

# Lived Experiences of Filipino Nurses during the COVID-19 Pandemic: An Interpretative Phenomenological Research

<sup>1</sup>Michaela Ajesta, <sup>2</sup>Mikaela Sanchez, <sup>3</sup>Marjorie Aliposa, <sup>4</sup>Sophia Marie Montero

College of Nursing, Mary Chiles College, Manila City, Philippines

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7244566>

Published Date: 24-October-2022

---

**Abstract:** The study explored the Lived Experiences of Filipino Nurses during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Hence, the resulting findings brought a salient contribution in the field of hospital leadership and management, healthcare research, nursing education, and political medicine. Interpreted data also provided an opportunity to spread awareness and appreciation for Filipino Nurses who have experienced enormous discreditation for their patriotic efforts to serve their country. Moreover, this research paper offered some knowledge on factors to improve the healthcare delivery system in the Philippines concerning the welfare of our dear Filipino nurses. This study aimed to investigate the lived experiences of Filipino nurses who handled COVID-19 patients, specifically with severe and critical conditions during the COVID-19 pandemic, to carefully identify recurring factors that contribute to workplace performance. Moreover, this paper aimed to determine the shared experiences of Filipino nurses in and outside of their workplace that had a major impact on their well-being status.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Interpretative Phenomenology, Lived Experiences, Filipino Nurses, Pandemic.

---

## I. INTRODUCTION

The unexpected outbreak of the second strain of SARS-CoV caused devastating damage and effects on several factors, from the financial markets to the health of the population. This crisis has implications for the economy, health systems, and patient care delivery (Schutz, 2020). The rapid growth in coronavirus cases was approximately 103,507,287 cases worldwide, with 2,237,029 deaths and 75,108,624 recovered (Worldometers, 2020).

During this time of fear and stress, practicing nurses have worked long shifts. Despite the stress and anxiety generated by the workplace environment, they are often not provided with adequate emotional support (Veenema & Meyer, 2020). Physical and mental exhaustion, lack of knowledge, and in many cases, a lack of skills to care for patients can lead to negative emotions and psychological trauma (Sun et al., 2020).

As the director-general of WHO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, stated, "Even if we do everything else right, if we don't prioritize protecting health workers, many people will die because the health worker who could have saved their lives is sick."

This has brought us to the question: how will the COVID-19 pandemic affect the future of nurses and nursing? Probing numerous questions in the present can be very viable for the future (Kirkland, 2020). According to Dr. Mary Glasgow, Dean of Nursing at Duquesne University, "in times of devastation, the world can see how critical the nursing profession truly is." As defined by Anderson (2020), a crisis is an "undesirable event or outcome, which includes the element of surprise or disruption of action, and is a threat to the resources and well-being of an individual within the organization." Considering

## International Journal of Novel Research in Healthcare and Nursing

Vol. 9, Issue 3, pp: (148-159), Month: September - December 2022, Available at: [www.noveltyjournals.com](http://www.noveltyjournals.com)

the sparsity of empirical data on the lived experiences of nurses during crises, the scarcity of studies in this area has compelled the researchers to explore the nurses' lived experiences during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

This study aimed to investigate the lived experiences of Filipino nurses who handled COVID-19 patients, specifically those with severe and critical conditions, during the COVID-19 pandemic to identify recurring factors contributing to workplace performance. Moreover, this paper aimed to determine the shared experiences of Filipino nurses in and outside of their workplace that had a significant impact on their well-being status. And from the interpreted data, it could also provide an opportunity to spread awareness and appreciation for Filipino nurses who have experienced enormous discreditation for their patriotic efforts to serve their country. Hence, in this study, the researchers opted to use a research method by Max Van Manen to understand and interpret the lived experiences of the Filipino nurses in a more detailed and creative way.

### Grand Tour Question

This qualitative, interpretative phenomenological study aims to interpret the lived experiences of nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the study also sought the answer to the grand question: What are the lived experiences of Filipino nurses during the COVID-19 Pandemic? Specifically, the following questions were used to help the proponents in the course of the study:

1. What are your daily experiences in caring for patients with COVID-19?
2. What is it like to be a nurse during the COVID-19 Pandemic?
3. During the COVID-19 Pandemic what changes did you experience in regard to your mental, emotional, psychosocial, and physical health?
4. What are the big challenges you encountered during this time of the COVID-19 pandemic?
5. How do you cope or deal with those challenges? What are your coping and defense mechanisms?
6. Age, sex, years of service

### Scope and Limitation

The study was centered on the lived experiences of nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic. The participants of this study were selected based on the criteria. In addition, participants gave their statements with regards to their experiences in handling severe and critical COVID-19 patients. Moreover, this study started in the month of August 2020 and finished in June 2021. The exclusions of this study are the following: participants will not include their experiences with COVID-19 patients with mild and moderate conditions. And lastly, geographical location, which means there will be a specific place for the conduct of this study. As a result, only COVID-19 referral hospitals in Metro Manila will be covered in this study.

