

Positivity during the Global Pandemic Among Malaysians Covid-19 Frontliners: A Pilot Study

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ABSTRACT

The positive COVID-19 cases in Malaysia have, at one point, reached up to 24,599, which is unsolicited and often seen as a challenge for frontliners. The medical system in Malaysia is at stake, while the frontliners find it hard to accept the hurdle as days go by with situations that cause them to not only be exhausted physically but psychologically. A pilot study is initiated to look into the plights faced by the frontliners, before the main study. The purpose of this pilot study is to improve the interview questions, as well as upgrade the overall research design. It also hoped that the meaning in life as an intervention among the Malaysian COVID-19 frontliners during the outbreak can be discovered. This study emphasized the qualitative research method with the interpretative phenomenological research design to collect data. With purposive and snowballing sampling techniques, two COVID-19 hospital and clinic healthcare workers, with inclusion criteria of giving service during the pandemic by caring and supervising patients directly or indirectly, were recruited from Selangor and Kuala Lumpur. The themes that emerged from the data analysis included principal progression, mutual inclusion, religious affiliation, community empowerment, unique mannerism, and self-actualization. In this pilot study, six (6) main revelations were uncovered: (1) Malaysian frontliners could preserve their meaning in life by mainly attributing to career engagement. They could be responsible for the coming generations since they recognize it as the progression of their life. (2) As perceived by the frontliners, home is where their love and inspiration are bound as they confront occupational stress. The support and motivation from their wives, children, and other family members, is the factor that makes them remain positive and understand their meaning in life. Understanding companions that could foster their human connection could help defeat the dreadful COVID-19 infection. (3) As Malaysia is a multicultural country with multiple religious beliefs being freely practised, it would appear that religion is one of the clearest telescopes through which the frontliners can behold the beauty of meaning in life. It allows them to undergo personal devotion by the concept of life after life while referring to the spiritualism that they believe in. (4) In that manner, their heart would be surrounded by generosity, and they call attention to social welfare. They strive to give back to the community and be role models to the patients by enlightening the illiterate. Frontliners are apt to depend on the social circumstances accompanying emotional support from their peers, as they receive collective reinforcement to form social inclusivity and achieve social transformation. (5) They are considerate of their action by utilizing the happiness set-point theory, together with the try-and-error concept. Undeniably, the COVID-19 outbreak has diminished their meaningful life, while they strive to have the positive anticipation by owning a characteristic to count on blessing with genuineness and gratefulness. (6) Despite having the desire for acknowledgment like recognition, Malaysian frontliners contemplate for the better with self-motivation and self-reflection to look after their mental and physical health. Meaning in life for Malaysian COVID-19 frontliners is abruptly declining due to the recent spike in cases with critical variants. Fortunately, they could achieve their life satisfaction with their meaning in life belatedly to generate positivity during the global pandemic as a frontline.

Keywords: meaning in life; COVID-19 pandemic; frontliners; Malaysia; a qualitative study