
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Expériences of a New Breed of Heroes amidst Covid-19 Pandemic: Plights and Aspirations

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ABSTRACT

Due to their exposure to public areas, particularly at border checkpoints, police officers were not free from the Covid-19 risk. Aside from the health hazards, these frontliners were frequently targets of mistreatment from border violators. The study aimed to know the lived experiences of police officers enforcing standard health protocol at the border checkpoints of Maasin City, Southern Leyte. Specifically, the research sought the following problems: the experiences of the informants in enforcing standard health protocols, the informants coping with the problems encountered in enforcing standard health protocols, and the aspirations of informants to improve the implementation of standard health protocols. This research was carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic, and data was collected through individual depth interviews and focused group discussions. It was performed to learn more about police officers' lived experiences with the pandemic, including how they adjusted to the sudden change and managed challenges in the work environment, health risks from Covid-19 exposure, and the possibility of the danger posed by many challenges enforcing standard health protocols. The research tried to show how these experiences are handled and how their ramifications could help to improve future crisis preparedness and policing. Furthermore, seven (7) emergent themes were formulated in this study. From the positive experiences, the theme of The Fulfillment of Heroes emerged. While from the experiences of the informants, in the negative experiences, two (2) themes have been formulated: Being in the Frontline and In the State of Battle. The two (2) developed themes for how the informants cope with their experiences are Self-sufficiency in the State of Adversity and Overcoming Adversity in Unity. The final two themes, Unity and Cooperation, an Excellent Armor, and The Desire Behind the Motivation, are drawn from the aspirations of the informants. The police officers performed their duties with the goal of involving the community in their work and coping with and adapting to sudden changes as a whole. They achieved this by considering their past experiences in order to become better public servants and be ready for upcoming crises.

KEYWORDS

Lived experiences, plights, aspirations, border checkpoints, COVID-19 pandemic, standard health protocol.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 20 May 2024

PUBLISHED: 08 June 2024

DOI: 10.32996/ijlps.2024.6.3.14

1. Introduction

The world was shaken late in 2019 when Chinese officials told the World Health Organization (WHO) that 40 people in Wuhan province had been sickened by an unknown illness. A month later, in early 2020, the World Health Organization declared a global public health emergency (Kennedy & Read, 2020). An unexplained disease in China was caused by a newly discovered coronavirus known as Covid-19, resulting in a global pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020). A pandemic, according to WHO, begins with the detection of a new virus to which the vast majority of people are not resistant and for which there is no known prevention, cure, or vaccine. It's often called a global epidemic because it includes the spread of infectious disease in a nation, its neighbors, and, in some cases, the entire world.

The first cases in the Philippines were confirmed in January 2020. Both patients were previously stable Chinese nationals visiting the Philippines for a vacation. Patient 1, a 39-year-old woman, was admitted to San Lazaro Hospital in Manila on January 25 with

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cough and sore throat symptoms. On January 30, she was named the first confirmed Covid-19 case in the Philippines. Fever, cough, and chills plagued Patient 2, a 44-year-old man. He was given intravenous antibiotics for community-acquired pneumonia, but his condition worsened, and he required intubation. SARS-CoV-2 viral RNA was found by PCR on the initial swabs on January 31, and he was identified as the Philippines' second recorded Covid-19 infection. The patient's health worsened on February 1, and after a cardiac arrest, he was unable to be revived. As a result, he was identified as the first Covid-19 victim to die outside of China (Edrada et al., 2020).

The number of cases in the Philippines has rapidly risen since the first case was recorded. The Philippine government mounted a multi-sectoral response to COVID-19 through the Interagency Task Force (IATF) on Emerging Infectious Diseases, chaired by the Department of Health (DOH). The government's Covid-19 National Action Plan (NAP) aimed to halt the virus' spread and mitigate its socioeconomic consequences (World Health Organization, 2020). In an attempt to halt the spread of the novel coronavirus in the Philippines, the government began a lockdown of Metro Manila, the country's most populous and developed region, on Sunday, March 15, 2020. The region, which has a population of over 12 million people, had been put in a state of "community quarantine," which prohibited land, domestic air, and domestic sea travel in and out of the region (Talabong, 2020).

Despite the fact that Covid-19 is a global pandemic, it had a different impact on each community. As a result, police around the world were responding in a variety of ways to meet the specific needs of their respective communities. In response to President Rodrigo Duterte's call, military and law enforcement officials were facilitating community quarantine in various parts of the country, as well as the strict implementation of wearing face masks and face shields and social distancing, in order to mitigate Covid-19 risks and cases (Recuenco, 2020). Inspection of quarantine passes, management of checkpoints, and patrolling the curfew were also part of their duties to ensure that minimum health standards were met (Caliwan, 2020).

Meanwhile, in Southern Leyte, the Inter-Agency Task Force proposed on March 16, 2020, that a voluntary community quarantine be instituted because of the fast movement of persons in and out of the province in order to prevent the entry and widespread exposure to Covid – 19. On the same day, Governor Mercado signed Executive Order No. 19, putting Southern Leyte under voluntary group quarantine, which started on March 17, 2020 (Philippine Information Agency [PIA], 2020).

Due to the rising threat of coronavirus disease, five villages in Maasin City were put under enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) in October 2020, shutting down a police station, government office, school, and major shops. Residents living within the designated critical zone villages of Combado, Tagnipa, Tunga-tunga, Mantahan, and Asuncion were forced to stay at home for their own safety, and their movements were limited 24 hours a day, except during emergencies. With 68 confirmed Covid-19 cases, the city government had also put a moratorium on accepting locally stranded people from October 12 to 25 in order to focus its resources and manpower on locating and isolating new cases (Amazona, 2020).