The limitations of this study were the following: first, the qualitative nature of the study limits the generalization of the findings. Second, limitations in terms of interpersonal communication due to the circumstances brought by the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in the application of technology. All the interviews were conducted from a distance through telephone or audio-visual means. Therefore, there was a limited observation of body language beyond the tone of voice. Third, at least 1 year of working at the hospital before the pandemic to determine if there were changes in how they rendered care to patients. Fourth, the nurses' experiences were only covered during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lastly, researchers are considered novices in the field of research. As a result, the researchers seek guidance from the advisers and experts in their field of study and are guided by the literature and books, specifically qualitative and phenomenological information.

### Significance of the Study

The study was necessary to identify the lived experiences of nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic. The significance of the study was based on the following:

#### Participants

This study was significant to the lived experience of Filipino nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic. With this, it spreads awareness and facilitates a better understanding of those nurses who have experience working and living during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Thus, this study helped us realize the nurses lived experiencing the COVID-19 Pandemic.

**International Journal of Novel Research in Healthcare and Nursing**

Vol. 9, Issue 3, pp: (148-159), Month: September - December 2022, Available at: [www.noveltyjournals.com](http://www.noveltyjournals.com)

**Nurses**

This study was made especially for nurses because it would help them to identify, sustain and improve nursing interventions in the hospital. Furthermore, it will help them to be resilient to the trials brought about by this pandemic. It will also help them understand what Filipino nurses went through during COVID-19.

**Hospital Administrators**

The recognized individuals responsible for maintaining a quality practice in the hospital, consisting of the boards and administrators, will immensely benefit from this study as it will give them reference and knowledge regarding the live experience of Filipino nurses in their delivery of quality healthcare during emergency crises like pandemics. This study may serve as a reference for future outbreaks.

**School Administrators**

The professors, deans, and other administrators who are the backbone of education in nursing schools are also relevant in this study. Throughout the course, those who are liable for making student nurses competent in their workplace will be able to apply this study as supplemental teaching material about the live experience of Filipino nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, this may serve as a reference for any changes in the nursing curriculum. Thus, producing more equipped and informed nurses in the future.

**Government**

For the National Government of the Philippines, this study may provide information on Filipino nurses' life experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. The live experience of Filipino nurses will give the government evidence about the reactions or results of their political endeavors. Thus, when COVID-19 happens again in the future, they can prepare for an improved response measure properly.

**Proponents**

The study develops the proponents' knowledge about the live experience of Filipino nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic. This enables them to further comprehend their experience in fighting this battle and expect what Filipino nurses do during certain situations like the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, this study contributes to the researchers' credibility in pursuing the research field.

**Definition of Terms**

This study utilized several terminologies and was given operational definitions to correlate them to the survey. The significant keywords in this study are as follows:

**COVID-19.** It pertains to a deadly virus from the family of SARS-CoV that affects mainly the respiratory organs of the infected person.

**Interpretative Phenomenology.** The study of the essence and lived experiences of a specific subject or matter as presented in a creative art form.

**Lived Experiences.** Refers to personal occurrences or events experienced first-hand by an individual.

**Filipino Nurse.** A licensed healthcare professional in charge of providing nursing care to the sick; a person in the Philippines who is trained or skilled in providing healthcare.

**Pandemic.** A sudden disease outbreak occurs simultaneously worldwide (in multiple countries).

**II. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

A virus called SARS-CoV, otherwise known as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Associated Coronavirus, was caused by the emergence of the first severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), which was discovered in Asia in February 2003. The outbreak lasted approximately six months as the disease spread to more than two dozen countries in North America, South America, Europe, and Asia before it was stopped in July 2003 (CDC, 2020). Unexpectedly, in December 2019, a new report of a new coronavirus known as SARS-CoV-2 appeared in humans. It is believed to have started in Wuhan, China.

**International Journal of Novel Research in Healthcare and Nursing**

Vol. 9, Issue 3, pp: (148-159), Month: September - December 2022, Available at: [www.noveltyjournals.com](http://www.noveltyjournals.com)

Further, the name COVID-19 was assigned to the coronavirus disease on February 11, 2020, and it was declared a pandemic on March 11, 2020, which the World Health Organization (2020) reported as a public health emergency on January 30, 2020. Thus, it is still present as of this time of research.

The first case of COVID-19 in the Philippines was identified in January 2020. The patient was a foreign citizen who had visited the country for travel reasons. Shortly after the confirmation of the first case, a posthumous test result from another foreign tourist revealed that he was positive for the virus, making the Philippines the first country outside China to record a confirmed death from the disease. Later, the country was put into a State of National Emergency to provide a massive aid program and response measures to the rising crisis.

Consequently, many countries were also appalled and alarmed by the abrupt occurrence of the virus. This puts the government's and healthcare system's preparedness and management to the test to maximize available resources to control the rapid spread of SARS-CoV 2.

