

Tahan na't Bumangon: Lived Experiences of Kapampangan Bereaved Family Due to an OFW Covid-19 Death

Joey E. Concepcion¹, Ryan P. Lacson¹, Jemalyn M. Miranda¹, Ladee Cleire T. Punzalan¹, and Jomari Ramos¹

Abstract

Without precarity, human resilience is heartened as the toll of fatalities ravages the world quickly. It is not selective of its victims; anyone can be infected, even the “Bagong Bayani,” domestically known as Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW), have perished. Through the lens of a qualitative Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), this study explored in detail the lived experiences of three Kapampangan first-degree bereaved families who did not meet the criteria of a diagnostic tool administered known as the Prolonged Grief Disorder (PG-13). This study generated five central themes, namely: (1) suffering from excruciating pain and bereft of loved ones, (2) grieving process is affected by deviation from traditional funeral practices, (3) adapting to familial changes brought about by the loss, (4) coping up after an ambiguous loss, and (5) meaning-making in the aftermath of brokenness. Hence, this study highlights the selflessness, heroism, and resilience of OFWs who lost physical connectedness for several years with their loved ones. Thus, families endured their unbearable loss and were repatriated into ashes without the chance to perform traditional funeral practices, yet changes in familial relationships were strengthened. Indeed, moving forward as a family was a way to restart life with purpose.

Keywords: *lived experiences, Kapampangan bereaved family, OFW, Covid-19, PG-13*

Introduction

In the upheaval wrought by the novel coronavirus, the world came to a halt; loved ones' lives were lost; the roads were deserted; schools and offices were shuttered; face-to-face communication was limited; restaurants and shopping centers were stopped; people were imprisoned inside their houses; ways of living were upended; and the "new normal" ahead is unclear and precarious. - an image produced by an unseen threat that has driven the entire human race to change their way of life and most of their behaviors in ways no recent health catastrophe has (Aguiar et al., 2020). On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) evaluated that the virus SARS-CoV-2 was disseminating and causing the 2019 novel coronavirus, which was subsequently designated COVID-19, at a concerning pace (WHO, 2020, as cited in Scheinfeld, 2021). With currently 6,309,633 deaths globally as of June 6, 2022, with 60,461 deaths in the Philippines and 3,693,608 confirmed COVID-19 cases (WHO, 2022), its impact exceeds even the most devastating natural disasters of previous decades (Eisma et al., 2021).

According to WHO (2020), the COVID-19 outbreak has resulted in a catastrophic loss of life worldwide and poses an unforeseen threat to food systems, public health, and the workplace. As the world isolated itself, many individuals lost jobs and livelihood; in many places, medical facilities disregarded non-COVID illnesses (Hamid & Jahangir, 2020), depriving the majority of equal access to healthcare. Undoubtedly, the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic has significantly struck our planet, and the whole human species faces great distress (Vahdani et al., 2020).

The continuous COVID-19 outbreak has taken the lives of innumerable coworkers, friends, and family (Lapeña, 2021). A great deal of agony and suffering generally characterizes COVID-19 deaths. Fatalities caused by COVID-19 are solitary, without traditional funeral practices, are typically unexpectedly quick, missing clear information or preparedness, and have limited or interrupted communication links (Borghetti & Menichetti, 2021). Worse still, COVID-19 patients usually die alone, away from the family at the health care facility,

¹ Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Institute of Education, Arts and Sciences

while family members were not present in the last moments of life and cannot bid the departed goodbye; and are unable to hold their hand or grieve at their bedside due to potential contagion. Deaths usually bring people closer. Funerals assist bereaved people as well as the opportunity for bereaved people to receive support from others. Given the Philippines' collectivist culture, it is common for Filipinos to seek and accept welfare support from others (Broomhall & Phillips, 2020). Large gatherings for funerals and memorial ceremonies, house visits, hugs and kisses, and the provision of meals are all common practices. Funeral rituals thus memorialize the loss of a family member while expressing to society the importance of the deceased's life (Goncalves et al., 2020). Thus, the only way to hold wakes and novenas for the deceased is virtually deprive bereaved loved ones of the support and solace that face-to-face condolences provide. Indeed, social support systems that helped individuals cope with death have been "dismantled, and the cultural and religious rituals that help us process grief also stripped away" (Lapeña, 2021).

In the COVID-19 pandemic, death is not a day worth living. It is a strange thing. As per Gonçalves et al., 2020 hospital morgues are flooded. Bodies and stories line up, and coffins wrapped in pain and homesickness are led to cremation, creating emotional trauma. The COVID-19 pandemic has placed the entire world in an uncertain state for an indefinite period of time due to its unprecedented and unforeseeable nature (Das et al., 2021). During this predicament, undoubtedly, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates the vulnerability of the life of Overseas Filipino Workers (De Borja, 2021). The global upsurge spread of COVID-19 posed an extreme threat and became a leading cause of death worldwide. Unfortunately, part of these cumulative deaths were the OFWs. In fact, according to the Statista Research Departments, as of January 31, 2022, around 24,052 confirmed cases of COVID-19 from OFW, the most significant number of these, were recovered, and 1,458 deceased due to the virus. Worse yet, following the death, the corpse was transferred immediately to the crematorium or the grave. Once the remains of OFWs arrive in the country, they will be cremated and sealed under several containments. According to Coconut Manila (2020), it was reported that 49 remains of

the OFWs from Saudi Arabia which were arrived at Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Pasay City, with over 20 of them dying due to COVID-19 while the rest of them died due to natural causes once the caskets had been blessed and disinfected in front of a crowd, the OFW remains were transported to crematoriums where their family was waiting. Additionally, Rocamora (2020) stated that within 12 hours, cremation would be performed on an individual who died due to COVID-19, as stated by the Department of the Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año. Hence, being unable to see the body and only receiving the cremated remains of the family member would be devastating for the family. In accordance with Fernández & González-Gonzalez (2020), there would be no embalming, no option to dress the body as initially intended, the absence of the opportunity to view the remains, and the inability to hold a desired funeral, therefore there remains a sensation of not paying honor as one would have wished and as the loved one deserved.

Considering the need for observing health protocols, the ways family and friends bid farewell to their loved ones were drastically altered, leading to a more intricate grieving process (Menziés et al., 2020, as cited in Neimeyer & Lee, 2021). The absence or inadequate execution of funeral customs, coupled with the responsibility of ensuring the safety of themselves and their family members, placed an additional burden on the surviving adults. It is consequently possible that the incapacity of the bereaved to engage in funeral services, rituals, and observances could have a detrimental effect, impeding their mental well-being and their capacity to manage or process their grief (Burrell & Selman, 2020) where grief is a common emotional reaction to the loss of a loved one and is characterized by expressions of sadness, regret, and agony (Muhammed & Idowu, 2020). Consequently, people were left alone to cope with their loss oddly (Farahmandnia et al., 2020), which according to studies, was known as disenfranchised grief, where individuals' grief was not socially supported or publicly acknowledged.

In general, as death is an inevitable event, individuals must overcome their grief and should resume a normal life. It is difficult for a family to

endure being separated from an OFW family member and knowing that they will not see them again since they died as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Being separated from a loved one after their death—who can be anyone with whom you had a close relationship—is best described as being bereaved (Riordan et al., 2020). Losing a loved one is the most stressful event in life, and it could lead to a major emotional crisis, wherein, bereavement, which means "to be deprived by death," occurs after the passing of a loved one (Mental Health America, 2022). Whereby negative feelings like sadness and longing, together with memories, images, and thoughts of the deceased, are present in all of these experiences, and these are their commonalities (Fagundes et al., 2019; Shear, 2012). During this crisis, it is critical to mourn what has been lost while finding purpose and hope in how life has changed (Corpuz, 2021). In order to process learning to live with the loss, moving away from the pain can help bereaved people to feel positive and live peacefully.

The stream of research has established understanding of the challenges posed in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, where isolation has complicated the bereavement process by preventing families from being able to spend time with a dying loved one, who is alone in their final moments without a last goodbye, and even holding funeral and ritual rites were deprived by this traumatic event, which complicated grief may become even more prevalent as the support sources are limited. Furthermore, the families of deceased OFWs who already had lost physical contact prior to their death added on their agonizing experience. The loss of physical connectedness disrupts the ability of families to maintain close relationships. This prolonged physical distance makes it hard to restore relationships as they may only be able to see the OFW family members once a year or other year, for a short period of time (Garabiles et al., 2017). The present quo creates a significant research gap, specifically in the investigation of the bereavement process of Kapampangan bereaved in relation to the death of their OFW loved one.

The review of related literature aimed at delving into the existing studies on Overseas Filipino Workers, the Global pandemic, Covid Deaths, Bereaved Families, Funeral rites, and coping

mechanisms. This section has diverged into six parts: the first part yield a brief overview of the Overseas Filipino Workers' motivations for going abroad and their sacrifices to sustain the demands of their family in the Philippines until the pandemic occurred; the second part discusses the literature on the impact of COVID-19 worldwide, its effect on the health of people and how they respond to it; the third section attempts to shed light on the current studies on COVID-19 increasing the number of deaths including the OFW; the fourth part discusses the bereavement process of the mourning family members; 5th section provides relevant previous literature findings regarding the funeral practices perpetuated by the bereaved amidst pandemic; and 6th section discusses the coping mechanisms practiced after a loss; and finally, this research highlighted research gaps to propose additional findings to enhance existing data and uncover discoveries that can enrich current understanding.

Overseas Filipino Workers

The popular belief is that superheroes with extraordinary abilities are needed to save the day; the reality is that anyone has the potential to be a hero, regardless of their abilities or lack thereof. Surprisingly, possessing no wings does not hinder millions of Filipinos from flying out of the country, as the Philippines is one of the world's most potent labor-sending countries (Capistrano & Sta. Maria, 2010). These vigilant heroes are well-known as OFWs or Overseas Filipino Workers. An OFW is a Philippine citizen who is employed outside the country. They are scattered all over the world, coming from all walks of life and backgrounds, but share one common aim: the desire for higher income, better opportunities, and hopes for a better life. Hence, numerous Filipinos serve on the frontlines in service of our country.

Filipino workers migrate to other countries for employment contracts overseas (Azimo, 2021). Further, "Overseas Contract Workers (OCWs) is initially the term use to refer to them as they work through a contractual basis with the employers; however, President Fidel Ramos administration changed 'Contract' to 'Filipino' and made OFW acknowledge considering that millions of Filipinos make endless sacrifices by laboring in other nations (Cosalan, 2010). Unquestionably, OFWs are indeed

the true "Modern Day heroes" of the 21st century, a hero who had abandoned their families and treasured their homeland to provide for their families back home (Bautista & Tamayo, 2020). Nonetheless, heroism has imprinted on their identity, symbolizing the bravery and pride they have stood for several years (Lucenesio, 2022). According to the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration or POEA (2012), Filipinos comprise the majority of migrant workers in over 190 nations throughout the world. As a matter of fact, as of May 07, 2022, according to Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), there is 1.77 million estimated range of OFWs who worked overseas through the length of April to September 2020 (96.4%), or equal to 1.71 million OFWs were on current work contracts. The data provided makes it easy to deduce that there is an increased population of Filipinos working abroad. The modern-day heroes are continually serving on the frontlines in service of the country as their contribution to the economic growth of the Philippines plays a vital role (Ariate et al., 2015).

Indeed, OFWs are undeniably the saviors of the economic status of the Philippines. It is evident how significant their contribution is to the livelihood of many and the country's economic status, leaving a vulnerable mark on their identity. According to Mitra, 2016, as cited in Lucenesio, 2022, OFWs are one of the most critical human resource assets contributing significantly to their home country's social and economic landscape through their international affiliations and reputations. OFWs sent \$33.4 billion to the Philippines in 2018. This equates to around 4% of the country's total GDP, whereas in 2019, remittances from OFWs reached a record high of more than 200 billion Philippine Pesos (Mapa, 2020).

OFWs are considered the brand-new heroes not only because of their contribution to the economic status of the Philippines but, most importantly, their unselfish sacrifices for their loved ones (Ragma & Molina, 2018). In addition, Gavilan (2015) also agreed that just for the sake of their family, OFWs sacrifice themselves to give their family a better life, as Bautista and Tamayo (2020) confirmed that concerning finances, sending money to their families and loved ones were their top priority.

Although there are substantial benefits of being an OFW, there are also some drawbacks, such as the fear of the possibility that their family relationships will be damaged and will be weakened (Ragma & Molina, 2018).

Aside from that, OFWs were still continuously embracing the consequences of being miles away, which can lead to mild to severe homesickness and can be emotionally difficult. To cope with it, many OFWs seek other ways of connecting with their home country through social networking sites or messaging apps, using them to stay in touch with family and friends, and getting involved in the various Filipino communities in their respective countries, no matter how far or near they are (Dispatch, 2018). They may also face language barriers because they opt to communicate in English or by using body language (Bautista & Tamayo, 2020). Also, racial bias inside the workplace, culture shock, physical and verbal harassment, and abuse in an unknown foreign environment that is thought to support them better.

In spite of this, according to Baclig (2021), Information from the 2018 countrywide Migration Survey, Mangahas said that among the various OFWs who experienced settlement violations and involuntary work preparations, only a third sought assistance. The fundamental reasons OFWs refused to ask for help were a threat, fear, and shame (27.1%). Others claimed they lacked the funding to make a legal claim (4.8%). Nevertheless, according to survey data, 53.4% of OFWs who experienced contract violations and involuntary labor arrangements stated they just quit their jobs or accepted what had transpired. Of the 53.4%, 17.6% believed no one would pay attention to or take their complaints seriously, 9.9 % thought it was a standard component of their employment agreement, 15.3 % claimed that the problem did not disturb them enough for them to seek assistance and 10.6 % or more no longer communicated with their employer (Baclig, 2021).

Despite the challenges, OFWs were still driven to seek employment in distant places due to poverty, employment problems, family issues, financial challenges, and the longstanding lack of confidence in the authorities' effort to cozy a better destiny for

its residents (Ragma & Molina, 2018). In the Philippines, OFWs are viewed as heroes for boosting the economy and improving their families' financial status. However, studies have shown that these workers often face challenges while working overseas, including the risk of abuse from employers in the form of hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviour (Bernardo et al., 2018). Moreover, while working abroad, OFWs are expected to continue fulfilling traditional roles as parents and breadwinners, providing for their families emotionally and financially while away, resulting in experiencing loneliness and homesickness due to the physical distance from their loved ones (Vargas et al., 2020). On the other hand, the story of OFWs is one of courage, strength, and resilience. It is a story of leaving everything behind to provide for one's family. It is a story of sacrifices and challenges as the unexpected advent of the deadly virus has hit the sphere of the earth.

Global Pandemic

On January 30, 2020, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was labeled a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) by the WHO, and by March 11, 2020, it had been classified as a global pandemic (WHO, 2021). According to Cennimo (2022), coronavirus *disease* 2019 (COVID-19) is defined as an illness caused by a novel coronavirus called severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2; formerly called 2019-nCoV). Furthermore, COVID-19 passes primarily from person to person through respiratory droplets produced by coughs, sneezes, or talks. SARS-CoV-2 can last up to 9 days on surfaces, depending on the amount of inoculum shed and the kind of surface (Kampf et al., 2020). The global spread of COVID-19 and the rippling effect of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) that started in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 unfurl rapidly around the world, leading to a rapid and dramatic change in people's relationships, daily routines, and lifestyle (Mortazavi et al., 2021). This pandemic has significantly raised the worldwide death rate as a global threat (Zhai & Du, 2020), so 520,912,257 cumulative cases and 6,272,408 deaths were registered on May 20, 2022, as reported by the WHO. Mortazavi et al. (2021) noted that people resort to collective isolation to follow protocols and social distancing measures since they are deemed a

possible carrier of the virus to another individual. In order to lessen the effects of COVID-19, public health measures have been implemented in the affected countries to contain the transmission of the disease.