Despite being exposed to the Covid-19 threat, the Philippine National Police, operating on President Rodrigo R. Duterte's orders, assisted the community in maintaining peace and order, as well as assisting the local government and the Department of Health (DOH) in providing much-needed government services. Not only do these frontliners face health risks, but they still have to deal with quarantine violators (Edrada et al., 2020). For police officers, the ongoing crisis is yet another day at work. Many emergency responders, including police officers, are used to performing their duties in life-threatening situations. These are the people who assist with the evacuation of buildings during earthquakes or bomb threats, as well as arrest criminals who may threaten the community. Police officers put their lives on the line regularly to represent and protect the citizens of their communities (Papazoglou et al., 2020).

This research carried out a study of the lived experiences of police officers, as well as their plights and aspirations in light of the dramatic shift in the work environment, the health risks associated with Covid-19 exposure, and the danger posed by various factors in border checkpoints during community quarantine. It also determined real workplace problems and shifts in police tactics, as well as how they coped. This research determined how these events and their consequences can enhance future crisis preparedness and policing. This research took place during the pandemic, and data was collected through in-depth face to face interviews and focused group discussions that took into account the health protocols.

2. Literature Review

This study was guided by the anchor theory Social Cognitive theory by Albert Bandura (1999) and two supporting theories of the theory of Strategic Core developed by Humphrey et al. (2009) and the Social Control theory by Travis Hirschi (1969).

Social cognitive theory was Bandura's cognitive version of social learning theory (Glanz et al., 2001). According to the Social Cognitive theory, the environment, behavior, and personal and cognitive variables all interact as determinants of one another. Human functioning is described in terms of several basic capabilities, including symbolizing capability, forethought capability, self-

regulatory capability, self-reflective capability, and vicarious capability, which includes the ability to learn through observation, imitation, and modeling others' behaviors and attitudes. Self-efficacy is an important concept in SCT. It refers to a person's belief in their ability to accomplish a specific activity when confronted with a variety of problems. According to SCT, self-efficacy can be developed in four ways: first, through the personal experience of success; second, through social modeling, which demonstrates to a person that others like them can perform/acquire a certain behavior; as well as the small steps taken by them; third, through improving physical and emotional states; and finally, through verbal persuasions, such as encouragement from others to boost confidence.

According to Bandura et al. (1999), self-efficacy in SCT beliefs serves as the proximal driver of human motivation, affect, and action, operating the action via motivational, cognitive, and affective intervening processes. In SCT, people's perceptions of their abilities have a substantial impact on their abilities. Ability isn't a fixed characteristic; how you perform fluctuates a lot. Based on the self-efficacy notion of SCT, people with a strong sense of self-efficacy bounce back from setbacks; they think about how to handle problems rather than what could go wrong.

As the primary driver of cognitive change, cognitive theory changes regarding stages. According to this equilibration mechanism (Piaget, 1960), discrepancies between existing cognitive schemas and perceived events lead to internal conflict that encourages investigation into the cause of the discrepancy until the internal schemas are changed to accommodate the contradictory experiences. Significant departures from expectations or knowledge are too perplexing, whereas slight variations are too mundane to pique curiosity or inspire research. Moderate cognitive, which is thought to be sparked by the moderate discrepancy, is what causes the rearrangement of the cognitive system. Therefore, according to Piagetian theory, the primary auto-motivator for cognitive change is cognitive disturbances caused by mildly divergent experiences.

According to Schunk & Pajares (2010), Bandura's social cognitive theory of human functioning emphasized the critical role of self-beliefs in human cognition, motivation, and behavior. Social Cognitive theory gives prominence to a self-system that enables individuals to exercise a measure of control over their thoughts, feelings, and actions. In putting forth this view, Bandura reinvigorated the nearly abandoned focus on the self in the study of human processes that William James initiated nearly a century earlier.

Social Cognitive theory is an agentic and empowering psychological perspective in which individuals are proactive and self-regulating rather than reactive and controlled either by environmental or biological forces. Instead, the beliefs that people have about themselves are key elements in their exercise of control and of personal, cultural, and social achievement. It is because of their beliefs about their own capabilities – their self-efficacy beliefs – that people are able to exercise the self-influence required to contribute to the types of persons they become and their achievements (Schunk & Pajares, 2010).

The theory of Strategic Core developed by Humphrey et al. (2009), on the other hand, is a team performance theory that claims that specific team roles are more significant for overall team performance than the characteristics of role holders in the "core" of the team. Although high levels of experience and job-related competence are essential predictors of team performance, the correlations between these cores and team performance are substantially greater when the traits are possessed by core position holders.

This strategy investigates the relationship between various aggregates of the individual team member traits and the efficiency of the team. Researchers, for instance, have looked at many methods to conceptualize team ability, including the average level of ability among team members, the maximum or minimum ability of individual team members, or variation in ability among team members (Barrick et al., 1998; Miller, 2001). All these forms of composition begin with the idea that the individual attribute is the fundamental analytical unit, despite the fact that they are conceptualized and operationalized in various ways.

In accordance with Humphrey et al. (2009), since team performance is not a factor in the strategic core, tautological arguments have been avoided. They define the strategic core of a team as the role or roles that (a) encounter more of the issues that must be resolved as a team, (b) are more exposed to the tasks that the team is completing, and (c) are more central to the team's workflow. They do this by drawing on the sociotechnical and team design literature. The definition's elements vary in severity; therefore, it's helpful to think of a strategic core function as a continuum: the more these criteria are met, the more essential the role is to the team.

Teams create and establish the tools to carry out activities (such as coordination) as well as to manage conflict, emotions, and a range of action processes (Marks et al., 2001), such as goal defining and affect management. When procedures are established, routines start to take shape and become part of the team's structure (Arrow et al., 2000). Teams can be said to be moving toward

equilibrium as they establish and put into practice routines since this leads to more stable patterns of interaction and internal consistency (Tushman & Romanelli, 1985).

It was asserted that certain roles within a team exert a higher influence on the team's performance and that these roles can be recognized in advance of performance episodes based on particular role features. The following types of duties may be part of a strategic core job (Humphrey et al., 2009).