In a report by Sadillo (2020), more than 13,000 health professionals in the Philippines have been infected with COVID-19. At one point, healthcare personnel accounted for over 20% of all COVID-19 cases in the Philippines. COVID-19 claimed the lives of 76 health workers by December 21st, 2020. During the first few months of the pandemic, nearly half of them perished. Hospitals are overburdened by the flood of patients in emergency departments and a lack of personal protective equipment (PPE). On top of such problems, health workers still face inadequate pay and delayed benefits.

Despite the threat to their health and the accompanying dangers of this outbreak, many workers are still required to report to work. Most of them are front-liners, including the military and police forces, medical professionals, and other members of the skeletal workforce. They face various challenges as they continue to report to work, including the difficulty of transportation, the risk of being infected, and the scarcity of personal protective equipment (Nicomedes, Avila, and Arpia, 2020).

On the contrary, the indisputable impact of this pandemic on these medical professionals begets the exceptional resiliency and adaptability of the Filipino nurses. Their perseverance and determination in rendering healthcare were also noticed. As a result, the long-established dilemma concerning the nurses' welfare was recognized and gradually contrived for the national government and unenlightened people to consider improving the treatment of Filipino nurses.

There has been a vast amount of literature dedicated to the lived experiences of people during infectious disease outbreaks and the mental health impacts of infectious disease outbreaks (Park et al., 2018). Since there is insufficient knowledge concerning the novel COVID-19 pandemic in the Philippines, more research is needed to explore the possibility, more specifically, the lived experiences of Filipinos during this COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the nurses, who are on the front line for its better development, readiness, and response measures for future pandemics. Using the interpretative phenomenological approach, the researchers provided detailed information regarding Filipino nurses' lived experiences during the COVID-19 Pandemic that can be used to explore the perceived meaning and challenges of these experiences. Therefore, the goal of the study is to explore the lived experiences of Filipino nurses to develop efficient interventions and programs following the resolution of this crisis.

**Theoretical Framework**

In this study, the humanistic theory was employed to guide the researchers in their attempt to interpret the lived experiences of Filipino nurses during the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the most recognized humanistic psychologists is Carl Ransom Rogers, who developed the Personality Theory or Self Theory, which emphasized the importance of the self-actualizing tendency in shaping human personalities. He also believed that humans constantly react to stimuli with their subjective reality (phenomenal field or experiential field), which changes continuously. Over time, a person develops a self-concept based on the feedback from this reality field (Miller, 2021). This theory had certain hypotheses regarding the nature of personality and behavioral dynamics.

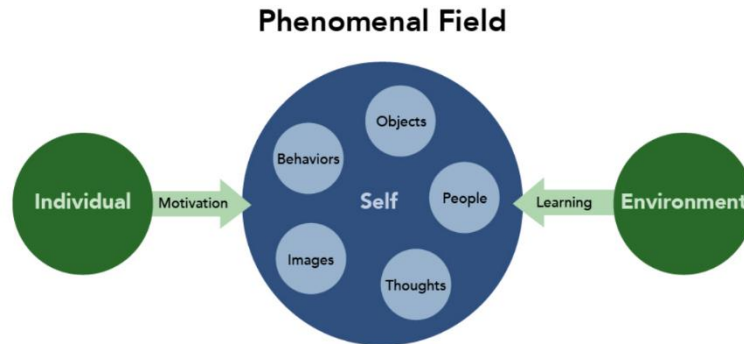


Fig. 1 Phenomenal Field

Carl Rogers’ humanistic approach is categorized into four sub-theories: Theory of Therapy and Personality Change; Theory of Personality; Theory of Fully Functioning Person; and Theory of Interpersonal Relationships. Entered in the chart (Fig. 2) were the numbers of the various propositions which follow, so that in reading any specific portion of the theory, the reader may refer back to see its organic relationship to other parts of the theoretical structure. According to Roger (1959), the theoretical implications of this theory affect many aspects of human life, such as family life, education, learning, group leadership, and group conflict. This study’s extracted themes explain what these theoretical implications mean.

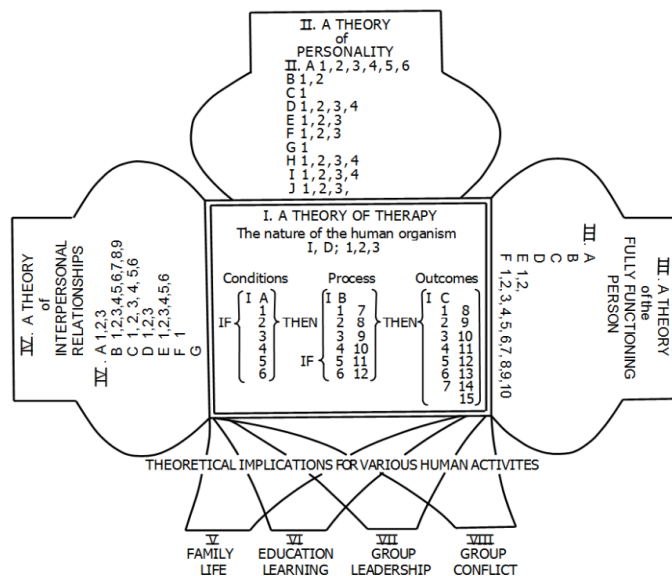


Fig. 2 Theory of Therapy

The principle of the Theory of Personality, which is pertinent to this study, was utilized to unravel and delineate the research outcome. Wherein the phenomenal field/experiential field is synonymous with the “lived experiences” of the participants that determine the behavior, perspective, and self-regard of the involved individuals. Therefore, this theory was employed as guidance in interpreting the rationale behind the elicited themes from the corresponding data generated by the research participants.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### Research Design

