Emotion and Problem Based Coping of Caregivers in an Elderly Care Institution: A Case Study

Rhenz Stephen A. Dela Serna[1], Quennie Belle R. Coronado[2], Treshia Jane C. Cala-or[3], Louise Danielle P. Animas[4], Roselle Anne A. Fernandez[5], John Erwin P. Pedroso, PhD[6]

Corresponding author: rhenzstephen.delaserna@wvsu.edu.ph, johnerwin.pedroso@wvsu.edu.ph

[123456]West Visayas State University, Iloilo City 5000, Philippines

ABSTRACT: This case study was anchored to the theory of stress appraisal to identify the challenges and how they influenced the coping strategies practiced by caregivers working in an elderly care institution. A semi-structured, researcher-made interview guide was adapted focused on identifying prevailing themes regarding the working facilities, assessing the needs of the elderly, and workload. It was conducted face-to-face among five (5) caregivers working in an elderly care institution with a minimum of one (1) year of experience who were chosen using a purposeful sampling technique. The information gathered was then analyzed through inductive-reflexive thematic analysis. Two (2) significant themes were found, namely: (1) Problem-based coping and (2) Emotion-based coping. These themes were then classified into four (4) sub-themes, under which nine (9) meaningful categories emerged. This study concludes that these caregivers face numerous challenges that influence how coping strategies are enacted through emotion-based and problem-based coping.

Keywords: Caregivers, Elderly Care Institution, Problem-based Coping, Emotion-based Coping

1. Introduction

Caregivers are crucial sources of assistance to elderly individuals, handling the majority of the demands of care recipients (Chappell & Dujela, 2008). In accordance with the third goal of Sustainable Development (SDG 3), which emphasizes protecting lives and promoting welfare as everyone's right; SDG 3 conversely focuses on the accessibility of care services and adaptable environments for the elderly (Shevelkova et al., 2023). With this developmental goal as the foundation, caregivers also assist recipients in their day-to-day activities, such as feeding, bathing, and dressing (Mitchell et al., 2009). In addition, they ensure residents take their medications as prescribed, monitor for any side effects, and communicate with healthcare providers (Muñoz-Contreras et al., 2022). Moreover, they provide companionship, listen to residents' concerns, and offer emotional support to help alleviate feelings of loneliness (Kim & Park, 2017).

Despite the significant positive aspects, several challenges and liabilities persist, such as caregivers' degree of stress and some caregivers' inexperience with tending care for elder individuals (Zajdel et al., 2023). Moreover, caregivers faced several challenges due to care recipients' declining cognitive state, behavioral regressions and aggressions, and care facility limitations (Kong, 2008). In addition, the level of stress experienced by caregivers varies based on their age range and educational attainment; older caregivers often report feeling more burdened and stressed, while those with higher levels of education tend to experience less stress (Loo et al., 2022). A caregiving profession can influence an individual in employment, educational opportunities, financial choice, and social life (Cameron et al., 2011). Hence, this study further identified a prominent knowledge gap in other studies since there is limited literature explaining how caregiving challenges influence the various coping strategies caregivers employ, especially in the case of privatized caregiving institutions.

This case study specifically looked into the lived experiences of caregivers at a private elderly care institution located in Iloilo City, that has been operating since 2012 and cares for the elderly with cognitive difficulties such as Alzheimer's or other dementia-related illnesses. Moreover, this study was anchored to the Theory of Stress Appraisal, which states that stress arises from the interaction between an individual and their environment, specifically how they evaluate or appraise the situation based on emotion or mindset (Folkman & Lazarus, 1986). This framework's concept may be applied to the assessment, intervention, and evaluation of the human stress response as the coping strategy utilized in the aftermath of challenges (Matthieu & Ivanoff, 2006). Thus, these theory-focused guiding questions were asked: What are the emotion-based and problem-based coping of caregivers in an elderly care institution in terms of the working facilities, assessing the needs of the elderly, and workload?