Summers et al. (2012) suggested that the teams' ability to coordinate their behavior efficiently was found to be affected by changes to more strategically core versus less strategically core responsibilities and information flow, which in turn molded their capacity to carry out their tasks and perform. In the strategic core-flux relationship, they additionally incorporated the moderating influence of new team members' relative cognitive ability. It's critical to pinpoint particular variables that limit a team's ability when looking at how change affects them.

Social Control theory was conceptualized when sociologists were searching for new ways to think about crime. Hirschi (1969) presented his groundbreaking representation of control theory, which was based on contemporary social control principles. Hirschi's social control hypothesis asserts that having ties to one's family, education, and other aspects of society lowers one's predisposition for aberrant behavior. As a result, crime occurs when such relationships are broken or not well-formed, according to Social Control theory. Control theorists argue that without such ties, crime would be unavoidable. In Social Control theory, actors weigh the costs and benefits of various legal and illegal actions and select the ones that they believe will maximize their enjoyment. Specifications of the theory tend to list the considerations that the actor considers when making this decision, such as attachment to individuals or organizations, adherence to traditional lines of action, participation in noncriminal activities, and confidence in the moral validity of the decision (Hirschi, 1969).

Social Control theory unquestionably plays a role in understanding how society gets involved in and participates in criminal activities, but it by no means stands alone in this regard. In general, Hirschi's Social Control theory contends that morality is a quality that develops in people through time as a result of their interactions with significant individuals and environments in their lives. Our parents, churches, and schools impart morality and values to us. Our parents, schools, courts, and police indoctrinate us with the laws and social mores. Our religious convictions are instilled in us by our families and churches, and they have a significant impact on how we act and make decisions (Chen, 2019).

According to Social Control theory, anyone can perceive the benefits of crime and be creative enough to devise and carry out any number of illegal acts spontaneously, without any extra drive or preparation. It is assumed that the costs of engaging in criminal action cause one to resist the want to do so. It further assumes that the rejection of the people the potential offender cares about is one of the main costs of crime. The potential perpetrator is free to conduct the offense in question as long as they have no regard for anyone. Sociologists frequently use this sensitivity to explain conformity. Psychologists frequently cite insensitivity to others' worries as the cause of departure. Together, they demonstrate that sensitivity is a continuum, with some persons having greater sensitivity than others and others having less sensitivity than others (Janowitz, 1975).

Social Control theory can be tweaked to make the most of its benefits while also addressing the five flaws it has. Firstly, it should focus less on social relationships and on the individual rather than on social bonds because there are other aspects and variables that contribute to deviance and criminal behavior. Second, the idea explains how adult delinquency is related to juvenile delinquency. Third, the theory should be applicable to all sorts of criminal behavior. Fourth, the theory should be put to the test in the real world. The theory also discusses the importance of parent-child bonding, but it ignores the fact that a single parent may have more than one child in the family (Quon & McGrath, 2015).

At present, in addition to carrying out the already taxing task of law enforcement operations, the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic is one of the amazing challenges the Philippine National Police (PNP) has encountered in recent years. The PNP members went above and above the call of duty by working until they were to the limits of weariness (Rabena, 2021).

According to Gonzales et al. (2006), during times of public health emergencies, law enforcement is in charge of preventing dangers, whether they are man-made (such as war or terrorist acts) or naturally occurring (e.g., natural disasters or pandemics). According to them, police tactics change based on the origin and gravity of the threat. Additionally, as mentioned by Gonzales et al. (2006), was the point at which a disease epidemic posed a significant risk to the general populace. The law enforcement's duties may also include crowd control, monitoring suspected biological scenes of terrorism, enforcing public health directives (such as travel bans or quarantines), securing the perimeter of contaminated areas, securing healthcare facilities, and securing quarantine facilities.

Because people weren't prepared when the virus spread over the world, they started stockpiling food and supplies, which led to violence as a result of a lack of resources (Dudely, 2020). The number of needs for each customer was restricted in South East Asian nations like the Philippines and Indonesia (Neo, 2020). The police should be a part of this war, should respond, and must continue to be the custodian of peace and order within the community despite the fact that the health workers were unquestionably leading the charge. In order to address all the concerns about readiness and the need for recovery from this pandemic, police preparation in response to Covid-19 is crucial. Additionally, it would emphasize the significance of the police in the Pandemic's response and have a notable effect on the connection between the police force and, naturally, the general public in the future (Police Division United Nations Department of Peace Operations, 2020).

Birnhack (2020) contended that while the specific responsibilities played by the police during the Covid-19 pandemic may have been novel, the issues they have brought up regarding police-community relations are not. War, natural disasters, and especially terrorism have all had an impact on police duties and relationships with the communities they serve. Laufs and Waseem (2020) state that maintaining constant contact with the public during a crisis may be difficult because the police interact closely with persons who are being severely affected by the calamity at hand. Numerous studies on the efficient use of social media by police and fire departments during hurricanes (Chauhan & Hughes, 2015) and floods (Bruns et al., 2012) were cited to show how social media may be used as a strategy for maintaining continuing crisis-time interactions with citizens. Laufs and Waseem (2020) also added that while the adaptability of social media material updating was a useful tool in the near term, it would be prudent for the police to additionally have established routes of communication in order to preserve ongoing police-public online links.

Hollywood et al. (2020) asserted that police officers also aid in squelching false information concerning Covid-19 in addition to assisting in upholding social order and peace. Educating the police about the dangers posed by the virus can aid their ability to distinguish between fact and opinion through critical thinking. They could recognize what information should be given, comprehend the causes of disinformation, and completely assess the laws and policies. The Police Division United Nations Department of Peace Operations (2020) indicated that the police force must have an in-depth understanding of the dangers of the pandemic in order to develop a solid plan for this pandemic. Equipping all the police units in charge of organizing and combating this is essential.

