

Emotions, Perceived Stressors And Coping Strategies Of Front Liners During The Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the emotions, perceived stressors, and coping strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic among the front liners in the four municipalities Eastern Samar (Maydolong, Balangkayan, Llorente, and Hernani). There were one hundred fifty-seven (157) respondents composed of PNP, BFP, health workers, barangay officials, LGU employees, rescuers, and emergency response team. Convenience sampling was employed for practical accessibility, geographical proximity, and willingness to participate of identified respondents.

The study utilized a four-part questionnaire. Part 1 asked the feelings/emotions of respondents, part 2 solicited the factors causing stress, part 3 implored the factors that help reduce stress, and part 4 elicited the personal coping strategies to alleviate stress.

Findings showed that the feelings/emotions of respondents were interpreted as “slightly emotional” which shows that respondents are professionals and ethically responsible which drove them to continue working. The results on the factors causing stress revealed that “lack of cooperation among the residents on following health protocols” with a

mean of 3.0 was interpreted as “moderately stressed.” On factors that help reduce stress, it showed that knowing how to be infected and how to prevent the virus from contamination does not really help in reducing stress. This study found out that personal coping strategies to alleviate stress were often used by the respondents.

Keywords: covid-19; pandemic; emotions; perceived stressors; coping strategies; front liners

INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus has created a global crisis that is beyond the capacity of even powerful nations to contain (Lep & Katrina, 2020). Without a vaccine to cure it, even with the onslaught of aggressive research all over the world, it is up to the various government leaders to come up with ways to fight the unseen enemy. In the Philippines, President Rodrigo Duterte came up with putting up a group known as the Inter-Agency Task Force chaired by the Department of Health which is tasked to contain the spread of the virus and mitigate its socio-economic impact (Chen, 2020). The task force laid down various health guidelines and protocols for the populace to follow it also issued memorandums regarding the implementation of community quarantines and border controls, to ensure the maximum safety of the people amidst the pandemic (Santos, 2020).

Originally, COVID-19 or the coronavirus disease, comes from a strain of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus2 (SARS-CoV-2). Colloquially known as the coronavirus, it has become mankind's greatest healthy enemy since the Black Plaque and has infected millions and killed of thousands. The virus known coughs or sneezes (Perlman, 2020). COVID19, one of the most unpredictable viruses known to have originated from China knows no religion, country, race, color or political affiliation and has affected all social classes. Due to its deleterious impact, many economies around the world have deteriorated, large companies have closed down, hospitals are brimming with patients and the world is in a lurch (Wu, 2020).

People were advised to wear personal protective equipment to prevent acquiring the disease. Preventive measures such as frequent hand washing, physical distancing, avoidance of crowds and practicing respiratory hygiene were

introduced by the different health organizations. The IATF ordered the lockdown of several locations to contain and stop the spread of the virus. Work was suspended, face to face schooling was stopped and people had to adapt to the new normal scheme (Nicomedes & Avila, 2020).

To alleviate the problem that the world is facing today, superheroes in slightly different costumes are leading the battlefield and staging a war in the frontline. These individuals are called front liners. In the Philippines, as the COVID-19 pandemic grows by the day, the front liners- medical workers, policemen, and health volunteers are in the thick of the battle, whatever the cost (Abletes, 2020). They leave home and their families to serve and fulfill the nitty-gritty of their profession. They are the new heroes. The front liners step out of the comfort of their homes and tread the danger of getting the disease just so they will be able to offer their services to the people during this pandemic. They are tired and scared that they will be the next patient of the very disease they are trying to battle with. These unsung heroes are weary and the long working hours under uncomfortable and stressful conditions may jeopardize their psychological well- beings as well as their morale and work performance. Apart from the social pressures faced at home and in the society due to the implementation of MCO, these critical front liners are also at high risks to be exposed to serious mental health issues resulted in symptoms such as being stressful, severe depression, decline of work motivation, fatigue, and over-anxiety (Baker & Ramil, 2020).

This global pandemic has led to unprecedented trauma and anxiety among front liners. Mental health disturbances such as these can cause a decrease in productivity. Stress can cause physical, emotional, and behavioral problems which can affect your health, energy, well-being, mental alertness, and personal and professional relationships (Bhargava & Trevedi, 2018). Front liners are susceptible to such type of stress because of the danger they face every day.

