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TURNING AWARENESS INTO ACTION: A STUDY TO IMPROVE DISASTER RESILIENCE

Bryan Clint C. Casumpang [1], Febe T. Llentic [2],
Patrocinio Jean O. Lanuevo [3], Arneil G. Vellorijo [3]

[1]Higher Education, i-Link College of Science and Technology, Inc., Midsayap, North Cotabato, Philippines
[2]Department of Education, Kalilangan Central School,Kalilangan,Bukidnon, Philippines
[3]Department of Education, Lapurisima high school, Wao, Lanao Del Sur, Philippines

ABSTRACT

This study determined the level of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Awareness and disaster resilience of the respondents in the First District of North Cotabato, particularly in Midsayap, Aleosan and Pikit. Specifically, this studied the demographic profile of the respondents, the awareness of DRRM issues, assessed the level of disaster resilience and the significant relationship and influence between DRRM Awareness and disaster resilience. Descriptive quantitative correlational research design was used. A total of 399 respondents from Midsayap, Aleosan and Pikit was selected by stratified random sampling. An adopted survey questionnaire from some studies on DRRM awareness and disaster resilience was used. Frequency and percentage distribution, mean, standard deviation, independent samples t test, ANOVA, Pearson-r correlation and simple linear regression were the statistical tools used. Findings showed that the respondents have a moderate level of awareness on DRRM issues and a moderate level of disaster resilience. The study yielded conclusive finding that there's a significant relationship between DRRM Awareness and disaster resilience which is significant but weak and DRRM awareness significantly influence Disaster resilience and limited. In general, no significant difference in terms of disaster resilience when respondents were grouped according to age, sex and economic status. The Study yielded the conclusion that, up to some extent, awareness contributes a lot to disaster resilience, yet Disaster resilience is also channeled by some behavioral and or social and environmental factors. The findings may serve as basis in upholding an augmented disaster resilience plan for citizens of North Cotabato.

Keywords: *Disaster Risk Reduction Management, Disaster Awareness, Disaster Resilience, Community Preparedness, DRRM Awareness, North Cotabato*

INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is one of the most disaster prone countries due to its geographical location along the Pacific Ring of Fire and its exposure to typhoons, floods, earthquakes, and other natural hazards. Because of this, disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) has become a major concern to government institutions and local communities. Disaster resilience and preparedness is needed in minimizing disaster impacts and securing community safety.

Awareness on disaster risk reduction among students in Catanduanes State University as exposed by Toyado (2022) reflects that respondents know basic disaster concept but still do not have enough preparedness and adaptation skills. This study suggested that preparedness drills and doing of regular capacity -building activities is concentrated in training victims on disaster awareness. And in another study by De Castro and Aranguren (2023), disaster awareness and preparedness practices among other things become significant contributors to pupils' level of preparedness on disaster risk reduction and management.

Awareness does not also guarantee resilience according to Asio (2021), the awareness of the respondents on disaster occurrence in the region was mentioned; however, their awareness did not lead them to comply fully with disaster programs. Cresencio and Hermosura (2025) reiterate that awareness does not equate to the effective implementation disaster preparedness practices. Suggesting that aside from awareness, other factors affects resilience and preparedness behavior.

In the area of schools and communities DRRM program implementation has contributed in improving preparedness and resilience. Morante and Cerado (2025) found that there is a positive effect in the DRRM program implementation in SOCCSKSARGEN in the practical disaster readiness of pupils although study shows that the relationship of DRRM implemen tation and preparedness knowledge is weak. In another study, Fale (2022) explained that climate change adaptation and DRRM practices have significant relationship to the resilience of secondary school teachers.

Community participation also play a role in disaster resilience, Abdulkasan et al. (2021) emphasizes that public participation in DRRM activities significantly improve community -based disaster preparedness and the strengthening of local disaster management approaches. Bali (2022) further added that the greater the awareness that communities have of disaster and the greater their involvement in disaster preparedness, then the periodic losses that persons suffer from such disasters are lessened because they are much more prepared and better adapted.

Disaster resilience is a multidimensional process influenced by social, economic, behavioral, and environmental factors. Tariq et al. (2021) noted that disaster resilience frameworks must consider physical, economic, social, health, governance and environmental dimensions of disaster risk to determine measuring community disaster resilience. Sarker et al. (2020) explained that resilience includes adaptive, absorptive and transformative capacity which helps a community to cope with disaster.

