

Becoming Resilient and Selfless: A Grounded Theory of Service despite the Threats during Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Frontliners were referred to the civil workers fighting against the pandemic, which includes the nurses, doctors, and other health workers and allied professionals; Officials and staff of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging and Infectious Diseases (IATF); The uniformed personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP); Media; Various Government Agencies, Groceries, Banks, Food Establishments, and Delivery Services who ensure that basic services are provided to the people; Private sectors, Volunteers; and Civil society organizations. The study intends to explore the experiences of these Frontliners in doing their service to people despite the risks and threats to their lives. It used a grounded theory approach to generate themes, and themes emerge from the data drawn from varied situations and contexts to capture and explain the essence of meaning or experience of the Frontliners. As a result, categories and sub-categories had emerged from narratives of experiences of the Frontliners. Becoming resilient and selfless are two larger categories that transpired after all the categories and sub-categories were combined. Resilience and selflessness emerged as important attributes manifested by the Frontliners in doing service despite the pandemic threats.

Keywords — Social Sciences, Frontliners, Services despite the threats during the pandemic, Grounded Theory, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of novel coronavirus 2019-nCoV, which is now known as Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), has affected several aspects of human lives experienced by people in different parts of the world. Thus, it is declared a global emergency by the World Health Organization (Chua et al., 2020). With the rapid increase of cases-related to COVID-19, several actions or measures of the International institutions, communities, local and national governments, and international bodies were initiated to slow or stop the spread of COVID-19. These measures to reduce transmission of COVID-19 include individual and environmental measures, detecting and isolating cases, contact-tracing social and physical distancing measures including for mass gatherings, international travel measures, and vaccines and treatments (World Health Organization, 2020).

In the Philippines, enhanced/general community quarantine as a safety measure has been implemented in accordance with the Presidential Proclamation dated March 8, 2020, which declares a State of Public Health Emergency throughout the country. The community quarantine limits people's movements and access to basic services except for the frontline workers who are the civil servants and others whose work involves delivering basic services. They play an important role in ensuring the safety and protection of the general public. They were the civil workers fighting against the pandemic, including the nurses, doctors, and other health workers and allied professionals; Officials and staff of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging and Infectious Diseases (IATF); The uniformed personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Philippine National Police (PNP); Media; Various Government Agencies, Groceries, Banks, Food Establishments, and Delivery Services who ensure that basic services are provided to the people; Private sectors, Volunteers; and Civil society organizations (Presidential Communications and Operations Office, 2020).

As the Frontliners continuously fulfill their duties and responsibilities in this fight against COVID-19, their lives are also at stake. There was news heard about the death of some Frontliners, especially those who are in the medical field due to their exposure and contact with individuals who have been positive with the virus. While their service needs the protection of humanity, their lives are being

threatened. Thus, hoped to generate concepts and categories on the experiences and narratives of the Frontliners in fulfilling their mission or their roles despite the risk of harm of the pandemic.

The experiences of the Frontliners in pursuing their roles despite the threats to their lives and the risk of harm can be viewed using various psychological lenses. Frontliners' constant exposure to people exposed them to a high risk of harm. The researcher came from that premise on questioning how these people continued to survive and pursue doing their job (regardless of whether it's their prescribed job) to serve and save people in the time of the pandemic. *Why would people do something that benefits someone else but offers no immediate benefit to them? If it's part of their job, some people do it beyond what is expected from them.* The concept of help and service beyond self can be viewed using prosociality as the theoretical lens for this exploration.

It is viewed that prosociality is fundamental to human social life (Tappin and Capraro, 2018). Prosocial behaviors are those intended to help other people. These actions are characterized by a concern for the rights, feelings, and welfare of other people. Behaviors that can be described as prosocial include feeling empathy and concern for others. Prosocial behavior includes a wide range of actions such as helping, sharing, comforting, and cooperating. The term itself originated during the 1970s and was introduced by social scientists as an antonym for antisocial behavior (Cherry, 2020).