The mourning for the death and crying for help are never-ending. Therefore, the government decided to implement lockdowns, self-quarantines, and policies to reduce COVID-19 transmission (Bayani & Tan, 2021). According to Tripathi et al. (2020), people's compliance with preventive measures is critical to its success.

Consequently, many countries in Asia and the Pacific, where COVID-19 was born, responded quickly and intensely, bringing a variety of best practices and lessons gained in disaster and crisis preparation, management, coordination, and response (Osewe, 2021). In conformity with (Aguar et al., 2022), the measures to control the disease have also affected how we, as a society and individuals, cope with death. The accustomed everyday life has shifted drastically as the catastrophic calamity has taken over the world at the speed of light. No one in this lifetime is exempted from this epidemiological situation.

Covid Deaths

As the world relentlessly fights and conquers pandemic showdowns, many long for the glow of a new dawn and yearn for bright life. The hope is getting darker as humanity is in quarantine, and the frightening assaults of the pandemic have vastly increased our vulnerability. Humankind's division began to unite because nobody was prepared for the consequences of confronting the significant challenges of the pandemic. In times like these, though, hope may be a tremendous healer. Humanity is unified in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, and life will undoubtedly triumph (Kumar, 2021). Unfortunately, it is common to experience discouraging setbacks during this terrible ordeal.

As per Zhai and Du (2020), the coronavirus pandemic will profoundly affect many of us. Unquestionably, the common aim of the pandemic is to win the fight for survival; however, the year 2020 has been a period of accentuated losses

marked by the COVID-19. As a result, COVID-19 has caused a "tsunami of death" due to its high and rising number of deaths (Jackson et al., 2020, as cited in Galvin et al., 2020). In fact, according to the WHO, by the end of 2020, the year the COVID-19 pandemic hit the world, 1.82 million people have died as a result of the virus (Gopez, 2021). The unimaginable continuous rise of COVID-19 deaths has been normalized; thus, Walsh (2020) narrated that humans frequently overlook that every death is a devastating loss for loved ones. The unseen agony is beyond measure for numerous families who have suffered substantial losses during this difficult time.

Furthermore, more individuals experience ambiguous loss amid the pandemic. In addition, COVID-19 death, according to several studies, is a heartbreaking loss since it happens to several people abruptly and without notice (Masiero et al., 2020; Walsh, 2020, as cited in Asgari et al., 2021). Apart from this, if statistical models are applied to the present worldwide circumstances, almost 9 million individuals are projected to have died due to COVID-19. Although death is inevitable as nothing lives in this temporary world for eternity, it continues to be a theme that is paradoxically hidden away in a corner chiefly throughout the global pandemic. This pandemic has born an era of death as millions of people are grieving the loss of someone who died of COVID-19 (Lee & Neimeyer, 2020).

Meanwhile, Zhai & Du (2020) reported that countless families had suffered substantial losses in this pandemic. Also, Walsh (2020) noted that loss is a powerful nodal experience that shakes the foundation of family life. In the light of this, considering that the death of a loved one is rated as one of the most traumatic occurrences in life, scientific attention to persons grieved by COVID-19 losses is unexpected (Hobson et al., 1998; Holmes & Rahe, 1967, as cited in Lee & Neimeyer, 2020). No one in this lifetime has come prepared. As a result, thousands of people have died due to COVID-19 at a hospital ward or in a room in an elderly care facility without family members near them; not one goodbye or farewell (Fernández & González-González, 2020). The unseen enemy has dramatically affected all people. In fact, according to WHO (2020, as cited in Scheinfeld et al., 2021),

this pandemic became a "public health crisis" that would touch every sector. One of the sectors this pandemic adversely affected was the resilient people that have ever lived, the Overseas Filipino Workers. On analysis, there were 2.18 million OFWs registered before the break of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2019, and 2.11 million had been OCWs (Philippine Statistics Authority), even before the pandemic hit the entire humanity, tolls of OFWs were deployed overseas. As a result, it heightens the anxiety of the OFW members over their left-behind loved ones concerning the high number of COVID-19 cases in the Philippines.

Unlike families that live in the same residence, OFW households have members from different countries and experience COVID-19 in different ways. This prolonged separation creates a distinct anxiety experience for OFW families (Cleofas et al., 2021). Another factor, for migratory workers worldwide, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic creates significant challenges. (Lui et al., 2021). Many people are required to execute tasks that raise their risk of contracting an infection, including taking the dog outside, heading to the store or groceries, or taking care of a family member who has comorbid conditions. Those who object will probably lose their jobs.

In many cases, cramped housing in the destination has exacerbated exposure to the virus, as migrant domestic workers have had to live in extreme proximity to other household members (Tigno, 2021). Unfortunately, the global upsurge spread of COVID-19 posed an extreme threat and became a leading cause of death worldwide. Hence, part of these cumulative deaths were the OFWs. In fact, according to the Statista Research Departments, as of January 31, 2022, around 24,052 confirmed cases of COVID-19 from OFW, the most significant number of these were recovered, and 1,458 deceased due to the virus. However, the coronavirus illness 2019 (COVID-19) executed 31 Filipinos in Kuwait, including four medical frontliners. According to the diplomat, Kuwait is "straightforward" in dealing with the remains of COVID-19 patients, since they are quickly buried in Muslim or non-Muslim cemeteries, with burials held according to the deceased's religious traditions (Esguerra, 2020).

Meanwhile, the 282 OFWs who died in Saudi Arabia refer to the combined number of OFWs who died there since the country imposed a lockdown in February, according to the Department of Labor and Employment (Parrocha, 2020). The government continues to assist Filipino migrant workers infected with the coronavirus while working in host countries. Furthermore, Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III closely monitors the status of COVID-19 cases involving OFWs based on regular updates from the 40 Philippine Overseas Labor Offices (POLO) across Asia and the Pacific, US and North America, Europe, and the Middle East (Department of Labor and employment, 2020). It is undeniably disheartening to see the modern heroes fall for all they did was fight for their families rather than themselves.

Miserably, after enduring innumerable fights, only the battle for survival during COVID-19 is far beyond their control, thus, it led to irretrievable loss. Worse yet, after death, their bodies are usually carried immediately to the crematorium or the tomb. There can be no embalming, no choice of attire, no seeing of the body, and no funeral held as wanted, therefore there is a sense of not paying respects as one would have desired and as what the loved one deserved (Fernández & González-González, 2020). The sudden and unexpected death of OFWs leads to family grief Joaquim et al. (2021) emphasize that the death of a loved one or acquaintance due to SARS-COV2 infection contributes to psychological trauma. Individuals having an incidence of psychiatric illnesses appear to be more vulnerable to this effect. In addition, Weir (2020) stated that a sudden deceased could contribute to someone's feelings of anxiety, hatred, and sorrow.

Consequently, the methods of friends and relatives addressing their farewells to loved ones have changed dramatically, complicating the grieving process (Hooghe et al., 2021). Coronavirus is robbing people of the opportunity for a final goodbye. The COVID-19 pandemic has made a major impact on the loss experienced by the bereaved family since hospital visits were limited which prevented many individuals from saying their final goodbyes to their loved ones. Additionally, bereaved families were prevented from being able to receive traditional assistance due to the social

distance rule, which forbade them from holding funerals or engaging in certain ceremonies (Stroebe & Schut, 2020 as cited in Asgari et al., 2021). Hence, this deprives the deceased of their dignity and heightens the grief of those who live on since they cannot give the dear departed, the relatives they have lost, a proper honour and final farewell as the health situation has prevented them from having a funeral that would have been in line with cultural traditions.

Bereavement

Millions worldwide are grieving the loss of the presumed society and a sense of security (Milman et al., 2020 as cited in Hooghe et al., 2021). As the number of fatalities increases to unimaginable millions, people might overlook that every death is a traumatic loss experience. Through all people's experiences, death displays the most agonizing adaptational challenges for a family (Walsh, 2020). Additionally, a family member's death may experience the loss of a relationship, whether it be with a spouse, parent, child, sibling; grandparent; or even a grandchild. Thus, death is inevitable and generally felt as a huge wound in a family's heart that will never be whole again. According to Goveas & Shear (2021), bereavement is an experience of loss in which a loved one's life comes to an end. It is a natural part of the human experience; on the other hand, it can also be incredibly excruciating and have a negative impact on one's physical and emotional health. Apart from that, individuals are often more severely and differently affected by the death of a loved one. The main reason that deaths have such a huge impact is the significance of a person in one's life (Denckla et al., 2020).

Furthermore, normally people undergo bereavement throughout their lives as the entirety of this world has an end, however, due to unforeseen events, COVID-19 disrupts human lives. As the unprecedented situation that continuously affects the lives of many individuals, considering the loss of a loved one due to the COVID-19 pandemic is the most heartbreaking and stressful event that comes across in a person's life, as they experienced bereavement and adapt to the sudden change and unpleasant circumstances. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, common losses are relational, in other

words, the connectedness with another individual, such as family or friends who are a tower of strength in one's life. According to Stroebe & Schut (2021), an increased number of bereaved individuals has been documented in countries around the world, with a high number of deaths and indications that families and friends are severely impacted. The grieving family may wonder why they survived when a loved one did not, individuals may feel guilty for perhaps spreading the sickness, they may lose their sense of purpose or coherence, and they may lament the loss of future goals and ambitions (Selman et al., 2020).

Additionally, the risk factors for poor bereavement outcomes are characterized by COVID-19 fatalities. The inability to say goodbye, absence of a support system, living alone and financial loss are all associated with poor bereavement outcomes which affect bereaved people during this time (Harrop, 2020). In line with this, COVID-19-related deaths are seen as bad or poor-quality deaths due to the circumstances that influence the death (Kumar, 2021). Death from COVID-19 is prevalently accompanied by intense pain and suffering. According to the existing evidence, such death denotes a kind of "bad death," and there are several risk factors for poor bereavement outcomes in COVID-19, such as isolation, severe breathlessness, disruption of social support systems, financial difficulties, as well as worries about own health or the health of other family members (Mortazavi et al., 2021). Aside from that, all these factors can cause psychological symptoms such as depression, anxiety, and anger in bereaved people. These COVID-19-related deaths may increase the chances of a worse bereavement outcome, such as a more severe or prolonged grief disorder (Mayland et al., 2020). Hence, this devastating event leaves a wrenching pain experience in the lives of the bereaved family.

Funeral Practices

As life comes to an end, bereaved families find closure through traditional forms of mourning and rituals in the aftermath of the loss. Furthermore, establishing funerals is crucial since it is a vital aspect of cultural and religious mourning, as this provides social and emotional support to bereaved families with love and respect for the deceased

(O'Rourke et al., 2011, as cited in Burrell & Selman, 2020). Additionally, mourning is typically perceived after death, and many people's emotions were unable to recognize, missing out on an opportunity to cope and causing uncertainty and anxiety.

During the funeral, mourners must be offered physical comfort, caressing, hugging, shaking hands, or engaging with one another to ease the pain (Burrell & Selman 2020). Hence, funeral practices manifest an honor to the memory of a loved one, share one's emotions, and give the deceased meaningful closure. According to Giannopoulou et al (2018), in Philippine cultures, Filipinos shared the characteristics of grief as well as the other aspects that manifest one's own culture which include the involvement of the extended family, showcasing honor for the deceased by adhering to rituals, having a deep connection with the Almighty and numerous other cultural funeral practices. This highlights the main features of Filipino mourning tradition in terms of how these groups of people perform funeral practices.

Nevertheless, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, bereaved people were deprived of an opportunity to be in the last moment of loved ones and were prevented from being able to receive traditional assistance due to the social restriction measures, which prohibited people from holding traditional funeral practices and engaging in certain ceremonies (Stroebe & Schut, 2020 as cited in Asgari et al., 2021). Moreover, there were reports of postponement of the funeral, and the need for burial to perform quickly in the presence of a limited number of relatives that were restricted (Oliveira Cardoso et al., 2020). This has significantly altered the usual funeral practices, in which bereaved individuals missed out on the opportunity to share one's emotions and find a meaningful closure. Lapene (2021), stated that due to restriction measures, the absence of a social support system was experienced by the bereaved family. Social support is very essential to the bereaved family in these traumatic times which aids to cope and maintain well-being. Additionally, showing respect, compassion and comforting the bereaved family mitigates the negative outcomes and dissatisfaction. Nonetheless, according to an investigation of

Burrell & Selman (2020), it shows that restriction measures on funeral practices do not lead to the worst outcomes of bereavement.

Meanwhile, during COVID-19 many remains were unaccounted for, potentially devastating to individuals and society (Wallace et al., 2020, as cited in Hernández-Fernández & Meneses-Falcón, 2021). Many people suffer from the uncertainty of a loved one's death, which is traumatic since there's no closure or resolution to the loss causing disbelief that a loved one has died as they've never seen the final moments. In line with this, there are several reports regarding the remains of OFW in other parts of the world where the bereaved family experience uncertainty. OFW remains were cremated without being unable to view the body and only received the remains as ashes by the bereaved family (Rocamora, 2020). Furthermore, repatriated remains were immediately cremated within 12 hours of arrival in the Philippines to prevent the spread of the coronavirus and reduce the risk of contracting the disease (Go & Docot, 2021).

In consequence, this case of death and funeral practices is an odd experience for the Filipino bereaved family which altered and abrupt the typical mourning of Filipino bereaved families as these people were incapable to perform the traditional funeral practices due to restriction measures. According to reports, some OFW remains were buried in the gulf state of Saudi Arabia (Tomacruz, 2020). This unimaginable experience was adversity for the Filipino bereaved family as these individuals had not seen the OFW family member who was working overseas for many years, and at the time of one's encounter, this Filipino bereaved family had undergone the undesirable fate of a loved one. Hence, time may not heal all wounds, and accepting such loss was difficult as it is part of one's existence; however, life must proceed even when loved ones are gone forever.

Coping Mechanism

Death is inevitable; the entirety of this world has an end. Nature, animals, and even people are temporary. In humanity, people's death inflicts human beings to grieve. Specifically, if death was unexpected, it was likely to be traumatic and distressing as no one was prepared to deal with what

had occurred. The most frequently reported incident was a loved one's unexpected death, which could be traumatizing Keyes et al. (2014). Thus, grieving family members deal with sudden loss by feeling tension, loneliness, and painful emotions (LeRoy et al., 2020). Although any type of death of a loved one can be emotionally devastating, sudden deaths elicit extreme reactions because there is less time to prepare and adjust to the death (Keyes et al., 2014). Particularly during the pandemic, a high number of people are grieving throughout the Pandemic, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2020), which took the lives of people considering their age, social status, and gender identity.

Families could not stay near their loved ones in their dying stage (Borghi & Menichetti, 2021) has been traumatic and distressing to the bereaved families. According to Eisma et al. (2021), according to recent research, grief caused by a COVID-19 death is more severe than grief caused by other types of loss, such as death from natural causes. Hence, many individuals all across the world missed out on the opportunity to say goodbyes to their loved ones due to health regulations that limited hospital visits. Families may find the grieving process exceedingly tricky due to the intricacy and simultaneity of these stressful and restrictive factors (Borghi & Menichetti, 2021); apart from this, they lost out on traditional social support because the social distance regulation barred prominent funeral and burial services or the practice of certain rituals (Stroebe & Schut, 2020), despite the fact that they are vital to the mourning and healing processes as they stimulate emotional expression, social support, and providing meaning to the loss (Borghi & Menichetti, 2021). Thereby, the likelihood of comprehending the deceased's loss has been compromised (Sun et al., 2020).

