

DISCOVERING THE RESILIENCE OF WORKING WOMEN FROM ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CRISIS

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ABSTRACT

The unprecedented challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic tested people's resilience. The abrupt change in the conventional delivery of teaching and other services of educational institutions caused a lot of adjustments that schools and their employees need to manage. Drawing from their own experiences as motivation, the authors investigated the resilience of Filipino working women from the academe during this extraordinary time. Using a mixed-method approach, open-ended questions to explore the participants' experiences and a resilience scale to assess their resilience were utilized. Three hundred twenty-six women employed in educational institutions served as participants. Results revealed individual and community resiliency characteristics that enabled the participants to deal with the challenges. The findings pointed out some implications for practitioners to foster the value of resilience in developing mental health programs for this population, especially during a pandemic outbreak.

Keywords: challenges during pandemic, ways of coping, resiliency characteristics and behaviors

Introduction

According to the World Risk Report 2015, the Philippines is the third country with the highest disaster risk in the world. Every year, Filipinos encounter natural calamities yet they survive and recover afterward. This is the Filipino *katatagan* (Hechanova et al., 2015) otherwise known as resilience, defined as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors (APA, 2012). Yoda et al. (2020) refer to it as the capacity to bear changes in the environment and the ability to recover after a shock. Resilience is also described as the ability to adapt to the new life brought about by the disaster (in a timely and robust manner) (Bollettino et al., 2018). It also refers to the process of effectively coping with and adapting to adverse circumstances, threats, loss, and stressful situations (Hamby, et al., 2016) and the individual's capacity to live a functional life despite traumas and adversities (Mostajo, 2010).

Donato and Lorica's (2020) study among Filipinos from Cagayan (northern part of the Philippines) revealed that the participants demonstrated their resilience in their adaptability and flexibility through positive cooperation, coordination, and communication during typhoons and floods. Likewise, Orio (2016) found optimism, sense of coherence, hardiness, and religiosity/spiritual coping as indicators of the resilience of Cebuanos after the super typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan). De Leon (2002) claimed that resiliency among Filipino families comes from strong adherence to religion, tightly knit family relationships, voluntary sense of service, and self-reliance. Hechanova et al.'s (2015) study on the survivors of super typhoon Haiyan revealed the crucial role of the formation of groups, more than enhancing individual efforts in achieving resiliency.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought another challenge to Filipino resilience when the Philippines ranked first in COVID-19 cases in ASEAN and landed in the top 20 worldwide (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). Amidst the chaos the pandemic has brought, household adjustments are understandably integral to the management of the many challenges families experience. With a traditional family structure where the mothers, even if working, are still in charge of the various household concerns, the burden of coping with these challenges is much felt by the Filipino working mothers. According to Ferrer and Lagos (2016), women have been predominantly stereotyped as weak victims in the context of disasters, yet have proven to be more resilient than men and can assume critical leadership roles during emergencies and disaster situations. Drolet et al. (2015) said that while the vulnerabilities of women in times of disaster are evident, so too is their resilience shown in their capacities to care for their children and family members, and in engaging in multiple activities and tasks. In a recent study of Filipino teachers' resiliency by Lacaba et al. (2020), the participants revealed that their resiliency is manifested in their will to stay strong amidst the difficulties brought about by inclement weather in the islands and the necessity of earning for their own sake and their family as well.

During these trying times, studies proved unfavorable effects of the pandemic on people's psychological and mental well-being (Castelli et al., 2020; Solomou & Constantinidou, 2020; Wang et al., 2020; Xiong et al., 2020 cited in Tan et al., 2021). It was furthered in the same article that people's well-being to better understand their ability to thrive in adverse conditions was the focus of many studies. As such, various organizations crafted mental health programs and strategies to take care of the employees' wellbeing as well as to maintain a more resilient society (APA Foundation, 2020; Buenaventura, Ho & Lapid, 2020; DOLE Philippines, 2020).

Cognizant of the importance of exploring women's resilience, researchers recognized the benefit of discovering sources of women's strength in coping with life challenges. Pillay (2020), in her study of women leaders in higher education institutions, acknowledged the contribution of psychological strengths like positive affect and mindfulness in increasing resilience. This accordingly can be used by institutions in fostering the internal strengths of leaders in the workplace. The same finding is congruent to the study of Lian and Tam (2014) in their attempt to identify building factors of resilience to enhance effective coping strategies among working females to thrive and sustain satisfying careers in the workplace. They further recommended the provision of programs that focus on teaching resilience particularly in understanding and effectively coping with stressful situations to reduce developing health risks.