The concept of prosociality is even explained in the context of neuroscience, as in the study of Chierchia and Singer (2017). It explains that empathy enables the person to connect at an emotional level. But this might not be enough to promote prosociality. Being empathic to someone does not necessarily motivate others to help. However, for Stocks, Lishner and Decker (2008), empathically aroused individuals help those in need, even when physical escape from the need situation is easy. This evidence has been used to support the claim that empathy evokes an altruistic motive. To fill this gap, a tradition in psychology has highlighted the role of empathic concern or compassion, and developments in social neuroscience have made this proposal increasingly clear, and it has also been shown that empathy and compassion can be trained; whereby compassion training has been associated with several intrapersonal and interpersonal benefits, ranging from increases in psychological well-being and health to increased cooperation, trust, and tolerance. Cherry (2020) revealed different types of prosocial behaviors are distinguished based on why they are produced. The first type is *proactive*, which refers to prosocial actions that serve self-benefitting purposes. Reactive

actions are performed in response to individual needs, and Altruistic includes actions meant to help others without any expectations of personal gain.

For this study, the theoretical concept on prosociality and understanding prosocial behaviors simply helps the researcher set the phenomenon under study and not dictate the emerging data in the course of analysis. From the review of literature and studies, seemingly, there had already been several studies on prosocial behaviors explaining why people continue doing service and helping others despite the possible threats to themselves. However, in this study, the phenomenon of serving despite the risk is very specific to the experiences of the Frontliners during the quarantine period whose lives are at stake. This study is a grounded inquiry to generate theory from the narratives and experiences of the Frontliners serving the public in times of the pandemic.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study aimed to establish a theory to explain the phenomenon of service despite the threats experienced by the Frontliners during the quarantine period. It examined the experiences of the Frontliners in serving the community despite the threats to their health during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic utilizing a constructivist grounded theory approach in showing the relationship of the concepts inductively derived from the data. The method used was a key informant interview with the identified participants. Using theoretical sampling crucial to a Grounded approach, the participants were chosen based on the criteria described in the succeeding part of this paper. Generally, these are Frontliners who have been serving (they are still in the service even when this study is being conducted) during the community quarantine period from May to October 2020.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study utilized the Qualitative Research Design and Grounded Theory approach in examining the experiences of the Frontliners in doing their service amidst the threats brought by the pandemic during the Enhanced and General Community Quarantine Period. Grounded Theory is a systematic and iterative process of research. The goal is to develop theories from the data through an inductive process of analysis to explain or understand a phenomenon.

This approach calls for a continual interplay between data collection and analysis to produce a theory during the research process (Bowen, 2006). In this

study, the phenomenon of doing service amidst the threats to life caused by the pandemic is seen to be the phenomenon and explored by examining the experiences of the Frontliners. Key informant interview as the method in the data gathering was employed with the use of an interview guide prepared by the researcher. With theoretical sampling as crucial to a grounded theory, participants were interviewed based on referral and criteria.

Research Site

The study was conducted within the City of Koronadal South Cotabato, placed under general community quarantine under the Executive Order (EO) No. 35. Such was issued as a control measure in response to the increasing confirmed cases and spread of the deadly disease in parts of the country as being reported. Koronadal is a fast developing city composed of twenty-seven 27 Barangays and is the center of political, cultural, and socio-economic activities in the province of South Cotabato. This City has advanced itself as the capital city of the province at the same time named as the seat or the Administrative Center of Region XII or SOCCSKSARGEN.

Participants

The participants in this study were identified as Frontliners who served during the quarantine period. They were nurses who worked in the hospitals that accommodate *Covid* patients, medical doctors, PNP personnel, Barangay police, and civilian volunteers. These participants were identified through referrals considering the set inclusion criteria set by the researcher. The participant should have started to render service since day one of the enhanced community quarantine in the city and continued up until the General Community Quarantine period. For the Participant from the medical field, she/he should have been exposed to a patient identified as either a Person under Investigation (PUI) or a 'person under monitoring' (PUM). For the participant from the Armed force/PNP, he should come from the checkpoint area of the city; the participant from the Barangay unit, he should have been assigned to the area where there were identified PUI or PUM. The participants, though they have encountered any of the cases, should be confirmed to be safe, still in service when this study is to be conducted. Most importantly, they should be willing to participate in this study.

Instrumentation

Since this study used key informant interviews to gather data, an interview guide was developed by the researcher. Questions are open-ended to gather

comprehensive and substantial narratives of the experiences of the participants.