This study utilized a research method designed by Max Van Manen, involving interpretative phenomenological research, otherwise known as hermeneutics. In a survey conducted by Alase (2017), he mentioned that hermeneutical phenomenology, according to van Manen (1990), It is the lived experiences of research participants (phenomenology) and the interpretation (text) of the life they have lived and experienced (hermeneutics). To Heidegger (1962), the critical

question is: what is being? He stressed interpreting and understanding—not just describing—human experience. His premise is that lived experience is inherently an interpretive process. Beck & Polit (2012) argue that hermeneutics is a fundamental characteristic of human existence.

In addition, the researchers isolated thematic aspects of experience from participants' statements using a selective approach. In the selective (or highlighting) approach, the researchers emphasize or pull-out statements or phrases that seem essential to the experience under study (Beck & Polit, 2012). From this textual analysis, the researcher identifies sub-themes and themes examined in light of the study's research questions. As the text, themes, and relevant literature are integrated, a description of the phenomenon as interpreted is produced, resulting in an artistic expression. (Groove, Gray, & Burns, 2015).

Interpretive phenomenologists rely primarily on in-depth interviews with individuals who have experienced the phenomenon of interest, but they may go beyond a traditional approach to gathering and analyzing data. (Beck & Polit, 2012).

In this study, the researchers augment their understandings of the lived experiences of Filipino nurses during the COVID-19 Pandemic through in-depth interviews via online or video conferencing, which is supported by an in-built voice recorder to store, retrieve, and transcribe the data gathered. The participants are taken using purposive sampling and snowball sampling.

#### **Data Analysis**

In phenomenology, this immersion in the data is referred to as "dwelling with the data." This indicates that the researcher spent considerable time reading and reflecting on the data. (Groove, Gray, & Burns, 2015). In this interpretative phenomenological study, the Phases of the Hermeneutical Phenomenological Method relative to Max Van Manen's data analysis were applied to analyze and interpret the gathered data. This data analysis constitutes four chronological stages:

First phase: Previous Stage or Clarification of Budgets

Second phase: Collecting the Experience Lived

Third phase: Reflecting on the Experience Lived - Structural Stage

Fourth phase: Writing about-Reflecting on the Experience Lived

#### **IV. FINDINGS, THEMES AND SUBTHEMES**

This chapter discussed the summary of findings, themes, and subthemes that emerged as Filipino nurses shared their lived experiences during the pandemic. Data saturation was achieved with a sample of nine (9) participants. Using Van Manen's data analysis, the researchers extracted five (5) themes and fifteen (15) subthemes. As such, to showcase the extracted data, the researchers constructed a fitting digital concept artwork that will bring tangible representation to the lived experiences of Filipino nurses during the pandemic.

Theme 1: Care Context

The first theme, care context, involved three (3) subthemes: vigilance, decreased direct nursing care, and lack of resources. In the digital concept art, the care context was depicted as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as the metal weapon/armor and bunny suit worn by the Filipino nurse. This represented their dedication to performing their duties while remaining cautious and vigilant. However, merely wearing PPE became a barrier to nurse-patient interaction, thus decreasing their direct nursing care. Furthermore, the PPE donned by the nurse was portrayed with holes, worn and shabby, signifying their exhaustion from lack of resources.

a. Vigilance

Filipino nurses shared their experiences regarding COVID-19 protocols and care policies. They admitted that at the beginning of the first few months of the pandemic, they were perplexed about what kind of treatment they would administer to the patients. Apparently, they all discussed not having any ideas about how to manage COVID-19 patients. However, they also emphasized the importance of becoming confident about rendering nursing interventions supported by evidence-based practice (EBP) as more scientific research and studies emerged to ratify their actions.

**International Journal of Novel Research in Healthcare and Nursing**

Vol. 9, Issue 3, pp: (148-159), Month: September - December 2022, Available at: [www.noveltyjournals.com](http://www.noveltyjournals.com)

P. 8: “we need to extra precautions as well because you know uhhh we have to take care ourselves as well kasi kapag nahawa kami sino mag aalaga sa kanila papano nayun diba?... we have to be extra precautions by wearing a mask but of course same care as going to give to patient yun nga lang iba yung precautionary measure natin at as myself also experience to have COVID patient” (P,8 L, 22-23; 26-28)

(We need to be extra cautious as well, because, you know uhhh..., we have to take care of ourselves as well, because if you get infected, who will take care of you? We must be extra cautious by wearing masks, but we must also take the same care with patients. However, our precautionary measures are different and, in my experience with COVID patients.)

