Another shared, "Importante gud an permanente nga balay para dire na kami mag-aligaga" (L140–141, P4) (Permanent housing is important so we will not keep worrying). A participant also noted preparedness concerns, "Kinahanglan gud an pag-andam para diri na maulit an trahedya" (L143–144, P10) (Preparedness is needed so the tragedy will not happen again). These responses emphasize the demand for sustainable housing and preparedness programs.

The narratives suggest that housing insecurity remained an unresolved source of fear long after the disaster. Permanent shelter represented safety, continuity, and emotional security.

Participants also linked housing stability with preparedness, indicating awareness shaped by lived experience.

Research shows that durable housing and community preparedness are key components of disaster resilience (World Bank, 2017). According to Maslow's theory, safety needs must be met before individuals can pursue higher aspirations. The participants' emphasis on housing aligns with resilience frameworks that prioritize structural and environmental security. Their calls reflect adaptive learning from past trauma.

Overall, the need for sustainable housing and disaster preparedness emerged as a critical concern for future well-being. Participants viewed secure shelter as essential for reducing fear and fostering stability. This theme highlights the importance of long-term housing solutions beyond short-term relief. Government-led preparedness initiatives are vital to preventing repeated trauma.

Theme 3: Desire for Psychosocial and Financial Support Systems. Theme 3 reflects the participants' recognition of the importance of continued psychosocial services and financial assistance. Healing from childhood trauma was perceived as an ongoing process requiring sustained support. Participants acknowledged that emotional recovery and stability cannot be achieved through individual effort alone.

Participants emphasized the need for emotional and financial support. One participant shared, "Makuri la gud kun ikaw la an nagdadara han kasakit" (L148–149, P2) (It is hard when you carry the pain alone). Another stated, "Kinahanglan gihapon hin bulig, diri la kwarta kundi pag-intindi" (L151–152, P9) (Help is still needed, not just money but understanding). A participant also noted, "An suporta han gobyerno makakabulig gud ha amon pagbangon" (L154–155, P6) (Government support really helps us recover). These responses indicate a desire for holistic support systems.

The narratives reveal that participants viewed recovery as incomplete without psychosocial and financial assistance. Emotional wounds persisted alongside economic challenges, requiring integrated support. Participants recognized that sustained intervention was essential for long-term healing and stability.

Studies on post-disaster recovery emphasize the importance of psychosocial services in addressing long-term trauma (Norris et al., 2002). Trauma theory highlights that unresolved childhood loss can resurface without appropriate intervention. From an ecological perspective, institutional support strengthens individual coping by reinforcing social systems. These findings affirm the necessity of sustained, responsive government programs.

In conclusion, the desire for psychosocial and financial support systems emerged as a vital aspect of future well-being. Participants recognized that healing extends beyond survival and requires ongoing care. This theme underscores the role of government and institutions in addressing invisible wounds of disaster. Comprehensive support systems are crucial for sustained recovery.

Overall, the participants' future plans reflect hope grounded in lived experience and resilience shaped by loss. Aspirations for education, secure housing, and psychosocial support reveal both personal determination and reliance on institutional responsibility. These

interconnected needs highlight that recovery from childhood disaster trauma is long-term and multidimensional. The findings emphasize the importance of integrated government programs that address education, housing, emotional healing, and financial stability.

Finally, the findings reveal that the loss of parents during childhood due to Typhoon Yolanda created enduring challenges that extended beyond immediate survival. However, through coping mechanisms, resilience-building, and hope for institutional support, participants demonstrated remarkable strength. These results highlight the importance of integrated disaster-response programs that address not only physical reconstruction but also emotional healing, education, and long-term social support.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This presents the summary of the study, draws conclusions based on the findings, and provides recommendations to key stakeholders. The study explored the lived experiences of children who lost one or both parents during Typhoon Yolanda and examined how they navigated challenges, coping mechanisms, and resilience over the past twelve years. It further explored their future plans and the government programs and support they perceive as necessary for their continued well-being.

Summary of the Study

This study employed a transcendental phenomenological design to understand the experiences of twelve participants in Tacloban City who were six years old at the time of Typhoon Yolanda and are now eighteen. Purposive sampling ensured the selection of participants who had lost a parent or both parents due to the disaster. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and analyzed using thematic coding, resulting in several key themes.

The study revealed four major challenges experienced by participants following parental loss: (1) sudden disruption of safety and normalcy, (2) loss of shelter and forced displacement, (3) socioeconomic decline and financial hardship, and (4) interrupted education and social withdrawal. Despite these adversities, participants employed coping mechanisms centered on hope and healing, including endurance through acceptance and faith and emotional survival through silence and self-reliance. Over time, participants demonstrated the development of resilience through strength built from prolonged hardship and meaning-making from loss and survival.

Finally, participants articulated their future plans and identified perceived needs for continued well-being. Themes emerged regarding aspirations for stable livelihood and education, need for sustainable housing and disaster preparedness programs, and desire for psychosocial and financial support systems. Overall, the findings underscore the interplay of personal growth, resilience, and institutional support in the post-disaster recovery process.

Conclusions

This presents the conclusions drawn from the study on the lived experiences of children who lost one or both parents during Typhoon Yolanda. It synthesizes the key findings on the challenges they faced, the coping mechanisms they employed, and the resilience they developed over the past twelve years. The discussion also highlights their future aspirations and the government support necessary for their continued well-being.