Data Gathering

A key informant interview was utilized for this study. Basic protocols for the conduct of the interview were properly observed. Some participants agreed to be interviewed face-to-face with social distancing as protocol. Theoretical sampling is crucial to a grounded theory approach. After the interview with the participant, the data were transcribed and analyzed to see initial codes and categories from the first data. Then, the researcher interviewed the second participant, analyzed the data, and compared it with the prior data. This is where the constant comparative analysis played a critical role also for a grounded approach. This process has been reiteratively repeated until it reaches the saturation point. The saturation point tells the researcher that the data that had been gathered are already sufficient and substantial enough and that no more new categories emerged in the course of analysis.

Data Analysis

Grounded theory, by nature, is an iterative process in terms of data analysis. After the first data being gathered, it was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify initial concepts. Then went back to the field, gathered data, analyzed, and made a constant comparison. Bowen (2006) discussed that themes generate a grounded theory, and themes emerge from the data during analysis, capturing the essence of meaning or experience drawn from varied situations and contexts.

The analysis involved examining underlying meanings of data reduced data to abstract concepts, and summarized them. It involved three stages: the first one was the initial coding which is the assigning of labels to the significant portions of the data; the second stage is focused coding which is the selection of relevant or dominant codes and determining their connections with other codes; and the third one is the theoretical coding which is the creation of connections between categories relating to data. The process was iteratively conducted until the data reached the saturation level in which no more new themes or categories emerged in the analysis. The emerging categories were theoretically coded by naming the particular relationship between them (Glaser, 1978). At successive stages of the study, themes moved from low levels of abstraction to overarching themes. These overarching themes served as the foundational pillars of theoretical saturation when the additional data for such themes failed to uncover new ideas about the developing theory (Bowen, 2006).

Theoretical saturation is achieved through constant comparison of incidents (indicators) in the data to elicit the properties and dimensions of each category (code). This constant comparing of incidents continues until the process yields the interchangeability of indicators, meaning that no new properties or dimensions are emerging from continued coding and comparison. It is by constantly comparing the meaning of indicators that concepts and their properties are slowly built.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After the rigor process of analyzing the data using the grounded inquiry approach, the following categories and sub-categories had emerged from narratives shared by the Frontliners who served despite the threats to their lives during the quarantine period due to the pandemic.

There are two larger categories that transpired after all the categories and sub-categories were combined. Becoming resilient and selfless as a theory emerged as important attributes manifested by the Frontliners in doing service despite the threats of the pandemic.

Becoming resilient

Resilience is one major category that emerged from the analysis. It appears as one trait manifested by the Frontliners. According to Sarkar & Fletcher (2013), resilience is required in response to different adversities, ranging from ongoing daily hassles to major life events. Positive adaptation must be conceptually appropriate to the adversity examined in terms of the domains assessed and the stringency of criteria used. Similarly, in the study of Masten & Barnes (2018), resilience is the capacity to adapt successfully to challenges that threaten function, survival, or future development. This definition is scalable across systems levels and across disciplines, applicable to resilience in a person, a family, a health care system, an economy, or other systems. Here, resilience as a major category emerged as a trait or characteristic of the Frontliners based on how they respond to the challenge of the pandemic in the context of continuing their service despite the risk or threats to their own safety. This particular trait is being demonstrated by the Frontliners through the following:

Resilience can withstand the threats of the pandemic to their own and other people's safety by continuing serving despite complete awareness of the threats. They are aware that exposing themselves to the people (as a nature of their job) means threats to their health, threats to other people's health, and even conflict

to their relationship with others. Exposure to their work can bring threats to their health, for they may get infected and become the carrier of the virus due to their contact with clients, patients, random people they meet in the workplaces like in the hospitals for the nurses, checkpoints for the police officers and BPATS and in the community visited by the volunteers. It can be a threat to other people's health especially for their family, when they unintentionally and unknowingly get infected by the virus.

Resilience is being able to resist difficult situations and conflicts within the work and against the apathy of some people. As shared by the Frontliners, conflict with other people becomes part of their daily routines. For example, for the medical practitioners like the nurses in particular. When they are out of work, like when they are at home or elsewhere, they feel that they are being discriminated against by being judged to be the carrier of the virus because of their work and where they work. That feeling of being judged is expressed in the following sentiments:

One of the challenges that we face as Frontliner is discrimination. They fear us that we are exposed to a patient positive to COVID or are the carrier of the virus. (P1)

Second, despite all the reminders, people still roam around. They do not stay at home for their safety. As Frontliner, we sacrifice our lives for them, but some people only think about what's good for themselves. Another challenge is time. Our time away from family just to ensure their safety. (P3)