#### b. Decreased Direct Nursing Care

Most of the participants revealed their dissatisfaction with the current situation between them and the COVID-19 patients. It was mentioned that their nurse-patient interaction decreases as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) hinder them from showing their faces, consequently interrupting their communication. Regardless, Filipino nurses made sure to be sincere in every medical action to compensate for the current predicament.

P. 1: “isang pasyente may sarili syang vital signs kit tapos as much as possible kung kaya mo silang maturuan gawin mo na yon para hindi kana masyado ma expose sa kanila” (P, 1 L, 27-29)

(One patient has their own vital signs kit and, as much as possible, if you can teach them, then you should do it so that you're not too exposed to them.)

#### c. Lack of Resources

Filipino nurses asserted that there was an increasing scarcity of human labor, supportive equipment, and even medicine. This equipment included but was not limited to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) such as facemasks, face shields, gowns, oxygen tanks, and mechanical ventilators. A majority of the participants disclosed that they needed to maximize every resource available. They were made to be resourceful and creative to help COVID-19 patients survive. Another major problem they encountered was a shortage of nurses. Not only are Filipino nurses underpaid and overworked, but they are also suffering from the consequences of their workplace due to understaffing.

P. 9: “ratio ng nurses dun is 1 nurse is to 16-24 na patient, so parang... ang bed capacity kasi ng isang ward before nasa 42, so minsan tatlo o apat na nurse ang naghahati dun sa isang ward... (cleared throat)” (P, 9 L, 20-22)

(Ratio of nurses is 1 nurse to 16–24 patients, so it's like... the bed capacity of one ward before is almost 42, sometimes 3-4 nurses share for that one whole ward... (cleared throat)

### Theme 2: Mental and Emotional Condition

The second theme was mental and emotional conditions. It involves three (3) subthemes: Anxiety and Fear; PPE challenges; and Suffering and Affliction. In the digital art, the mental and emotional condition of the Filipino nurse was represented as the virus with a half-crying human face. Specifically, the crying human face represented the suffering and affliction, and the virus expressed the anxiety and fear of the Filipino nurse. Lastly, the PPE per se depicted the concept behind the challenges of PPE.

#### a. Anxiety and Fear

The Filipino nurses have been experiencing anxiety and fear whenever they are on duty. This leads to their overthinking that they might carry the virus to other patients who do not have it since they are the ones who are on duty with the patients who have the virus. And this does not help them focus on what they are doing because they are distracted by their thoughts. Working in a COVID ward needs a strong immune system and strong mental support to avoid this thinking and make them ready to do the task without worries.

P. 5: “Mentally iniisip mo na what if ikaw mag dala ng what if instead tong pasyenteng to PUI pa lang pero baka may nagawa kang mali may hindi ka nagawang pag wash hand something like that tapos lumipat ka sa kanya galing ka sa positive baka ikaw pa magdala” (P, 5 L, 62-65)

(Mentally, you'll wonder if you carried out the virus on the patients that should supposedly be PUI patients in such a worst-case scenario. And a simple washing of hands that you forgot to do, leads you to wonder what will happen if you transfer the virus to other people.)

#### b. Challenges of PPE

As a nurse, it's not easy for them to adjust to wearing PPE. Apart from consuming their time, it is also a big adjustment for them from how it suits them. It's not easy to move around while wearing extra clothes over what you are wearing. This makes them uncomfortable at first, but not until they have adjusted. Wearing PPE helps reduce the risk of having the Coronavirus, but this is not enough if they don't maintain sanitation and cleanliness themselves.

P. 1: "napaka hassle kasi alam mo yun 8 hours ah ano bang gugustuhin mo mag break ka umihi ka masasayang yung ppe that time napaka limited talaga nang ppe's naming so para makonsensya ka na lang kung iba wala nang gagamitin like kung mag na night shift ka usually paubos na yung supply" (P, 1 L, 13-16)

(It's a hassle because you are wearing PPE for 8 hours, and you want a break to pee, but you'll think of the stock of the PPE because it's very limited, and the conscience is coming to us because we think of others who are on night shift. Usually, the supply is getting small.)

#### c. Suffering and Affliction

Filipino nurses stated that it's tough to start another day, seeing that people are not cooperating with them; as much as people stay this way, their lives are more at risk.

P. 4: "bakit parang hindi naman nakikisama yung mga tao, especially ngayong surge parang isang taon na, pagod na kami pero itong mga 'tu gusto pa rin mag mall, gusto pa rin lumabas, parang ahhh for what? Kasi diba yan yung point namin palagi kung hindi kailangan lumabas, wag na" (P, 4 L, 47-50)

(Why is it that other people don't seem to be cooperating, especially during this one-year surge, and are too tired to go out for what? The point is that you don't have to go out every day and shouldn't go out when you don't have to.)