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Research Design

This study used a qualitative-descriptive research design, which enables thorough flexibility in methods adapted as it aims to address exploratory issues that are not compatible with a framework of a more standard type (Bradshaw et al., 2017). A case study was used, which allows researchers to take broad complex topics and narrow them down into feasible for research concepts (Heale & Twycross, 2017), anchored on the Stress Appraisal theory, which claims that problems are

dealt with through coping strategies that are either problem-based or emotion-based (Folkman & Lazarus, 1986). Furthermore, it is relevant to social work research because it allows for an in-depth examination of group cases, offering insights into effective caregiving coping practices and outcomes that can provide interventions for highlighted issues (Gilgun, 1994). Thus, this study sought to delve into the coping strategies of caregivers in an elderly care institution in terms of (1) working facilities, (2) assessing the needs of the elderly, and (3) workload.

2.2 Informants of the Study

Five (5) caregivers from an elderly care institution were the informants of the study. The inclusion criteria are as follows: (1) he/she is in his/her current working shift as a caregiver in the elderly care institution with a minimum of 30 days of service; (2) he/she is a certified NC (National Certification) Level II Trained Caregiver in Iloilo City, Philippines; and (3) he/she has at least 1 year of experience working as a caregiver in the elderly care institution.

Table 1 summarizes the profiles of the informants, with a distribution of three (3) females and two (2) males. The youngest was 22 years old, followed by ages 33, 35, 36, and 47 years old. All of them obtained their NCII certification, ranging from 2011 to 2023 as the most recent. Four (4) of the caregivers have more than one (1) year but less than two (2) years of experience, while the most experienced caregiver has eleven (11) years of experience.

Table 1. *Informants of the study*

Informant	Sex	Age	A caregiver with NCII certification since...	Working as a caregiver in the Elderly Care Institution for...
Dana	Female	22	2022	1 year and 2 months
Philip	Male	33	2021	1 years and 6 months
Helen	Female	47	2017	1 year and 2 months
Jonel	Male	36	2011	11 years and 3 months
Geraldine	Female	35	2023	1 years and 1 month

2.3 Data Gathering Instrument

This study made use of a researcher-made semi-structured interview guide divided into three (3) sections, namely: (1) the profiling questions; (2) the first part of the main interview questions, focused on identifying the challenges experienced; and lastly, (3) the second part, focused on the different coping strategies they employ. It was deemed the most applicable for a case study since it allows the researchers to prepare a set of questions while having flexibility for

more follow-up questions used for clarifications (Ranganathan & Caduff, 2023). Similarly, the interview guide was pilot-tested on one (1) caregiver working in a different elderly care institution who met most of the inclusion criteria. The interview guide was then validated by three (3) master's degree holders with qualitative research expertise. Supplementarily, the researchers made use of purposeful sampling to identify the informants; it was considered to be the most suitable since it enables researchers to choose informants who are more inclined to offer relevant and adequate information (Campbell et al., 2020).

2.4 Data Collection

The data collection process began after the Dean of the College of Education approved the letter to conduct the study. The researchers then presented a letter to the head nurse of the elderly care institution. When it was approved, the selected informants were informed if they consented to partake in the research, ensuring them of the ethical considerations made, such as the anonymity through the use of pseudonyms and the privacy of the information gathered. When they had agreed, the researchers began the interview. Cellphones were used to record the interview. Lastly, the researchers made sure to be in contact with the informants in case there were further clarifications.

2.5 Data Analysis

This case study used an inductive-reflexive thematic analysis as it allowed the researchers to openly generate themes that emerged from the data; this also enabled flexibility to alter, eliminate, and add codes as researchers worked throughout the data (Campbell et al., 2021). Specifically, Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis was chosen since it can effectively summarize key features of a large body of data and provide a comprehensive, detailed description of the dataset. After the meaningful data was arranged into specified themes, data triangulation was used to find similar and contrasting evidence in literature reviews and observations to support the reliability and validity of the discussion.

3. Results

To describe the coping strategies of caregivers in an elderly care institution, two (2) significant themes were generated, modeled after the theory of stress appraisal. These were (1) Emotion-based Coping; and (2) Problem-based Coping.

3.1 Emotion-based Coping

Emotion-based coping is a method that uses an inward-facing approach when dealing with stress to moderate an individual's negative emotional response (Baker and Berenbaum, 2007). Divided into two (2) sub-themes, namely: (1) Taking care of oneself to cope with stress, and (2) Motivating oneself to lessen work fatigue.