Furthermore, not being able to say 'goodbye' when access is restricted can be highly stressful and is linked to psychological trauma in mourning (Bloomer & Walshe, 2021); grieving a sudden death of a loved one has a significant impact on the grieving process. Basically, up to 2/3 of persons bereaved by the Pandemic report a clinically heightened level of grief, which is linked to severe impairment in social, vocational, and family

obligations (Lee & Neimeyer, 2020); during the grieving process, the family of a deceased was in an emotional state that affected the way they function as an individual in different aspects of life.

According to Smid (2020), social support, on the other hand, may significantly impact finding meaning in the loss. Consequently, being with others is a fundamental coping response to threats and connecting to others can sustain psychological health (Bloomer & Walshe, 2021). Therefore, having someone to rely on was necessary to lessen the stress of bereaved families somehow. Some bereaved families normalize the loss (Simonsen & Cooper, 2015) of their loved one to cope with it. Others, speaking with someone who understands what they are going through can be incredibly beneficial. (Wirth, 2019). Also, within groups of people who have similar traits or have experienced the same life tragedy, such as online grieving support groups, people may share their stories and offer support to one another (Borghetti & Menichetti, 2021). And they rebuild meanings by telling others about the loss (Neimeyer et al., 2010). Moreover, they address faith and hope (Mason et al., 2020) in their God to cope with the loss. This helps people mobilize their internal resources to deal with the loss (Swartwood, 2011).

Thus, the Overseas Filipino Workers' death count has also surged due to the widespread outbreak. However, studies exploring the death of an OFW and the left behind bereaved families are very few and far behind. To address this aperture, the present paper highlights bereaved family members' experiences.

Research gaps emerged after synthesizing the previous studies regarding the bereaved family's experiences regarding the death of an OFW.

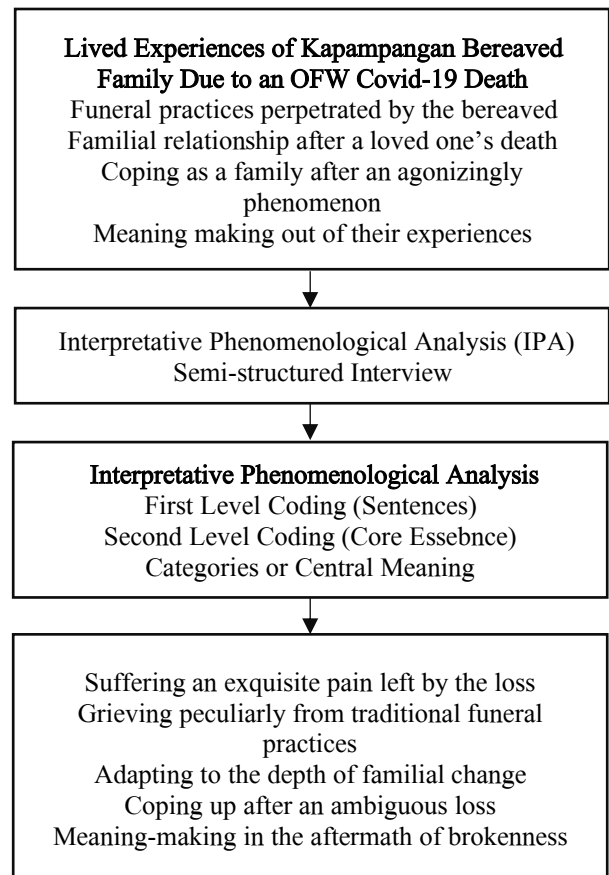
First, the researchers conducted their study in the scope of Pampanga. Previous studies have yet to be conducted on the said topic. Hence, we, the researchers, are considering executing it in our locale, Pampanga. Second, the statistics of 1,458 OFW's died due to COVID-19 (Statista Research Department, 2022); there is a possibility that several studies and reports about the OFWs would support the study. Furthermore, the experiences of the

bereaved families about the natural death of their loved one were different from the experiences of the bereaved families following the death of their OFW loved one due to COVID-19 disease.

In line with this, the researchers are prompted to carry out this study because several research has focused solely on the bereaved families following the death of their loved ones due to COVID-19. However, no emphasis has been put on determining the experiences of bereaved families following the death of an OFW loved one due to COVID-19 disease. In doing so, this research attempts to see and explore the lived experiences of the unforeseen loss of Overseas Filipino Workers' death.

Research Paradigm

The present study, "Tahan na't Bumangon: Lived Experiences of Kapampangan Bereaved Family Due to an OFW COVID Death," presents its framework in the figure above. The study meticulously examines the funeral practices perpetuated by bereaved families, the familial relationship after the loss, their coping strategies,



and how they make meaning out of their experiences. To understand these experiences more deeply, the researchers employed Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and validated their Semi-Structured Interview guide with professionals in the field. Moreover, the data analysis involved three categories of coding: first-level coding (sentence), second-level coding (essence), and categories/central meaning. The researchers generated five central themes from this process that capture the essence of the bereaved families' experiences. These themes include:

1. Suffering an exquisite pain left by the loss,
2. Grieving peculiarly from traditional funeral practices,
3. Adapting to the depth of familial change,
4. Coping up after an ambiguous loss, and
5. Meaning-making in the aftermath of brokenness.

Methods

This section presents the research design used in the study, the sample and setting, instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis, and the ethical considerations in the conduct of the research study.

Research Design

The researchers employed a qualitative design called Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). IPA explored how participants make sense of their personal and social worlds. As a result, it enabled reaching, hearing, and understanding of participants' experiences (Pringle et al., 2011). This method comprehensively analyzed and understood an individual's personal experience. In accordance with Smith (2009), IPA accentuated the active role of the researcher in acquiring discernment into the participant's world. It intended to explore one's personal experience and was concentrated on the participant's perception of an event as opposed to the objective nature of the event.

Furthermore, Smith and Osborn (1999) remarked that IPA presumed a chain of connections existed between people's talking, thinking, and emotional state. No pre-existing conceptual framework had been utilized, considering this research design generated themes and concepts as results. Therefore, this study explored and profoundly understood the lived experience of Kapampangan

bereaved families after losing their OFW loved ones due to COVID-19.

Sample Setting

Participants in this study were a sample of three bereaved Kapampangan family members. In IPA research, according to Smith and Fieldsend (2021), three (3) is an exceptionally acceptable sample size for students adopting IPA for the first time. It allowed sufficient in-depth engagement with each case and a detailed examination of similarity and difference, convergence and divergence. Furthermore, Clarke (2010), as cited in Noon (2018), stipulated that three (3) was the default sample size for undergraduate or Masters-level IPA study, whereas 4–10 was advised for professional doctorates. Hence, this study utilized the purposive sampling technique, in which three (3) bereaved families were purposely selected through the social networks of the researchers (Cleofas et al., 2021).

In line with the ethical considerations specified for this study, the researchers adhered to the following standards in participant selection:

In this study, the participants were selected based on specific criteria. To begin with, they were required to be of Kapampangan descent and have had the experience of losing an OFW family member due to COVID-19 that occurred abroad. The participants were chosen from at least one (1) family member from three (3) families residing in Pampanga. It was crucial to note that only family members of at least eighteen and any gender were eligible for the study. Additionally, the participants were strictly first-degree relatives of the deceased, such as a daughter, son, or wife. Those participants who met the set criteria for PG-13 were automatically excluded from the study.

Furthermore, the participants were offered the privilege to decide their desired format based on their preferences, whether online/virtual or face-to-face interviews. Upon reaching a consensus, in a face-to-face interview, the process took place in a location and type of environment preferred by participants to minimize their discomfort and promote beneficence. Whereas Gmeet was utilized to execute the virtual interview, afterwards,

researchers scheduled a time and date depending on the participants' convenience and availability.

Instrument

In this study, the first part of the data collection involved the robot foot, which refers to the respondents' data, a cartographic sketch of the subject (De Guzman et al., 2009)

Also, the researchers formulated their interview guide to capture the study's primary objective; three experts in the field validated the research questionnaire to ensure that all questions were aligned and coherent with the research topic.

The researchers utilized semi-structured interviews that predominantly consist of open-ended questions to avoid forcing data into any presumptions and allow adaptability to participants' emergent narratives, which would normally have been achievable with structured interviews (Jamshed, 2014).

Furthermore, a Prolonged Grief Disorder screening tool, PG-13, was administered to all potential participants before commencing the interview proper to verify if they met the respective criteria for prolonged grief disorder.

Data Collection

Recruiting bereaved families into research was fraught with possible risks; hence substantial consideration was provided before the interview process to ensure participants were protected from exploitation.

First off, before commencing the interview proper, researchers administered a diagnostic tool known as the Prolonged Grief Disorder (PG-13) to all potential participants, to diminish the negative impact and therefore maintain decency, to assess if the participants had a current manifestation of the abovementioned disorder; if they met the respective criteria of prolonged grief disorder, they were automatically excluded from taking part in the interview process to reduce and prevent harm. By then, ethical considerations were observed to protect the participants from potential misconduct.

Subsequently, all qualified participants were given a consent form through their personal social media accounts prior to the interview proper for them to read and affix their e-signature, which outlines the purpose of the study, details about the interview (including its length and procedures), the interviewer's contact information, the statement of voluntary participation and rights of a participant, the assurance of strict adherence to upholding confidentiality, and the data privacy act of 2012. Hence, the contents of the informed consent form were appropriately explained to the participant. This provided participants the security that the entire research process, from the interview to the results, would be handled with caution, anonymity, and confidentiality. Following their decision to participate, researchers and each participant agreed on a precise interview schedule and location. Afterwards, during the interview, participants were given a series of questions based on the researchers' own self-made interview guide. Furthermore, the researchers also asked for permission from the participants if they could use a voice recording device. A voice recorder was an essential tool that enabled the researchers to not miss any crucial points from the participants' answers. All the participants agreed to the use of a voice recorder.

Before the interview proper, the researchers first established rapport with the participants to make sure they would be more open in expressing their thoughts and answers. Filipino, English, and Kapampangan were used as the medium of communication during the interview process.

Data Analysis

To develop a thorough understanding of the lived experiences of the bereaved family following the loss of a loved one, the collected data was analyzed by utilizing the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the four-stage process described in detail in (Smith & Osborn, 2007) and the process of this analysis was as follows: To begin with, the gathered data from the participants was transcribed word by word after the interview session.

All five researchers were fully involved in the data analysis process. After transcription, each researcher re-read the transcripts multiple times to familiarize themselves with the data and gain a

general understanding. This immersion allowed them to gain new insights. Then, they moved on to initial coding, where they wrote down their observations, reflections on the interview, and any other potentially significant thoughts or comments. The focus was on the content, language usage, context, and initial interpretative comments. The first level codes were created to capture the essence of the observations made from the data. These codes were then transformed into second level codes, which were organized in a way that related codes were grouped together. The researcher compared and debated the second level codes to arrive at a central meaning and to understand the phenomenon under investigation. Finally, the codes were converted into a narrative account that was substantiated with quoted statement extracts from the interview (Smith & Osborn, 2007) to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Reflexibility and Trustworthiness

In the data analysis, the researchers utilized bracketing to avoid biases in the gathered data from the participants. The researchers were aware of personal thoughts, emotions, feelings, experiences, and biases that could influence the participants' responses. When conducting phenomenological research, bracketing serves as a methodological tool that enables researchers to temporarily set aside their preconceptions or existing knowledge concerning the phenomenon under investigation throughout the phenomenological study (Carpenter, 2007, as cited in Chan et al., 2013). Hence, researchers wrote a journal to eliminate the biases and preconceptions that precisely captured the participants' experiences; further, the bracketing aids in demonstrating the validity of the analysis process.

To ensure the study's trustworthiness, the researchers conducted member checking, and each was immersed in analyzing the data. Additionally, member checking was executed on the participants in the data analysis process as they were allowed to read the transcribed data (Curtin & Fossey, 2007). Participants were allowed to evaluate what they had said in the interview and the transcribed data. Additionally, the research adviser thoroughly examined the data analysis process, including the first and second-level codings and the central

meanings, and provided insights and recommendations to assess the analysis. Additionally, the researchers asked for feedback from three experts in the field, including research experts, psychologists, and psychometricians, to evaluate the gathered information from the participants. These steps aimed to enhance the validity and credibility of the data and the research findings.

Ethical Considerations

The researchers adhered to the Data Privacy Act of 2012 to protect the participants' information. They took necessary measures to handle the information provided by the participants in private and with the utmost confidentiality. Additionally, the participants had the right to receive appropriate information about the nature, results, and conclusions of the research following the Data Privacy Act of 2012 regulations. These measures aimed to safeguard the participants' privacy and to promote ethical and responsible research practices. Informed consent was provided, and participants were notified of voluntary participation.

Correspondingly, to guide and support families through the research interview, the researchers had undertaken a Family Support Group (FSG) Session on the topic "Tahan na: Caring for the Grieving Hearts," which was held on the 8th of July 2022 before commencing any interviews. To protect the privacy of every participant in this study remains anonymous; codes and pseudonyms were used to conceal their identities. The participants have been granted the privilege to withdraw from any part of the study and the option to pause, end, or reschedule the interview. Before and after the start of the interview, participants were asked how they felt and if they had experienced distress to maintain their safety and emotional state. The researcher also asked permission before using an audio recording device during the interview.

In addition, considering the sensitive nature of this research, a licensed psychologist was present during the entire interview proper to supervise; if ongoing distress arose during the interviews, a registered psychologist associated with the study was available for follow-up care of participants. Also, after the face-to-face interview, the researchers did

not leave immediately after the interview in a "smash and grab" approach to data collection. They ensured the participant had someone to look for to assist before the researchers left. Also, the participants undergo a debriefing protocol incorporating an aftercare debriefing that lasts around ten minutes following the interview session. The researchers ensured to give follow-ups to the condition of the participants via message and phone call within 24 to 48 hours to check on their well-being, answer any questions that may have arisen, and provide contact information for a free psychiatric appointment to guarantee their mental health wellness if necessary.

Hard copies of files related to this study were ensured locked inside the researcher's cabinet, while soft copies of files were stored in a folder protected by a password on the researcher's laptop. Gathered data related to this study will be disposed of a year after the study was defended and passed. The hard copy of files was shredded, while the soft copy of files of transcribed interviews were permanently deleted.

Furthermore, the City College of Angeles thesis committee gave the researcher their approval to conduct the said research, providing the researcher with valuable insights and suggestions for conducting the research properly and ethically.

Results

Demographics

Table 1. Bereaved Participants demographics (n=3)

Demographic Profile	N	%
Sex		
Female	2	66.7
Male	1	33.3
Age		
35	1	33.3
25	1	33.3
42	1	33.3
Relationship		
Father	2	66.7
Husband	1	33.3
Educational		
College Graduate	3	99.9
Employment		

Employed	3	99.9
Socio Economic		
Middle Class	1	33.3
Low Middle Class	2	67.7

The table above demonstrates the three (3) bereaved participants. Two of them were females and one male, aged between 25-42. The relationships of these individuals to the deceased OFW were two fathers and one husband. All participants had a tertiary-level education and were currently employed. Moreover, one participant was in the middle-class status, whereas two of them were in the lower-middle class.