Despite abundant knowledge in the area of DRRM awareness and resilience, less studies focused on citizens in the First District of North Cotabato especially the municipalities of Midsayap, Aleosan, and Pikit. Furthermore, the awareness on DRRM issues have significant impact on whether citizens would become disaster resilient. Thus the researchers conducted a study on the level of awareness on DRRM issues, disaster resilience and the relationship between the two which is also to determine the influence of awareness on DRRM issues to disaster resilience, the results may be helpful in developing an enhanced disaster resilience plan for citizen in the First District of North Cotabato.

Research Questions

The general purpose of this study was to develop a disaster resilience plan for citizens in the First District of North Cotabato.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
   1.1 age;
   1.2 sex; and
   1.3 economic status?
2. What is the level of awareness on DRRM issues in terms of:
   2.1 earthquake hazard;
   2.2 flood hazard; and
   2.3 typhoon hazard?
3. What is the level of disaster resilience in terms of:
   3.1 knowledge gained by understanding disaster;
   3.2 practice disaster readiness; and
   3.3 confidence for action in case of an emergency?
4. Is there a significant difference in the level of disaster resilience when grouped according to profile?
5. Is there a significant relationship between awareness of DRRM issues and disaster resilience?
6. Is there a significant influence between awareness of DRRM issues and disaster resilience?

METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive quantitative correlational research design to determine how aware citizens are on DRRM issues, and disaster resilience, and the relationship and influence between the two variables. The study was conducted in the three municipalities of the First District of North Cotabato, Midsayap, Aleosan, and Pikit. The respondents of the study were selected citizens of the three municipalities. Stratified random sampling was used to represent all respondents of the municipalities. Data gathering commenced as soon as the research had an approved letter from the municipal mayor of the desired municipalities. When the letter was approved, the researchers contacted their local officials, along with the respondents regarding the administration of the survey questionnaires. They were informed that their responses to the survey would be utilized solely for research purposes. Also, their consent was sought after explaining to them the objective of the study. The researchers collected the responses personally to ensure the completeness of the questionnaire.

The research instrument was an adopted survey questionnaire which allows the researcher to gather data concerning the variables. Independent Variable questionnaire of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) Awareness was adopted from the studies of Sauquillo et al. 2023 “Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Awareness among Residents of High-Risk Barangays Towards an Evidence-Based Training Plan”. Also, dependent variable for disaster resilience was adopted from the study of Matsukawa et al. 2024 “Disaster Resilience Scale for Individuals: A Fundamental Requirement for a Disaster-Resilient Society”. The instrument was composed of six parts. Part one gathered the respondents demographic profile on the age, sex and economic status. The second part assessed how aware citizens are on DRRM issues, based on the three major hazards, earthquake hazards, flood hazards, typhoon hazards. The third part assessed disaster resilience based on how much knowledge respondents gained from understanding disaster, disaster readiness, what practices equip them best prepare, and confidence for action during disasters. The successive parts show and examine the significant difference, relationship and influence between DRRM awareness and disaster resilience.

Pilot-testing was conducted on 397 residents of Banisilan, North Cotabato to establish validity and reliability of the instrument. Cronbach’s alpha was used to determine internal consistency of the items, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.80 indicating high reliability and acceptability of the research instrument. Using statistical tools to analyze the profile of the respondents, frequency and percentage distribution were employed. The mean and standard deviation was used to determine the level of DRRM awareness and disaster resilience of the respondents. Independent samples t-test was used to determine if a certain variable is significantly different from each other in terms of sex, ANOVA was applied in determining if age and economic status of the respondents brought a difference. To test the relationship of the two variables, Pearson-r correlation was used. Also to test the influence between variables simple linear regression was used. The scope of the study focused only on selected citizens of Midsayap, Aleosan and Pikit of the First District of North Cotabato at the conduct of the study. This study was limited to the

variables included in the questionnaire. Finally, other factors affecting disaster resilience that were not included in this study were beyond the scope of the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the analysis and interpretation of data regarding the level of awareness on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management and disaster resilience of citizens in the First District of North Cotabato. Gathered data of the respondents were analyzed and interpreted using appropriate statistical treatment such as frequency and percentage distribution, mean, standard deviation, independent samples t-test, ANOVA, Pearson-r correlation, and simple linear regression analysis.