Common to the experiences among the armed personnel like the policemen and barangay patrol is the negotiation between them and people. There are times that negotiation leads to argument and sometimes fight. There goes the conflict between them and others who are apathetic (*as they call them*) and insistent without following the protocols. In their sharing, they understand the plight of the public, but they operate according to policy and protocols, and they need to be consistent. This is why most of the time, they are in conflict with people but remain calm and patient in dealing with them. As shared by them;

Ang pinaka budlay o mahirap gid kay may ma-encounter kami nga mga tao nga wala ga-social distancing kis-a ga-rant pa, maakig pa kong sawayon mo. And also, Wala ga-proper wear sang mask. (p1)

(We have difficulty dealing with people who do not follow the safety protocols just like wearing mask and social distancing. When caught, they tend to rant and fight against the authority. (p1)

Damu wala ga-suksuk sang mask, kis-a pabungul-bungul ka lang kis-a mangakig pa sila, ma encounter ka pa nga ma isog nga tao so amu lang ng part nga budlay, so total kay di man abi permanente na oras ara ang pulis o visible ang pulis, so thankful kami kong may mga pulis kami na visible sa amuna na areas... (P1)

(Many do not follow the safety protocols just like wearing of mask. When you call their attention, they pretend not to hear the authority. Some get mad when their attention is called for. Police officers are not allowed at all times to pacify. We are thankful if police are visible in the area.) (p1)

Some people are so stubborn and don't want to follow quarantine rules, so you have to cope-up with them. (p2)

Resilience is being able to adjust and being flexible. As experienced by the front liners, they sacrifice time spent with their family. Most of their time are attributed to work. As shared by one of them, “*Aside from hindi mo na or hindi ko na masyadong abmm... inuuwian yong tirahan hindi pa masyadong nakakausap ang pamilya hindi rin pong masyadong nagkakaroon ng contact with other people as a frontliner*” (p9). (*Seldom I go home (to where he stays). Seldom also I talk to my family. Contact with other people also becomes limited*) (p9).

They needed to adjust to their new routines both at home and work. Because of their exposure to the covid patients, some nurses were also isolated and were not allowed to meet their families momentarily. The following were shared by some of them:

Being a Frontliner is not an easy job. You put yourself at risk, not only you but your family and loved ones. You sacrifice a lot of time being in the hospital and quarantine facility than going home to your family... (p8)

We have to adjust your schedule against your usual routine and you have to do overtime. As government employees, we are required to do extra time to undertake our responsibilities as front liners on top of hour 8 (p7).

To them, that's a lot of sacrifices. Police, barangay patrol, and even barangay officials need to ensure that everyone's curfew policy is being implemented strictly. This means a lot of work in terms of monitoring and securing that the policy is observed to them. For them, the work means dedicating most of their time on duty, even at night or early morning. As a result, time for the family is sacrificed. Other than the time, apprehensions on whether they are infected or not are also there. They cannot be certain and complacent because of their whereabouts too. In effect, they also needed to keep their distance from the children and family members.

Resilience is being able to see positivity despite the difficult situation. Frontliners tried to be strategic in terms of ensuring their safety at the same time fulfilling their job. They believed that their job is their oath and a calling to serve despite the risk of threats. They believed in the power of collaboration to mitigate the problem, and they trust that what they are doing, though it's risky, is for the people and the community.

But it's a calling... an oath, A responsibility. In the end, you may feel that you did a good job, a great job in society...(p8)

The coordination between the government and hospitals also helped us to somewhat control the pandemic. We were also able to cope with these challenges with the people donating proper protective equipment for the use of the health care professionals. We need to hold hands, come together, and help each other to fight this pandemic. (p9)

Lastly, resilience is being able to consciously utilize a "protective mindset" to protect themselves as shared by one medical Front liner, "As a Frontliner, aside from the PPEs that are being provided to me. A well-established knowledge of the disease transmission is the top consideration to protect myself to such. I believe that, although my enemy is microscopic and cannot be seen by my naked eyes, knowing everything about it is as important as the PPEs (p7).