Following this, the current study investigated the resilience of Filipino women employed in educational institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic as they tried to balance their roles as wives, mothers, and workers. It specifically explored these research objectives: (1) to know the level of resilience of the Filipino working women; (2) to recognize the challenges experienced by working women from educational institutions in the Philippines during the COVID-19 pandemic and the effects of these challenges to them; and (3) to discover how the Filipino working women in the academe coped with these challenges.

Methodology

Design

This study utilized a mixed-method research design with a purposive sampling technique to address the research objectives. The current global scenario on mobility restrictions brought by the pandemic made the researchers utilize internet-mediated research (IMR) wherein the primary data was gathered through online platforms. IMR is "research involving the remote acquisition of data from or about human participants using the internet and its associated technologies" (British Psychological Society in Padayachee, 2016).

Participants

The participants were Filipino women working from educational institutions in the three major islands of the country: Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. From the original 383 recorded participants, 326 remained after removing those who were not employed in the academe and those who do not have children. Each of them was invited to participate in the study voluntarily. No incentive was given for their participation. Strict observance of ethical standards was carried out of which the participants were assured. Out of these respondents, 279 or 85.58% are living with a spouse or partner while 47 or 14.42% are solo parents. The respondents' ages range from 24 to 63 years old where the majority of them, 183 or 56.10%, have 3 to 4 children.

Instrument and Data Analysis

The two instruments utilized in this study were: (a) the modified Personal Resilience Scale (PRS) that determined the resilience level of Filipino working women, measuring five resiliency characteristics, where four of the characteristics (confidence, social support, adaptability, purposefulness) were taken from Cooper et al. (2013) and the fifth (perseverance) was added by the researchers taken from various literature as another resiliency characteristic; and (b) the open-ended questionnaire composed of four questions that described the challenges experienced by these working women and the effects of these challenges to them, how they coped with these challenges, and the factors that contributed to their coping.

The PRS was subjected to a reliability test with Cronbach's alpha result of .962 interpreted as excellent. The mean scores in the PRS were analyzed using this scale: *1.00 – 1.75 (Very Low)*; *1.76 – 2.51 (Low)*; *2.52 – 3.26 (High)*; and *3.27 – 4.00 (Very High)*.

Thematic analysis was used to statistically treat the qualitative data, wherein the participants' online responses were coded and analyzed to conceptualize themes. The process of analysis went through phases such as familiarization of the data, initial coding, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Both the questionnaire and the results were validated by colleagues from the De La Salle University-Dasmariñas, College of Education - Graduate Studies who are experts in both quantitative and qualitative research methods. The conceptualized themes were reflective of the majority (more than 50%) of the participants' responses.

Due to geographical constraints and mobility restrictions implemented to lessen the spread of the coronavirus, the instrument was administered using Google form and sent to the participants via email and Facebook Messenger.

Results and Discussion

This study investigated the resilience of Filipino women from the academe during the COVID-19 pandemic which specifically explored the level of resilience of these working mothers, the challenges they experienced and the effects of these challenges on them, and how they coped with these challenges.

The Level of Resilience of the Filipino Working Women

Table 1. Resiliency Level of the Participants According to Characteristics

| Resiliency Characteristics | Mean | Verbal Interpretation |
|--|-------------|------------------------------|
| A. Confidence | 3.18 | High |
| When given a new task, I am confident that I will succeed. | 3.31 | Very High |
| My self-belief is not affected by a task that doesn't go to plan. | 3.05 | High |
| I feel positive about the future. | 3.50 | Very High |
| Successes are easy to remember, and failures are easy to forget. | 2.87 | High |
| B. Social Support | 3.35 | Very High |
| I have people at work who I can speak to about issues in the office. | 3.33 | Very High |
| I find it easy to ask for help from my colleagues. | 3.28 | Very High |
| I ask for assistance from others when I feel the need to. | 3.41 | Very High |
| I can discuss my job and its challenges with people outside of work, such as family members and close friends. | 3.37 | Very High |
| C. Adaptability | 3.28 | Very High |
| When one attempt fails, I learn from it and change my approach next time. | 3.38 | Very High |
| I have strategies in place for dealing with stress. | 3.27 | Very High |
| When there is a fundamental change, I learn to be creative by aligning new ways of dealing with the current reality. | 3.27 | Very High |
| I am more likely to say "yes" than "no." | 3.18 | High |
| D. Purposefulness | 3.31 | Very High |
| I don't lose sight of my goal when I encounter difficulty. | 3.31 | Very High |
| I am committed to my job. | 3.55 | Very High |
| I don't usually worry about issues that I have no control over. | 2.99 | High |
| I have strong goals that are clear in my mind. | 3.38 | Very High |
| E. Perseverance | 3.33 | Very High |
| I am determined to achieve certain things in my lifetime. | 3.39 | Very high |
| I have a strong motivation in achieving what I want. | 3.41 | Very high |
| I am not easily discouraged by difficulties that come my way in accomplishing goals. | 3.22 | High |
| I have the patience in dealing with difficult situations. | 3.28 | Very high |
| Average Mean Score | 3.29 | Very High |