Taking care of oneself to cope with stress

Taking care of oneself through mindfulness in the working environment positively affects a worker's overall well-being (Gómez-Borges et al., 2022). This sub-theme includes: (1) Balancing work and personal life, and (2) Prioritizing safety and comfort in the workplace.

Balancing work and personal Life is further categorized into these sub-topics: (1) Scheduling of workload effectively, and (2) Doing leisure activities once in a while.

- ***Scheduling of workload effectively***

Most of caregivers handle multiple workloads at the same time, pointing out the burden of getting divided between profession and personal life. Effective time management as a coping strategy decreases work-related stress and enhances work efficiency (Aeon et al., 2021).

Philip: *"I try to adapt time management— I also schedule my tasks ahead of time during day offs."*
Dana: *"…time management is really needed— so you could adequately provide caregiving services…"*

- ***Doing leisure activities once in a while***

As caregivers, one of the challenges is finding a way to relax briefly during work hours and to rest oneself after a shift is over. Doing leisure activities as a form of relaxation lowers the risk of chronic stress and depression (Pressman et al., 2009).

Helen: *"I have a vegetable garden— Then I have a flower garden. They are stress relievers."*
Philip: *"…for my leisure, I stay outside and talk; mingle with colleagues— open up emotionally."*
Dana: *"I calm myself during shifts by doing some short breaks— like recess, I eat snacks…"*

Prioritizing safety and comfort in the workplace is further categorized into these sub-topics: (1) Distancing temporarily from an aggressive elderly, (2) Taking leave from work, and (3) Aligning quality of service with the income compensated.

- ***Distancing temporarily from an aggressive elderly***

The caregivers stated that elderly residents in the facility have a tendency to hurt people. Hence, they temporarily distance themselves until the agitation stops; this is to ensure the safety of the caregivers and the elderly residents.

Helen: *"…if the patient misbehaves— I distance myself to avoid getting hurt."*
Philip: *"I distance myself— sometimes I even use a pillow as a shield."*

- ***Taking leave from work***

Caregivers experience fatigue, weight loss, anxiety, and stress as they neglect personal health in favor of their patients (Ho et al., 2009). The caregivers at times take leave from work; however, this should be done under the terms of prioritizing personal matters, having a contagious disease, or being over-fatigued at work.

Philip: *"Due to fatigue, I file for leave or I just take my day off…"*
Helen: *"If my children need me, I file a leave of absence…"*

- ***Aligning quality of service with the income compensated***

Since the institution is private with a low salary grade and no hazard pay, some of the caregivers make sure their quality of work is equal to the income they receive as means of precaution.

Philip: *"I balance my efforts to the salary compensation I receive…"*
Jonel: *"…we have a No Hazard Pay Policy here; service provided is balanced to my compensation."*
Helen: *"Even though I aim for quality service; I still equal my efforts to income as precaution.*

Motivating oneself to lessen fatigue

Work-motivated people are more committed to doing tasks, which lessens fatigue felt (Vos et al., 2022). This sub-theme includes: (1) Setting a goal, and (2) Establishing a reaffirming mindset.

Setting a goal is further categorized into these sub-topics: (1) Aiming to gain knowledge, (2) Envisioning to work abroad someday, and (3) Building the reputation of the institution.

- ***Aiming to gain knowledge***

The caregivers pointed out that caregivers must be equipped with knowledge in looking after people and handling scenarios that are unpredictable and not part of what was trained.

Geraldine: *"To get an idea on how to take care of people someday…"*
Dana: *"…to gain knowledge on how to take care of other people outside…"*
Helen: *"…gain knowledge to prepare for other situations in caregiving…"*

- ***Envisioning to work abroad someday***

Some caregivers have shown interest in working abroad after garnering enough skills, and credentials. This then motivates them to work and gain the needed experience.