The presentation of results is arranged in accordance with the order of the questions stated in the study. This chapter tackles the demographic profile of the respondents' age, sex, and economic status; the level of awareness about Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Issues - Earthquake hazard, Flood hazard, Typhoon hazard; level of disaster resilience - Knowledge gained by understanding disaster, Practice of readiness for disaster, Confidence for action during emergencies; Tests of Difference on Disaster resilience according to Demo profile; relation of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Awareness and Disaster Resilience; and the influence of Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Awareness on Disaster Resilience. The result of findings was likewise analyzed and interpreted in the light of other studies.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents According to Age

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18–21	104	26.1%
22–26	140	35.1%
27–30	76	19.0%
31–34	79	19.8%
Total	**399**	**100%**

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the respondents according to age. It showed that most of the respondents lie in the 22–26 age bracket with 140 respondents or 35.1% of the population, followed by 18–21 with 104 or 26.1%, while in the holder of 31–34, with 19.8% and 27–30 with 19.0%. It shows that the majority of the respondents are young adults. This manifests that younger people more involved in the community and disaster related awareness activities, the young adults due to the education they get through campaigns or informative also the exposure to digital means and social media where they can notice awareness regarding disaster preparedness and resilience. This result is supported by the study of Rosario (2022) where it emphasized that the participation of youth is very important in disaster risk reduction management because of their flexibility, their engagement and dissemination of information and their active participation in activities and preparedness.

Table 2. Demographic Profile of the Respondents According to Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	158	39.6%
Female	241	60.4%
Total	**399**	**100%**

Table 2 presents the demographic profile of respondents as to sex. The findings revealed that there were more female respondents, 241 or 60.4%, than 158 or 39.6% who were male respondents. This finding suggests that females are more represented in the study. This may reflect the greater engagement and involvement of women in surveys conducted as well as community based surveys and disaster preparedness initiatives. Females address the issues in the household and participate in the more community welfare activities compared to men and therefore are more susceptible to conducting DRRM related studies. This aligns with recent global data from the United Nations Development Programme (2026), which emphasizes that women increasingly lead local early warning and community-level risk assessments due to their localized trust networks. Furthermore, Hemachandra et al. (2018) note that while structural barriers exist, women consistently serve as primary disaster risk managers at the household level, making them naturally more engaged in local welfare and emergency preparedness initiatives.

Table 3. Demographic Profile of the Respondents According to Economic Status

Economic Status	Frequency	Percentage
Poor	88	22.1%
Low-income (not poor)	156	39.1%
Lower middle-income	71	17.8%
Middle middle-income	38	9.5%
Upper middle-income	46	11.5%
Total	**399**	**100%**

Table 3 shows that the respondents by economic status majority belong to a low-income (not poor) with 156 or 39.1%, followed by poor households with 88 or 22.1%. The results indicate that the most of the respondents belong to economically vulnerable segments of the society. Economic limitations may hinder access to private resources, preparations tools, and even strategies to mitigate disasters. Lower-income communities however prone to disasters, hence awareness and resilience programs in disasters are very important. This conclusion is strongly supported by a recent Philippine study published in by Mester et al., (2025), which found that household income is the single most powerful predictor of disaster readiness, as lower-income brackets face severe logistical constraints when acquiring survival tools. Furthermore, global data from Delgado et al., (2025) reinforces that because economic limitations exponentially increase displacement vulnerability, specialized community-level interventions and targeted safety nets are absolutely crucial to substitute for a lack of private household resources.