#### Theme 3: Physiologic and Social Wellbeing

The third theme, which is physiologic and social wellbeing, involves three (3) subthemes: discrimination, infection, and health consciousness. In the digital concept of art, physiological and social wellbeing were depicted as hands emerging from the ground. Similarly, the hands represented each subtheme: one wearing gloves to represent health-conscious nurses, one with spikes to describe the characteristics of a virus, and one throwing rocks to represent the stigma and discrimination faced by Filipino nurses during the pandemic.

##### a. Discrimination

Filipino nurses expressed their sentiments about discrimination. Some experienced it first-handly, while most feared the circulating news about people resorting to violence towards nurses whenever they are seen in public places. Despite the possibility of being in danger, Filipino nurses continue to fulfill their responsibilities as health care workers and instead heed to empathize with the reasons behind the people's actions. The respondents stated that it was due to the public's lack of information about COVID-19 and that people were alarmed and frightened of acquiring the disease from someone highly exposed to the virus.

P. 2: "Yung times na baka ma-bash haha yung kapitbahay. Kasi di 'ba dati may mga ayaw rin, may kapitbahay rin na "uy duty sa ospital baka nauwi yung virus". So yun lang ang ano 'ko, parang nag worry ako na baka ganun rin ang mangyari. So uuwi ako nakacivilian" (P, 2 L, 129-132)

(When you might get a bash from your neighbors before, some neighbors were like, "Uy! you work in a hospital." You might bring the virus home. So that's why, like my own, I always worry that somehow, I might experience it the same way. That's why I go home wearing my civilian clothes.)

##### b. Infection

Nurses, a vital part of the healthcare system, were at a higher risk of acquiring the virus than the general population and professions. Regardless of the precautionary measures and preventive protocols, imminent casualties of front-liners were lamentably part of the battle process against the COVID-19 virus.



**International Journal of Novel Research in Healthcare and Nursing**

Vol. 9, Issue 3, pp: (148-159), Month: September - December 2022, Available at: [www.noveltyjournals.com](http://www.noveltyjournals.com)

P. 6: “Actually I was tested positive... Siguro bumaba din yung immune system ko that time, so that’s why, I was ah, I was suspected with that virus” (P, 6 L, 68; 73-74)

(Actually, I tested positive... Maybe, my immune system weakened at that time, so that’s why, I was ah, I was suspected with that virus)

c. Health consciousness

After encountering numerous adversities and anguish from discrimination and infection, Filipino nurses became even warier of their health. While continuously and consciously protecting themselves while saving patients, they thought of ways to stay physically healthy and fit. Because of the COVID-19 protocols, people were not allowed to remain outside their homes casually. As a result, most participants responded by exercising indoors, eating healthy food, and taking vitamins and supplements. The nature of their work requires them to be overly healthy; otherwise, as one of the participants stated, no one will take care of them, so they might as well be extra health-conscious and disciplined.

P. 3: “physically mas na feel ko mas inaalagaan ko yung sarili kasi I take vitamins na, I take ah uhm nutritious food nag vegetable and all, and mas nag li-lim-lean ako towards sleeping and kapag off ko nagpapahinga talaga ako” (P, 3 L, 71-73)

(Physically, I feel like I've been more conscientious about taking care of myself; I now take vitamins, eat nutritious foods and vegetables, and sleep more. When it's my day off, I usually take a rest.)

Theme 4: Coping Mechanism

The fourth theme had two (2) subthemes: social support and subsistence. In the digital concept art, a luminous stone floats above the hand of a Filipino nurse, symbolizing their source of strength as hard as a stone, which came from the support of their family, friends, colleagues, and community. The yellow color signifies optimism, enlightenment such as spiritual connection with God, and engagement in worthwhile activities that uplift their spirits to perform their professional job during this COVID-19 pandemic.

a. Social Support

Maintaining physical and psychological wellness requires social assistance. According to participants' experiences, sufficient support from their families, friends, coworkers, and community significantly impacts their ability to cope with their professions and provide proper care for their patients. As one nurse mentioned, the community sent food along with a letter from the children addressed to their hospital.

P. 1: “sa physical sa mentally meron naman kaming adequate support from the family and friends' kaya naco cope naman” (P, 1 L, 96-98)

(Basically, I get adequate physical and mental support from my family and friends, and I aim to know that I can cope with it.)

“Mga bata may mga letter sila alam mo yun parang nakaka na encourage ka din na alam mo yun na mag patuloy kahit simple note lang nakalagay sa food na ganyan na iinspire ka din” (P, 1 L, 184-186)

(Receiving simple notes posted on my packed food from those children really inspires me a lot.)

b. Subsistence

Filipino nurses discovered ways of dealing with stressful situations during this crisis. Working in a COVID ward can be exhausting, but they still figure out strategies to brighten the case, especially by working more closely with their colleagues. On the other hand, the majority of participants admitted that while on their days off, they spent more time on activities unrelated to their jobs to relax. In addition, many strengthened their spiritual connection with God by offering quiet prayer daily, especially during work.