Philip: *"I want to apply outside the country due to more benefits."*
Dana: *"…to work abroad someday— that's also a possibility…"*

- ***Building the reputation of the institution***

At times, the institution experiences a decline in elderly residents. The corporate perception and reputation of nursing homes for the elderly significantly affect the number of potential clients (Rodriguez, 2022). Thus, being the main factors determining the institution's reputation, the caregivers set a self-centered goal to offer adequate service to attract potential customers and keep the institution running smoothly.

Helen: *"…we should be productive to maintain a good image— and attract more people."*
Jonel: *"We need to adequately cater so that their families would continue paying for our services."*

Establishing a reaffirming mindset is further categorized into these sub-topics: (1) Lessening attachment, and (2) Affirming oneself through positive self-talk.

- ***Lessening attachment***

The caregivers struggle with attachment to their respective elderly residents, experiencing anxiety due to the residents' unpredictable health and fear of imminent death. The caregivers set boundaries and self-reminders to not get too attached to their elderly residents.

Helen: *"…our number one rule is to never get attached to, but you cannot avoid it."*
Dana: *"It's emotionally painful to get attached; lessening attachment helps me cope with deaths."*
Phil: *"…try your best to not get too attached— it lessens the emotional pain."*

- ***Affirming oneself through positive self-talk***

The caregivers instill a mindset of patience, resilience, and determination to keep serving the elderly residents and counter work fatigue and negative mindsets.

Helen: *"I talk to myself; you just have to be strong— I can do this…"*
Geraldine: *"…to combat fatigue, I talk and reassure myself that my job is noble."*

3.2 Problem-based Coping

Problem-based coping seeks to minimize or lessen stressors by directly confronting them through generating solutions, confronting responsible parties, and taking other instrumental actions (Lazarus & Folkman, 1986). Divided into two (2) sub-themes, namely: (1) Implementing positive interventions to deal with working environment issues, and (2) Demonstrating adaptability when handling elderly residents with cognitive impairments.

Implementing positive interventions to deal with working environment issues

Issues in the working environment, relationships among colleagues, and operational management cause stressors for caregivers, affecting the quality of service (Smith et al., 2015). This sub-theme includes: (1) Improving services to overcome operational challenges, (2) Resolving miscommunication to promote professionalism, and (3) Supporting other caregivers.

Improving services to overcome operational challenges is further categorized into these sub-topics: (1) Collaborating with third-parties, and (2) Delegating complex medical issues to nursing staff.

- ***Collaborating with third-parties***

The caregivers, being aware of such limitations in their ability to provide quality healthcare and shortages of supplies, often seek help from third-parties. However, since the institution is private, collaboration is limited and has boundaries. Enhancing collaboration and outsourcing among healthcare providers leads to improved healthcare services (Ahmed et al., 2020).

Dana: *"We hire a maintenance crew here— they do the cleaning…"*
Jonel: *"We ask the clients and relatives to donate materials…"*
Philip: *"…transferring to the hospital we partnered with for dire situations…"*

- ***Delegating complex medical issues to nursing staff***

The caregivers are only trained to handle basic medical tasks; for complex medical procedures, they pass on the responsibility to the nurses and offer only backup.

Geraldine: *"I refer to the head nurse since they are knowledgeable about complex medical matters."*
Dana: *"We allow and rely on the nurses to handle hard medical procedures…"*
Helen: *"…nurses do most of the medical-related issue— we are only backups…"*

Resolving miscommunication to promote professionalism is further categorized into these sub-topics: (1) Reporting to Human Resources, and (2) Establishing social-relationships.

- ***Reporting to Human Resources***

Some caregivers avoid confrontation, but when an issue escalates, reporting to the Human Resources office is considered.

Philip: *"…when there's an issue, I try to brush it off— when it escalates, I report to HR."*
Geraldine: *"File an incident report to HR when I deal with miscommunications…"*

- ***Establishing social-relationships***

Prejudice, shaming, and backstabbing are among the forms of discrimination experienced by caregivers, with some nurses tending to exhibit more prideful behavior. Through building relationships, the caregivers create a sense of similarity, closeness, and concern for others.

Philip: *"…it's normal to have prejudice in the working place— we talk about it…"*
Dana: *"Misunderstandings are normal— we try to talk and settle it out…"*

Supporting other caregivers is further categorized into these sub-topics: (1) Providing guidance to newly hired caregivers, and (2) Assisting and seeking help from other caregivers.