The local data on the turmoil that front liners are facing everyday are non-existent. Research focusing on their emotions and coping strategies are absolutely lacking probably due to the fact that it is difficult to conduct any research in this pandemic due to the risk of contracting the disease. International data on the same focus is also limited.

This particular type of data is greatly significant amidst the ambiguity surrounding this pandemic of great magnitude. It is therefore imperative that a study be made to assess the emotions, perceived stressors and coping mechanism of front liners. Such research can shed light to the experiences of frontline workers. It can also be used to come up with ways in which to alleviate the dire situations that they are in. because they are in the forefront in this struggle against the pandemic. They should be well-equipped with science and wisdom which can abet in their lie of duty.

Objectives

The study was catalyzed to determine the emotions, perceived stressors and coping strategies of front liners during the COVID-19 pandemic. Explicitly, the study served the following purposes:

- 1) To assess the degree of emotions of front liners during the COVID-19 pandemic;
- 2) To find out the perceived stressors of front liners;
- 3) To grasp the coping strategies of front liners during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Significance of the Study

The study will be beneficial, especially in this time of pandemic the following:

The National and Local Government. The study may help in coming up with programs and interventions that can address the needs of front liners.

The community. The study can help the members of the community understand the duress that the front liners are going through, that they be spared from the stigma of the society.

The University. This research can be a source of literature and other relevant data that may be used to conduct similar studies in connection with front liners and the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Front liners. The result of this study may help the front liners in battling with anxiety and stress and how to cope with the dire situation that they are in.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Several literatures have been linked towards gaining a keener understanding of the study. Although few were written during the time of the current pandemic, some were born out of the other epidemics around the globe which were deemed necessary to better understand the context of the research.

COVID 19

The coronavirus disease is an infectious disease caused by the newly discovered coronavirus. People who are infected with the disease will suffer mild to severe respiratory illness and has the chance of recovering even without any medical treatment. However, those who have underlying sickness like diabetes, respiratory disease and cancer are most likely to develop serious illness which might lead to death. The disease, through the droplets of the saliva, and the discharges from the nose when one sneezes or coughs. Several health guidelines were implemented such as physical distancing, wearing of personal protective equipment and avoidance of mass gatherings in all over the world (World Health Organization, 2020).

Despite the best efforts of the world leaders, the national government and local government units to contain the spread of the disease, many continue to get infected and some have perished. According to the United Nations, it is the most global health calamity of the century and the greatest challenge that the mankind has ever faced since World War 2. According to the world health organization. It has already killed more than three thousand individuals with no sign of an antivirus cropping up.

Front liners

Because of the severity of the disease, front liners such as health workers, uniformed personnel and other volunteers were called upon to combat the virus. As it keeps spreading and continuing to affect more people, they were faced with difficulties when discharging their duties (Nyashanu & Pfende, 2020). The lack of pandemic preparedness, the anxiety of being away from home, the fear of contracting the virus is but a few of the predicaments that the front liners are facing. Feelings that the disease is not treatable and could lead to death were what worries them most (Beech, 2019). The ever-changing guidelines of the different agencies tasked to handle the disease led to more confusion and doubt about the robustness of the government's infection control practices. Aside from this issue, a study in the United Kingdom ascertained those frontline workers had at least a three-fold increased risk of

COVID19 (Nguyen & Drew, 2020), resulting to deaths of doctors and nurses in the country. Such occurrences cause stress and anxiety among front liners who are uncertain of what will happen tomorrow.

Emotions and Stressors among Front liners

Stressors are events or conditions in the surroundings that trigger stress. Subsequently, stress is a feeling of emotional physical tension which comes from any event that makes you feel frustrated, angry or nervous. It is the body's reaction to a challenge or demand which can be positive in short burst but may be dangerous if felt for a long period of time (Medeline Plus, 2020). Frontline workers who are under the highest degree of duress and anxiety caused by the pandemic are most likely to feel stress. Firsthand exposure to their serviced populace who are also under anxiety can lead to burnout affecting job effectiveness and making crucial decisions that comes with the job (Fried & Fisher, 2017). Such negative emotions cause a high level of stress and vice-versa.