Several agencies and different disciplines must work together to plan for Covid-19. Additionally, to defend them from the threat of the virus, it is also necessary to maintain peace and order. Kim et al. (2020) advised keeping a distance of six feet from people, practicing good hand hygiene, avoiding touching your face with your hands, and wearing protective gear at a minimum in order to prevent the police force from exposure to the virus. Additionally, they stated the suggested personal protective equipment (PPE), which consists of disposable examination gloves, a single-use isolation gown, a facemask (with a level-95 or above respirator), and eye protection such as disposable face shields.

Sridhar (2022) implemented biosafety measures in the fight against Covid-19 to avoid cross-contamination among our policing force, particularly the person in charge in the field, such as patrolling in curfew and quarantine checkpoints. When employees return to their respective homes or stations after working shifts, the PNP Health Service's PNP-wide Biosafety Plan specifies the necessary setup of a decontamination procedure.

Maru (2020) claimed that the Covid-19 response in the Philippines was one of the tightest and longest lockdowns ever. The wearing of masks and social seclusion were tightly enforced, and entire provinces and cities were placed under lockdown. Mobility was also prohibited. Punitive measures were used to address violations. To preserve law and order and to guarantee that all safety precautions were taken, the government placed a significant amount of trust in the military and the police. Because of this, some experts and observers have labeled the government's response as "draconian," "militarized," or "police-centric."

On April 16, 2020, Duterte stated in his speech that the military and the police would take control if the lack of discipline among Filipinos persisted. In order for them to be ready, I am currently placing my order. The military and the police will impose a curfew and a policy of social isolation. They certainly will. It is similar to martial law as well (Ali & Davis-Floyd, 2020).

Maasin City had imposed community quarantine on five communities (ECQ). The Maasin City police station in Combado village, where six policemen tested positive for Covid-19, and the Metro Hi-Per Maasin in Tagnipa village, where 11 personnel contracted the illness, were the two locations that were impacted by the lockdown. It is the responsibility of village officials and the city task force to make sure that everyone in every impacted family is given access to and receives the basic necessities that they need (Amazona, 2020).

For its swift threat assessment in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, Mayor Nacional Mercado issued Executive Order No. 36 mandating a lockdown in each of its 70 communities, which will be in effect until lifted. The directive was issued a short time after

the Department of Health (DOH) on Thursday morning said that two Balik Probinsya, Balik Pag-asa beneficiaries from Tanauan town and Baybay City, both in Leyte, had tested positive for Covid-19. The highway in Panan-awan, the first village and the principal entry point to Maasin from Leyte province, is off-limits to non-residents of Southern Leyte, as instructed. Only those engaged in providing essential goods and services, health professionals, uniformed officers, and other government employees providing emergency front-line support were permitted during the pre-emptive lockdown, according to Mercado. Tourists were also not allowed to enter the city, and government personnel were not allowed to go outside of the province unless it was absolutely necessary for the organization to function or in the event of a medical emergency (Sabalza, 2020).

In preparation for its fiesta celebration, Maasin City in Southern Leyte also enacted a two-day increased monitoring on all access points on August 14 and 15, 2020. The Philippine National Police (PNP) has established anti-criminality checkpoints at the border in the towns of Pasay and Panan-awan after Mayor Nacional Mercado's public alert. While Panan-awan serves as the city's point of entrance from Leyte, Pasay connects the city to the rest of the province. The city's entry point from Leyte is Panan-awan, while Pasay connects it to the rest of the province. According to the Philippine Information Agency [PIA] (2020), Governor Mercado said in his public announcement that the checkpoint's main goals were to protect the city from insurgent threats, to keep peace and order in the area, and to prevent the admission of dishonest people as well as illegal substances, cigarettes, and other contraband. In the midst of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic, this will also enable them to screen admission of undocumented, stranded locals and authorized people who are not at home. Anyone traveling for business-related reasons must show a valid ID card, a travel authorization or travel order from the office, and, if the work station is beyond the region, a medical certificate. Those entering for reasons other than work must present a valid ID card and a medical certificate (Sabalza, 2020).

According to Marticio (2020), in order to stop the 2019 coronavirus disease (Covid-19) from spreading, border controls and curfews were also put in place. The city mayor, Nacional Mercado, stated that quarantine checkpoints in communities have temporarily shut down the road from Lunas to the municipality of Bontoc. Pasay and Panan-awan were still in use. According to City Mayor Mercado, the main goal of the checkpoint was to make it easier for people who have been to areas where the disease has been positively exposed to be quickly tracked. The politician also declared that curfews would be implemented in his city.

Laufs and Waseem (2020) explained that research police's enforcement of public health restrictions during Covid-19 can be improved in a variety of ways. Although the application of these suggestions may differ according to the national and local circumstances, they are nevertheless relevant both during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. At first, Laufs and Waseem (2020) discovered that when a public health emergency arises, police-community ties might suffer. Because officers must enact policies that restrict civil liberties, tensions may increase on both sides. It's possible for authorities to treat infected people unfairly and discriminatorily due to their ignorance of an illness or virus like Covid-19. When responding to Covid-19, police should use varied policing philosophies both during and after lockdowns in order to accommodate changing civilian demands and expectations at various stages of the outbreak. Additionally, law enforcement agencies should create adequate social media and message plans to effectively employ online communication to engage with impacted communities and assure compliance with public order. Second, the study noted a number of ways PHEs may make it more likely for police officers to experience psychological stress, posttraumatic stress, depression, and anxiety. The police culture may get in the way of people seeking help for mental health issues through interventions like therapy and counseling. In order to improve job satisfaction, foster social support, and preserve officer welfare, police commanders and state authorities should make concerted efforts to recognize the work of police officers. In addition, pre-crisis training practices should be institutionalized to give police the knowledge and abilities they need to avoid mental health issues in future PHEs with a similar demographic (Laufs & Waseem, 2020). Lastly, ineffective communication and a lack of trust across organizations might hamper or postpone the essential collaboration between various agencies. In the context of Covid-19, law enforcement agencies should evaluate prospects for cooperative training and exercises following the pandemic to strengthen readiness for upcoming emergencies as well as cooperation deficiencies. Particularly with organizations in the public health sector, police organizations should aggressively work to forge personal ties. A national communication infrastructure that enables intra- and inter-agency information sharing may also be beneficial for inter-agency communication and collaboration (Laufs & Waseem, 2020).