- ***Providing guidance to newly hired caregivers***

According to the caregivers, this profession requires utmost knowledge and fast decision-making skills, as some scenarios do not align with their training. That is why experienced caregivers provide guidance to new and other caregivers on how to adapt easily to the working environment.

Geraldine: *"I always seek help when I need it, especially since I don't have an idea sometimes."*
Jonel: *"…I provide information and guidance due to my years of working here; I can handle most of the caregiving burdens since I have almost experienced it all…"*

- ***Assisting and seeking help from other caregivers***

The caregivers seek help from fellow colleagues when handling difficult workloads, promoting teamwork and cooperation. Seniority in age is also a reason why some caregivers ask for assistance.

Helen: *"I call for assistance when I'm physically challenged due to seniority…"*
Jonel: *"I asked for advice on the knowledgeable— it serves as guide on handling my patients…"*

Demonstrating adaptability when handling elderly residents with cognitive impairments

Caring for the elderly requires adaptability to manage their cognitive impairments (Callahan et al., 2009). This sub-theme includes: (1) Addressing regressions through behavioral mediation, and (2) Adjusting communication techniques.

Addressing regressions through behavioral mediation is further categorized into these sub-topics: (1) Calming through heart-to-heart talks, (2) Providing entertainment, and (3) Reprimanding misbehavior.

- ***Calming through heart-to-heart talks***

The caregivers utilize their ability to sympathize with the elderly residents by engaging in heart-to-heart talks, which not only provide a sense of comfort but also foster trust and rapport.

Helen: *"I talk to them thoroughly and nicely so they will listen and calm down."*
Dana: *"We have an elderly resident that's depressed; I talk, comfort, and caress her…"*

- ***Providing entertainment***

The caregivers provide entertainment and recreational activities to distract and relax the elderly residents, while promoting overall wellness.

Helen: *"…assist them with their Zumba sessions; if not, we help them walk as their exercise…"*
Jonel: *"…give them time to watch TV, sing a song, and exercise…"*

- ***Reprimanding misbehavior***

The elderly residents occasionally exhibit misbehavior and non-compliance, which are met with gentle reprimands from caregivers to reduce the risk of harm to both parties.

Geraldine: *"…they sometimes hold sharp objects; we talk and give them gentle reprimands."*
Dana: *"…just ensure their safety by talking and reprimanding them when misbehaving…"*

Adjusting communication techniques is further categorized into these sub-topics: (1) Reiterating and rephrasing the message, and (2) Using non-verbal communication.

- ***Reiterating and rephrasing the message***

The caregivers reiterate and rephrase their messages when talking to residents who are demented or have hearing difficulties.

Geraldine: *"…you're the one that needs to adjust and reiterate."*
Philip: *"…you must speak slowly, sometimes repeatedly."*

- ***Using non-verbal communication***

The caregivers use non-verbal communication as an effective alternative when trying to converse with demented elderly residents who can no longer understand basic utterances of words.

Helen: *"I used body language— I tap his back and explain to her…"*
Philip: *"…with actions not just by words… they can understand it…"*