There have been many studies that claim of the relationship between stress and emotions. Stress is defined as a relationship between individuals and environment that is appraised as personally significant and as taxing or exceeding resources for coping while emotions are the natural state of mind deriving from one's circumstance, mood or relationship with others (Rusting & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2020). Rumination, or the process of thinking about something dark and sinister repeatedly (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020), is the link that binds emotions and stress. It is also a cognitive style associated with negative and persistent thoughts about threats to the self (Just & alloy, 19197). The higher level of stress at the current time predicts negative emotions such as depression, anger and anxiety and peoples' momentary thinking of ruminations positively predicts higher level of negative emotions. That is, the higher level of stress experienced, the higher level of ruminations one undergoes through, which in turn predicted a higher degree of negative emotions experienced (Koster, 2011). Hence, a study conducted about the relationship of tress and emotion among students in Nanjing University concluded that if a person is under a lot of stress, he tends to think about his situation repeatedly, resulting to a higher degree of negative emotion such as fear, anxiety, anger or even hate and extreme sadness 9Jiaxuan & Huang, 2018). Such emotions affect productivity and effectiveness (Kukde, 2017) which are relevant to the job of frontl8ine workers of today.

Stressors defined are events or conditions that may trigger your body to feel stress. However, stressors may not necessarily be unpleasant. Physiological and behavioral responses are stressor-specific and so the process engaged to restore homeostasis or well-being also differ. Thus, the following are all considered stressors, although they elicit variable behavioral and physiological responses: viral or bacterial infection, threat of physical harm, drugs, exercises, sexual activity, high altitude, restraint, hunger, and thirst (Tournier, 2001). Front liners feel hunger, thirst and threat to physical harm causing them to be stressed in their working environment.

Coping Strategies of Working under Stress

Work-related stress has been defined by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) as harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. When a person is in a lot of stress, he either succumbs to a negative state, or he develops ways to undermine it. In the General Adaptation to Stress (GAS) Model by Hans Selye (1956), the idea of adaptation or coping with stress is inherent, that when under stress, the central nervous system either flights or fights resulting to three stages- alarm, resistance and coping (Walinga, 2008). The adaptation value of a particular type of coping may be a function of the characteristics of the stressful encounter being considered (e.g., controllability of the stressor). Meaning that the coping mechanism of an individual depends on the stress he is experiencing (Christensen, 1998).

In this time of pandemic, frontline workers are one of the most vulnerable to be infected with the disease due to their constant exposure to it. Past studies show that stress and anxiety lead the need to build resilience. Resiliency is the ability of a person to recover swiftly from hardships and people using positive emotions in difficult situations have been found to be resilient. Past literature shows that extremely resilient people foster their positive emotions which assist them in dealing with stress, boredom, and change. Resilience helps in coping with mental and physical health issues; thus, it can act as a protective factor against the onset of psychiatric issues among those facing hardships. Coping strategies among frontline workers are but proof of their resilience (McAlonan & Lee, 2007).

There are different sources of stress and various coping mechanism of front liners in this time of pandemic. In a study conducted in Pakistan, it was found that during the pandemic, media was mentioned to be a major source of exacerbating anxiety and stress levels of masses as authenticity of updates or news shared could not be ascertained. Furthermore, religious coping, passion opinions, and views regarding their roles during the pandemic boosted their resilience⁴ and coping mechanism (Munawara & Fajad, 2020).

Other Related Studies

Some studies and articles have been conducted and written internationally and locally which are related to the scope of the research.

In Hubei, China, a study on the psychological impact of health care workers during the outbreak of coronavirus posits that the front liners believe that they have a social obligation to combat the disease but were anxious about their safety and their families. Strict infection control, recognition of their efforts and report on reduced number of positive cases provided psychological benefit reducing their level of stress (Hoazhing & Baorenb, 2020). Subsequently, another study was conducted on sleep disturbance and psychological profile of medical staff resulted that most respondents who were in a lot of stress were experiencing sleep disorders, anxiety and depression.

Coping is the current term for understanding frontline workers' responses to stress. They are the ones who implemented the policies set by government agencies and it is no easy feat (Lipsky, 1980). They often experience conflicting demands from new rules and the human dynamics of engaging with their superiors, their fellow workers and the very people they serve (Tummers & Bekkers, 2009). A study in Prague, investigating on the process of handling stress due to policy implementations revealed that there are three ways of coping that the worker does – negotiation, problem solving and opposition (Musheno & Vlink, 2013). In Pakistan, a similar study postulated that frontline workers cope with stress by relying on religion, acceptance of the situation and planning ahead (Salman, 2020).