As reflected in Table 1, the overall level of resilience of the working mothers as measured by the PRS is very high with an average mean score of 3.29. This indicates that respondent-working mothers have a very high capacity to recover quickly from the difficulties that they may have experienced during this pandemic. Remarkably, none of the resiliency characteristics got a score lower than the high level.

This very high resilience was made possible by the social support that these working moms received with a mean of 3.35, the highest among the means of the five characteristics. The importance of this social support is emphasized by De Leon (2002) when she discovered that the Filipino families' resilience comes from tightly knit family relationships, among others. Likewise, the study of Hechanova et al. (2015) revealed the crucial role of the formation of groups in enhancing individual efforts to achieve resiliency. The other resiliency characteristics which also received very high means were perseverance (3.33), purposefulness (3.31), and adaptability (3.28). These characteristics can be manifested in the adaptability and flexibility behaviors (Donato and Lorica, 2020) of Filipinos during calamities, as well as in their optimism, sense of coherence, hardiness, and religiosity/spiritual coping (Orio, 2016). Of all the resiliency characteristics, confidence got only a high level (3.18) description. These findings may imply that even if the confidence level of the respondents was not very high, it was compensated by the presence of the other resiliency characteristics which have very high levels.

Table 2. Resiliency Level of the Participants According to Age

| Age Group | Confidence | Adapt-ability | Social Support | Purpose-fulness | Perseverance | Average & Verbal Interpretation |
|--------------|------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------------------------|
| 20-29 | 3.07 | 3.18 | 3.17 | 3.11 | 3.33 | 3.17 (High) |
| 30-39 | 3.14 | 3.26 | 3.37 | 3.22 | 3.25 | 3.25 (High) |
| 40-49 | 3.22 | 3.29 | 3.36 | 3.35 | 3.36 | 3.32 (Very High) |
| 50-59 | 3.18 | 3.27 | 3.36 | 3.37 | 3.36 | 3.31 (Very High) |
| 60-69 | 3.25 | 3.25 | 3.12 | 3.17 | 3.25 | 3.21 (High) |
| Total | 3.18 | 3.28 | 3.35 | 3.31 | 3.33 | 3.29 (Very High) |

When disaggregated by age using a 10-point interval (Table 2), there seem to be slight differences in the areas of *confidence*, *social support*, and *purposefulness*. Those in the 20-29 and 30-39 scored lower compared to the other age groups in the area of *confidence*. In terms of social support, the 60-69 had a slightly smaller mean compared to the rest. Lastly, the 20-29 had a lesser score in *purposefulness* compared to the other respondents. Nevertheless, the overall resilience level of the participants according to age is very high with an average mean of 3.29. The results also showed that those in 40-49 and 50-59 have very high resilience with a mean of 3.32 and 3.31 respectively.

Several studies proved that resilience is related to age wherein as the person grows older, the stronger the resilience (Lundman et al., 2007; Portzky et al., 2010). It was noticed, however, in the current study that the level of resilience slightly declined with the participants in 60-69, the age of retirement in the Philippines.

Table 3. Resiliency Level of the Participants According to Marital Status

| Marital Status | Confidence | Adapt-ability | Social Support | Purposefulness | Perseverance | Average & Verbal Interpretation |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|--|
| Living with spouse/partner | 3.21 | 3.30 | 3.36 | 3.33 | 3.35 | 3.35 (Very High) |
| Solo parent | 3.05 | 3.12 | 3.27 | 3.19 | 3.20 | 3.17 (High) |
| Total | 3.18 | 3.28 | 3.35 | 3.31 | 3.33 | 3.29 (Very High) |

As regards marital status (Table 3), the resiliency level of the participants is also very high. On the other hand, there is a slight difference when grouped according to a marital arrangement with solo parents (high) appearing to be lower compared to those living with spouse/partner (very high). Specifically, there are slight differences in the areas of confidence and adaptability. Those living with their spouse or partner scored higher compared to the solo parents. This can be explained by the study of Grzankowska et al. (2018) stating that when coping with life challenges, single mothers rely on their resources to a greater extent compared to mothers in relationships who can receive support from their partners.