This is also manifested through doing simple things like being not too complacent, ensuring cleanliness in one's body system, ensuring self-protection while outside, such as wearing PPE's in the workplace', planning for safety routines every day, and being able to understand completely what the threats of the pandemic are. The following statements may substantiate more the idea about Frontliners' protective mindset:

Always put into mind the risk that we face every minute and every day. Wag pa kampante! Even you know that person you need to follow all the safety rules and protocols, be sure that you wear your mask, never entertain a patient without your PPE, wash hands as always and maintain social distancing. (p8)

Always build your mindset for safety first, be alert to your surroundings... Plus, always follow all the protocols not only for your safeness but also for the safeness of your family. A lot of patience, prayers, and have a positive thoughts that soon this pandemic will end. (p8).

Magampana ko ang akon nga... (referring to duties) ang siguridad ko kag ang akon nga safety pinaagi sa pagsuot sang mga facemask, faceshield tapos gloves tapos naka atleast one meter distance kami sa mga salakyan na amon nga ginapara kag sa mga tao kay para ma avoid namon ang pagtransmit sang mga laway dira oh ano nga pwede makalaton sa isa ka tao para syempre security first kay paano kami ka ubra sa amon nga trabaho kong hindi, hindi namon ma kwan ang amon nga sarili ma secure amo lang to... (p3)

(I ensure my own safety through wearing mask, face shield and gloves. We ensure one meter distance with the vehicles when we do check-up to avoid possible transmission. We are mindful about protecting ourselves first. How can we protect others when we (as Frontliners) are not safe?) (p3)

As a frontliner po nag set din po ako ng rules and regulation ko para ma prevent ko po ang virus nato. After work sinisigurado kop o na malinis po ang mga gamit ko nakapag disinfect ako na kapag ligo ako at lahat po ng gamit ko. (p5)

(As a Frontliner, I also established my own rules and regulations to avoid the virus. After work, I make sure to disinfect, clean the equipment (used) and if possible, take a bath) (p5)

Malinis bago pumunta or pumasok sa mga gusali or tirahan naka-disinfect po ako to ensure that...(p5)

(I ensure to disinfect upon entering the building or homes.) (p5).

I am clear of this kind of pandemic at hindi po ako cause ng isang pandemic (he meant that he is not a carrier) sa isang lugar or saaking pupuntahan...(p5).

Becoming selfless

Selflessness is the second major category that emerged from the analysis. It appears as one trait manifested by the Frontliners. This particular trait is being demonstrated by the Frontliners through the following:

The Frontliners show commitment to their work/duties as expressed through extending the work time when necessary; conscious effort on helping the government; clear on their duty for public safety;

Syempre bilang isa ka pulis nga ginatawag ang akon ang amon nga role is bantayan namon ang mga nagagawas kag nagasulod sa aton nga siyudad no lalo na sa mo na gahalin sa gawas na kong may mga quarantine pass sila dapat ma prevent naton na nga nakasulod sila sa aton nga siyudad kay para maprevent ang pagdamo o paglapta sang COVID19 (p3).

(As a police officer, I ensure the safety of the people coming in and out the city. I check the quarantine pass especially those who came from outside the city. This is important to contain the virus and avoid the spread of it) (p3).

Dapat maging strict kami na mag implement sina kay para nga masecure naton ang aton siyudad nga hindi na magdamo o maglapta pa gid ang aton nga kwan nga COVID19 nga issue dire sa aton dire nga siyudad. (p3).

(We need to be strict in implementing the policy to ensure the safety of the city, and not to allow the spread of the Covid19 virus.) (p3).

Felt accountable for the safety of other people; extra effort on educating people about safety such as social distancing and other safety measures; extra effort on monitoring whether people are following safety rules or not, especially in the barangay level; show consistency in performing their duties; set themselves as models of others in terms of following protocols; and personal initiatives in purchasing the necessary equipment for their safety.

As Frontliner gina-ensure gid namon nga himuon ang tanan para lang maayos ining pandemic nga ini... (p1)

As Frontliners, we do our best to find solution to this problem on pandemic.) (p1)

We need to ensure the safety of our family and the people around us dahil tayo ang frontliner tayo yong nagiging ahm... vocal point ng mga tao since we are the, the material to help other people and coping of this kind of pandemic ahhh (p9).