Table 2. Deceased OFW's Demographics (n=3)

Demographic Profile	N	%
Sex		
Male	3	99.9
Age		
55	1	33.3
59	1	33.3
40	1	33.3
Relationship with the bereaved		
Daughter	1	33.3
Son	1	33.3
Wife	1	33.3
Years Working Overseas		
20 years	1	33.3
11 years	1	33.3
4 years	1	33.3
Country did the OFW passed away		
Guam	1	33.3
Saudi Arabia	1	33.3
America	1	33.3
Socio Economic		
Middle Class	1	33.3
Low Middle Class	2	67.7

The table shows that there were three male OFWs, with ages ranging from 40-59, and had bereaved family members who were their daughter, son, and wife. These OFWs worked overseas for 4-20 years before passing away in Guam, Saudi Arabia, and America.

Central Meaning

The participants were asked to narrate their experiences concerning the death of their Overseas Filipino Workers' loved ones. Five central meanings emerged from the analysis of core essence from transcribed and coded data. Using direct statements from the participants, five (5) central meanings themes were identified through interpretive analysis and provided in this section with supporting information. They are as follows:

1. Suffering from excruciating pain and bereft of loved one
2. Grieving process affected by deviation from traditional funeral practices
3. Adapting to familial changes brought about by the loss
4. Coping up after an ambiguous loss
5. Meaning-making in the aftermath of brokenness

Theme 1: Suffering from excruciating pain and bereft loved one

The initial central theme that emerged pertains to the perception of the participant's in-depth accounts of their experiences following the unexpected demise of their loved one. This theme uncovers the unforeseen end of life of the participants' anguish and loss, leaving an embedded scar on their hearts. This unfortunate experience of bereavement caused a great deal of pain as there were unfulfilled plans and longing for precious moments with the deceased loved one. Despite the overwhelming pain and sadness, the participants acknowledged that there was nothing that could be done to alter the situation, and the only option was to come to terms with and accept the reality of their loss. Along with this, three sub-themes emerged from the participants' statements, which are as follows: (1) *Excruciating Loss*, (2) *Longing for an elusive chance*, (3) *Lamenting over unfulfilled plans*.

Excruciating Loss

This sub-theme demonstrates how the participants were consistent in expressing their sentiments about their utmost suffering upon the death of their loved ones. This bereavement experience of the participants leaves an engraved pain and a huge hole in their family lives. This unexpected event of loss resulted in participants' endless agony as they were deeply

affected by the death of their loved ones. Hence, this illustrates the participant's emotional suffering and the impact of their loved one's death on their lives. The following statements justify this subtheme:

“Well, ka“Well, kasi medyo fresh ya pa. Actually, 2 years ya pa kaya talagang ing sakit atsu pa... Masakit, sobrang masakit, kasi lalu na balu mo-Ita pin, uling malugud yang tatang. So, sobrang masakit para king side mi na e me man akayabe, e me a sese angga mong akasabi me king phone pero ahh siyempre alwa ya parin itang care kasi na bukal...”

“Well, sobrang—sobrang masakit siyempre iya nanaman itang magbalik ing gana-gana, magbalik itang parang sisi, magbalik itang sakit ning lub bakit milyari itang makantang bage. Ita, masakit, masakit ya na ita siguradung ali na mabie parang alang sigiradung—ala na talaga, alang, ala na... Bilang tatang a maganaka akit mu e na ya mangisnawa, maka tubo ya halos e na gagalo. Tubo ne ing magpakabie. Siyempre masakit king puso ita.”

“Well, because it was fresh. Actually, it was 2 years ago so the pain is still there. It's painful, it's so painful because you know what - that's it, he is a loving father. So, it is so painful for our side that we didn't even get along with him, can't take care of even have a conversation with him on phone but ahh, of course, the voluntary care is different. Well, it's extremely - extremely painful, of course, when everything comes back, recurring regret, recurring pain in the heart, why does it happen? It's painful, it's really painful like it surely is and there's no certainty to live- there's really nothing, nothing at all... As a kind father of a family, seeing him not breathing, was intubated and no longer moving. Only the tube gives him life. Of course, it hurts in the heart.” – Participant Selfless, daughter of the deceased who died from Guam

Participant Selfless, a 35-year-old daughter of a deceased OFW, reported that the pain of loss remains despite it happening in the past two years. She described her deceased father as a loving and devoted parent. The fact that she could not be with her father during his final days and provide him with care and compassion exacerbates the agony of her loss. She mentioned that the loss of her father, who

experienced suffering before his death due to COVID-19, causes her recurring pain.

“That time syempre, hindi kami makapaniwala akala namin gagaling pa si papa. Tapos bigla nalang namin nalaman na wala na pala kasi nag-expect kami na uuwi pa siya pagkatapos nitong pandemic and mag stay na siya dito sa’min, for good. Napakasakit para sakin no’n, na wala man lang akong magawa para ibalik ‘yong kung ano man nagawa niya para sa’min.”

“At that time, of course, we couldn't believe it. We thought that our father would get better, and we were in shock when we found out what had happened. We were worried because we didn't know what was going on. Then suddenly we found out that he was gone because we had expected him to come home after the pandemic and stay with us for good... It's very painful for me that I can't do anything to bring back what he did for us.” – Participant Heroism, Son of the deceased who died from Saudi Arabia

However, Participant Heroism, a son of a deceased OFW who lost his father due to COVID-19 21 months ago, initially held hope for his father's recovery. However, an unexpected turn of events led to an unforeseen and tragic loss, resulting in his ongoing emotional suffering. He expressed a sense of disbelief as his loved one was no longer present. Furthermore, he was shocked and deeply saddened by the loss of his father and displayed difficulty in accepting the reality that his father was truly gone. He had been expecting his father to return to the Philippines and stay permanently after the pandemic. Additionally, he mentioned that he was not able to repay for what his father has done for them which adds to his agony.

“Syempre sobrang sakit and hindi ko alam anong gagawin ko saan ako magsisimula, sino kakausapin ko, sobrang hirap, sobrang sakit. Masakit syempre, parang binuhos lahat sakin ng bigat ng mundo, mahirap, masakit pero dapat kayanin lalo na may maliit kami.”

“Of course, it's so painful and I don't know what I'm going to do, where I will start, or whom I will talk to. It's so difficult, it's so painful... It's painful

of course, it's like all the weight of the world was poured on me, it's difficult, it's painful but I need to be strong especially since we have kids.”

– Participant Resilient, Wife of the deceased who died from America

Meanwhile, Participant Resilient, a widow and a mother, had no idea how to start over again and was uncertain after the loss of her husband. She consistently expresses an excruciating pain at how the heaviness of the earth poured on her. In spite of her unfortunate loss experience, she demonstrated a sense of hope and determination to continue living for the sake of her children, who served as a source of strength for her. The participant's strength in facing this adversity, and her determination to keep going for her children show her resiliency to create a new life for her children in the aftermath of a significant loss.

Longing for an elusive chance

This displays the yearning of the participants to be with their deceased loved one final moment which is unattainable and uncertain to happen. It highlights how the participant's lost an opportunity to show compassion and tell their last word prior to the death of their loved one. This theme unfolds the participant's desire to provide care, have a conversation, and witness their loved one's final moment as none of them were able to be present at their loved one's side considering the challenges of being miles away. Furthermore, all they can do is to reminisce about shared experiences and memories with the deceased loved ones as they are no longer present.

Nung ating pagkakatawun sabyan ku mu naman na kuluguran ke at sobrang, sobrang ahh thank you king binie ng lugud keng kekaming family na at karing apu na... Sobrang—kasi parang bilang anak buri mung sumuyu kahit keta mung makantang way, diba? So, kaya sobrang makapang lumo, sobrang maka—makalungkut na ketang part a magkasakit ya eme a sapan.”

“If only I have a chance, I will tell that I love him and thank him for the provided love for the family and his grandchild... It's really - because as a child, you want to show affection, right? So, that's why it's really heart-wrenching, it's really - it's

saddening on the part that he was suffering, and you cannot provide help.” – Participant Selfless, daughter of the deceased who died from Guam

Participant Selfless shows a sense of longingness and gratitude towards her father for his boundless love and support towards the family. As a daughter, she wanted to provide care for her father's needs and ease his suffering from Covid-19 disease, however, due to her inability to be with her father's last moment leads to feelings of sadness and helplessness. It is evident that the participant recognized the sacrifices of her father for the family, and she wants to reciprocate the love and care.

“Napakaimportante siyempre kapag may kailangan mo ng emotional support nandiyan yung tatay para payuhan ka, kung ano yung dapat mong gawin at kung ano yung mga bagay na hindi mo dapat ginagawa and siyempre kapag nandiyan yung presence nang tatay parang ano eh superior ka eh siyempre malakas yung loob mo dahil nandiyan yung father mo para supportahan ka during the time na nahihirapan ka, ayon.”

“It's so important of course when you need emotional support there is the father to advise you, what are the things you need to do and what are the things you don't need to do, and of course when the presence of a father is there it's like you are superior of course you have strong-willed because your father is there to support you during the time you are struggling, that's it.” – Participant Heroism, Son of the deceased who died from Saudi Arabia

While, Participant Heroism, a son who experiences bereavement in his younger adult year, emphasized the importance of the presence of a parental figure, specifically his father, in providing emotional support and guidance. He manifests a sense of longingness and believes that if only his father was there to provide support and a sense of comfort would boost his confidence which would help him to feel more capable during difficult times.

“Sana nayakap ko siya, sana nakausap ko pa siya, sana nandoon ako pero wala akong magawa, malayo siya eh. Para mabawasan ‘yong hirap niya

gusto ko kasama niya ako do'n para naalagaan ko siya para sana kahit sandali lang kasama ko siya. Siyempre namimiss ko ‘yong pagtawag niya ayun lagi kayo nag-uusap, pangalawa financially, may tumutulong sayo sa lahat ng bagay tapos ‘pag nandito siya siyempre namimiss mo ‘yong mga ginagawa niya sayo ‘yong pagluluto, paglilinis lahat sobrang sipag ng asawa ko.”

“I hope I was able to hug him, I hope I talk to him, I hope I'm there, but I can't do anything, he is far away... To lessen his difficulties, I want to be with him so that I can take care of him, and even just for a moment, I could be with him... Of Course, I miss his calls when we talk, second financially, someone is helping you with all the things and then when he was here, of course, I miss all the things that he does for you like cooking, cleaning, and all, my husband is so hardworking.”
– Participant Resilient, Wife of the deceased who died from America

Whereas, Participant Resilient, a 42-year-old widow who lost her husband overseas. She characterized her husband as a dedicated and hardworking individual. Despite the geographical distance, she was hoping to be there and offer support to her husband while in America as she was yearning for physical connection with her husband who was suffering alone from the COVID-19 disease. Additionally, she indicated that she missed all the positive memories she shared with her deceased loved one highlighting the deep emotional connection she had with him.

Lamenting over unfulfilled plans

With this sub-theme, it unveils that the participants and their deceased loved ones have awaited plans which have come to an end and built dreams will forever be shattered as their loved one passes away. The passing of their loved ones marked the end of their plans and left them with a sense of suffering and sadness. This life-altering event was a challenge for the participants causing those certain plans and dreams may no longer be fulfilled. Hence, their plans became a piece of dreams which would never be completed again. The following statement provides justification for this subtheme:

“Tapos dakal pangarap kaya masakit yang tanggapan. Masakit yang tanggapan... O ning ita pin bali ala anggang-anggang ala anggang meging pangarap ne ita na minuli yang december. Pero, well gewa de man actually reng kapatad ku mekumpletu kami. Sabi mi pin mekumpletu kami pin mikakapatad pero ali kami magcelebrate. Ali ya masaya ing celebration, ali ya kumpletu ing celebration.”

“Also, there are a lot of dreams, so it is painful to accept. It is difficult to accept... So that’s it until it became a dream that he will return home in December. But, well my siblings managed to be complete. We said that we are complete as siblings, but we will not celebrate. The celebration is not happy, the celebration is incomplete.” – Participant Selfless, daughter of the deceased who died from Guam

Participant Selfless, a daughter who experienced a significant loss two years ago with the passing of her father. Prior to the loss, her father had intended to return to the Philippines in December, as he had not seen his family in an extended period of time. The plan to reunite with the entire family during the holiday season was unable to be fulfilled as her father passed away. Despite this tragic turn of events, the family was still able to reunite, however, the absence of their father caused a gap in the family dynamic which left the family members feeling incomplete and filled with sadness.

“Personally, gusto ko sanang sabihin na mahal ko siya and ako naman ‘yong magtatrabaho para sa kanya since napakatagal niya ng ginagawa ‘yon para buhayin kami. Kaya lang hindi ko na hindi na ako makakapag give back sa kanya kasi, ‘yong mga pinramis ko sa kanya hindi ko na siya magagawa dahil sa, ‘yon nga dahil sa nawala siya. Tapos wala, bigla nalang nawala ‘yong lahat ng pinlano namin pagkauwi niya. May mga trips pa sana kaming gagawin and siyempre ‘yong time na hindi namin napagsamahan susulitin na namin since matanda narin naman siya. Wala eh ganun talaga, bigla nalang siyang Nawala. ‘Yong mga plano na ‘yon is talagang pinaplano namin siya kapag nakauwi na siya and para ma enjoy niya rin ‘yong napagpaguran niya doon sa abroad. Lahat ng pinangarap natin lahat ng pinlano natin gagawin natin basta

malagpasan lang natin ‘tong problema na ‘to. Kaya lang wala eh hindi mo na masasabi ‘yon eh dami mong pangarap pero wala na eh patay na. So, wala na ‘yong pangarap na ‘yon.”

And yet, Participant Heroism, a Kapampangan bereaved individual who had lost his father working abroad for more than 10 years. He expresses a feeling of gratefulness and a desire to show appreciation for his father’s sacrifices. Moreover, his father plans to return to the Philippines after the pandemic as he seeks to compensate for the years of being apart since his father was old and wanted to spend more time with him. Unfortunately, the wishes to fulfill all the planned trips and promises were no longer feasible as his father had already perished before he could return home.

Theme 2: Grieving process affected by deviation from traditional funeral practices

The Filipino funeral arrangement includes a viewing of the corpse visited by many people, including extended family members and friends, and lasts for over a week. Unfortunately, participants' burial experiences were utterly opposed to the usual practices. They stated that they did not immediately get their loved ones' remains from overseas due to COVID-19 regulations. Prior to repatriation, there was no longer a body; instead, the deceased's remains had been cremated. This prohibited the participants from performing the traditional ceremony; rather, they conceived of other ways to mourn for their loved ones, even in the absence of their friends and family. The following are the sub themes under this major theme: 1) *Excruciating repatriation process*, and 2) *Commemorating loved one in different ways than the usual*

Excruciating repatriation process

Participants described how long they had waited for their loved ones' remains to get back home, only to discover that by the time they did, the body of the deceased loved ones had already been cremated. Given that the deceased were in good health when starting to work overseas, one participant finds it difficult to believe that their loved one is now nothing more than ashes. The following statements justify this subtheme:

“Wa, dela de reng kayi. 1 month pa bayu de abie pa kekami... Wa, actually inuli yang january—ay, december ba? Minuli yang december, minuli yang december itang abu na.”

“Yes, it took 1 month before they gave it to us... Yes, actually they brought it on january—no, was it december? They brought it in December, they brought it home as an ash.”— Participant Selfless, Daughter of the deceased who died from Guam

Participant Selfless was the daughter of the deceased who died from Guam. Their family waited a long time to receive their father's ashes since they were unable to receive the ashes of their father immediately after his cremation and had to properly adhere to COVID-19 pandemic regulations before the cremated loved one could be returned to their family. The participant narrated that their family had waited a month before they received their loved ones' remains.