The Challenges of Filipino Women Working in the Academe during the COVID-19 Pandemic and Its effects on their Wellbeing

The challenges experienced by the participants and their effects as determined from their self-reports were categorized into four superordinate themes conceptualized to reflect “individual crises amidst the pandemic crisis” as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Themes Reflecting the Working Women’s Challenges

| Superordinate Themes | Subordinate Themes |
|---|---|
| ADAPTABILITY versus INFLEXIBILITY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adjustment to Alternative Work Arrangement and Digital Learning Modality • Enhancement of Technical Competency |
| CONNECTIVITY versus INACCESSIBILITY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Restrictions • Technical Constraints |
| RESOURCE AVAILABILITY versus FINANCIAL DISTRESS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Loss • Unforeseen Expenses |
| SELF-CARE versus SELF-NEGLECT | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Fatigue • Emotional Disturbances • Mental Exhaustion |

Theme 1. Adaptability *versus* Inflexibility

The unprecedented changes brought by the pandemic necessitated the participants to make sudden adjustments to their daily routines and usual way of doing things.

“Work-from-Home” has been adopted by most organizations as an alternative work arrangement when community quarantine was enforced. The participant-teachers, as part of the academe, carried out Emergency Remote Teaching to ensure continuous delivery of educational services which required them to enhance their technical competency as digital platforms are needed to facilitate the teaching-learning process. This caused a certain degree of difficulty since these teachers were used to a face-to-face encounters with their students and were not adept at using computer applications in their lesson delivery. Similarly, the school administrators and non-teaching employees who also worked remotely experienced this challenge. To quote some of the mothers’ statements, one stated: *“I have limited knowledge on using different online platforms.”* and another said: *“Tons of things to prepare for the new learning modality. New system, policies, and procedures must be in place.”*. Additionally, a mother said *“Supervising online classes and giving instruction online are challenging. Everything must be carefully thought of, planned, and executed. It was quite rough and tough.”* This is a challenging experience for the participants because they are not familiar with telecommuting arrangement.

Part of the difficulties the mothers experienced is making their home their workplace. Since Filipinos traditionally have an extended family wherein multiple generations live under one roof (Buenaventura et al., 2020), their homes may not be a conducive place where they can work from home without disturbance from other family members doing their respective tasks. As experienced by the participants, family members inadvertently encroach on each other’s working area and cause distractions while performing work duties. Because the mothers are at home, they also claimed that they could not help but perform their home duties including assistance to their children’s home-based learning during their official work time. This also resulted in their difficulty in adjusting to new guidelines, meeting deadlines, and facilitating online classes or tasks. Thus, feelings of being ineffective and unproductive, inability to accomplish voluminous tasks, and difficulty in managing the overlapping responsibilities of being a worker, mother, wife, and taking care of a sick family member emerged. One participant expressed that *“the transition to distant learning modalities requires time and physical endurance which sometimes makes me unable to perform some of the mommy duties”*. Another said, *“...I always ask myself – can I be an effective teacher? Are they learning?”*. Moreover, a participant stated that *“taking care of a sick 81-year-old father, having a 27-year-old son with autism, multiple tasks as a teacher, housewife, and mother”* were her challenges while another mother dubbed her challenge as accomplishing “work-FROM-home and work-FOR-home” tasks. The current study’s finding regarding dual/multiple roles as one of the challenges of working mothers is consistent with the study of Bhattacharjee and Tripathi (2012), who found that stress was high for working mothers because of the dual roles they were performing. Similarly, the survey conducted by Microsoft company showed lack of separation between work and life negatively impacts the well-being of remote workers (Spataro, 2020). Thus, working mothers need to demonstrate adaptability against inflexibility to overcome these challenges. In support, Donato and Lorica (2020) considered adaptability and flexibility as resilience characteristics of people who face calamities.