(We need to ensure the safety of our family and other people. As Frontliners, we become the instrument to help in coping this kind of problem) (p9)

Aside from that we need to take a risk as a frontliner to help other people to take them cure uhmm.. to be survivors from that ahh.. mas nagkukulang na tayo ng oras sa pamilya at saibang tao natotoon tayo saating trabaho which is yon ang dapat kasi dito tayo na puntahan ito yong atin dapat gawin kasi tayo yong ahmm.. naging model sa panahon ng pandemic which we are ahmm.. Aside to be frontliner.. (p9)

(We take risks as Frontliners to help others- to cure them and be survivors. We already sacrificed much time intended for our own family. We are much focused on our work. This is expected from us. Many see us their models (many rely to them) this time of pandemic) (p9)

Another manifestation of their commitment is how they ensure the judicious and proper delivery of their task. The medical practitioners do a rigorous investigation and examination of facts, especially on travel histories and illness, and perform surgeries and operations as needed. The barangay patrol ensures that everyone adheres to the safety measure in the barangay.

The front liners also recognize that their role is significant for people's safety in information dissemination, encouraging people's participation, data collection, and innovative strategies and studies on treatment based on current studies.

Care as expressed by the nurses, provides extra care for the patients by ensuring that patients are comfortable. They assess them every day to prevent further complications of the disease. The nurses believe that they needed to care for themselves to continue caring for others, especially those who need most of their presence.

I would describe my role as the person who ensures that patients and clients and medical and non-medical staff coming into the institution, are safe in possible exposure to someone who is a suspect/probable/confirmed patients (p7).

We try to give the best treatment possible based on current studies to ensure that our patients will be comfortable and prevent further complications of the disease.... We make sure to see and assess our patients every day because, they may develop sudden complications with the course of the disease (p9).

They believe that part of their significant role is orienting and educating the public on basic protocols on protecting themselves. For them, that is not only because it's a policy. They needed to re-orient and re-educate people for their safety regardless of whether it is a policy or not. The police officers consider the fact that imposing policy can sometimes be challenging. Sometimes, they need to consider some due to necessity. For them, human consideration is also important while imposing policies-it depends on the judgment of the officers. When they give consideration it is sometimes out of care also for people's circumstances. It is difficult but sometimes, flexibility is also necessary.

Care is also reflected in the way they worried about people's apathetic behavior. Based on their sharing, many people they have encountered seem not to care about what's going on around them. They do not follow the protocols. They disregard safety measures. They do not wear protective equipment when in

public, not cooperating with the authority that they sometimes even fight against the persons in authority. Others do not tell facts about important information on their travel and whereabouts. When they encounter that, they got irritated, not really because of people's apathy but because of people's lack of concern for their safety, as apathy leads to getting infected.

I've encountered people who lie in their health conditions and their travel histories. I realized that it is not the virus that we must only be scared of, but more to people who are ignorant and apathetic who don't care for everyone and only look for themselves (p7).

There are also times when the Frontliners, the medical people, in particular, cannot right away perform their tasks immediately due to standard health and safety protocols or by not having standards at all "how-to." It affects their performance, and it worries them not to respond to the needs of the patients outrightly.

Passion is the drive that allows Frontliners to volunteer. Most of them are private individuals who are willing to render service for others. As shared, they volunteer to gather goods and cash for those in need, and they connect people to the government for help. According to the sharing of one volunteer, he even shells out his own money just to help. When asked about why they opt to do this even though it is risky, one volunteer said that it was the passion to help that drives him to do so.

Parang if you are blessed share your blessings so what you see what you receive. Words from the bible truly inspire me a lot. Share once you are blessed. You need to share, I showed my time my effort and also if you have that amount of what (p14)

Parang ano sir, once naka- help ka parang you are complete, kumpleto kana I mean yung parang happiness mo... (p14)

(Once you share something, you feel complete) (p14)

Patience is being shown by the Frontliners to show maximum tolerance for the people, especially those who are not following the protocols. There are times that they got angry but remain calm. In the process, they have learned to handle complaints properly and nicely. They said it is something they have also

learned with their engagement in a lot of cases. For them, patience is necessary to explain even many times already the safety protocols and measures for the public as experienced by the police and barangay patrol. For the nurses, performing triage as one important task is the common problem of most health workers. Doing this takes a lot of patience, most especially in dealing with difficult people who are not cooperative.

Some people are so stubborn and don't want to follow quarantine rules, so you have to cope-up with them (p2)

One of the biggest challenges is how to convince the public, the general public, to internalize how hard it is to fight covid-19 without their participation (p7).