The police have played and continue to play a crucial role in the effort to contain the pandemic. Recent events have made it clear that more attention needs to be paid to the role of the police in pandemic emergencies caused by infectious diseases. This is because it is clear that in the past, neither in actual practice nor in scientific circles, enough attention was given to the fact that the police were able to significantly aid society in overcoming one of the most trying times in human history (Janković, 2021).

This can relate to the study of Jones (2020), which explained that police have to respond to and assist in a public health crisis by enforcing new laws and bylaws that are regularly changing as governments take information from epidemiologists and virologists on how to manage this global pandemic. As the government relies on the justice system to ensure community safety and to protect the community not only from common threats to public or individual safety, such as domestic violence, gangs, guns, or drugs but

also from Covid-19, they afford them with additional powers. How the police carry out those powers and policies during the pandemic becomes of utmost importance as these drastic measures can impact police legitimacy. Whether or not the police can successfully respond to this crisis depends not only on lawmakers or the government but also on public trust and confidence, and the public sees the police as legitimate power holders. Consequently, in these very uncertain times, the police must understand their impacts, the construct of police legitimacy, and the tenets of procedural justice, and put a substantial amount of effort into avoiding creating an us versus them mentality amid this pandemic (Reicher & Stott, 2020).

The concept of police legitimacy implies that the police are seen as legitimate power holders who uphold the law and operate in the community in a procedurally just way, giving a voice to the people they serve. Research has shown that if the police are perceived as legitimate power holders, community members are more likely to comply and cooperate with police and are less likely to re-offend.

The over-policing of marginalized neighbourhoods and communities was particularly worrisome during the pandemic when the police had to enforce new public health laws and ensure public safety while depending on the public's willingness to comply with social distancing or lockdowns in a way that they never had to before. At the same time, police are tasked more than ever to prevent civil unrest. Communities that already have strained relationships with the police might have a harder time complying with the new rules and regulations. As police legitimacy is often lower in disadvantaged communities, there is the potential that the population does not see the laws as necessary.

The aforementioned theories, related research, and related literary works have all aided in understanding this study on the lived experiences of police officers, as well as their plights and aspirations in light of the drastic change in the work environment, the health risks associated with Covid-19 exposure, and the danger posed by various factors at border checkpoints during community quarantine in Maasin City, Southern Leyte. They support both the research's findings and their ramifications.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study used a phenomenological design. Edmund Husserl described phenomenological design in the early twentieth century as examining the viewpoints of people who have experienced an event in order to acquire a better knowledge of their experiences. It's also a type of idiographic psychological analysis that shows how a qualitative technique can be utilized to investigate people's lived experiences. This type of methodology is appropriate for the goal of this study, which is to investigate the informants' lived experiences through in-depth interviews (IDI) and focus group discussions (FGD).

As stated by Moran (2011), it presents a masterful, enlightening, but the Husserlian phenomenology account is insightful while avoiding being overly Husserl of the Logical Investigations and Ideas are essentially offered, with some technical discussion mixed in. Alternatively, it is believed that phenomenology is a direct-realist, semi-Aristotelian and science that describes how things manifest in the world.

3.2 Research Participants

The informants were classified into three categories: (1) regardless of gender, the informants must be police officers; (2) the informants must be active during the pandemic; and (3) the informants must be deployed at the border checkpoints of Pasay or Panan-awan, Maasin City, Southern Leyte for at least two months, for a total of ten (10) informants, four (4) of them were interviewed individually in depth, while the remaining six (6) were interviewed in a focused group discussion at the same time.

The decision to take part in the study was optional. The informants made a decision about their willingness to take part.

3.3 Research Instrument

The researcher used a self-made interview guide with open-ended questions that were tailored to the study's objective and purpose to collect data. The interview guide was created based on the study's major and sub-problems that were validated and approved by the panel members.

The interview guide centered on the lived experiences of police officers enforcing standard health protocol in Maasin City, Southern Leyte's border checkpoints, which was also supplemented with field notes and a voice recorder for the documentation of the responses of each informant. It was divided into two sections: Part one (1) was comprised of preparatory questions designed to answer basic questions and create a welcoming environment that helped informants prepare for the next round of questions; Part two (2) delved into the informants' experiences enforcing the standard health protocols which are the study's main focus.

3.4 Data Collection

This study focused on the lived experiences of police officers during the pandemic. The data was gathered at the Maasin City Police Station, as well as the Panan-awan and Pasay border checkpoints. Before the informants were approached by the researcher at stations and checkpoints for an interview, a transmittal letter was submitted for approval to the Chief of Police of Maasin City Police Station. After the approval, the informants were briefed that the researcher consented to conduct the interview, and they were given informed consent forms and an interview guide during the scheduled interviews. They were also reminded of their ability to withdraw from the study and the constraints on confidentiality.

Following that, through the "pakipag-isturyahay" process, the researchers and informants began to create compatibility. After the introduction, consolation, and confidence had been built, the interview began. For the individual interview, each informant had only one interview session, which lasted between 20 and 40 minutes on average. The Focused Group Discussion (FGD) was also conducted between 30 to 45 minutes. All of the interviews were audio-recorded, which made transcription easier.

Research has successfully demonstrated Colaizzi's use of descriptive phenomenology. By including various factors of credibility throughout the research process, the researchers are urged to emphasize improving the rigor of the study findings.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data acquired from the in-depth interview and Focused Group Discussions (FGD) were analyzed and interpreted using a qualitative approach by the researcher. Various methodologies were employed at various stages of the research. First, the recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim into a readable language for easy analysis and improved understanding of the informants' ideas. The next step was to go over the transcripts and code them to see if there was anything in common to formulate common themes. Finally, a phenomenon or patterns arose and were evaluated using thematic analysis.