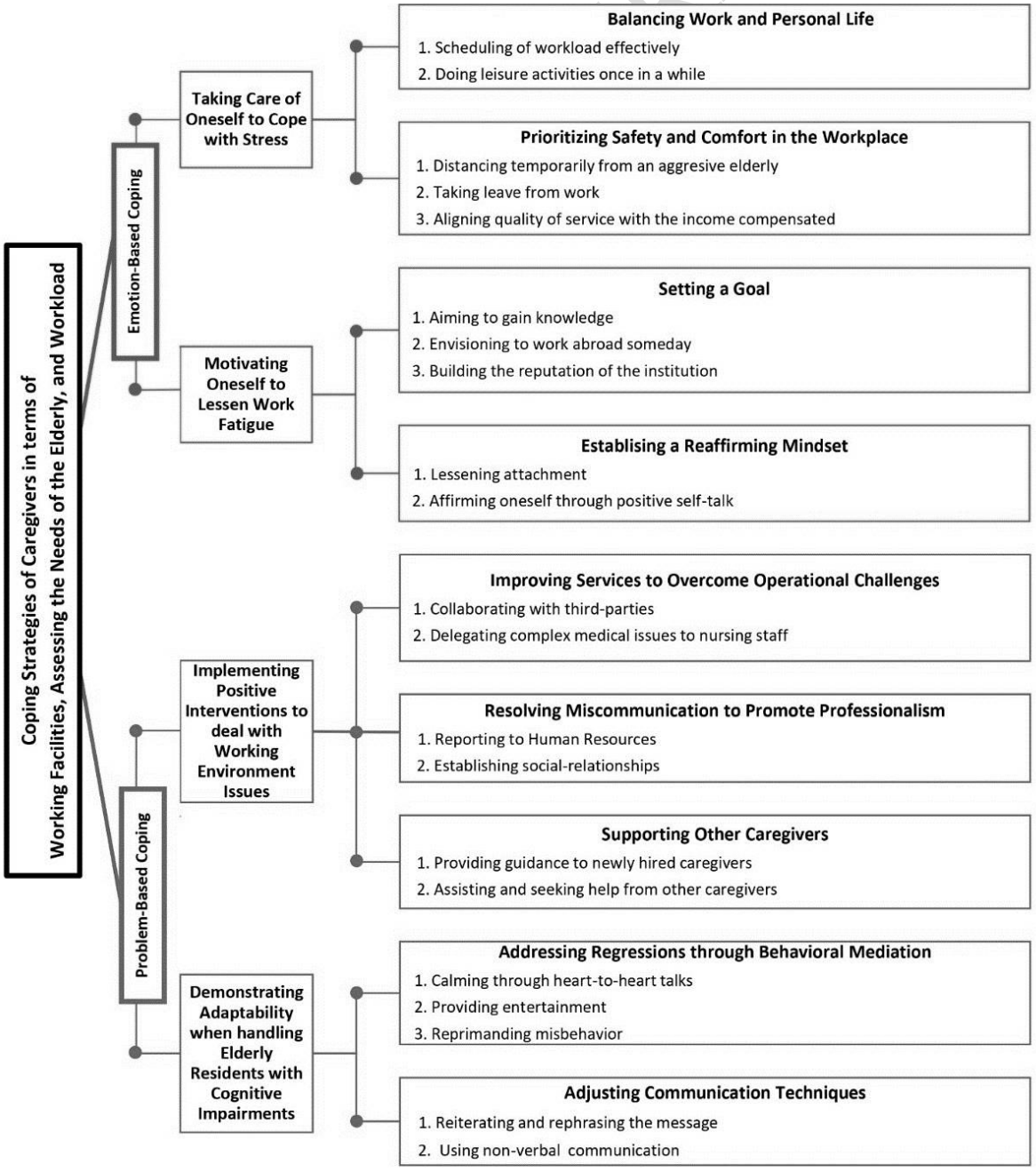

Figure 1. *Conceptual Diagram illustrating how caregivers in an elderly care institution cope with challenges*

4. Discussions

Modeled after the theory of stress appraisal by Lazarus and Folkman (1986), this case study aimed to identify the (1) Emotion-based and (2) Problem-based coping strategies of caregivers in an elderly care institution. These themes were then further classified into four (4) sub-themes, under which nine (9) meaningful categories were identified, namely: (1) taking care of oneself to cope with stress, further categorized into balancing work and personal life, and prioritizing safety and comfort in the workplace; (2) motivating oneself to lessen work fatigue, further categorized into setting a goal, and establishing a reaffirming mindset; (3) implementing positive interventions to deal with working environment issues, further categorized into improving services to overcome operational challenges, resolving miscommunication to promote professionalism, and supporting other caregivers; and, (4) demonstrating adaptability when handling elderly residents with cognitive impairments, further categorized into addressing regressions through behavioral mediation, and adjusting communication techniques.