In the Philippines, eighty-four (84) percent of Filipinos are stressed with the COVID-19 pandemic (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2020), as per result of the special Social Weather

Station (SWS) survey. More so for frontline workers. In a country that idolizes heroes, fear of stigmatization among front liner weighs the same as the fear of being infected. According to UNICEF, front liners feel that they can rely only on their co-workers but loneliness kicks in when they are all alone and fear gets to them the hardest during the end of their shifts (Gemino, 2020).

In recent news, health care workers have insistently asked for a repose from the onslaught of infected patient by asking the government to extend the implementation of the community quarantine in metro manila (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2020). According to a Filipino scientist, the government should heed the call of frontline workers since they can no longer live by the burden of who lives or who dies. Besides the lack of personal protective equipment, they are underpaid and lack the respect that they deserve Biana & Joaquin, 2020)

Renowned Filipino doctors have died fighting the pandemic, and front liners, especially medical practitioners are adamant of the lack of support from the government adding up to the anxiety and stress that they are going through hence these workers have developed coping mechanism to reduce the anxiety caused by the virus. Subsequently, a study conducted in manila involving Filipino nurses revealed that COVID-19 may cause dysfunctional levels of anxiety among these front liners. Moreover, increased level of personal resilience, organizational and social support may reduce their level of anxiety (Labrsague & De los Santos, 2020).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study is descriptive research that used descriptive survey design in assessing the degree of emotions, stress and coping mechanism of front liners. Creswell (2012) and Ary, et. al. (2010) propounded that the survey research designs are procedures in quantitative research in which investigators administer a survey to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of the population.

Research Locale

The research was conducted in the municipalities of Maydolong, Balangkayan, Llorente, and Hernani Eastern

Samar. These four municipalities are within the service areas for research and extensions of Eastern Samar State University-Maydolong Campus. This is the southern part of Eastern Samar where in the duration of the study the province was still COVID free.

Respondents

One hundred fifty-seven (157) front liners were the respondents of the study which includes PNP, BFP Personnel, Health workers, Brgy official, LGU employee, Rescuer, and the Emergency Response Team.

Sampling Technique

On this time of pandemic, the researchers opted to use the convenience sampling technique. This sampling technique is a type of non-probability sampling in which members of the target population that meet certain –practical criteria easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study (Etkan & Musa, 2016).

Research Instrument

The study used a survey questionnaire which was adapted from the Khalid, 2016 and was modified by the researchers for there are some items which does not fit to the locale and type of respondents.

The questionnaire asked the name of the respondents but it was optional. The occupation of the respondents was also asked for identifying in what agency the respondents are connected.

The study utilized four-part survey questionnaire in gathering data. Part 1 asked the feelings /emotions of the respondents during the pandemic and part 2 solicited the factors causing stress. Those two parts used a four-point Likert-scale which was interpreted as follows; (4) – very much, (3) - moderately, (2) - slightly, (1)-not at all.

On the other hand, part 3 of the survey questionnaire elicited the factors that help reduce stress and this was measured as, (4) - extremely effective in reducing stress, (3) moderately effective, (2) - mildly effective, (1) - not at all effective.

Statements which describe the personal coping strategies to alleviate stress by the respondents were provided and the respondents were prompted to provide response in a four-point Likert-scale and interpreted as follows; (4) – always used, (3) – often used, (2) – sometimes used, and (1) never used.

Data Gathering

After the research instrument was finalized, the researchers sought the permission, in writing from the municipal mayors of Maydolong, Balangkayan, Llorente, and Hernani, Eastern Samar. A consent form was given to the respondents before the gathering of data and the researchers personally administered the research instruments after the respondents signed the form. The questionnaires were distributed in the triage, municipal and barangay checkpoints where the respondents were on duty. While the respondents are answering, the researches took the opportunity to distribute food packs as a token of being cooperative and giving time to answer the questionnaire. An orientation with the questions was made and the researchers assured the respondents the confidentiality of their responses. After the instruments were accomplished, they were immediately retrieved, collected and collated for data analysis and interpretation.