Colaizzi's method, which uses a rigorous and phenomenological analytical process, was used to analyze the transcript data derived from the informant's comments throughout the interview.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

In this research, the informants are in no way physically, emotionally, or psychologically harmed before or after conducting the interview. Similarly, priority was given to a convenient interview with the research informants while performing data collection.

The informants signed the consent forms before the interview with respect to their rights and value to the research provided by the researcher. The signed consent forms signify the informants' voluntary involvement and conclude that the study questions were answered without hesitation and at their convenience.

The confidentiality of the data obtained and the informants' personal information was prioritized after the interview. Also, the consent forms signed were kept secure and were only used for the research study. The Data Privacy Law (RA 10173) in dealing with the personal and sensitive information of the informants was strictly observed.

4. Results and Discussion

The researcher audio recorded all of the informants' interviews and transcribed them verbatim into intelligible language. Only the most crucial details were chosen and coded. The researcher analyzed and evaluated the coding to learn about the perspectives of the informants and discover common themes. The data presented here was divided into three (3) sections: part one (1) detailed the informants' experiences in enforcing the standard health protocols at border checkpoints; part two (2) examined how informants cope with their struggles in enforcing the standard health protocol at border checkpoints; and the informants' aspiration to improve standard health protocol at border checkpoints were discussed in part three (3). The information was gathered through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The data was analyzed to depict the informants' opinions and experiences.

Themes were developed based on the informants' significant statements formed into emergent themes in response to the sub-problems.

4.1 Experiences of the Informants in Enforcing Standard Health Protocols

Amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, the informants still appreciated the fulfillment of working as police officers enforcing the standard health protocol. The slow spread of the virus in the province was considered a great achievement by the police officers. While police officers were stationed at the border checkpoint, they came across a variety of people, some of whom were violators. They divided the violators into two groups: arrogant and VIPs. These violators were one of the many challenges they confronted on a daily basis while on duty.

4.1.1 The Fulfillment of Heroes

This was the theme that emerged in the positive experience of the informants in enforcing the standard health protocol.

This is a rewarding experience because, at the start of the pandemic, I believe Southern Leyte is one of the last places to have Covid cases due to strict implementations. We were very happy that we had an effective implementation in Southern Leyte. (Participant 2).

It is really hard, but now, from time to time, with a prayer, we're coping with our situation. (Participant 3).

The most memorable experience here in the border checkpoint is when not only the PNP but different agencies work together in order to stop the spread of the Covid-19 virus. The cooperation of everyone is needed (Participant 4).

This theme talked about how fulfilling it was to be one of the officers on the frontline enforcing the standard health protocols at the border checkpoints.

This emerging theme can relate to the fulfillment theory developed by Schaffer (1953) ultimately, job satisfaction, according to the theory, is precisely proportional to the level to which an individual's workable demands are actually fulfilled. Jobs will be increasingly tightly linked to the fulfillment of the need as the need grows stronger. Or, to put it another way, fulfillment theory assumes that a person's level of pleasure or dissatisfaction is determined by the strength of his or her needs and goals, as well as the degree to which he or she can envisage and exploit chances in the workplace.

4.1.2 Being in the Frontline.

This theme emerged from the responses of the informants with regard to their experiences in enforcing the standard health protocols at the border checkpoints. Being in the frontline was the main role of the informants in enforcing the standard health protocols. In this role, they encountered different kinds of people crossing the border.

As a police officer and as a Covid frontliner, it is really hard because there's a lot of adjustment. And until now, we are still adjusting but it is not as hard as before. But as they say, you must follow the rules and regulations (Participant 3).

Travel documents are required for crossing the border, but in some emergency situations, they are unable to provide all of the requirements, and that's when you have to strike a balance and decide whether or not to let them enter. Because there are also times when they lie about having an emergency, and they sometimes blame us who are here in the border control. (Participant 2).

When Covid cases rise, the strict restrictions will apply again. Firstly, you will put restrictions on the border line, which will affect many. First, the jobs of many people. Second, the access and exit of different items and services will greatly affected. It's been implied that in the border line and checkpoints, once you're able to present the needed certifications and papers and you complete them all, there will be no more questions; you can enter the border. That's what we only require: cooperation with the community especially with those areas with higher restrictions. (Participant 1).

Their experiences dealing with many types of people, most notably the violators and government officials whom they regard as VIPs.

This theme relates to Social Control and Self-Control theories that refer to the group of theoretical viewpoints identified by Wells (2017) and linked by Hirschi's work, which suggest the existence or absence of control as a crucial component in understanding why some people offend while others do not. Offenders lack exterior social controls, internal self- or personal controls, or both, according to these theorists. Personal controls, in terms of their nature and strength, are a reflection of a person's notion of how he will act in different situations. Individuals who conform to legal-penalty norms are thought to have mature ego ideals or non-delinquent social roles, internalized controls of social groups governing behavior in accordance with non-delinquent group expectations, and appropriate and flexible rational controls over behavior.

4.1.3 In the Field of Battle.

This theme describes the experiences of the informants enforcing standard health protocols. Aside from handling different kinds of people, the violators, and government officials, the informants also struggled with their work environment and Covid exposure. *The start is really hard because you are in the field, you are in the center of the road physically exposed. Adding these things that are very hard to carry and this hot uniform. The PNP proposed a better uniform but it was not yet approved (Participant 2).*

Other challenges I have encountered as a Covid-19 frontliner, of course, you are not a robot; you are a human being you are vulnerable to get sick. If you get sick, it will affect how you do your duty and it will also affect your working environment. Our job is fatal. It's not easy to do a job, rain or shine 24/7. ((Participant 3).