P. 3: “matulog, kumain at magbasa or mag-aral; I finished my MAN during the pandemic; I wanted to do something to remind me of 2020 in a good way.” (P, 3 L, 206; 209; 214)

(I sleep, eat, read and study. I finished my MAN during the pandemic; I want to do something good that will remind me of 2020 in a good way.)

**International Journal of Novel Research in Healthcare and Nursing**

Vol. 9, Issue 3, pp: (148-159), Month: September - December 2022, Available at: [www.noveltyjournals.com](http://www.noveltyjournals.com)

## Theme 5: Heroism

The fifth theme had three (3) subthemes: competency and resiliency, relevant, and characteristic. In the digital concept art, Filipino nurses resemble Darna for their dedication to serving their fellow citizens during the COVID-19 crisis. Working as frontline nurses during this crisis showcased their integrity and endurance, which brought them honor, worth, appreciation, and self-gratification in their profession. As a result, they are inspired to continue rendering care to COVID-19 patients.

## a. Competency and Resiliency

Nurses discussed how difficult and exhausting their work in the COVID ward can be. They attended to all the patients' demands and maintained adequate oxygenation through proper interventions. One of the nurses commented that they were overtired and infected. However, once they recovered, they returned to work. Furthermore, they added that once you've adapted to the situation, you'll be able to render proper nursing intervention to the patients.

P. 3: "sobrang toxic ng mga pasyente, in a way na puro naka O2, naka high-flow tas mag intubate kami; as nurse nung time na 'yun we were challenged on what to do; pero eventually, with the help of my staff mga kapwa ko nurses na surpass namin yung mga challenges" (P, 3 L, 12-13; 15; 17-18)

(The area is getting severe patients on O2, high-flow intubation; as a nurse, our part is really challenging to the extent of getting confused, but with the help of my colleagues, we surpass those challenges.)

## b. Relevant

The participants expressed how rewarding and fulfilling it was to be a Filipino nurse during this pandemic. It was with great pride that they were providing nursing care to patients. In return, they received appreciation and words of gratitude. Most participants were aware of their relevance as they were recognized as modern heroes.

P. 4: "sobrang rewarding sa part ng nurse na napauwi ko yung patient ko ganyan tapos wala lang pag sobrang thankful nila sayo kasi ikaw yung visible na tao." (P, 4 L, 220-221)

(It would be very rewarding on our part if I sent home my patient, expressing their gratitude towards you because you're the person who is visible to them.)

## c. Characteristic

Working amidst a crisis exemplified the qualities of Filipino nurses: loyalty, optimism, emphatic, and passionate. Despite the possibility of working abroad, one of the nurses revealed that she would rather stay in the country and serve her fellow Filipinos because she loves the country and finds it fulfilling to provide care for Filipino patients without guaranteeing a good salary. In addition, nurses have witnessed COVID-19 patients die without the presence of their loved ones. Hence, death comes at an unexpected moment; therefore, they recognize the importance of providing high-quality care to their patients. Furthermore, nurses become more passionate about their jobs by prioritizing their patients' well-being over their own.

P. 4: "kawawa naman yung mga magiging pasyente natin hindi lang sila basta nahihirapan huminga, nahihirapan din sila sa bayarin. Nurse ispatient advocate; kahit hindi mo problema yung bayarin nila maiisip at maiisip mo yun, hanggat kaya mong isalba yung pasyente mo para mapauwi mo siya ng maaga gagawin mo." (P, 4 L, 60-61; 62; 69-71)

(I feel pity for our patients. They are not only experiencing difficulty breathing but also financially with their increasing hospital bills day by day. A nurse is a patient advocate; despite your patient's hospital bill not being your problem, the very least you can do is send them home as soon as possible.)

**V. CONCLUSION**

The study arrived with the presentation of the simulacrum concept art, Padayon: Beyond the Call of Duty amidst Adversity. The model represented the lived experiences of Filipino nurses as they continued their work in the battle with COVID-19. This study concluded that the following themes: care context, mental and emotional condition, physiologic and social wellbeing, coping mechanisms, and heroism narrate the story of the experiences of Filipino nurses during the pandemic, as proven and expressed by the participants.



**Fig. 3 Padayon: Beyond the Call of Duty amidst adversity**

With the image above, five themes were generated and remodified from verbatim of the Filipino nurses. The researchers integrated the first theme: The model depicts the care context as weaponry and armor seen in the extremities, the metal headdress worn by the nurse, and the PPE itself. These objects represent the equipment used to protect patients and provide nursing care. Yet, due to the extensive and impenetrable gearing required to fight an inconspicuous infection, this PPE became a hindrance and barrier to nursing care delivery and communication between the nurse and the patient.

The next theme was called "The Mental and Emotional Condition of the Filipino Nurses." The model presented above and was depicted as "half crying human face and half virus." The suffering and affliction were shown as a crying human face and were attached to a virus, relating to the anxiety and fear it carries from an inconspicuous and deadly virus.