Emotion-based coping is a way to manage stress that intends to regulate stressful experiences through internal emotional responses (Ben-Zur, 2020). In this study, caregivers must constantly practice effective time management, not only to offer good caregiving services but also to allow them to take time to take care of their own personal wellbeing. Balancing work and rest through leisure after work improves job satisfaction and provides caregivers with a resting point to recover (Akmal et al., 2012). The caregivers in this study explained that they indulge themselves in leisure activities during and after shifts to release stress and negative emotions since they have to handle elderly residents with cognitive problems that test their patience and adaptability. Aggressive behavior is a common symptom for the demented elderly, which results in stress and harm to some caregivers and nursing staff (Dettmore et al., 2009). In relation to this issue, the caregivers in this study narrated that some elderly residents tend to be aggressive, which manifests into hurting other people, mostly the working staff. Consequently, self-distancing in the heat of the situation also allows these caregivers to calm down and reduce aggressive thoughts, since retaliating could backfire on the caregiver's own reputation. One of the findings in this study pointed out as well that taking work-related leave is common among caregivers when they are feeling tired, sick, or have other personal matters that are more pressing and require their immediate attention. In connection, caregivers who take work leaves due to the aforementioned reasons are reported to have better overall health and performance compared to those who do not take necessary work-related leave

(Goodman & Schneider, 2021). The caregiver's testimony clearly pointed out that they fall under the minimum wage as caregivers and are not fully satisfied with it; additionally, they have no hazard pay. Lower quality of service is a result of low compensation and unmotivated workers (Coviello et al., 2022).

The caregivers of this study emotionally motivate themselves through setting pragmatic goals; these serve as objectives and daily reminders for them to uphold while providing caregiving services. Additionally, through experiential learning and seeking guidance from seniors, these equip them with the necessary skills for effective caregiving. Likewise, this study found that some caregivers are interested in working overseas someday, which is why they motivate themselves to gain prior knowledge and, most importantly, credentials in the field of caregiving. In contrast, it is taboo in the Philippines to abandon elderly family members who can no longer care for themselves (Francisco et al., 2023). Consequently, the caregivers set a motivating goal to build a positive image and reputation of their institution to attract more clients by providing adequate services, while also highlighting the importance of homes for the aged in response to the increasing aging population in the Philippines and challenging cultural norms regarding the abandonment of the elderly. The caregivers in this study also constantly remind themselves not to get too attached to their elderly residents; this is to ensure that they won't experience severe emotional pain when the inevitable death of an elderly person comes. Attachment avoidance is an effective coping strategy that limits emotional strain on caregivers (Laflamme et al., 2022). Hence, the caregivers engage in positive self-talk to overcome emotional doubts, fostering a positive mindset of patience, resilience, and determination to keep serving the elderly residents and handle other challenges.

Meanwhile, problem-based coping acknowledges that challenges are solvable through direct confrontation; it helps many people feel less stressed or anxious because it works more efficiently (Schoenmakers et al., 2015). One such finding in this study is the implementation of positive interventions to deal with working environmental issues; caregivers apply various interventions to mitigate issues in the workplace while at the same time advocating for better relationships among other colleagues. Caregiving is increasingly demanding with financial costs and expenses, often necessitating the outsourcing of supplies and services (Lai, 2012). Due to some limitations in the working facilities, the caregivers turn to outsourcing to other service providers and seek help from the relatives of the elderly residents. Furthermore, being aware of their limitations in handling complex medical procedures, caregivers transfer health-related challenges to nurses, but they

remain available to provide additional backup and support. Nevertheless, maintaining professionalism is also crucial in creating a good working environment, as it enhances employee performance, facilitates effective interactions with colleagues and clients, and ultimately drives operational efficiency and success (Riyanto et al., 2021). Consequently, caregivers resolve miscommunications in the workplace to ensure the delivery of quality care and reduce preventable errors. Specifically, one of the coping strategies used by the caregivers in this research is reporting to Human Resources (HR) if a situation is beyond commendable and strains in the relationship are present. Meanwhile, caregivers also cited that they experienced various forms of discrimination, including prejudice, shaming, and backstabbing, often facing prideful behavior from some nurses. Workplace injustice negatively affects psychological and physical health and is linked to unhealthy behaviors, negatively impacting a worker's personal life and job-related outcomes (Okechukwu, 2014). To deal with this challenge, caregivers foster a healthy working environment by building social relationships among other staff. Moreover, the caregivers collaborate with other caregivers to handle challenging tasks like managing elderly mobility issues, administering medications, and controlling agitation, while also strengthening social relationships.