Data Analysis

The data obtained was carefully collated, tabulated, treated and analysed with the used of statistical tool of which percentage, frequency and weighted mean was determined. The result of the study was presenter using tables/matrix. And the score of the respondents were rated based on the given table.

Descriptive Ratings and Their Equivalent

Table 1

Adjectival rating	Range of weighted mean
Very much	3.26 – 4.0
Moderately	2.6 – 3.25
Slightly	1.76 – 2.5
Not at All	0.75 – 1.75

Table 2

Adjectival rating	Range of weighted mean
Very much stressed	3.26 – 4.0
Moderately stressed	2.6 – 3.25
Slightly stressed	1.76 – 2.5
Very minimal stress	0.75 – 1.75

Table 3

Adjectival rating	Range of weighted mean
Extremely effective	3.26 – 4.0
Moderately effective	2.6 – 3.25
Mildly effective	1.76 – 2.5
Not at All effective	0.75 – 1.75

Table 4

Adjectival rating	Range of weighted mean
Always used	3.26 – 4.0
Often used	2.6 – 3.25
Sometimes used	1.76 – 2.5
Never used	0.75 – 1.75

Ethical Consideration

All data gathered from the participants was used for the purpose of this research only and did not used to defame or malign any of the participants. The researcher also made sure that the participants agreed on the process of gathering data by letting them sign a consent form. The respondents were also informed that they can stop without any explanation while answering the questionnaires, if they deem it necessary.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**Profile of the Respondents**

Table 5 shows the distribution of respondents according to occupation. Out of one hundred fifty-seven (157) respondents, barangay officials have the most numbered of participants in the study. There were forty-four (44) or 23.03 percent barangay officials who were on duty at the time the researchers' gathered data. Thirty (30) or 19.11 percent health workers and twenty-eight (28) or 17.83 percent Philippine National Police personnel was deployed to the triage and check points in the duration of the study. In addition, emergency response team (EMT) of the four municipalities deployed eighteen or 11.46 percent and fourteen (14) or 8.92 percent

rescuer were part of the respondents. The local government unit of the four municipalities deployed thirteen (13) or 8.28 percent and the least numbered of the respondents came from the Bureau of Fire Protection which is ten (10) or 6.37 percent from the total number of respondents.

Table 5. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of the Respondents' Profile in terms of Occupation.

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
Barangay Official	44	23.03	1
Health Workers	30	19.11	2
Philippine National Police	28	17.83	3
Emergency Response Team	18	11.46	4
Rescuer	14	8.92	5
LGU Employees	13	8.28	6
Bureau of Fire	10	6.37	7
TOTAL	157	100	

Feelings/Emotions of the Respondents during the Pandemic

Table 6 presents the respondents' feelings/emotions during this pandemic. It can be gleaned from the table that out of fourteen (14) statements, six (6) or 42.85 percent got a weighted mean of 2.58 to 3.24 particularly on the statement numbers 1,2,3,5,9 and 10 which is interpreted as "moderately" which means that the respondents felt nervous and scared of their situation while they are on duty. Statements 4,6,8,10,11 and 14 got a weighted mean ranging from 1.77 to 2.14 which is interpreted as "slightly". Despite of the hazard they are facing while fulfilling their duties, they are still willing to protect the community from the virus. On the other hand, statements 7 and 12 got a weighted mean of 1.61 and 1.70 which is interpreted as "not at all", which shows that the respondents will not quit their job amidst this situation and they do not take it as a burden in the increased of work compared to other government employees.

The overall weighted during of the feelings/emotions of the respondents during this pandemic is 2.3 which is interpreted as "slightly". The findings shows that the respondents are professionals and ethically responsible that

drove them to continue working in order to protect their fellowmen and stop the spread of the virus.

Table 6. Average Weighted Mean of Respondents' Responses towards Feelings /Emotions as Front liners during this Pandemic