“Yes, naka packaged siya na abo nalang na dumating. Naisip ko na pagdating niya sana mayakap ko man lang siya kasi napakatagal na panahon. Tapos bigla ‘yon abo nalang pala ‘yong makikita ko and hindi parin ako makapaniwala na ‘yon ‘yong tatay ko na abo nalang siya.”

“Yes, we received his body that was already cremated and packaged. I realized that when he came back home, I'm hoping that at least I could hug him because it's been a long time. Then, suddenly I saw him already cremated and up until now I still can't believe that my father was already an ash.” – Participant Heroism, Son of the deceased who died from Saudi Arabia

On the other hand, Participant Heroism was the son of the deceased who died from Saudi Arabia. After receiving his father's cremated ashes, the participant felt disappointed and in disbelief, hoping he could have given him one final embrace. Due to his desire to spend more time with his father, it is difficult for the participant to believe that his father is already gone.

Commemorating loved one in different ways than the usual

With this sub-theme, participants highlighted how they mourn in the absence of their loved ones' remains and only a limited company of friends and family were able to be present due to COVID-19 restrictions. The majority of participants were unable to witness the deceased before cremation. In relation to their absence, one participant used a photograph in replacement of the loved one's actual remains. Correspondingly, two participants narrated that no burial wake was performed at all; the ashes were directly buried. On the other hand, one participant had the chance to carry out a traditional wake for at least two days. The following statements below characterizes this theme further:

“Well, a show ke king kabaong for 2 hours, ita mu. Ahh 2 hours then ita na. Diretsu neng cremation kasi. Well, lucky kami parin kasi pepakit de parin kekami pero e mu alapitan, e me atalan or apisan man kahit balu mung mete ne, ena pwedi... Wa, minuli yang december ing abu na pegkayi mi ya pa peg, anong tawag doon? Lame ba? Yeah, piglamay mi ya pa for 2 nights.”

“Well, I saw him in his corpse for 2 hours, that's it. Ahh 2 hours then that's it. Straight from cremation after. Well, we are still lucky because they let us see him, but we cannot go close to him, or touch him even if you knew that he was already dead, it is not allowed. Yes, his ashes repatriated in December we did him we... what do you call that? Host a wake? Yeah, we did that to him for 2 nights.”— Participant Selfless, Daughter of the deceased who died from Guam

The family of Participant Selfless had the opportunity to view their father's remains before being cremated. They were able to see and pay respects for a short period of time, lasting two hours. The participant together with her family received the ashes of her father, who had died and been cremated after in Guam. Due to precautionary measures, she indicated that a funeral was held for two nights in honor of her father. Despite this limitation, the participant felt grateful to have had the opportunity to see her father.

“Actually, the usual process ng funeral sana is ibuburoh muna sana siya within three to seven days mga gano’n. Kaya lang wala na kaming maibuburoh dahil abo nalang siyang dumating dito. Although may mga friends and relatives na nakarating, hindi lahat nakarating since doon sa mga protocol ng COVID-19 no’ng pandemic.’Yong traditional na pagbuburoh hindi namin siya nagawa and ‘yong mga other relatives hindi rin sila nakapunta dahil sa pandemic. It is important kasi that time kailangan namin ng presence nila na makakaramay sana namin, na physically nandiyan para damayan ka, pero ang hirap kasi hindi sila makarating and hindi nila masabi ‘yong pakikiramay nila personally, ayon.”

“Actually, the usual process of conducting a funeral is to have a burial ceremony within three to seven days, something like that. But we couldn’t perform the funeral practices because he only arrived here as ashes. Although some friends and relatives came, not everyone was able to come because of the COVID-19 protocols during the pandemic...That is the traditional way of burial ceremony, but we couldn’t do it and the other relatives weren’t able to come because of the pandemic...It is important because that time we need their presence, who are physically there to be with you, but it is hard because they can’t be with us and they can’t express their sympathy personally, that’s it.” – Participant Heroism, Son of the deceased who died from Saudi Arabia

Therefore, Participant Heroism conveyed that the usual process of holding a burial ceremony is primarily within three to seven days. He also believed that seeing and being with the people who sympathize with them was important particularly when you lose a family member. In his case due to the fact that the remains of his father were received as ashes which made it impossible to have a traditional burial ceremony. In spite of this, some friends and family members were permitted to attend the burial, others were unable to do so because of COVID-19 pandemic guidelines that prohibited large gatherings.

“Makakasama pa sana namin siya kahit ilang araw lang, mga kaibigan niya para makita niya maraming nagmamahal sakanya pero wala eh bawal ‘di ba.

Feeling ko mas makaano sakanya kung makikita niya na maraming nagmamahal sakanya. Wala, diretso libing sakanya bawal eh. Pinagbawal nila ‘di ba? Bawal daw. Kaya ‘yong picture nalang niya ‘yong inano namin pero ‘yong ashes niya nilibing na agad.”

“He could have been with us for a few days, his friends so he could see the people who loved him but it’s prohibited right... I’m sure he’ll be more than happy to see that he’s got a lot of people who love him...Nothing, they bury him directly, it’s not allowed, they banned it, right? It’s not allowed. That’s why it’s just a picture of him that we used but the ashes were buried right away”. – Participant Resilient, Wife of the deceased who died from America

Hence, Participant Resilient was the wife of the deceased who died and cremated from America. The participant stated that she could be with his husband together with his friends to perform a funeral wake to his husband. Unfortunately, the ashes of her husband were promptly buried, which prohibited her from carrying out funeral practices due to imposed restrictions. Despite this, she utilized a picture of her loved one as a way to mourn.

Theme 3: Adapting to the familial changes brought about by the loss

Following the participants' hapless experience, they embrace change to start a new chapter in their life and a positive change in the family unit begins. They managed to continue to live and ensure that without the deceased's assistance, they keep on finding ways to strengthen the foundation of the family. Along with this, two sub-themes were generated from the participants' statements. The following are the core essences under this central meaning: 1) *Establishing an unwavering strength*, 2) *Taking ownership of one’s obligation*

Establishing an unwavering strength

Each participant came to the same conclusion: they prioritize their own family because they believe they are the only ones who can support one another; thus, it is mainly their family as a source of strength.

"Well, lalung—lalung meging matatag kasi iyang pengaku mi king parents—king pengari mi kasi ing peka abilin ng father ku pag ating bungil keng e mu naman a iwasan kahit mikakapatad-kapatad kami. Hindi pagkakaunawaan, ita ing peka—Ena buri masira relasyon mi as a sibling at relasyon mi—e ne buring masira ing pamilya mi...Mikalugud kaming mikakapatad, itang makanta. Alang aliwang misosopan alwa i kayu mu nia ita ing gagawan ming mikakapatad hanggang agyu ming—yan."

"Well, it became even stronger because that's what we promised to our parents—to our parents, my father's will is when there is someone's not there, you can't ignore it even though we are siblings and our relationship—he doesn't want us to break our family...we are loving each other, like that. There's no one to support you, but you, that's what are we doing as a sibling as long as we can---that's it".

- Participant Selfless, Daughter of the deceased who died in Guam

Participant Selfless' father died 24 months ago in Guam due to Covid-19. The participant narrated that their family relationship has strengthened through continuous loving and supporting each other as siblings. For the welfare of their family, they were able to uphold his father's wishes, preventing a rift in their relationship and allowing it to flourish.

"Yong relasyon namin ngayon as a family, I think mas lalo namin pinaigting ang caring sa isa't-isa, 'yong pagmamahal and 'yong communication laging nandiyan since kami kami nalang 'yong magdadamayan."

"Our relationship now as a family, I think we have made caring for each other even more intense; the love and the communication is always there since we are the only ones who sympathize". – Participant Heroism, son of the deceased who died from Saudi Arabia

However, Participant Heroism, a son of an OFW died in Saudi Arabia. He believes that the relationship within their family has become stronger over time, with an increased focus on caring for each other and maintaining strong communication. He indicated that they value their family through the

love and connections from within, and maintain their close relationships as they rely on each other's support.

"Lalong akong naging matatag para sa mga anak ko, nagsimula ako magtrabaho ulit para buhayin 'yong mga anak ko, lalo na ngayon wala na siya tapos lalo akong naging malakas para sa kanila, kahit mahirap nilalakan ko loob ko para makita nila na malakas ang mama nila. Hindi, pero bahala sila as long as nakakasama ko 'yong mga anak ko."

"I became stronger for my children, I started working again to raise my children, especially now that he is gone...I became stronger for them, even though it's hard for me to encourage them to see that their mother is strong...No, but whatever happens as long as I'm with my children."

- Participant Resilient, Wife of the deceased who died in America

Eventually, Participant Resilient experienced a significant loss with the death of her OFW husband due to COVID-19 in America. Despite this difficult circumstance, the participant reported that she was able to maintain a strong and resilient mindset for the sake of her children. Participant's ability to remain resilient and strong in the face of adversity played an important role for those left behind, particularly in raising her children.

Taking ownership of one's obligation

Participants reported that upon the death of their family's provider, a sense of responsibility developed within them to meet the family's necessities. Hence, the death of the family's provider created a gap that the participants felt a need to take on the role of the deceased family member in meeting and supporting the family's needs. This change has significant changes within the family unit for, which resulted in a shift in the roles and responsibilities of other family members, as they try to compensate for the absence of the provider.

"'Yong panganay namin siya na rin 'yong tumayong padre de pamilya para sa'min. May nagbago especially financially, Sa financial ngayon nag-aambag ambagan na kami para bayaran 'yong mga bills para mabili 'yong mga kailangan sa

bahay. Pero, I think minsan may miscommunication sa family kasi nga sa mga bayarin gan'on, na supposed to be dapat si ano 'yong mag-aambag ng ganito. Kaso minsan pag walang pera 'yong kung sino lang 'yong merong pera siya lang nagbibigay. 'Yong adjustment especially sa pagbabudget, 'yun 'yong pinakamahirap."

"Our eldest sibling is the one who stood up as the father of the family for us... There's a change in terms of finances, um now we are sharing the expenses to pay the bills to buy the things needed at home. But I think sometimes there is miscommunication in the family because of the bills, which supposed to be who should contribute was the other one but sometimes when they don't really can't contribute, the only one who has money is the one who take the expenses... The adjustment, especially in budgeting, is the most difficult". - Participant Heroism, Son of the deceased who died in Saudi Arabia

Participant Heroism was a bereaved son for about 1 year and 9 months after his father's death in Saudi Arabia due to COVID-19. The participant mentioned that the loss of the provider created a gap in terms of the family's decision-making and leadership, as the provider has played a central role in these areas. Furthermore, the family adjusted to a new dynamic and found ways to manage without the support and guidance of the provider.

"Nagsimula ako magtrabaho ulit para buhayin yung mga anak ko, lalo na ngayon wala na siya."

"I started working again to raise my children, especially now that he is gone." - Participant Resilient, Wife of the deceased who died in America

Whereas, Participant Resilient was only the age of 42 when she lost his husband who's working in America but suddenly died due to COVID-19. The participant continued to live without her husband and started to work to fulfill the needs of their children. She was filled with courage since she is the only one who can assist their family.

Theme 4: Coping up after an ambiguous loss

As the participants continued narrating their stories, all of them expressed their ways to cope as a family after the death of their OFW loved one. They decided to set aside their emotional despair and move forward together while fulfilling the assumed responsibility to function for the family's sake. The participants further conveyed that, through unceasing prayer and the unwavering support of close friends, they gained strength and continued living while carrying the ambiguous pain caused by the death. The following are the core essence under this central meaning: 1) Driving to continue, 2) Suppressing negative thoughts, 3) Leaving everything in God's hand, and 4) Valuing social support system

Driving to continue

Following a thorough analysis of the narratives that pertain to the subtheme, most of the participants' prime motivation to persistently live without their significant other was for the family's betterment. Hence, the will to surrender has never been an option; as per participant one, someone is still waiting and depending on her. The statement below further shows that losing a loved one doesn't entail an end of life:

""Uhm, ah nanu syempre ing ah dumalan ta ngan karin I mean pa mag move forward mig move forward kami mu...basta mig move forward kasi kailangan para keng family mi din...Ala ita ing makantang way mu ah emi na emi na iisipan masyadu syempre atchu pa rin ing pamanghinayang or atchu pa rin ing pamag kayi pero move forward pa rin kailangan...Oh ibig sabihin sabi kupin so ibig sabyan kahit pakananu ah maka ah atchu nakami keng 70% na mekapag forward na move forward keng bie na balamu ala yu talaga."

"Uhm, ah, of course we will all go through there. I mean, when we move forward, we just move forward... We just move forward because it's necessary for our family as well... In such a way, we don't think about it too much of course there is still the regret or there is still something (Pain) but we still need to move forward... Oh I mean I said it so it means somehow, we are already there at 70% that we have moved forward, move forward in life

as if he's really gone." – Participant Selfless, Daughter of the deceased who died from Guam

Participant Selfless, a bereaved daughter of an OFW who died in Guam due to COVID-19 2 years ago. While enduring the pain of losing a father, she realized that everyone goes through the process of moving on. Even though the death was still painful and regretful, she moved forward for the sake of the family and did not dwell too much on the fact that her father was no longer there.

"Tapos lagi lang iisipin may mga love ones ka parin naghihintay sayo at andiyan para sayo na kailangan ka."

Then always think that you still have loved ones who are waiting for you and are there for you who needs you." – Participant Resilient, Wife of the deceased who died from America

Consequently, Participant Resilient, a bereaved wife of an OFW who died in America 1 year and 2 months ago due to COVID-19 shared her experiences as she recognized the importance of being there for her loved ones and chose to move forward in spite of her pain for the sake of her family. She demonstrates resilience and a strong sense of responsibility towards her loved ones. She was able to find the strength to persevere in the face of such a difficult loss and continue to support her loved ones.

Suppressing negative thoughts

Along with their motivation to continue living despite losing a loved one, the participants also reported that diverting their attention and avoiding excessive thinking aids in alleviating the pain. One of the participants emphasized that distracting oneself at work refrains from a recollection of the past.

"Aliku na masyadung isipan or aliku na masyadung kasi ah anyang bayu ya man anyang— bayung kamamate na laging— lagi kung mimisip bakit lagi kung mimisip."

"I don't think much anymore or I don't think much anymore because ah when after his— after the death that always— I always think why I always think."

– Participant Selfless, Daughter of the deceased who died from Guam

Participant Selfless, daughter of an OFW who died in Guam, believes that excessively thinking about her father's death is not helpful in her journey to move forward and accept the loss. She has learned to manage grief in a healthier way by finding ways to distract herself from constantly thinking about the loss of her OFW father.

"And pinokus ko nalang yung sarili ko dun sa trabaho ko since nagtatrabaho naman ako and dahil sa sobrang busy din sa work medyo nakakalimutan kodin yung mga masasakit na bagay or ala-ala na nangyari nga dun sa father ko."

"And I just focused myself on my work since I was working and because I was too busy at work, I kind of forgot the painful things or memories that happened to my father." – Participant Heroism, Son of the deceased who died from Saudi Arabia

In contrast to Participant Heroism, son of an OFW who died in Saudi Arabia due to COVID-19 1 year and 9 months ago. Yet instead of dwelling on the pain from the loss, he has been focusing on his work as a way to distract himself from painful memories related to his father.

Leaving everything in God's hand

Most participants turned to God when their presumed world began to collapse following the death of their loved one. In addition, the pain they have gone through paved the path for undying faith in God that everything that transpires has a purpose.