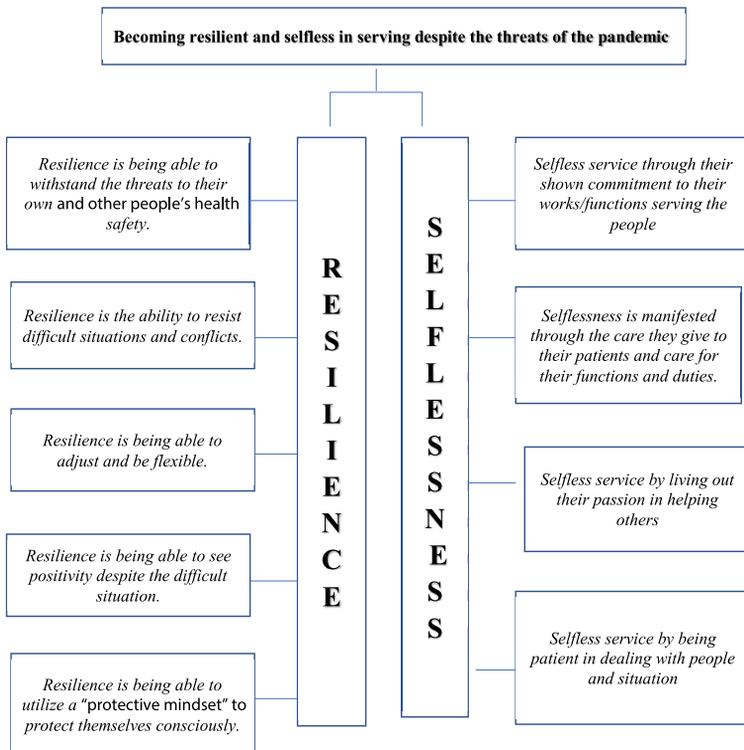


Figure 1. The schematic presentation of the theory “Becoming resilient and selfless” generated from the analysis

This study generates theory from the experiences and narratives of the Frontliners during the quarantine period as they have continued rendering their services despite the threats and risks of the pandemic. Trusting the rigor and process of the constructivist grounded theory approach following the inductive and constant-comparative analysis in generating themes (categories and sub-categories), the essential traits and attitudes of the front line workers towards service despite the threats of the pandemic surfaced as the central category. Resilience emerged as an essential trait which captured the sub-themes revealing how they withstand the threats, resist difficult situations and conflicts, their ability to adjust and their flexibility, their positivity and their acts of exemplifying protective mind set at all times. Selflessness emerged as the second central category that encapsulates their sense of commitment, care for the people, patience and passion on what they do.

CONCLUSIONS

Resilience and selflessness of the Frontliners in serving despite the threats of the pandemic emerged as theory through the inductive constructivist process of grounded theory analysis. The intention of the study primarily was to explore how these Frontliners as workers during the quarantine period experienced continuous and persistence service amidst the risks and threats brought by the pandemic. In the interview, the researcher began by simply asking the participants to share their stories on serving despite the risks of the pandemic to their safety and health. Following the process on data analysis using the constructivist paradigm, what emerged as the core category on the initial and succeeding analyses are their traits and attitudes shown or manifested by the front line workers in dealing with people, handling stress, managing conflicts, implementing the guidelines and protocols, and even in handling their personal lives and family. Thus, the theory explains how Frontliners could withstand to their duties and responsibilities despite the risk. It furthers prosociality as a theory that explains human predisposition to help others especially those in need or some behaviors such as showing empathy and concern for others by helping, sharing, comforting, and cooperating. This theory may explain that in dealing with difficult situations in the context of service, essential traits on being resilient and selfless can also be a process that evolve through human's experience with the phenomenon. As an emerging category that defines one particular trait of the front line workers, resilience captures the participants' strength and potency

to deliver and perform their tasks despite the risk of harm. It is their duty and commitment that linked to the second core category on selflessness. Selflessness is the second emerging core category that captures their sense of service driven by their own commitment, patience, passion and care.

TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH

The theory generated in this study through the rigor of grounded theory approach is already a contribution in explaining underlying issues and phenomena related to the study. The theory may provide additional inputs on some exiting theories related to the topic explored. In terms of the practical implications, this may provide significant feedback on policy legislation about possible capability-building programs, mentoring and coaching for the involved front line workers and some initiatives that emphasize on their welfare and protection as individuals with significant functions in times of crisis just like the pandemic.

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