Feelings /Emotions during the Pandemic	Mean	Interpretation
1. You feel that you have to do your job as if it is professional and ethical duty	3.24	Moderately
2. You feel and nervous and scared	2.64	Moderately
3. You will appreciate financial compensation after the pandemic	2.99	Moderately
4. You are unhappy to do overtime	2.14	Slightly
5. You appreciated special recognition for you job by the government and the populace	2.90	Moderately
6. You expect financial compensation during the pandemic	2.44	Moderately
7. You thought of quitting your job	1.61	Not at All
8. You feel that you are not directly exposed to COVID	2.08	Slightly
9. You feel that people outside your unit will avoid COVID patients	2.58	Moderately
10. If optional, you would have chosen to work in an area where you would not be exposed to COBID 19	2.66	Moderately
11. You will quit your job if such pandemic recurs	2.01	Slightly
12. You feel angry that your workload increased compared to other workers	1.70	Not at All
13. You thought of not going to work and calling in sick	1.77	Slightly
14. You missed work at least once	1.88	Slightly
Overall Mean	2.30	Slightly

Factors Causing Stress

Table 7 shows the weighted mean of respondents' responses towards the different factors that caused their stress while on duty in the triage and check points.

The overall weighted mean of 2.77 which is interpreted as "moderately" shows that the respondents felt that they are moderately stressed with the all the factors identified in the questionnaire. All the statements from one (1) to fifteen (15) has an average weighted mean ranging from 3.00 to 2.45 which are interpreted as "moderately".

The results revealed that the lowest mean (2.45) is the statement “You have to wear protective gear on a daily basis”, and the highest mean (3.00) is the statement “Lack of cooperation among the residents”. This only shows that respondents are wearing protective gear to protect themselves from contamination from the virus and they are following health protocols as mandated by the local Inter Agency Task Force (IATF). It has been a problem by the respondents on the cooperation of the residents in following health protocols, it can be gleaned from the table that it got the highest mean.

Table 7. Average Weighted Mean of Respondents’ Responses towards Factors Causing Stress during this Pandemic

Factors Causing Stress	Mean	Interpretation
1. Imagining your co-workers being affected with COVID 19	2.81	Moderately
2. You could transmit the virus to your family and friends	2.98	Moderately
3. Small mistakes could infect you or others	2.97	Moderately
4. Not knowing when the COVID 19 pandemic will be under control	2.67	Moderately
5. Lack of treatment for the virus	2.89	Moderately
6. News on new cases reported on TV/newspapers	2.83	Moderately
7. You are emotionally and physically exhausted	2.52	Moderately
8. Conflict between duty and your safety	2.73	Moderately
9. Lack of cooperation among the residents	3.00	Moderately
10. Seeing your co-workers afraid or stressed	2.77	Moderately
11. You feel there are no adequate protective measures Or equipment for front liners	2.86	Moderately
12. You have no wear protective gear on daily basis	2.45	Moderately
13. Shortage of staff at times	2.59	Moderately
14. Inadequate information about the pandemic	2.73	Moderately
15. Stigma from the society	2.72	Moderately
Overall Mean	2.77	Moderately

Factors that Help Reduce Stress

Table 8 shows the weighted average mean of the respondents towards the factors that help reduce their stress during this pandemic.

It can be gleaned from the table that the overall mean is 3.14 which is interpreted as “moderately effective”. This shows that the factors identified that help reduce stress are moderately effective as perceived by the respondents.

Furthermore, the statement “getting free meals from donors and government” got the highest mean of 3.36 which means that the respondents appreciated much the individuals, groups and the government for giving them foods while they are on duty. The respondents perceived, however, in the statement “clear guidelines for infection and prevention” that this factor is moderately effective, but this statement got the lowest mean of 3.03. It shows that knowing how to be infected and how to prevent the virus from contamination does not really help in reducing the stress of the respondents.

Table 8. Average Weighted Mean of Respondents’ Responses towards Factors that Help Reduce Stress during this Pandemic

Factors that Help Reduce Stress	Mean	Interpretation
1. Positive attitude towards co-workers	3.24	Moderately Effective
2. None of the workers getting infected	3.20	Moderately Effective
3. Protective equipment provided by the government	3.06	Moderately Effective
4. Extra compensation given by the government during pandemic	3.14	Moderately Effective
5. Clear guidelines for infection and prevention	3.03	Moderately Effective
6. Family members and friends not getting infected	3.25	Moderately Effective
7. Decrease in COVID 19 cases reported in news	3.18	Moderately Effective
8. Likelihood that you will get extra compensation for Your exposure after the pandemic	3.10	Moderately Effective
9. All agencies and government branches working together at the frontline	3.25	Moderately Effective
10. Confidence in the health care system in case you get infected	3.11	Moderately Effective
11. Appreciation and support from the residents for tour efforts	3.22	Moderately Effective
12. Sharing jokes and humor among co-workers	3.17	Moderately Effective
13. Getting free meals from donors and the government	3.36	Extremely Effective
14. Not to do overtime	2.70	Moderately Effective
Overall Mean	3.14	Moderately Effective