Theme 2. Connectivity *versus* Inaccessibility

Connectivity as a challenge was magnified by social restrictions and technical constraints as experienced by the participants. Accordingly, physical/social distancing and restrictions for face-to-face interaction had caused an unfavorable impact on their socio-emotional well-being. A participant said, *“Actually it is hard because there are so many things that I have to consider such as not having face-to-face conversation or discussion, and we have to consider first our health in dealing with other matters.”* which is more or less the same experience as another mother who said, *“Unable to talk properly to co-workers regarding work-related issues, updates and concerns due to limited face-to-face encounter.”* Difficulty in communication was also expressed by other participants stating that *“It is hard to communicate with others.”* which also led to feelings of isolation as appeared in the online responses. Likewise, there were also mentions that they were challenged by the restrictions in going out to buy the things they needed and in doing stress reliever activities. This finding is consistent with the studies of Meng et al. (2020) and Subramanyam et al. (2018). Both studies confirmed debilitating worry and depressive symptoms as effects of mandated isolation/quarantine. Generally, the physical presence of a *kapwa* during special occasions to celebrate, talk to and laugh with, and/or trying times to help, listen, and cry with as an expression of love, care, and empathy for one another matters most for Filipinos. *Kapwa*, a Filipino core value, in which a person shares identity and consciousness with the “other” person (Aguila, 2015) proves that Filipinos value relationships, especially the affectional attachment that binds them with their family, relatives, friends, and colleagues. This is being recognized as important by the mothers. Furthermore, the technological platforms espoused in accomplishing tasks and in conducting meetings, conferences, and social events also prevented physical interaction and communication. These circumstances led to the participants’ feelings of isolation, loneliness, and disheartenment which is analogous to the argument of Newby et al. (2020) that loneliness and social isolation are risk factors for poor mental health.

Moreover, technical constraints due to poor/unstable internet connection adversely affected their work efficiency and productivity, and self-efficacy. Online classes are either cut or interrupted; others could hardly access if not disconnected. Some working mothers have outdated computers/gadgets which worsened inaccessibility. They perceived these as obstacles in performing their duties effectively. One mother mentioned: *“The challenging one is my gadget. I use only an android cellphone, no laptop so it’s hard to do my report in my job.”* Another statement of a mother reflects the connectivity struggle: *“Connectivity to the internet and the use of laptop/computer are the real challenges.”*

Having those challenges mentioned, the working mothers from the academe need to creatively resolve inaccessibility to triumph over the identified effects on them.

Theme 3. Resource Availability *versus* Financial Distress

Added to the situations' complexity brought by the pandemic are the financial difficulties encountered due to job loss and the emergence of unforeseen expenses. This is revealed by the mothers’ statements like *“Our financial problem is at the top since my husband lost his job due to the pandemic.”* and *“Financial crisis, utility bills like internet and electricity are the challenges.”*

Many establishments declared closure or retrenchment which adversely affected economically disadvantaged families. As expressed by the working mothers, their husbands' loss of jobs led them to become the sole breadwinners providing the family's basic needs including medical assistance to sick family members. Thus, survival became a tough concern to them who at the same time was anxious and uncertain about their job security. Similar to the findings of Newby et al. (2020), uncertainty as experienced by the majority of the mothers together with financial distress are significant risk factors for mental health.

Unforeseen expenses like increased budget for internet load, purchase of gadgets, and subscription to stronger data to proficiently perform their jobs online and for their children's digital learning aggravated the financial distress. The necessity to properly manage what was available and to find other financial resources became vital for working mothers to overcome their overthinking, anxiety, hopelessness, and irritability. Analogously, Ettman et al. (2020) stated that COVID-19 economic consequences combined with the context of the pandemic itself increase the prevalence of symptoms associated with depression.

Theme 4. Self-care versus Self-neglect

Results revealed harmful effects of the pandemic to the participants' physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing due to difficulties related to work arrangements, learning modalities, technical competencies, connectivity, finances, and the concept of the virus itself. Quoting a few of the responses demonstrating the effects of the challenges to the working mothers, one said, *"My emotional and physical aspects are more affected because I get exhausted dealing with tasks at home and school. Emotionally, I get stressed thinking about how I will be able to accomplish all these tasks."* Another participant said, *"Sometimes I feel alone, I feel tired, can't sleep easily because of thinking on where or how I can earn more money to support our family living."*

The harmful effects on their physical wellbeing were manifested through various symptoms of stress such as physical fatigue (tiredness, weakness), getting sick (headache/migraine, body/back pains, eye strain), and losing/gaining weight. They also lacked sleep, had less opportunity for stress-reduction activities, thereby believing that they lacked work-life balance. Undesirable effects on their emotional wellness were displayed through behaviors like being temperamental (easily getting annoyed, irritability/being moody, anger), feeling demotivated (losing hope/giving up, disappointment, frustration), loneliness/sadness, and intense fear of contracting the virus. Consequential effects on their mental wellness were exhibited through anxiety, overthinking of the future, being paranoid of the virus, compulsion in observing health protocols, mental exhaustion in planning for strategies to survive, and inability to focus/concentrate. Additional statements of the participants expressing harmful effects of their experiences during the pandemic are: *"Saturating and frustrating."*; *"I feel anxious."*; *"I feel physically drained, emotionally tired, and financially drained."*; and *"It brings me stress and anxiety."*

The findings under this theme are congruent to Petsanis' claim that COVID-19's threat to an individual's life affects behavior (WHO, 2020, para 4). Therefore, these unfavorable effects on their mental health entail self-care to thrive. Measures to sustain good mental health relative to the effects

of the pandemic were recognized by researchers and professionals as a necessity (Job et al., 2020; Spataro, 2020).