Depression. You're depressed because you're on duty every day, you don't get enough sleep, you don't have enough time to rest, and your body is exhausted. (Participant 7).

Based on my experience when I was still assigned in Panan-awan, for myself it was really risky. You will implement the protocol and be exposed to different kind of people. You will be afraid for your family. It was really risky because you are exposed and prone to get infected by the virus. (Participant 9).

As a frontliner, it is risky to conduct a checkpoint, especially the time when Covid started, because we are still unsure how to prevent it. We are all new to the situation that causes panic to everyone. We still don't know how to react to the situation. It's really hard to cope up in that time. (Participant 8).

Aside from dealing with violators when being on the frontline at the border checkpoints, police officers were also exposed to the Covid-19 virus while working in the sun or rain. Since the outbreak, police officers have been stationed in the middle of the road, enforcing the standard health protocols at border checkpoints and exposing themselves to anyone who may be affected. In this working environment, police officers put their lives on the line as frontline responders to the Covid-19 pandemic.

This theme can be connected to rational choice theory by Cornish and Clarke (1987). According to the theory, individuals pick a path of action that is consistent with their preferences. People rely on reasonable calculations in order to make rational decisions, and the outcome is always in their own best interests. When making decisions, it is considered that a person considers all available information, event probabilities, and prospective costs and benefits, among other factors, and that he or she acts consistently in selecting the self-determined course of action.

4.2 How the Informants Cope with the Problems Encountered in Enforcing Standard Health Protocols

Each of the informants had their own individual strategies they applied in order to cope with the struggles they encountered in enforcing the standard health protocol at the border checkpoints. Two themes were drawn to describe how they coped up.

4.2.1 Self-Sufficiency in the Face of Adversity

This theme emerged from the responses of informants regarding how they cope with their experiences in enforcing the standard health protocol. Because they were handling different kinds of people, they were prone to many adjustments and struggles while on duty. Their job was not easy because aside from manning the border checkpoint, they were also exposed to the Covid-19 virus. It was revealed that they use their own strategies for coping with their experiences.

If we don't recognize them the first time, we take note of their appearance and vehicle so that the next time they cross the border, all we ask for is the QR-Code (Participant 1).

Self-dedication. Each and every one of us we have our own coping strategies. In my part, self-dedication is important. If you have self-dedication to your work, even if you encounter struggles, you will find a ways to get through it. (Participant 3).

Because you are always on call, you must manage your time well. You should always be on time since it's difficult to implement regulations when the person doing the implementation isn't present. PNP are also expected to be on duty 24 hours a day, seven days a week. (Participant 4).

You should set your mind that you don't let people get into you because you are only implementing the law instructed to you. If they will continue breaking the rules, you just need to inform them with the consequences of their violations (Participant 9).

This theme describes how the majority applied different coping techniques and did not concentrate on implementing adjustments in specific work conditions but were more focused on the individual and teach personnel how to help themselves while at work.

This theme can relate to the self-determination theory developed by Deci et al. (2017). According to self-determination theory, people are motivated to grow and change by three psychological demands that are innate and universal to all people. According to self-determination theory, in order to achieve psychological growth, people must experience the following feelings: autonomy, people need to believe that they are in command of their own actions and goals, the sense of being able to take direct action that will result in real change contributes significantly to people's feelings of self-determination and competence; connection or

relatedness, to describe the relationship between two things, people require a sense of belonging and attachment to other people in order to function properly. Furthermore, according to this theory, individuals are able to become self-determined when their requirements for competence, connection, and autonomy are met.

4.2.2 Overcoming Adversity in Unity

theme that emerged with regard to how the informants cope with their experiences. Sharing common experiences often implies sharing common coping mechanisms. From the responses of the informants in applying maximum tolerance in handling violators.

It's ultimate tolerance for me. You will easily find arguments if you do not have maximum patience. And it's difficult because you're the one enforcing the law; you must maintain your composure and patience at all times) (Participant 4).

You must have maximum tolerance in order to regulate your temper and calm yourself down. (Participant 6).

To avoid negative feedback, you must control your temper, especially with those arrogant citizens who believe they know everything. (Participant 7).

It is a must to have a long patience. Patience is the best tool in handling short tempred people. You don't let them get into you. (Participant 8).

This theme describes how the officers were expected and trained to respond to danger and crises, as well as work together with superiors. Therefore, police training equipped them with the necessary coping resources to resolve crisis situations effectively.

This theme can relate to De Boer and Bressers (2011) on contextual interaction theory. This theory was created to describe the dynamic interaction of actors and to give a very basic, empirically validated framework for identifying key policy implementation problems. Motivation, cognition, and power of actors are identified as major characteristics impacting policy implementation in the contextual interaction theory. In their policy implementation experiences, actors alluded to all CIT fundamental principles such as information, motivation, power, resources, and interactions, and a lack or presence of these tenets were characterized as either a facilitator or a barrier to policy implementation. This idea was shown to be quite beneficial in explaining both policymakers' and facilitators' experiences with policy implementation.

The relative independence of various sectors and levels involved in river restoration efforts, for example, and the necessity to make or wait for their "many streams" to cross for productive activity are ideal examples of the concept. As a result, the concept of coevolution emerges.

4.3 Aspiration of the Informants to Improve the Implementation of Standard Health Protocols

Two (2) themes were created to describe the aspirations of the informants, as the pandemic has had a tremendous influence on police-community relations as well as public confidence in law enforcement. While a successful and effective police reaction to catastrophes and emergencies can save lives and protect public safety and well-being, an inefficient police response can erode public trust and confidence in the police.

4.3.1. Unity and Cooperation is an Excellent Armor

This theme describes the informants' realizations and desires, especially during a crisis. Organizational assistance can give resources and proper provisions for police officers and help officers deal better, resulting in higher work satisfaction and decreased turnover. So that enough support can be offered, such interventions should be targeted to those officers who are most vulnerable to the negative impacts of additional organizational stressors.