"Ahh, peg pasa diyos mi namu nung nanu man ing malyari, tanggapan me."

"I'll just leave it up to God and accept whatever happens." - Participant Selfless, Daughter of the deceased who died from Guam

Participant Selfless had suffered a profound loss with the death of her father, who was an OFW in Guam. Despite the immense emotional distress that she experienced, she demonstrated remarkable resilience and spiritual fortitude. Her statement, which asserted that whatever happened to her father

was in the God's hand and that she would accept it, even if it brought her pain, served as a testament to the transformative power of spirituality and faith in times of crisis. By embracing her spirituality, she found a way to navigate the complexities of grief and loss and demonstrated the strength and resilience that can come from a deep faith in one's beliefs.

"Kapag dumarating 'yong oras na naaalala ko si father ko, I am praying, nagdadasal nalang ako na siguro may ibang plano or mas magandang plano si Lord kung bakit nangyari 'yong mga bagay na 'yon. Siguro mas gusto niya nalang akong mas lalong tumatag 'yong mga ganung bagay, kumakapit lang ako kay Lord."

"When the time comes that I remember my father, I just pray that maybe the Lord has a different plan or a better plan for why those things happened, maybe he wants me to be stronger, things like that, I just hold onto the Lord." – Participant Heroism, Son of the deceased who died from Saudi Arabia

Similarly, Participant Heroism, a son of an OFW who died in Saudi Arabia, believes that God has a plan for the events that have occurred in his life, and that the purpose of these events may be to help him become stronger. He further has a strong faith in God and trusts in God's plan.

"Oo, oo hindi naman kasi importante na kailangan mo pakita sa ibang mga tao na nagdarasal ka na pumupunta ka sa simbahan, kahit na nasa bahay ka lang magdasal ka iyon ang pinakaimportante na marunong ka magdasal. Marami, minsan gusto ko na sumuko pero 'pag nakita ko 'yong mga anak ko, napapadasal nalang ako at humihingi ng tawad sa kanya. Oo, to be strong at lumakas 'yong faith ko kay God dahil doon."

"Yes, yes it's not important to show other people that you're praying by going to church. What's important is that you know how to pray, even if you're just at home... Sometimes I feel like giving up, but when I see my children, I start praying and asking for forgiveness... Yes, to be strong and my faith in God grew stronger because of that."

– Participant Resilient, Wife of the deceased who died from America

Therefore, Participant Resilient, a bereaved wife of an OFW who died in America, believes that it is more important to have a personal understanding and practice of prayer, rather than publicly demonstrating one's faith through actions such as going to church or showing others that one has prayed. She also experiences a desire to give up, but continues to pray and seek forgiveness in order to be strong and maintain her faith in God. It seems that her faith has grown stronger as a result of her husband's agonizing death and reliance on prayer.

Valuing social support system

In times of helplessness, most of the participants consistently mentioned the assistance they received from those around them. They are grateful that there are people willing to lend a hand for them in overcoming the despair caused by the death of a loved one. Additionally, they mentioned how crucial it is to have a support system that will stick by them at their most vulnerable moments.

"Siguru dahil din keng sawup na ning husband ku. A explain nang masalese kana—inexplain nang masalese kanaku. A explain kahit pakananu kung nanu ing sitwasyun."

"Maybe also because of my husband's help. That he explained properly to me-- that he explained at least what the situation was." – Participant Selfless, Daughter of the deceased who died from Guam

Prior to the Participant Selfless father's death in Guam, her husband played a role in helping to understand the situation by explaining it in a way that was easy to comprehend. This had an impact on her understanding of the father's condition before his death.

"Sa side ko naman suportado ako 'nong nanay ko at 'nong tatay ko at mga anak ko para bumawi at magsimula ulit. At 'yong mga ano, 'yong close friends ko hindi ako iniwan, lagi nila ako pinupuntahan kinakausap, na kahit minsan na tanga nalang sila na parang wala silang kinakausap, nagtyaga sila, 'yon lang."

"On my side, I am supported by my mother, father, and children to recover and start again... And those, my close friends never left me, they always came to

talk to me, even when they were stupid as if they weren't talking to anyone, they persevered, that's all." – Participant Resilient, Wife of the deceased who died from America

After all, Participant Resilient, a bereaved wife who was deprived to see her husband's last moment and funeral, expressed gratitude for the support of her family and the loyalty of close friends following her husband's death due to COVID-19. She noted that their unwavering support, constant communication, and efforts to reach out during this difficult time were a source of encouragement and helped her move forward in life.

Theme 5: Meaning-making in the aftermath of brokenness

Under this theme, participants were asked to unfold their narratives on how they create meaning out of their experiences after losing an OFW loved one. They have expressed various self-reflection and sentiments in relation to their loss which, according to them, to righteously adhere to safety ordinances and cherish every moment and every person in your life by the virtue of no one knows when will be the last time you will see them; thus, life is bounded to be unbelievably unpredictable. The participant narratives contain discernible qualities that may be classified into two sub themes: 1) *Adhering to rules and being vigilant*, 2) *Appreciating the value of life*

Adhering to rules and being vigilant

After thoroughly analyzing the narratives related to the theme, the participants' responses consistently encompass prioritizing their utmost safety before an unpleasant occurrence is even likely to take place. They realized that being eternally cautious in safeguarding their welfare must be their prime antecedence. Following precautionary measures and having a healthy lifestyle were notably their course of action to be vigilant.

"Ah okay ing emi ken is ali masyas a buntuk. Oh, abi mi pin after na nita meging meingat meging dobli ing ingat. Kayari sabi mi nga minsan ako kami siguro kailangan para mag ingat ka dapat ba talaga na atin pang malyari makanita ing kinayi mi kekaming mikapatad or kekami karing family mi, buri yu pamu ba na atin malyari o ayan kepalyanan ta na buri yu pa bang ulitan para mag diba maging

kasi ing sakit etanaman akakit. Atutunan mi na pag sinabi dang wag lalabas wag lalabas."

"Oh, okay on our end don't be stubborn. Oh, as we said after what happened we became more extra cautious. Then as we realized, is there really a need for something bad to happen before we even become careful like that? That's what my family and our siblings realize, do you want something bad to happen? Oh, there we already experienced it, do you still want to experience it again since the disease is invisible... We learned that when they say don't go outside then don't go outside." – Participant Selfless, Daughter of the deceased who died from Guam

Participant Selfless discovered the beauty of cherishing life, and seizing each moment while it lasts. She firmly believed that instead of putting off enjoyment until later, one should actively savor life. Her father, who she admired for his strength, was a poignant reminder of the significance of this philosophy. Furthermore, she imparted that life is fleeting, and we must not take it for granted, as death can come at any time.

"Mag-ingat, laging uminom ng vitamins at kumain ng gulay at ng prutas. Lahat ng bawal huwag mo ng gawin, sundin mo dapat 'yong nararapat, kung bawal, bawal."

"Be careful, always take vitamins and eat vegetables and also fruits... All the things that are forbidden, you must follow what is appropriate, if it is forbidden, it is forbidden." – Participant Resilient, Wife of the deceased who died from America

Nonetheless, Participant Resilient encouraged people to be cautious and to follow rules or guidelines that have been established, specifically in regards to healthy lifestyle to promote well-being.

Appreciating the value of life

Along with their vigilance behavior, the participants further apprehend memories as timeless treasures, hence it should be forever celebrated and enjoyed chiefly nowadays life can be easily taken away in just a glimpse. Above all, participants recognized the value of life at all stages as well as people's

existence. Furthermore, time has restricted the bereaved family member's chance to be together. Participants sorrowfully conveyed the value of golden time. Participants reported to not wait until it's too late to express affection and appreciation towards a loved one; to seize the moment and take every chance considering that nothing lasts for a lifetime. The following statements below characterizes this sub theme further:

“Ita pin pahalagahan ye ing, pahalagahan ing bie. Ah itreasure ing egana ing memories hanggang mabie, enjoy ing life mag ngening panahun ayni is mabili na ing bie...Eta balu ita pin lagi yang maging example i father ku malakas yang tau, malakas ya alang sakit pero magstart ya pa sanang mag enjoy king life at keng keng bie na pero ala enana aumpisan so itapin enjoy enjoy mu ing bie enjoy enjoy life habang mabie tamu kasi ta para kareng etamu balu kapilan.”

“That is why you value, value life. Treasure all the memories until you are alive, enjoy life because this time life is too fast... That knowledge that he is always an example of my father is a strong person, he is strong and doesn't have sick but he just going to start to enjoy life and to his to his life but none he does not start yet so that why just enjoy enjoy life enjoy enjoy life while we are still alive because that for there we do not know when.” – Participant Selfless, Daughter of the deceased who died from Guam

Participant Selfless learned to appreciate and value life, making the most of the time while she's still alive. She believed that it is imperative to enjoy life and make the most of one's time, rather than waiting until later. She also implied that life is short and that one should not take it for granted, as we do not know when it will end.

“I think ‘yong ano pagpapahalaga, pagpapahalaga kung ‘yong mga taong nasa paligid and kapag nariyan sila sulitin mo nalang ‘yong mga pagkakataon na kasama mo sila, kasi hindi naman habang panahon makakasama mo sila.”

“I think the appreciation, appreciation of the people around and when they're still there make the most of the opportunities with them, because

not all the time you are with them.” – Participant Heroism, Son of the deceased who died from Saudi Arabia

Subsequently, with a newfound appreciation for the people in his life, Participant Heroism has come to realize the importance of cherishing every moment spent with his loved ones. He firmly believed that expressing gratitude and valuing relationships is crucial, as our loved ones may not always be by our side. He further encouraged others to prioritize their relationships and make the most of their time with loved ones.

“Sobrang hirap kaya kung may time ka lagi mong sabihin sa mahal mo na mahal mo siya.”

“It's so difficult and if you have time, always tell your loved one that you love them.” – Participant Resilient, Wife of the deceased who died from America

Thus, Participant Resilient conveyed the difficulty and deep sadness of losing a loved one, since she was deprived of the opportunity to see and talk to her husband prior to death. She further emphasized the significance of expressing love and appreciation for loved ones while having the chance, as we all never know when it might be too late.

Discussion

This research delved into the lived experiences of Kapampangan bereaved families who lost their OFW loved ones due to COVID-19. In line with this, the demographic characteristics are also considered to highlight the unique and profound experiences they have encountered in the wake of their loss. The individual experiences of each participant are depicted below.

Participant Selfless, a 35-year-old female who lost her father in Guam two years ago, has a monthly income of 45 thousand pesos, is a college graduate, and currently works as a nurse, revealed that the unforeseen loss of her father, who had exhausted half of his life working overseas, has caused her to experience feelings of regret and recurring pain, compounded by the unfulfilled plans of returning home to the Philippines to celebrate Christmas with her father. Furthermore, two years have passed, yet

the agony of her loss persists. Worsening this suffering, they only had 2 hours to view her father's remains and afterwards directly cremated. Thereafter, her family endured a month-long wait for the repatriation of their father's ashes. Despite this lamentable experience, a renewed strength in the familial bond was established. Consequently, suppressing negative thoughts, lifting everything in God's hand, motivation to move forward for the family's sake, and through her husband's endless support, she managed to cope up. Apart from this, she realized the significance of adhering to rules and being vigilant, in the aftermath of loss.

Participant Heroism, a 25-year-old male college graduate currently employed as a call center agent with a monthly income of 24 thousand pesos, lost his father 21 months ago in Saudi Arabia expressed disbelief since he still had a high hope for his father's recovery who had worked overseas for over 11 years. Consequently, the weight of unexpected pain of loss heavily weighed on him as he was unable to do anything to ease his father's suffering. Heightening this, he had been expecting his father to return to the Philippines and stay permanently after the pandemic. Furthermore, all the planned trips and dreams together are now impossible to fulfill. Regrettably, fate had other plans as his father abruptly passed away, leaving him with lifetime regrets. This loss of hope for further plans and failure to reciprocate augmented his longing for emotional support. Moreover, he expressed his disbelief as he received the ashes of his father, returned to their home, in a package. Following that, he reflected on the length of time that had passed since their last interaction, only to see his father reduced to nothing but mere ashes upon arrival. Hence, the opportunity to perform traditional funeral practices was missed and relatives and friends were unable to be physically present to show their sympathy due to restrictions. Notwithstanding, a strengthened family relationship is established where communication and care is further fortified. However, a change of responsibility and financial misunderstandings and struggles arose within the unit. Consequently, coping through faith in God and suppressing all the negative thoughts aided him in dealing with the loss. Despite this brokenness, he learned to understand the value of people's

existence and cherish every moment with his remaining loved one.

Participant Resilient, a 42-year-old female call center agent, who is a college graduate and earns 22 thousand pesos monthly, lost her husband 14 months ago who had worked overseas for 4 years, and who passed away in America, shared a profound emotional yearning for the chance to hold her husband and offer him care and support, however it is beyond the realm of possibility. She showed a feeling of helplessness and hopelessness amidst an excruciating loss. Furthermore, she affirmed that she didn't know how to start again or who to talk to, she felt like the weight of the world had been placed on her shoulders. Augmenting this suffering, her husband's family didn't support their relationship. Consequently, she was deprived of a chance to see even her husband's ashes as it was promptly buried. Furthermore, no funeral wake was performed at all since it was prohibited. As an alternative she used a photograph as a replacement to mourn. Nonetheless, a renewed strength within the foundation of the family is established. Also, she narrated that she started to work again to sustain her family needs since her husband is no longer alive. Despite the ambiguous loss she had to endure, she managed to move forward for his kids, who were a source of her strength. Moreover, through faith in God and continued support from friends and family, she coped with the loss. Beyond what she had already gone through, she highlighted the relevance of showing love and appreciation to loved ones as possible and urged people to exercise vigilance and abide by established rules, particularly those that pertain to leading a healthy lifestyle that would promote wellbeing.

From this study, five central meanings were identified: 1) Suffering from excruciating pain and bereft of loved one, 2) Grieving process affected by deviation from traditional funeral practices, 3) Adapting to the familial changes brought about by the loss, 4) Coping up after an ambiguous loss, and lastly 5) Meaning-making in the aftermath of brokenness.

Following the participants' responses after the death of their OFW loved ones, it was conspicuous that suffering from excruciating pain was the primary

perceived experience. They reported that it was painful, and arduous to accept, and a sense of disbelief and endless suffering as it was an unimaginable and unexpected loss. This is consistent with the study conducted by (Walker, 2010), deaths were discerned as "untimely" and "unfair," often intensifying feelings of disbelief. All deaths are unplanned and lamentable; further, the sorrow of bereaved Kapampangan, who never had the chance to see nor touch their OFW loved ones' corpses before cremation, augmented their grieving process. Moreover, they repeatedly expressed a feeling of "*sobrang masakit*" (excruciating pain) to describe their unfortunate experiences. This posed endless sorrow and regret evoked over the plans that they had for the future. However, with the sudden and unforeseen loss of their loved ones, these plans were left unfulfilled and shattered. This added to the sense of grief and loss that the bereaved were already experiencing, as they were left to grapple with the reality that their loved one or significant component of their life would never return. Additionally, they found themselves constantly thinking about their deceased loved ones and longing to see them again or have one more moment with them, parallel to the study conducted by Conlon (2018). In light of this, it was formidable for the bereaved to accept finality and find closure after a loss. Furthermore, the inability in visiting the deceased's last resting place and the absence of closure heightened the sentiments of the yearning and longing of the bereaved.