How the Filipino Working Women in the Academe Coped with the Challenges

Table 5. Themes Reflecting the Working Women’s Ways of Coping

| Superordinate Themes | Subordinate Themes |
|-----------------------------|--|
| SELF-EFFICACY | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enriching Work-Life Balance • Valuing Strengths |
| SOCIAL RELATEDNESS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustaining Social Support System • Extending Self as Support for Others |
| SPIRITUAL CONNECTEDNESS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepening the Faith • Being Grateful |
| SELF-NURTURANCE | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering Self-care • Educating the Self |

To cope with the challenges of the pandemic and its effects on them, the participants benefitted from several factors that contributed to their resilience. Four themes emerged from the responses of the participants to show how they coped with their challenges during the pandemic outbreak as shown in Table 5.

Theme 1. Self-efficacy

“Self-efficacy” as a superordinate theme was derived from the subordinate themes “Enriching Work-life Balance” and “Valuing Strengths”. These were analyzed from the participants’ ability to maintain work-life integration through prioritization and time management and through self-awareness in recognizing their potentials in dealing with adversities. This theme is congruent to the result of PRS relative to the participants’ resiliency characteristics such as high level of confidence, and very high level of adaptability, purposefulness, and perseverance.

Filipino resilience has been tested in history by both natural and man-made calamities (Hechanova et al., 2015; Adviento & De Guzman, 2010). Amidst adversities, Filipinos would commonly say “*Kaya ko/natin ito!*” (I/We can do it!). This reflects Bandura’s self-efficacy, the concept of having self-trust or confidence in ones’ competency to produce favorable outcomes. Few excerpts from the mothers’ statements reflecting self-efficacy are: “*I guess my self-confidence and resilience...*”; “*My strong personality...*”; “*I can adjust to it.*”; “*I accept the challenges and don’t give up*”; and “*I do my best and eventually learn new things.*” This trait, coupled with other resiliency factors like adaptability and perseverance helped the working moms cope with the unprecedented challenges in the alternative work arrangements, learning modalities, volume and demands of work-home responsibilities, technical competencies, connectivity, and financial distress. They made efforts to enrich work-life balance through prioritization, time management, and enjoyment in the opportunity to be with their family while working from home. Prudence, wise spending, and resourcefulness in finding additional income were also observed by the participants.

Congruently, self-efficacy is fostered through valuing of strengths as analyzed from the participants' responses. They observed self-awareness through recognition of their potentials in dealing with adversities like courage, perseverance, conscientiousness, resourcefulness, optimism, open-mindedness, and flexibility. Looking at the brighter side of circumstances, having the freedom to make decisions, appreciation of what is available, learning from experiences, being more cautious with health protocols, and awareness of essential information about the pandemic added to the participants' resiliency. Retooling through webinars to improve their technical competency also helped them triumphed over the challenges. Nicodemes and Avila (2020) recognized comparable characteristics of the mothers like composure, optimism, conscientiousness, information dissemination, compliance, resourcefulness, and health consciousness as positive behaviors during the pandemic.

Additionally, purposefulness contributed to the participants' resilience. This is similar to Orio's (2016) findings that perseverance and purposefulness are characteristics of a resilient individual. Despite the uncertainty, the working mothers remained focused, strongly motivated, and determined to achieve their goals. Accordingly, the pandemic made them better realize the significance of their roles - mother, wife, friend, colleague, and employee - which fostered perseverance and optimism in them.

Theme 2. Social Relatedness

"Social Relatedness" was conceptualized from subordinate themes like "Sustaining Social Support System" and "Extending Self as Support for Others". The subordinate themes refer to the participants' means of nurturing interconnectedness as well as efforts to collaborate and serve those in need. This theme is remarkably associated with the very high level of social support from the PRS result.