They should reassign medical staff here because they are more knowledgeable; for example, at the first checkpoint, we had firefighters and nurses, and now we are the only ones left to do the job. (Participant 1).

According to what I've seen here, a health department representative is desperately needed. It should not just be us enforcing the usual health protocol but also some health department staff. (Participant 2).

The only thing I want to happen is for all agencies to work together. Because there will be no prevention if we don't work together. (Participant 4).

As a police officer, I think the way to improve enforcing the standard health protocol is, first, cooperation among individual because this virus can contaminate everyone. (Participant 3).

This theme depicts the informants' desire to cope during the pandemic. This theme described the need to assist officers in the aftermath and maintain a healthy workforce in the long run; follow-up measures must be required. Family members, community members, and the organization as a whole may be involved in such interventions.

This theme relates to Sampson and Laub's (2006) age-graded theory of informal social regulation, which emphasized the importance of social relationships at all stages of life. According to their theory, the strength of a person's social relationships will predict criminal activity throughout his or her life. The issue "why do offenders quit offending?" is answered by their theory and supporting empirical studies by highlighting the social ties formed through marriage, work, and military duty. As a result, these significant life events, as well as the resulting social relationships, can serve as turning points in criminal offending patterns.

4.3.2. Motivation Behind the Desire

In order to increase persistence, motivation has a causal role if the work is important in terms of the task. This theme described motivation is relationally designed to provide opportunities to interact with and have a significant impact on the desire of the actors, such as police work, which appears to improve persistence by making police officers feel affectively committed by allowing them to see the impact of their work on the community.

Everyone. Covid-19 excuses no one. So, it is a must that each one of us must cooperate in preventing the spread of the virus. (Participant 3).

Because it is really exhausting having these protocols and ordinances that we need to follow. Life was different back then when we are happy go lucky. We can go anywhere without mask; we can remove our mask. The most important is to be free from this situation. (Participant 8).

We will go back to normal if Covid will be stopped. People will no longer worry securing health certificate to pass the borders because theres no more Covid. Our economy will rise because transactions will run smoothly without delays because there is no need to submit tons of travel requirements (Participant 10).

Everyone will benefit, especially our family, our kids, and the economy. The economy will grow because amusement like parks and mall will available. All of us can benefit. (Participant 9).

It was revealed that the police officers are hoping that these improvements they are aspired to not only for themselves but everyone in the community. According to Informants, Covid-19 excuses no one; therefore, their aspiration for improvements can benefit everyone.

This emerging theme can relate to the goal-setting theory of motivation developed by Locke and Latham (2019). The theory emphasized the importance of the link between performance and goals. Moderators like ability and self-efficacy may have an impact on the motivational impact of objectives. Individual goal-setting is just as important as group goal-setting and a learning goal orientation leads to higher performance than a performance goal orientation.

5. Conclusion

From the gathered data, through the recorded response of the ten (10) informants, seven (7) substantial emergent themes were created. The researchers chose the informants based on three criteria. The first criterion was that the informants be police officers, regardless of gender. Second, the informants must also be actively operating during the pandemic. The third was that the police officer be posted to the border checkpoints in Maasin City, Southern Leyte, for at least two months. The informants of this study were ten (10) police officers who enforced the standard health protocol in the selected border checkpoints of Maasin City, Southern Leyte. Six (6) out of the ten (10) informants were interviewed in a focused group discussion, and the rest were interviewed individually.

The situation and experiences of the police officers serve as a wake-up call in terms of the need for improved crisis management and response in the country. Since the beginning of the pandemic, a police officer's mission has evolved to include not only defending our communities from crime but also controlling the spread of the virus, preserving public order, and promoting a safer community from the pandemic. Police officers are facing extraordinary hurdles as a result of strict lockout measures and following standard health protocol at border checkpoints. Furthermore, policing is made more difficult by an uncooperative citizenry and inconsistencies in government measures.

Effective police officers are dedicated to the government and the people, and their support and responsibility are for the greater good of the country. Police officers claim that their safety and security are given poor priority. Because their lives are on the line in this pandemic, police officers have requested a little more attention. Due to this being a health issue, police officers have requested assistance from the health department and other government agencies.

For the Maasin City Government, support from the community is critical for the success of the police operation. Based on the interviews, police officers would feel more efficacious if the community would cooperate with the implementation of the standard health protocol. As a result, it is suggested that the public must be more aware of the situation and experiences of police officers in order for them to understand how difficult it is to enforce health protocols. The majority of informants believe that if the community helps with the implementation, everyone will profit. Public collaboration motivates police officers to work hard and be productive, reducing the spread of Covid-19 and increasing the likelihood of a disease-free community. In this way, the local government, police, and community can be aware of the aid that they must provide to one another in the event of a crisis. Activities that benefit the entire community, such as strategic planning and crisis response, should be developed and prioritized by the city government.

Collaboration between government departments and agencies is linked to effective crisis management. When police officers are backed up by government allies, they feel confident in their capacity to construct clear and effective routines and procedures. These perceptions suggest that police officers have developed comprehensive and well-articulated rules and procedures for community management, transitions and interruptions of crisis response, use of materials and equipment, group work, and independent work, with the assistance of supporting government agencies and departments. Widen coordination with the different departments of the government, such as the Department of Health (DOH), and with different law enforcement agencies, such as the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). Proper coordination will strengthen crisis management, increase programs for crisis preparedness, especially health crises, and increase the success of every law enforcement operation involving such events in Maasin City.

Maasin City Police Station needs to keep the ongoing police community relation (PCR) programs that involve the barangay in developing community awareness initiatives, particularly in relation to crisis preparedness and coordination with barangay officials, including the barangay police, to increase community or public involvement in the police operation. Through these, the general public will become informed about the Philippine National Police's programs and encouraged to support them. They will also gain a better understanding of the goals of each program and the importance of strict adherence to the law.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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