Challenges Brought About by the Loss of Parents During Childhood

The participants' narratives reveal that the sudden loss of parents during Typhoon Yolanda caused profound disruption in their lives. They experienced emotional trauma, displacement, financial hardship, hunger, and disrupted education. Using the Ecological Systems Theory, it is evident that the lack of familial and community support heightened their vulnerability, demonstrating how environmental factors compounded the impact of disaster.

In conclusion, the loss of parents during childhood created multidimensional challenges that significantly affected participants' emotional, social, and educational development, highlighting the need for comprehensive disaster and child welfare interventions.

Coping Mechanisms Related to Hope and Healing

Participants developed coping strategies that allowed them to endure adversity. Through acceptance, faith, silence, and self-reliance, they managed to navigate grief and hardship. These coping mechanisms align with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, as social and cultural contexts, including religious practices and community norms, influenced their resilience.

In conclusion, despite early trauma, participants employed adaptive coping strategies that enabled emotional survival and fostered hope, emphasizing the role of personal and cultural resources in post-disaster recovery.

The Development of Resilience Over the Past Twelve Years

The participants demonstrated resilience that developed through prolonged hardship and meaning-making from their survival experiences. By reframing trauma as a source of strength and purpose, they cultivated psychological and emotional endurance. This finding aligns with Tedeschi and Calhoun's Post-Traumatic Growth Theory, which posits that individuals can experience positive transformation following adversity.

In conclusion, resilience among participants evolved over time, illustrating that early trauma does not preclude growth and that adversity can become a catalyst for emotional and psychological development.

Future Plans and Perceived Government Support

Participants expressed aspirations for education, stable livelihoods, secure housing, and ongoing psychosocial and financial support. Their narratives indicate that long-term recovery is not solely individual but requires systemic and institutional interventions. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs highlights that basic security and safety must be ensured before higher-order goals, such as self-actualization, can be pursued.

In conclusion, participants' future plans emphasize the importance of integrated government programs and institutional support in promoting well-being, stability, and social mobility following childhood disaster experiences.

Over and above, the study revealed that losing parents during Typhoon Yolanda resulted in profound and enduring challenges for the participants, including emotional distress, displacement, financial hardship, and interrupted education. Despite these difficulties, participants demonstrated remarkable coping mechanisms and resilience, using faith, self-reliance, and meaning-making to navigate life post-disaster. Their future aspirations highlight the critical role of institutional support, secure housing, education, and psychosocial services in ensuring long-term well-being. These findings underscore the significance of comprehensive disaster response and child-focused recovery programs that address both physical and psychosocial needs.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researchers offer the following recommendations to support the continued growth, development, and well-being of children affected by parental loss during disasters. These recommendations are directed toward key beneficiaries identified in the study, including survivors, families, educators, local government units, policymakers, and future researchers.

1. For the Participants / Survivors
1.1 Pursue educational and livelihood opportunities to secure long-term stability and independence.
1.2 Seek psychosocial support and counseling to address lingering emotional trauma.
1.3 Participate in community-based disaster preparedness programs to enhance safety and resilience.

2. For Families and Caregivers

2.1 Provide emotional guidance and consistent support to children affected by disaster and loss.
2.2 Encourage and facilitate access to educational and extracurricular activities.
2.3 Maintain communication about disaster preparedness to foster a sense of security.

3. For Educators and School Administrators

3.1 Offer flexible academic programs and personalized guidance for students coping with trauma.
3.2 Develop mentorship and support systems to address both emotional and educational needs.
3.3 Recognize the achievements of survivors to build confidence and resilience.

4. For Local Government Units and Policymakers

4.1 Implement long-term housing projects that prioritize displaced and vulnerable children.
4.2 Provide scholarships, financial aid, and psychosocial programs to support recovery.
4.3 Establish disaster preparedness and community resilience programs that include children as active participants.

5. For Future Researchers

5.1 Replicate the study in other disaster-affected areas to understand diverse experiences.
5.2 Examine the long-term psychological, social, and educational impact of parental loss on children.
5.3 Explore interventions and programs that effectively foster resilience among disaster-affected youth.

Overall, these recommendations aim to strengthen support systems for children who have experienced parental loss during disasters. Implementing these measures can enhance psychosocial well-being, educational attainment, and resilience, while promoting social mobility and stability. By addressing the needs of survivors, families, educators, and policymakers, stakeholders can create an integrated, long-term approach to recovery and child development in disaster-affected communities.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Mark Joevel C. Buante is a Practical Research I Teacher under the Department of Education and a graduate of the Master of Arts in Teaching. He is currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Program Management. With extensive experience in language teaching, communications, and research, he also serves as the School Research Coordinator at Sto. Niño Senior High School, District Learning Center VI, Schools Division of Tacloban City.

Erica A. Arriesgado, Renante B. Bastida, Jherick H. Dela Cruz, Jos Silvan M. Santizo, Martin Jay D. Dimas, Ryan James M. Basilio, Mio Anthony Larion, Nino Jade Sumook, Annrey Ordame, and Frank Lemuel Mathan B. Lace are student-researchers who participated in studies examining resilience and the lived experiences of Typhoon Yolanda survivors in Tacloban City. All are enrolled in Practical Research I and contributed to data collection, analysis, and interpretation under the guidance of the lead researcher.