As reflected in the responses, results showed that the working mother-participants put their best efforts to sustain the social support system. They ensure that they have time well spent with their loved ones, talk online with friends and colleagues, join a group of online spiritual activities, and maintain collaboration with professional groups. A response from a participant to demonstrate social support system was "*The open communication between me, my head and colleagues make the work lighter. The support from my family in all aspects keeps me going.*". Similarly, the statement "*I have competent people around me who help me.*" and "*I have my support system, my colleagues and my family who always support me to overcome these new challenges.*" support this theme. Interestingly, a participant responded, "*My husband helps me in managing the household chores and in taking care of our kids during his off-duty as a PNP officer.*" The importance of friends was also mentioned by a mother-respondent, "*Talking to a friend and sharing my experiences and how do I feel sometimes makes me feel better.*"; and by another who stated, "*I try to call some friends and talk to them, so my thoughts are diverted for a while.*"

The finding on the relevance of social support is parallel to that of De Leon (2002) specifying that close family bonds, social support, and service to others are contributory factors to resilience. During the pandemic, better community relationship was nurtured demonstrated through deep social connections and expression of concern for others. Collaborative efforts of individuals,

communities, and the government surfaced in most areas of the country to help one another survive. The mothers also benefitted from the “*Ayuda*” (social amelioration programs/operations) distributed to affected families/communities in the form of cash and/or relief goods as an expression of kindness, care, and compassion. Quoting Deyro, “The emergence of several volunteer-driven relief operations amid the COVID-19 pandemic is proof that Filipino *Bayanihan* thrives in times of crises, that people, regardless of their social status, can set their differences aside to come together and work towards a singular goal” (CNN Philippines, 2020). “*Bayanihan*” is a Filipino core value reflecting the community spirit of helping one another especially in times of need without expecting anything in return. This relatively provided emotional strength among Filipinos during difficult times, including the mother-participants. The importance of social support in triggering the resilience of individuals as a finding of the current study was previously expressed in several studies (Yoda et al., 2020; Orio, 2016; Hechanova et al., 2015; Landoy et al., 2015). Accordingly, the support of family, friends, colleagues, and community makes individuals stronger to face challenges and make the victims of disasters or calamities bounce back and start anew.

Extending ones’ self in support of a “*kapwa*” is provided by the participants by simply making themselves available online to offer advice, moral support, or an ear to listen, and even free service by professionals. These undertakings further developed interpersonal intimacy among families and communities intensifying their emotional bonds. Accordingly, social capital - the bonds, bridges, and linkages (re)built with various social actors enables resilience (Robles & Ichinose, 2017).

Theme 3. Spiritual Connectedness

“Spiritual Connectedness” as another superordinate theme was derived from subordinate themes such as “Deepening the Faith” and “Being Grateful”. “Deepening the Faith” was interpreted from the participants’ self-report of being more faithful, reflective, and prayerful to maintain a stronger relationship with God while “Being Grateful” was analyzed through the participants’ discernment of gratitude by being more appreciative of what they have and realizing God’s love and mercy during this extra-challenging time.

Spirituality is a significant positive predictor of psychological wellbeing which means that spiritual individuals are more likely to be psychologically well (Basileo, 2019). This has been found predominant to the participants based on the results of the current study. Results showed that they believe in the presence of an Almighty Father who is in control of everything. That amidst uncertainty, or when problems become complicated and/or solutions seem not within human being's capacity like the pandemic, the mothers turn to God whom they believed has always the best plan for them. As expressed by a participant, “*I lean more on my faith through prayers believing that things will get better soon with God's grace and mercy*”. This was supported by other participants’ statements like “*I rely upon Him. He will give me the security in dealing with the challenges*”, “*I keep the faith*”, and “*I surrender all my problems to God. I never forget to ask for His divine guidance*”. Faith gives them the courage and strength to keep going amidst adversities because they believe that there is a compassionate God whom they can always trust and lean on. Similarly, De Leon (2002) confirmed that faith plays a role in the Filipino family's resilience. The mothers further claimed that the pandemic made them more prayerful and has deepened their relationship

with God. Activities like attending online church events, prayer meetings, and reading the scriptures are some undertakings they engage with to strengthen their spirituality.

Gratitude was also realized by the participants during this extraordinary time which also contributed to their resilience. This is similar to the findings of Mary and Patra (2015) that gratitude has a significant relationship with resilience. The mothers became more appreciative of what they have by counting their blessings, valuing the people around them, and realizing God's love and mercy for keeping them safe and healthy.