Personal Coping Strategies to Alleviate Stress

Table 9 presents the personal coping strategies of the respondents to alleviate stress which is measured in a four-point Likert Scale. Statements 2 - “advises residents to follow personal protective measures, 3 – “read about COVID 19, its transmission and prevention” and 6 – “chats with relatives and friends to relieve stress” got the highest mean of 3.45 to 3.26

which indicate that they are “always used” by the respondents as their coping strategies during this pandemic. However, respondents “often used” coping strategies such as, “follows strict personal protective measures” with a mean of 3.11 and, “avoid going out in public places”. “Does relaxation activities such as prayers, sports and exercise” (3.15), “gets help from colleagues and persons of authority to reduce stress or get assurance (3.02) and they tried to be busy at home to keep mind away from the pandemic which got a mean of 2.99. On the other hand, respondents sometimes used coping strategies like “avoid doing overtime (2.38), avoid media news like COVID 19 (2.39) and a 1.94 mean in respondents vent emotion by crying, screaming or posting in social media. This shows that the respondents have the commitment in doing their job and have their own strategies on how to cope up with this pandemic.

The overall mean of 2.92 which is interpreted as “often used” denotes that the personal coping strategies to alleviate stress were often used by the respondents.

Table 9. Average Weighted Mean of Respondents’ Responses towards Personal Coping Strategies to Alleviate Stress

Personal Coping Strategies to Alleviate Stress	Mean	Interpretation
1. Follows strict personal protective measures	3.11	Often Used
2. Advises residents to follow personal protective measures	3.45	Always Used
3. Read about COVID 19, its transmission and prevention	3.26	Always Used
4. Avoid going out in public places	3.11	Often used
5. Does relaxation activities such as prayers, sports and exercise	3.15	Often Used
6. Chats with relatives and friends to relieve stress	3.27	Always Used
7. Gets help from colleagues and persons of authority to reduce stress or get assurance	3.02	Often Used
8. Tries to be busy at home to keep mind away from the pandemic	2.99	Often Used
9. Avoids doing overtime	2.38	Sometimes Used
10. Avoids media news about COVID 19	2.39	Sometimes Used
11. Vents emotion by crying, screaming or posting in social media	1.94	Sometimes Used
Overall Mean	2.92	Often Used

CONCLUSIONS

From the analysis of data, the researchers wind up that: Front liners believed that it is their ethical obligations to continue working in spite of their sentiments and feared for the

well-being and safety of their colleagues, family, and their own from getting infected by the virus.

Positive attitude from co-workers, none infected co-workers, adaptation of clear guidelines on how to prevent the transmission, appreciation or special recognition from government and populace for their effort, are element that helped relieved their anxiety.

Following protective measures personally and with the cooperation of residents within their area, and extra compensation from the government during and after the pandemic, helped to alleviate their stressed.

From the findings of the study, the following conclusion were drawn:

1. The frontline workers within the service area of ESSU-Maydolong experiences distressing time since the outbreak of COVID-19.
2. Frontline workers became anxious of the different stressors they encountered while doing their job.
3. Several ways, such as following strict personal protective measure, knowing that the residents follow health protocol, and chatting with their friends and relatives, will become their coping strategies to alleviate the stress caused by the pandemic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the light of the findings and conclusion of this study, the researchers strongly recommend the following:

1. The government must have a clear implementation of guidelines on how to treat the virus and provide standard personal protective equipment for the frontline workers, this is very helpful to the front liners in doing their job without the fear of transmitting the virus to their family, colleagues, friends and even acquaintances.
2. Positivity must be observed in a workplace. Giving them a special recognition and extra compensation from being exposed to the virus will help to boost their morale while doing their job.
3. A safer workplace provided by strict health protocols, and giving them proper orientation, trainings and seminars that would help know more about the virus is a great help to alleviate the stress of the front liners.

4. Local and National IATF, LGU's, NGO's, other government agencies and the community must work hand-in-hand in fighting this COVID19 crisis and tremendous support, respect and care for front liners must be observed and practiced.

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