Worsening this affliction, the deceased ashes were directly buried due to restrictions, thus, there was no traditional funeral held and no viewing of remains was carried out, and Fernández & González-Gonzalez (2020) reached a similar conclusion, which uncovered that no viewing of the body, and no funeral holding as desired. Hence, this deviation from traditional practices suggests that the pandemic has disrupted and significantly altered the typical Filipino mourning and bereavement customs, which aligns with the findings of (Menziez et al. 2020, as cited in Neimeyer & Lee, 2021). Deplorably, participants endured a month-long wait to receive the ashes and reported that the social systems had been stripped away due to precautionary measures, which is further supported by (Lapene, 2021).

After all, as reported by Bowen (2018), the equilibrium of a family unit is disturbed by the loss of a member. Notwithstanding, the unfortunate event has ultimately catalyzed a new start in the family dynamic, which led to the adaption of changes in the family relationships and a renewed sense of resiliency and strength. In addition, Walsh (2020) asserted that death displays a family's most agonizing adaptation challenges, but regardless of the adversities, participants narrated that their familial union had been fortified further and an open connection and supportiveness reinforced towards a brighter future together. Moreover, love remains their relationship's central and unifying element. On top of that, participant Heroism and Resilient asserted that financial struggles and adjustments arose as a result of a change in responsibility, analogous to the findings of a study by Corden & Hirst (2013), which revealed that death in a family lead to changes in roles and responsibilities among those remaining.

Without precarity, the transformed changes in the familial unit served as a tower of strength and solace in gradually adapting to the altered reality; as proclaimed by Corpuz (2021), it is critical to mourn what has been lost while finding purpose and hope in how life has changed. All participants narrated that their undying faith in God has provided additional strength and comfort during trying times which is in line with the study of (Mason et al., 2020), they recognized the significance of prayers and believed that everything that transpired had a purpose, as it was all God's plan. Furthermore, suppressing the negative events, such as distracting oneself at work and avoiding excessive thinking, assisted the participant in inhibiting the recollection of unacceptable occurrences and feelings. It is a common practice to seek yet obtain social support from other people (Broomhall & Philips, 2020), which assisted participants in coping as they averred that the endless social support from families and friends alleviated the sense of loneliness and isolation.

Finally, based on the participants' narratives, they moved forward together while fulfilling the assumed responsibility to function for their family's sake. Ultimately, after enduring an excruciating unforeseen loss, participants managed to make-

meaning out of their experiences, such as being vigilant and adhering to the established rules, appreciating the value of life, and living life to the fullest extent.

In contrast with the previous works of literature, this is the pioneer study to explore the in-depth experiences of Kapampangan bereaved families following the death of their OFW loved one due to COVID-19. This study sheds light on their experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms in the face of loss. Furthermore, it emphasized how the loss of an OFW who worked overseas for several years with no physical connection to their family has impacted and changed their lives as they received the remains of their loved one's ashes. Whereas findings conducted by Gamad et al., 2022 emphasized the changes to Filipino burial customs brought on by the pandemic as well as the significant roles played by connection, cultural values, and religious beliefs in Filipino grieving experiences.

Nonetheless, despite confronting adversities and setbacks, an OFWs' journey is marked by immeasurable sacrifices and dedication to providing a better life for their left-behind loved ones. The enduring separation of being miles away, as they work abroad for extended periods, is a testament to these individuals' heroism, resiliency, and selflessness. The cherished memories of their loved ones may fade over time but forever remain deeply ingrained in the minds and hearts of the bereaved. Moreover, even in the face of loss, the bereaved Kapampangan warrior continues to persevere, bravely navigating the challenges of their journey in pursuit of a meaningful and fulfilling life for the welfare of their own families.

Conclusion

This study explored the experiences of Kapampangan bereaved families following the death of their OFW loved ones. Hence, five central meanings emerged from the analysis of this research. ***"Suffering from excruciating pain and bereft of loved ones"*** is the first central meaning that emerged from this study. Participants perceived experiences after the death of their OFW loved one as excruciating, arduous to accept, infinite suffering, and a sense of disbelief as it was an

inconceivable and sudden loss. Hence, the abrupt loss leads to an excessive longing because of the inability to touch, show compassion, and fulfill all the promised plans with the deceased. The second central meaning emerged: ***"Grieving process affected by deviation from traditional funeral practices."*** Heightening the participants' anguish, the OFW's remains had already been cremated upon repatriation. In light of COVID restrictions, the participants were deprived of a chance to perform traditional funeral rituals and ceremonies to honor the deceased such as viewing the corpse, which friends and relatives primarily visit for over a week. Worst yet, they grieved even the inability to grieve. In addition, the third central meaning emerged was ***"Adapting to the familial changes brought about by the loss,"*** despite the undesirable occurrence, adapting to familial change in relationship has been fostered by the loss of their loved one. Participants narrated that the depth of their familial love has strengthened as they became united and supportive towards one another. Also, proper communication within the foundation unit was established. Undoubtedly, the strong bond built amongst the family members provides an unwavering strength and comfort in overcoming adversity amidst uncertainty to gradually cope with the loss. Following this, the fourth central meaning that arose in this research was ***"Coping up after an ambiguous loss"***. Several participants mentioned that they lifted everything to God, suppressed all the negative thoughts, and moved forward together while fulfilling the assumed responsibility to function for their family's sake. Finally, through endless social support from their families and friends, they managed to accept the loss of their OFW loved one. Lastly, the fifth central meaning emerged was ***"Meaning-making in the aftermath of brokenness"***. Regardless of all the challenges faced due to the unforeseen loss, the participants were able to find meaning out of their experiences and learned to adhere to rules and to be vigilant, appreciate and value life and people around them as they rebuilt their lives. Nevertheless, OFWs' heroism, selflessness, and resiliency will forever be etched into millions of Filipinos' hearts and memories. Indeed, ***"Sa kabila ng mga pagtanggap dulot ng pagkawala ng mga bagong bayani, ay siyang pagbangon para sa parating na umaga."***

(Despite the sorrowful cries caused by the loss of modern heroes, is the rising of a new tomorrow).

The endless sacrifices of OFWs by laboring in other nations were poignantly depicted in the narratives shared by the participants. These individuals left their beloved homeland and ventured to foreign lands to labor tirelessly, all for the sake of their families back home. The notion alone of being miles away was already a challenge, what more upon their repatriation, they were reduced to mere ash. This study has proven that the suffering of losing an OFW loved one without the chance to say goodbye is unparalleled. Hence, the experiences brought by the loss caused a range of complex emotions including disbelief, regrets for unfulfilled plans, and excruciatingly painful yet meaningful and purposeful for the bereaved. Augmenting this suffering, the grieving process was greatly affected by deviation from traditional funeral practices. Hence, to mourn for what has been lost was stripped away. Despite the adversities, the bereaved families adapted to the changes in the familial unit brought about by the loss. Consequently, faith in God, drive to continue, suppression of negative thoughts, and social support were revealed as a way to cope after an ambiguous loss. In line with this, regardless of gender, age, educational attainment, or employment status, all first-degree relatives of the deceased were left to confront the same level of suffering. However, despite their diverse backgrounds, the grieving process is still a universal experience that affected the participants in a similar way. Furthermore, they faced numerous challenges in dealing with the aftermath of their loss. On the other hand, socioeconomic status has a significant impact on the experience of Kapampangan bereaved, and Chemube & Omumu (2011) reached a similar conclusion, which revealed that socioeconomic status was a factor that affects the experience of bereavement. Hence, researchers highly recommended taking into consideration socioeconomic status to further standardize the participants and make a nuanced understanding of bereavement in a consistent context.

Furthermore, this study was limited in scope to first-degree Kapampangan families who have experienced bereavement due to COVID-19-related deaths of their OFW loved ones overseas. However,

the researchers encountered several challenges in finding potential participants who met the qualifications set for the study. Upon recruiting potential participants, two (2) were identified who met the criteria of PG-13; thus, following the ethical consideration, they were accordingly excluded from participating in this study to protect their welfare. Subsequently, researchers referred the unqualified participants to a registered psychologist with their consent. Additionally, locating first-degree bereaved relatives arose as a challenge, as many were reluctant to discuss their loss due to the pain it caused them. Hence, efforts were made to reach out to agencies for OFWs for additional participants, but requests for information were denied due to privacy concerns.

Consequently, participants who took part in the interview process reported feeling a sense of healing and emotional relief. This aligns with the findings of Butler (2019), which revealed that interviews in sensitive research as therapeutic and beneficial, despite being emotionally difficult. In addition, this study would contribute to the body of literature on bereavement and provide valuable insights for healthcare providers, researchers, and policymakers in addressing the needs of bereaved families during the pandemics, thereby highlighting the need for more inclusive and culturally-sensitive support and interventions.

References

- Aguiar, A., Pinto, M., & Duarte, R. (2020). Grief and Mourning during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Portugal. *Acta Médica Portuguesa*, 33(13). Doi:10.20344/amp.14345
- Aguiar, A., Pinto, M., & Duarte, R. (2022). A qualitative study on the impact of death during COVID-19: Thoughts and feelings of Portuguese bereaved adults. *Plos one*, 17(4), e0265284.
- Ariate, R. J., Cruz, R. J., Dimaculangan, J., & Tibayan, C. (2015). The Role of Facebook in Sustaining Relationships Among Families of OFW. *LPU Laguna Journal of Arts and Sciences Communication Research*, 2(1).

- Asgari, Z., Naghavi, A., & Abedi, M. R. (2021). Beyond a traumatic loss: The experiences of mourning alone after parental death during COVID-19 pandemic. *Death studies*, *46*(1), 78–83. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2021.1931984>
- Baclig, C.E. (2021, July 29). OFW burden grows heavier as relief, justice fall through system gaps. Inquirer.Net. Retrieved from: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1466537/ofw-burden-grows-heavier-as-relief-justice-fall-through-system-gaps#ixzz7U2CF03lo>
- Bautista, A. & Tamayo, V. (2020). Life Challenges of Overseas Filipino Workers. *Scientific Research: An Academic Publisher*, *7*(10). DOI: 10.4236/oalib.1106854
- Bayani, D. B. S., & Tan, S. G. (2021). *Health Systems Impact of COVID-19 in the Philippines*. Center for Global Development.
- Bentley, B., & O'Connor, M. (2015). *Conducting Research Interviews with Bereaved Family Carers: When Do We Ask?* *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, *18*(3), 241–245. Doi:10.1089/jpm.2014.0320
- Bernardo, A. I., Daganzo, M. A. A., & Ocampo, A. C. G. (2018). Abusive supervision and well-being of Filipino migrant workers in Macao: Consequences for self-esteem and heritage culture detachment. *Social Indicators Research*, *139*, 277–292. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11205-016-1446-7>
- Bloomer, M. J., & Walshe, C. (2021). Smiles behind the masks: A systematic review and narrative synthesis exploring how family members of seriously ill or dying patients are supported during infectious disease outbreaks. *Palliative medicine*, *35*, 1452–1467. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02692163211029515>
- Borghi, L., & Menichetti, J. (2021). Strategies to cope with the COVID-related deaths among Family Members. *Front Psychiatry*. Doi: 10.3389/fpsy.2021.622850
- Broomhall A. G., Phillips W. J. (2020). Collective harmony as a moderator of the association between other-referent upward counterfactual thinking and Depression. *Cogent Psychology*, *7*(1), 1714833. 10.1080/23311908.2020.1714833
- Burrell, A. & Selman., L. E. (2020). How do Funeral Practices impact Bereaved Relatives' Mental Health, Grief and Bereavement? A Mixed Methods Review with Implications for COVID-19. *OMEGA—Journal of Death and Dying*. DOI: 10.1177/0030222820941296
- Butler, A. E., Copnell, B., & Hall, H. (2019). *Researching people who are bereaved: Managing risks to participants and researchers*. *Nursing Ethics*, *26*(1), 224-234.
- Capistrano, L. O., & Sta. Maria, M. L. C. (2010). (DP 2007-06) The Impact of International Labor Migration and OFW Remittances on Poverty in the Philippines. *UPSE Discussion Papers*. <https://econ.upd.edu.ph/dp/index.php/dp/article/view/68>
- Cennimo, D., Bronze, M. S., & Olsen, K. M. (2020). Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): practice essentials, background, route of transmission. 2020.
- Chan, Z. C., Fung, Y. L., & Chien, W. T. (2013). Bracketing in phenomenology: Only undertaken in the data collection and analysis process. *The qualitative report*, *18*(30), 1-9. <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.913.458&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Cleofas, J. V., Eusebio, M. C. S., & Pacudan, E. J. P. (2021). Anxious, apart, and attentive: A qualitative case study of overseas Filipino workers' families in the time of COVID-19. *The Family Journal*, 10664807211006339. Doi:10.1177/10664807211006339
- Coconut Manila (2020, July 10). Bodies of 49 Filipino workers who died in Saudi Arabia arrive in Pasay City. Retrieved from: https://coconuts.co/manila/news/bodies-of-49-filipino-workers-who-died-in-saudi-arabia-arrive-in-pasay-city/?fbclid=IwAR07BKd7pMU-Ogbx4AGd-WUqomJXklv8Z8i1I4z8HQG0BTu_DiaCy1pBKqs

- Corpuz, J. C. G. (2021). From grieving to healing: moving forward a year after COVID-19. *Journal of Public Health, 43*(2), e403–e404. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdab099>
- Cosalan, S. M. B. (2010). Study on the overseas Filipino worker: A general profile. *KDI School of Public Policy and Management*.
- Curtin, M., & Fossey, E. (2007). *Appraising the trustworthiness of qualitative studies: Guidelines for occupational therapists. Australian Occupational Therapy Journal, 54*(2), 88–94. Doi:10.1111/j.1440-1630.2007.00661.x
- Das, S., Singh, T., Varma, R., & Arya, Y. K. (2021). Death and mourning process in frontline health care professionals and their families during COVID-19. *Frontiers in Psychiatry, 12*, 624428.
- De Borja, J. A. (2021). Overseas Filipino workers and the COVID-19 pandemic: Exploring the emotional labor of persistence. *Emotion, Space and Society, 41*, 100838. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2021.100838>
- Denckla, C., Koenen, K., & Shear, K. (2020). Managing Bereavement around the Coronavirus (COVID-19). Columbia University. <https://complicatedgrief.columbia.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Managing-Bereavement-Around-COVID-19-HSPH.pdf>
- Department of Labor and Employment (2020, September 29). DOLE monitors Covid cases overseas; assures aid to OFWs. Retrieved from: <https://www.dole.gov.ph/news/dole-monitors-covid-cases-overseas-assures-aid-to-ofws/>
- Dispatch (2018, November 2). Filipino workers working to stay in touch with their own culture. The NYU Dispatch. <https://wp.nyu.edu/dispatch/2018/11/02/filipino-workers-working-to-stay-in-touch-with-their-own-culture/>
- Eisma, M. C., Tamminga, A., Smid, G. E., & Boelen, P. A. (2021). Acute grief after deaths due to COVID-19, natural causes and unnatural causes: An empirical comparison. *Journal of Affective Disorders, 278*, 54–56. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2020.09.049>
- Esguerra, D. J. (2020, July 16). 31 Filipinos in Kuwait die of COVID-19, including 4 medical frontliners. Inquirer.net. Retrieve from: <https://globalnation.inquirer.net/189518/31-filipinos-in-kuwait-die-of-covid-19-including-4-medical-frontliners>
- Fagundes C. P., Brown R. L., Chen M. A., Murdock K. W., Saucedo L., LeRoy A., Heijnen C. (2019). Grief, depressive symptoms, and inflammation in the spousally bereaved. *Psychoneuroendocrinology, 100*(1), 190–197. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psyneuen.2018.10.006>
- Farahmandnia, B., Hamdanieh, L., & Aghababaeian, H. (2020). COVID-19 and Unfinished Mourning. *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine, 35*(4), 464. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s1049023x20000631>
- Fernández, Ó., & González-González, M. (2020). The dead with no wake, grieving with no closure: Illness and death in the days of coronavirus in Spain. *Journal of Religion and Health, 1-19*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-020-01078-5>
- Galvin, J., Richards, G., & Smith, A. P. (2020). A Longitudinal Cohort Study Investigating Inadequate Preparation and Death and Dying in Nursing Students: Implications for the Aftermath of the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Frontiers in Psychology, 11*. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.02206>
- Gamad, M. J. G., Managuio, P. D. V., Pastor, M. A. A., Ariola, A. G. G., Diane, M. G. A., & Silva, R. P. (2022). The Lived Experiences of Bereaved Filipino Families of the Deceased Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. *OMEGA-Journal of Death and Dying, 00302228221129669*.
- Garabiles, M. R., Ofreneo, M. A. P., & Hall, B. J. (2017). Towards a model of resilience for transnational families of Filipina domestic workers. *PloS one, 12*(8), e0183703. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0183703>