Theme 4. Self-nurturance

The last superordinate theme is "Self-nurturance" with "Fostering Self-Care" and "Educating the Self" as subordinate themes to express the participants' ability to address the unfavorable impact of the pandemic on their mental health, and by making themselves more knowledgeable in keeping themselves healthy being cognizant of their limitations.

Cognizant of the difficulties and possible effects on their mental health, the participants adopted several ways to stay healthy, happy, and resilient by fostering self-care and educating themselves.

To nurture wellness, they strived to have "me-time" usually spent for relaxation or stress-reliever activities like gardening, watching movies/comedy films, singing with the *Videoke*, playing with their children and/or pets, chatting with friends and co-workers, or just simply taking a break, rest or sleep. They ate well, took vitamins, exercised, and strictly observed health and safety protocols. Self-care strategies as a way of coping are necessary to safeguard wellbeing. This was emphasized by Mostajo, et al. (2018) in their study on the wellness and engagement of school administrators. Indeed, work-life balance became a priority of the mothers through proper time management. Some of the participants' statements supporting this are: "*I plan my tasks ahead of time*"; "*I try my best to balance being an administrator and a mother*"; "*I prioritize my tasks and have a to-do-list*"; "*I take things one at a time*"; "*Proper scheduling of household chores*"; and "*I organize my time.*"

Remarkably, the working moms recognized their limitations and acknowledged the need to seek help from others when needed. This result is related to the findings of Mills, et al. (2020) that self-awareness and self-compassion are important for self-care in promoting wellness and resilience. The mothers also tried to educate themselves about mental health by reading and/or attending free webinars about wellness, coping with mental health issues, time management, and stress management provided by their schools and professional organizations. The organization-initiated mental health programs are in harmony with the call for employers to take care of the wellbeing of their employees (APA Foundation, 2020; DOLE Philippines, 2020). Sensibly, the adverse effects of the pandemic are addressed through collaborative management strategies to help people maintain their well-being towards a more resilient society (Buenaventura, Ho & Lapid, 2020).

Conclusions

Educational institutions were not spared from the disruptions brought by the pandemic which consequently led them to suddenly modify their operations, shift to other teaching and learning platforms, and carry out alternative work arrangements. These changes brought lots of adjustments and challenges to the schools' management and employees. Drawing from their own experiences as motivation, the authors investigated the resilience of Filipino women working in the academe, the challenges they experience and the effects of these challenges on them, and how they cope with their challenges during this extraordinary time.

The findings indicated that the Filipino mothers working in the academe have a very high level of resilience manifested by their resiliency characteristics and behaviors, thus having the strong capacity to recover quickly from the difficulties they may have experienced during this pandemic. This claim is substantiated by the results of the PRS, and the various themes conceptualized from the participants' online responses in the open-ended questions. The results may reflect themes that are consistent with the larger body of work regarding experiences of working women but may suggest some unique patterns among working mothers in the academe during a pandemic.

Implications

Primarily, the unveiled strengths of the participants and their communities may point to some implications for practitioners to foster the value of resilience in developing mental health programs for working mothers since the findings provided information to better understand the experiences of working women as they took on roles being a wife, mother, and worker yet remain resilient amidst life adversities. Similarly, the findings could also serve as a guide in formulating a resiliency program for working mothers who are experiencing considerable difficulty in coping with the challenges of the pandemic by assisting them to develop relevant characteristics and behaviors resembling those demonstrated by the participants of this study.

Likewise, results might also have implications on how schools formulate relevant institutional policies and programs affecting the participants' working conditions during pandemic which could better help them become more resilient and sustain their engagement with their respective institutions despite the adversities.

Implications on programs related to gender sensitivity may also be suggestive looking at a perspective that in a generally patriarchal society like the Philippines, the Filipino working women were able to stand up and used their resiliency to manage their and their family's lives well amidst this pandemic.

Recommendations

Having these conclusions and implications, the researchers recommend that the information derived from the findings of this article be a basis for practitioners in addressing areas of concern like well-being during extra-ordinary times, stressing how the working women from the academe were able

to maintain their mental health as they faced the challenges brought about by the pandemic. This significantly suggests for an integrated program to be crafted to strengthen the working women in the academe's strong points and address areas that need to be uplifted.

Future research direction may delve deeper into these experiences for more responsive mental health programs relevant during pandemic outbreaks to foster individual and community resilience.

Being aware of the limitations of this study regarding its method, future studies may utilize other qualitative research methods like in-depth interviews and focus group discussion to gain a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of this population and obtain better insights into the issue being investigated especially when restrictions for a face-to-face interaction are lifted and/or when the situation already allows the conduct of such methods.

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