Table 4. Level of Awareness on DRRM Issues

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Earthquake Hazard	2.42	0.50	Moderate
Flood Hazard	2.56	0.54	Moderate
Typhoon Hazard	2.53	0.52	Moderate

Table 4 shows the level of awareness on DRRM issues among respondents. Looking closely to the data, flood hazard garnered the highest with the mean score of 2.56, with a standard deviation of 0.54 followed by typhoon hazard with 2.53 and standard deviation of 0.52, while earthquake hazard obtained the lowest mean score of 2.42 and standard deviation of 0.50. All indicators were interpreted as moderate. The awareness of respondents in DRRM issues is moderate. Moderate awareness on flood and typhoon hazard could be attributed to the frequent occurrence of disaster of this nature in the Philippines, particularly in North Cotabato where calamities are mindlessly wreaking havoc to the vulnerable. This pattern is consistent with Kurata et al., (2023), which notes that frequent, seasonal exposure to tropical cyclones significantly elevates household experiential awareness and risk perception regarding hydro-meteorological threats over geological ones. Furthermore, Abdulkasan et al., (2021) underscores that because Central Mindanao geography naturally functions as a major river catching basin, localized populations are perennially exposed to flooding, which naturally embeds a sharper, continuous awareness of floods and typhoons within the community's collective memory compared to less frequent hazards like earthquakes.

Table 5. Level of Disaster Resilience

Indicators	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Knowledge Gained by Understanding Disaster	2.69	0.46	Moderate
Practice Disaster Readiness	2.66	0.47	Moderate
Confidence for Action in an Emergency	2.73	0.45	Moderate

Table 5 shows the level of disaster resiliency. The highest mean score was obtained by the confidence for action in an emergency (2.73) with a standard deviation of 0.45 while the lowest was obtained by practice disaster readiness (2.66) with a standard deviation of 0.47. All indicators was interpreted as Moderate. This shows that the respondents have relatively moderate disaster resiliency especially the confidence in emergencies indicating that they believe they can respond during disaster situations, but practice disaster readiness was lower compared to confidence. This critical disconnect between psychological confidence and actual practice aligns with the nationwide findings of Vinck et al. (2024), which revealed that while the majority of Filipinos express high intent and mental assurance regarding emergency response, only a small fraction translate this

confidence into tangible actions like packing emergency kits or crafting formalized family disaster plans.

Table 6. Test of Difference on Disaster Resilience According to Sex

Variable	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Sex	1.12	0.26	Not Significant

Table 6 shows the test of difference in disaster resilience when respondents are grouped according to sex. The tested p-value of 0.26 was obtained which was greater than the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that there is no significant difference in disaster resilience among male and female respondents signifying that they have same level of disaster resilience. The findings also implies that disaster resilience is not significantly determined by (or linked to) sex, as male and female groups did have same access and linkage to disaster related information and preparedness activities. These findings are consistent with those of Additionally, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) (2011), emphasize that because modern disaster communication networks and public safety campaigns distribute critical risk information indiscriminately to all household members, both males and females develop parallel baseline capacities to withstand and adapt to disaster situations, further justifying the non-significant difference (p = 0.26) found in this study.

Table 7. Test of Difference on Disaster Resilience According to Age

Variable	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Age	0.20	0.82	Not Significant

Table 7 test of difference in disaster resilience according to age, with the p-value of 0.82 higher than 0.05, thus signifying there is no significant difference among respondents regarding disaster resilience as per age. It implies that respondents in different age category have similar levels of disaster resilience. The findings show that resilience is influenced by awareness, preparedness programs, and experience rather than age. The finding conforms to study of Jiang et al (2021) which stressed that resilience is an emergent process developed through continuous adaptation, rather than a demographic or situational characteristic.

Table 8. Test of Difference on Disaster Resilience According to Economic Status

Variable	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Economic Status	0.13	0.88	Not Significant

Table 8 shows the test of difference on disaster resilience according to economic status. The p-value of 0.88 is greater than the 0.05 significance level implying that there is no difference on disaster resilience according to economic status. Disaster resilience is relatively similar regardless of the economic status of the respondents. Disaster resilience may still be strengthened through awareness programs, training, and community support. This finding is strongly corroborated by Anindita (2025), who observed that while higher-income segments rely on financial resources, lower-income segments draw heavily upon localized social capital and community cooperation, effectively equalizing their overall resilience levels.