- Gavilan, J. (2015, December 05). What you need to know about overseas Filipino workers. *Rappler*. Retrieved from: <https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/iq/114549-overseas-filipino-workers-facts-figures>
- Giannopoulou, I., Bitsakou, P., Ralli, E., Chatzis, F., & Papadatou, D. (2018). Addressing cultural issues in grief counseling with immigrants: The case of a bereaved Filipino family following homicide. *The European Journal of Counselling Psychology*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.5964/ejcop.v7i1.149>
- Go, M. C., & Docot, D. (2021). Fire and fear: Rapid cremations in the Philippines amidst COVID-19. *Forensic Science International: Synergy*, 3. Doi: 10.1016/j.fsisyn.2020.100132
- Gonçalves Júnior, J., Moreira, M. M., & Rolim Neto, M. L. (2020). *Silent Cries, Intensify the Pain of the Life That Is Ending: The COVID-19 Is Robbing Families of the Chance to Say a Final Goodbye*. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 11. doi:10.3389/fpsy.2020.570773
- Gopez, J. M. W. (2021). Hope as fundamental human response to loss and grief experiences in the time of COVID-19. *Journal of Public Health*, 43(2), e332-e333. <https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdab042>
- Goveas, J. S., & Shear, M. K. (2021). Grief and the COVID-19 pandemic in older adults. *Focus*, 19(3), 374-378. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.focus.19303>
- Hamid, W., & Jahangir, M. S. (2020). Dying, Death and Mourning amid COVID-19 Pandemic in Kashmir: A Qualitative Study. *OMEGA - Journal of Death and Dying*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0030222820953708>
- Harrop, E., Mann, M., Semedo, L., Chao, D., Selman, L. E., & Byrne, A. (2020). What elements of a systems' approach to bereavement are most effective in times of mass bereavement? A narrative systematic review with lessons for COVID-19. *Palliative medicine*, 34(9), 1165-1181. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0269216320946273>
- Hernández-Fernández, C & Meneses-Falcón C. (2021). I can't believe they are dead. Death and mourning in the absence of goodbyes during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Health Soc Care Community*. DOI: 10.1111/hsc.13530
- Hooghe, A., Claeys, A., Thompson, B., Neimeyer, R., & Rober, P. (2021). Grieving the Loss of a Child in Times of COVID-19. *Couple and Family Psychology: Research and Practice*, 10(4), 313-325. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cfp0000180>
- Jackson, D., Bradbury-Jones, C., Baptiste, D., Gelling, L., Morin, K., Neville, S., & Smith, G. D. (2020). Life in the pandemic: Some reflections on nursing in the context of COVID-19. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 29(13-14), 2041-2043. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.15257>
- Joaquim, R. M., Pinto, A. L., Guatimosim, R. F., de Paula, J. J., Souza Costa, D., Diaz, A. P., da Silva, A. G., Pinheiro, M. I., Serpa, A. L., Miranda, D. M., & Malloy-Diniz, L. F. (2021). Bereavement and psychological distress during COVID-19 pandemics: The impact of death experience on mental health. *Current Research in Behavioral Sciences*, 2, 100019. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.crbeha.2021.100019>
- Johnsen, I. & Afgun, K. (2020). Complicated Grief and Post-Traumatic Growth in Traumatically Bereaved Siblings and Close Friends. *Journal of Loss and Trauma*, 1-14. Doi:10.1080/15325024.2020.1762972
- Kampf, G., Todt, D., Pfaender, S., & Steinmann, E. (2020). Persistence of coronaviruses on inanimate surfaces and their inactivation with biocidal agents. *Journal of Hospital Infection*, 104(3), 246-251. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhin.2020.01.022>
- Keyes, K. M., Pratt, C., Galea, S., McLaughlin, K. A., Koenen, K. C., & Shear, M. K. (2014). The Burden of Loss: Unexpected Death of a Loved One and Psychiatric Disorders Across the Life Course in a National Study. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 171, 864-871. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2014.13081132>

- Kumar, R. M. (2021). The Many Faces of Grief: A Systematic Literature Review of Grief During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *sagepub.com/journals-permissions* DOI: 10.1177/10541373211038084
- Lapeña, Jr, J. F. (2021). Death and Dying During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Tahan Na, Humimlay. *Philippine Journal of Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery*, 36(1), 4. <https://doi.org/10.32412/pjohns.v36i1.1667>
- Lee, S. A., & Neimeyer, R. A. (2020). Pandemic Grief Scale: A screening tool for dysfunctional grief due to a COVID-19 loss. *Death Studies*, 46(1), 14–24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2020.1853885>
- Lee, S. A. (2019). Persistent complex bereavement symptoms explain impairments above depression, post-traumatic stress, and separation anxiety: An incremental validity study. *Death Studies*, 43(10), 634–638. <https://doi.org/10.1080>
- LeRoy, A. S., Robles, B., Kilpela, L. S., & Garcini, L. M. (2020). Dying in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic: Contextual considerations and clinical recommendations. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 12(S1), S98–S99. <https://doi.org/10.1037/tra0000818>
- Lucenesio, A. [Abeto Lucenesio]. (2022, May 16). OFW's: The Distortion of Modern Heroes - FCW SA2 (Video Essay). Youtube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ERq5LjEvCN0>
- Lui, I. D., Vandan, N., Davies, S. E., Harman, S., Morgan, R., Smith, J., Wenham, C., & Grépin, K. A. (2021). “We also deserve help during the pandemic”: The effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on foreign domestic workers in Hong Kong. *Journal of Migration and Health*, 3, 100037. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jmh.2021.100037>
- Mapa, C. D. S. (2020). Total number of OFWs estimated at 2.2 million. *Philippine Statistics Authority*, 4. <https://psa.gov.ph/content/total-number-ofws-estimated-22-million>
- Mason, T. M., Tofthagen, C. S., & Buck, H. G. (2020). Complicated grief: risk factors, protective factors, and interventions. *Journal of social work in end-of-life & palliative care*, 16(2), 151-174. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15524256.2020.1745726>
- Mayland, C. R., Harding, A. J., Preston, N., & Payne, S. (2020). Supporting Adults Bereaved Through COVID-19: A Rapid Review of the Impact of Previous Pandemics on Grief and Bereavement. *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*, 60(2), e33–e39. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2020.05.012>
- Mental Health America. (2022). Bereavement and Grief. <https://www.mhanational.org/bereavement-and-grief>
- Mortazavi, S. S., Shahbazi, N., Taban, M., Alimohammadi, A., & Shati, M. (2021). Mourning during corona: A phenomenological study of grief experience among close relatives during COVID-19 pandemics. *OMEGA-Journal of Death and Dying*, 00302228211032736.
- Muhammed, S. A., & Idowu, A. I. (2020). Grief reactions of bereaved spouses in ilorin metropolis, kwara state, Nigeria. <https://uilspace.unilorin.edu.ng/bitstream/handle/20.500.12484/6482/Convenant%20journal%20Muhammed%20SA%20and%20Adeyemi.pdf?sequence=1>
- Neimeyer, R. A., & Lee, S. A. (2021). Circumstances of the death and associated risk factors for severity and impairment of COVID-19 grief. *Death Studies*, 46(1), 34–42. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2021.1896459>
- Noon, E. J. (2018). Interpretive phenomenological analysis: An appropriate methodology for educational research. *Journal of Perspectives in Applied Academic Practice*, 6(1).
- Number of coronavirus (COVID-19) cases among overseas Filipino workers (OFW). (2022, January 25). Statista. Retrieved from: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1243709/philippines-overseas->

workers-coronavirus-cases/?fbclid=IwAR0FAZ6IkcizEWW-vUxIyR4uqIJTVNnu6pE6Zr36vAdtJndbBwC0x_jQM5E

Oliveira-Cardoso E. A., Silva B. C. A., Santos J. H., Lotério L. S., Accoroni A. G., & Santos, M. A. (2020). The effect of suppressing funeral rituals during the COVID-19 pandemic on bereaved families. *Rev. Latino-Am. Enfermagem*. 2020;28: e3361. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/1518-8345.4519.3361>.

Osewe, P. L. (2021). *Pandemic Preparedness and Response Strategies: COVID-19 Lessons from the Republic of Korea, Thailand, and Viet Nam*. Asian Development Bank.

Parrocha, A. (2020, June 21). 50 OFWs who died of Covid-19 to be buried in Saudi Arabia. Philippine News Agency. Retrieved from: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1106552>

Pringle, J., Drummond, J., McLafferty, E., & Hendry, C. (2011). Interpretative phenomenological analysis: a discussion and critique. *Nurse researcher*, 18(3), 20–24. <https://doi.org/10.7748/nr2011.04.18.3.20.c8459>

Ragma, M. & Molina, J. P. (2018). Angst of Warriors: The Fears of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). *Research Gate*. DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.24373.17126

Riordan P. A., Price M., Robbins-Welty G. A., Leff V., Jones C. A., Prigerson H. G., Galanos A. (2020). Top ten tips palliative care clinicians should know about bereavement and grief. *Journal of Palliative Medicine*, 23(8), 1098–1103. 10.1089/jpm.2020.0341

Rocamora, A. J. L. (2020, March 28). *Gov't issues funeral guidelines for deceased Covid-19 patients*. Philippine News Agency. https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1098090?fbclid=IwAR00JpuDhwYofVyY5iHtR_Z8Fq4VvJvbTwwa3no90LUV_0I_RMiIaUsUJvc

Scheinfeld, E., Gangi, K., Nelson, E. C., & Sinardi, C. C. (2022). Please scream inside your heart:

Compounded loss and coping during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Health Communication*, 37(10), 1316-1328. DOI: 10.1080/10410236.2021.1886413

Selman, L. E., Chao, D., Sowden, R., Marshall, S., Chamberlain, C., & Koffman, J. (2020). Bereavement support on the frontline of COVID-19: recommendations for hospital clinicians. *Journal of pain and symptom management*, 60(2), e81-e86. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2020.04.024>

Simonsen, G., & Cooper, M. (2015). Helpful aspects of bereavement counselling: An interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 15(2), 119-127.

Smid, G. E. (2020). A framework of meaning attribution following loss. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 11(1), 1776563. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20008198.2020.1776563>

Smith, J. A., & Fieldsend, M. (2021). Interpretative phenomenological analysis. American Psychological Association. *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: American Psychological Association*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000252-008>

Smith, J. A., & Osborn, M. (2007). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. American Psychological Association. <https://medecine-generale.sorbonne-universite.fr/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Interpretative-Phenomenological-Analysis.pdf>

Smith, J. A. & Osborn, M. (2007). Pain as an assault on the self: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of the psychological impact of chronic benign low back pain. *Psychology & Health*, 22(5), 517–534. Doi:10.1080/14768320600941756

Smith, J. A., Jarman, M., & Osborn, M. (1999). Doing interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative health psychology: Theories and methods*, 1(1), 218-240.

- Stroebe, M., Schut, H., & Stroebe, W. (2007). Health outcomes of bereavement. *Lancet*, 370(9603), 1960–1973. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(07\)61816-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(07)61816-9)
- Stroebe, M., & Schut, H. (2021). Bereavement in times of COVID-19: A review and theoretical framework. *OMEGA-Journal of Death and Dying*, 82(3), 500–522. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0030222820966928>
- Sun, Y., Bao, Y., & Lu, L. (2020). Addressing mental health care for the bereaved during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences*, 74(7), 406–407. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pcn.13008>
- Swartwood, R. M., Veach, P. M., Kuhne, J., Lee, H. K., & Ji, K. (2011). Surviving grief: An analysis of the exchange of hope in online grief communities. *OMEGA-Journal of Death and Dying*, 63(2), 161–181.
- Tigno, J. (2021). Beyond business as usual: Philippine labor outmigration and the COVID-19 pandemic. *UP CIDS Discussion Paper 2021-05, University of the Philippines*, 1–28.
- Tomacruz, S. (2020, June 21). Saudi Arabia asks PH to bring home bodies of deceased OFWs. Retrieved from <https://www.rappler.com/nation/264416-saudi-arabia-asks-philippines-bring-home-bodies-deceased-ofws/>
- Tripathi, R., Alqahtani, S. S., Albarraq, A. A., Meraya, A. M., Tripathi, P., Banji, D., Alshahrani, S., Ahsan, W., & Alnakhli, F. M. (2020). Awareness and Preparedness of COVID-19 Outbreak Among Healthcare Workers and Other Residents of South-West Saudi Arabia: A Cross-Sectional Survey. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2020.00482>
- Tuffour, I. (2017). A Critical Overview of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis: A Contemporary Qualitative Research Approach. *Journal of Healthcare Communications*, 2(04). <https://doi.org/10.4172/2472-1654.100093>
- Vahdani, B., Javadi, S. M. H., Sabzi Khoshnami, M., & Arian, M. (2020). Grief Process and the COVID-19 Pandemic: Wise Intervention in Vulnerable Groups and Survivors. *Iranian Journal of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences*, 14(2). <https://doi.org/10.5812/ijpbs.103855>
- Vargas, M. C., Garabiles, M. R., & Hall, B. J. (2020). Narrative identities of overseas Filipino domestic worker community in Macao (SAR) China. *Journal of community psychology*, 48(3), 977–993. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.22318>
- Wallace, C., Wladkowski, S., Gibson, A., & White, P. (2020). Grief During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Considerations for Palliative Care Providers. *Journal of Pain and Symptom Management*, (), S0885392420302074–. doi: 10.1016/j.jpainsymman.2020.04.012
- Walsh, F. (2020). Loss and Resilience in the Time of COVID-19: Meaning Making, Hope, and Transcendence. *Family Process*, 59(3), 898–911. <https://doi.org/10.1111/famp.12588>
- Weir, K. (2020, April 1). Grief and COVID-19: Mourning our bygone lives. <https://www.apa.org/news/apa/2020/grief-covid-19>
- Who are Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs)?. (2021, August 31). Azimo Blog. Retrieved from: <https://blog.azimo.com/en/living-abroad/overseas-filipino-workers>
- Wirth, L. (2019). Normalizing the Grieving Process. American Addiction Centers. Retrieved from: <https://recovery.org/pro/articles/normalizing-the-grieving-process/>
- Zhai, Y. & Du, X. (2020). Loss and Grief amidst COVID-19: A Path to Adaptation and Resilience, Brain, Behavior, and Immunity. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bbi.2020.04.053/>