The caregivers of this study sympathize with their respective elderly residents through heart-to-heart talks with gentle caress to calm their agitations and lower the risks of worsening any health complications, while some misbehavior is met with gentle reprimands. This study further highlighted the prominence of providing entrainment to agitated and restless elderly residents as a way to distract them and provide a sense of comfort, while at the same time reducing the risks of injury to both the elderly and caregivers involved. The caregivers of this study have also shared difficulties communicating with the elderly residents due to physical and cognitive issues; this is handled by reiterating and simplifying the message, or for extreme measures, the use of non-verbal communication. The findings of this study align with Hailu's study (2023), which shows the importance of adaptive communication techniques, such as simpler language, illustrations, and engaged listening, in improving communication with older adults with cognitive impairments and guiding caregivers in communicating effectively with the elderly they care for.

Although this research has revealed how caregivers cope with the challenges they experience in an elderly care institution, there are various limitations that should be addressed in future studies. Firstly, the informants interviewed for this case study were only five (5), coming from a single elderly care institution; therefore, the data uncovered does not fully generalize the difficulties faced by

caregivers and their strategies for coping in a broader scope and perspective of working caregivers. Secondly, quantitative research may be utilized as a supplement for this study to get a better sense of the stress that these caregivers experience and how effective the coping strategies adapted through the use of statistical data are. Thirdly, most of the informants that were available for this study only have a minimum of one (1) year of experience working as caregivers, so it is suggested that other researchers may modify their inclusion criteria towards more experienced caregivers. Fourthly, this study only focused on the challenges and coping strategies of caregivers; future studies may want to focus on other points of interest, such as the aspirations and values of caregivers. Lastly, given that this research is in a Philippine setting, findings may vary from other countries. However, despite these limitations, this paper provides adequate findings that explain the challenges faced by caregivers in an elderly care institution and the coping strategies they employ. Furthermore, the findings from this study could lay the groundwork for future studies on this particular topic.

5. Conclusions

In addition to being largely in charge of the general well-being of the elderly, caregivers at elderly care institutions also have a say in how well the facility is regarded, emphasizing the significance of homes for the aged, given the growing elderly population in the Philippines and the cultural norms that discourage abandoning the elderly. Notwithstanding their honorable line of work, they deal with a variety of internal and external issues that have a big impact on their standard of living, standard of care, and general well-being. The biggest issues found include a lack of resources, the elderly residents' aggressive and regressive behavior, heavy workloads, over-attachment, and miscommunication among the working staff. Consequently, the difficulties they encounter lead to mental exhaustion, anxiety, burnout, and stress.

These caregivers demonstrate professionalism, cooperation, resilience, and adaptability through emotion-based and problem-based coping. Caregivers also practice effective time management to handle the dilemma between personal and work-related issues and multiple workloads. Furthermore, these caregivers employ a sense of patience and respect when handling elderly residents with cognitive difficulties. To maintain motivation, these caregivers also impart a positive outlook while constantly reminding themselves that their profession is as noble as it can be. Moreover, younger caregivers are much more idealistic and optimistic toward their profession, implying that they are dedicated to work. Lastly, caregivers help each other, especially when dealing

with difficult situations or caring for someone who needs a lot of attention. This demonstrates that providing care for the elderly is a profound responsibility, requiring not only knowledge of caregiving but also dedication and compassion, as the care of elderly residents who depend on them for comfort and support is entrusted to them. Hence, caregiving challenges substantially influence the various coping strategies caregivers employ.

Furthermore, because caregivers play such an essential role in caring for senior citizens, elderly care institutions must recognize the obstacles that each caregiver faces and take steps to assist them. This could include giving a hazard payment to protect caregivers' lives, adequate facilities to allow caregivers to provide the best possible level of care, better communication between management and personnel, and seeking solutions to reduce workload-related stress. Acknowledging their noble profession and promoting their overall wellness benefits not only for themselves but also for the overall general perception of working caregivers.

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