Table 9. Relationship Between DRRM Awareness and Disaster Resilience

Variables	r-value	p-value	Interpretation
DRRM Awareness and Disaster Resilience	0.235	<0.001	Significant

The obtained Pearson-r is 0.235 which signifies a weak positive relationship between the two factors, and a p-value of <0.001 confirms that the data is statistically significant.
This suggests that the more awareness on DRRM issues one has, the more disaster resilience it commonly has. However, the fact that it only weakly correlates, further confirms that awareness alone cannot establish disaster resilience. This study confirms the findings of Cabanig (2023), that disaster awareness significantly contribute to disaster management effectiveness and this finding strongly aligns with Hargono et al. (2023), who identified a distinct 'knowledge-action gap' in disaster demographics, proving that while risk awareness is a statistically significant prerequisite, it exhibits a weak direct correlation to resilience because cognitive understanding does not automatically guarantee behavioral adaptation

Table 10. Influence of DRRM Awareness on Disaster Resilience

Variables	Beta	R^2	p-value	Interpretation
DRRM Awareness and Disaster Resilience	0.25	0.05	<0.001	Significant

Table 10 shows the effect of DRRM awareness on disaster resilience. Simple linear regression analysis shows that DRRM awareness significantly affects disaster resilience with beta = 0.25, p = <0.001, although with an R^2 value of 0.05; hence, DRRM awareness explains only 5.5% of the variance in disaster resilience proving that the remaining 94.5% of resilience is determined by other external and structural variables. This low but statistically significant explanatory power is strongly supported by Hoffmann and Muttarak (2022), who noted that while disaster education is a highly significant baseline necessity (beta > 0), it routinely yields low R^2 values because the vast majority of disaster resilience variance is driven by structural and socio-economic realities rather than cognitive awareness alone. Furthermore, Chen et al. (2026) affirm that a minor R^2 value (such as 5.5%) is a common statistical occurrence in socio-behavioral DRRM studies, confirming

that while awareness is an irreplaceable catalyst for action, the remaining 94.5% of variance in a community's resilience depends heavily on tangible infrastructure, financial capital, and localized institutional governance.

Conclusions

The study found that respondents were mainly young adults, mostly female, and mostly poor and low-income members of families. Awareness in issues on DRMM particularly to flood and typhoon hazards was average while disaster resilience was high, especially on confidence. Disaster resilience showed no variations when respondents were grouped according to age, sex, and economic status while there was a significant relationship between DRRM awareness and disaster resilience but weak. On the other hand, the result of the study also showed that the greater the awareness in DRRM, the greater the disaster resilience is. Disaster resilience and DRRM awareness shows significant effect upon but weak only. This implies that a mere increase in disaster awareness would improve Disaster resilience in the respondents, but relatively low. A much greater influence exist in disaster preparedness courses, disaster training, community participation, institutional support and disaster experiences, which contribute much for developing a disaster resilient community. The findings are supported by Steers' Antecedents and outcomes of organizational commitment Theory (1977), which reflects that many factors must combine in order to achieve desired goals, which states that to accomplish the goals, it is a must have support from many, and these people must be involved because the level of support received depends on multiple factors, not just on the efforts of a single person. In relation to that of the study, simply, they must combine efforts to be disaster resilient. In the context of the study, awareness contributes to disaster resilience but does not solely determine it. The findings also support Graveline and Germain's Resilience Theory (2022), which explains that resilience is multidimensional and influenced by adaptive capacities, environmental conditions, preparedness behaviors, and social systems.

Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusions of the present study, the proponent therefore recommends the following:

1. DRRM units on LGU (Local Government Unit) reduce awareness campaigns and preparedness should be conducted in every barangay (community).
2. Regular school drill and community operands that are disaster-related like seminars and resilience will do.
3. Actual DRRP happens in the locality, or DRRP happens to focus on practical application.
4. Future study may include a bigger sample size, additional municipalities, or any variable that affects disaster resilience.
5. Disaster resilience plan should be drawn and put into practice so that the community is confident that they are prepared and are able.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

The researchers ensured that ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the conduct of the study. Permission to conduct the research was secured from the concerned municipal authorities prior to data gathering. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents, and they were informed that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The anonymity and confidentiality of respondents were maintained, and all gathered data were used solely for academic and research purposes. The researchers ensured that no harm was caused to the respondents during the conduct of the study. Plagiarism was strictly avoided through proper citation of sources and references. The interpretation of findings was conducted objectively and without bias.

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Corresponding author: *bryanclintcunningham@gmail.com*