The third theme, which was coined as Physiologic and Social Well-being, was illustrated as "hands," seen in the bottom part of the concept art. There are three types of hands seen in the figure, the hands wearing medical gloves symbolize nurses and other health-conscious people. The medical gloves themselves ramify the meaning of being cautious and discreet. The hands with the "spikes" akin to the spiked proteins of the COVID-19 virus; this pertains to nurses who tested positive for the disease. Finally, the hands that yield the motion of "throwing" are related to Filipino nurses' discrimination or stigma in their own country.

The fourth theme was Coping Mechanisms, which emphasized the "magical stone." It symbolizes the skills, knowledge, and compassion nurses possess whenever they attend to their patients. It acts as social support, which they get from their patients, friends, and relatives. This stone was related to the persona in the concept art, who is an ordinary person who transforms into a superhero once she swallows the stone, she received from a specific support person.

Lastly, the fifth theme was heroism, portrayed by “Darna,” a Filipino heroine. Darna was chosen to illustrate the said theme as (1) she is a popular, iconic Filipino superhero who originated from the Philippines’ comics; and (2) she is known as brave, strong, and kind as the participants conveyed their experiences, most of which are considered and demonstrate similar characteristics to Darna. Some nursing characteristics akin to Darna's are being empathic, resilient, competent, patriotic, relevant, gratifying, valuable, optimistic, and humble. Darna is being compared to Filipino nurses in this crisis, they were the superheroes of the infected patients, which gave them hope that they would lead them to their physical, emotional, and mental wellness.

## VI. RECOMMENDATION

To facilitate the research outcome and to be able to appreciate the process of conducting the research, the researchers opted to create a display of the Padayon: Beyond the Call of Duty amidst Adversity model through the posting of banners, and flyers, and artwork exhibiting/containing the said model. In particular, commencing the program at the affiliated institution of the researchers was given the starting point for the implementation. We recommend that other researchers simulate the program in their establishments, intending to uplift the morale and improve the treatment of Filipino nurses to uplift the morale and improve Filipino nurses' treatment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Conducting similar research on a bigger scale is also encouraged. Henceforth, evaluating the program outcome can be the start of another research topic or study for future resolution and improvement.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Alase, Abayomi. (2017). The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA): A Guide to a Good Qualitative Research Approach. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*. 5. 9-19. 10.7575/aiac.ijels. v.5n.2p.9.
- [2] Beck & Polit (2012) *Nursing Research: Generating and Assessing Evidence for Nursing Practice* 9th ed. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins. 530 Walnut Street, Philadelphia PA 19106
- [3] Groove, Gray & Burns (2015) *Understanding Nursing Research: Building an Evidence-Based Practice* 6th ed. Elsevier Saunders. 3251 Riverport Lane St.
- [4] Kirkland, T. (2020). How COVID-19 will impact the future of nurses. <https://local21news.com/news/local/how-covid-19-will-impact-the-future-of-nurses>
- [5] Miller, SA. (2021) *The Humanistic Perspective: A focus on Uniquely Human Qualities Modification, adaptation, and original content*. Lumen Learning. License: CC BY-SA: Attribution-ShareAlike
- [6] Nicomedes, Christian Jasper & Avila, Ronn Mikhael & Arpia, Hazel Mae. (2020). The Lived Experiences of Filipino Front Liners During COVID-19 Outbreak. 10.13140/RG.2.2.21221.35046/1.
- [7] Park, J. S., Lee, E. H., Park, N. R., & Choi, Y. H. (2018). The mental health of nurses working at a government-designated hospital during a MERS-COV outbreak: A cross-sectional study. *Archives of Psychiatric Nursing*, 2018; 32(1), 2–6.
- [8] Rogers C. (1959) *A Theory of Therapy, Personality, And Interpersonal Relationships as Developed in the client-Centered Framework*. From *Psychology: A Study of a Science*. Study 1, Volume 3: Formulations of the Person and the Social Context, edited by Sigmund Koch.
- [9] Sabillo K. (2020) 2020 heroes: Frontliners who died battling COVID-19. Retrieved from <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/12/30/20/2020-heroes-frontliners-who-died-battling-covid-19>
- [10] Sun, N, Wei, L., Shi, S., Jiao, D., Song, R., Ma, L., Wang, H., Wang, C., Wang, Z., You, Y., Liu, S., & Wang H. (2020). A qualitative study on the psychological experience of caregivers of COVID-19 patients. *American Journal of Infection Control*, 48(2020), 592–598. [HTTPS:// doi.org/10.1016/j.ajic.2020.03.018](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajic.2020.03.018)
- [11] Veenema, T. G., & Meyer, D. (2020, June 4). Why America’s nurses were not prepared for the coronavirus pandemic. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/coronavirusfrontlines/2020/06/04/why-americas-nurses-were-not-prepared-for-the-coronavirus-pandemic/#7bfa9a24164b>
- [12] Worldometers. (2020). COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic. <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus>