

BUY-anihan: The impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the life of food delivery riders

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Abstract: The purpose of this phenomenological study is to identify and understand the experiences of food delivery riders in the Philippines and how Filipino food delivery riders cope with the struggles they face before and amidst the pandemic. A semi-structured online video call interview through social media was utilized to a sample of five male food delivery riders ages 22-45 years old, working in online delivery companies. Researchers used interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) with coding techniques (*descriptive, emotion, and in-vivo*) to analyze and interpret the responses. The generated codes for all the participants were clustered to form final themes. As a result, four main themes were (1) *Struggles experienced by Food delivery riders*, (2) *Difficult customers*, (3) *Developed coping strategies*, and (4) *Emotions felt by the food delivery riders* with the inclusion of their corresponding subthemes. The findings discussed the challenges and difficulties food delivery drivers face and how they approached these negative work experiences. Implications on improving working conditions and work benefits were areas of paramount concern.

Keywords: online motorcycle riders; mobile app transactions; working conditions; small enterprise; pandemic

1. Introduction

The benefits of online food delivery (FD) were evident during this COVID19 outbreak, as it facilitated customer access to prepare meals and allowed food providers to keep operating. Because of the demand for order delivery, online food delivery riders would have a more significant advantage. The researchers have recognized the significance of constructing the meaning of experiences from continuous food delivery employees, who have long-term experience in food delivery, a provider to their family, and possibly a veteran to the field to consider their adjustment to this pandemic. However, a lack of research focuses on the riders themselves as most articles are present in a foreign context. Most literature discusses the economic and well-being adjustment the overseas FDR's have faced during this pandemic (Li et al., 2020). The absence of the Filipino context has led the researchers to study food delivery riders since there is a difference in employment styles and work guidelines between the Philippines and other countries. The unanticipated gaps in related literature include the lack of information about the challenges and insights at work that continuous food riders have faced before and amidst this pandemic.

Food delivery systems run by Food and Beverage firms this Covid-19 pandemic has significantly increased the growth of Food Delivery Riders (FDR). Hence, this qualitative study aims to explore and understand the FDR's experiences in the Filipino context of the challenges they encountered during this Covid-19 Pandemic compared to their experiences before the pandemic. The study also sought to know their perception of those difficulties and their coping strategies. Additionally, this study accepts different perspectives and will provide insights not just to the readers but also to food delivery riders themselves in the context of the Filipino.

1.1 The Surge of Food Deliveries

Over the last few months, delivery and take-outs have become a lifeline for restaurants across the globe. Although the COVID-19 pandemic is the biggest threat that the industry could have ever encountered, it does highlight the extraordinary resilience of restaurants that are changing their entire business model overnight. Doing whatever they can to adapt to the crisis and remain open to providing take-out and delivery service for their customers (Odou, 2020). Currently, internet-based platforms are the leading roles in this technological transition. They are unquestionably at the center of the digital economy today (Lattanzi, 2020). Thanks to the increasing mobile app transactions, the use of these online platforms, also known as third-party delivery, arose (Stanley, 2020).

In the Philippines, most major fast-food chains remained open for dine-in and take-out, though they utilized strict sanitation and social distancing measures. According to Go (2018), in his interview with the general manager for contact center and food delivery of Max's Group Inc., Icel Penalosa, it is difficult to determine how massive the Philippines' online food delivery industry is. Though almost 8 million people in the Philippines used online food delivery services in 2018, the food delivery businesses were worth around 11 million. These proved that online food delivery had shown an increase in demand with the emergence of numbers of food delivery applications and some of which have shown some great popularity, particularly in the Philippines, some of which are Foodpanda Philippines, Lalafood, Grab Food, and Zomato PH (Matt, 2020). These online food delivery companies existed before the COVID-19 pandemic, thus the need for Food. At the same time, most restaurants and shops had shut down during the crisis, the list of individual online food delivery businesses will not stop. It was evident when the Angkas app, known for its motorcycle taxi services, also launched its food delivery application, Angkas Food, to help riders earn amidst the community quarantine (Malasig, 2020). Therefore, even though people cannot visit their favorite restaurants or shops, foods from these restaurants can still be served in their respective homes.

However, these possibly create additional competition for the online delivery companies and their employees. Many have then lessened their delivery rates, and some have even engaged in free deliveries.

According to the website article published by Ines (2020), many online platforms have also chosen to decrease or at least reduce their delivery fees to make them more available to those who need them. Thus, in the first week of quarantine, LalaFood has lowered the delivery charge to P20 only while the company also gave customers a discount code. On the other hand, Foodpanda also announced its free delivery program as the community quarantine began.

As the COVID-19 crisis became evident all over the world, the online delivery application was the focus of previous studies and articles (Shead, 2020; Li et al., 2020; Rosenblat & Stark, 2016), including the pandemic and its effects on their sample participants (Riordan et al., 2020; Goods et al., 2019). Previous studies have also presented the mental health and well-being of food delivery drivers or couriers and their financial difficulty amidst the crisis (Apouey et al., 2020; Feng, 2020). In contrast, our research study mainly focused on the experiences of food delivery drivers during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also included how they coped with the challenges of being a food delivery driver during this time of crisis. Researchers specifically asked the two fundamental questions, (a) What are the experiences of food delivery riders during the COVID19 pandemic? (b) How do FDRs continue to strive in their job, especially with the additional challenges brought by the ongoing pandemic?

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Paradigm and Design

A constructivist worldview was utilized in this study to gain various insights and perceptions regarding the lived experiences of Filipino Food Delivery Riders. In constructivism, the goal is to rely as much as possible on the participants' view of the circumstances (Creswell, J. W. & Creswell, D. J., 2018). To fully extract the descriptions and meaning of participants' worldviews, an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was adopted where researchers use their interpretative lens to examine the participants' realities. IPA is recognized as phenomenological for it delves into the participant's major life stories, individual experiences, and personal construction of events before arriving at more extensive claims within the social context (Aringo & Diego, 2021).

2.2 Researcher's Role

The researchers are aware that they and the participants hold an essential role in the phenomenological approach that the study utilized. With the researchers' observation and analysis of data, being a primary form of data collection tool, the participants discuss their representation of their experiences while the researchers shed light on these perceptions to elaborate on these circumstances; to discover the lived experiences and coping of food delivery riders. The researchers are conscious that individual

prior experiences with food delivery riders and possible preconceived notions and biases can compromise the validity and reliability of the study. The researchers are not perfect, as there are chances that participants are uncomfortable as memories brought up or negatively lived experiences. However, the researchers are cautious in their approach and will keep a keen eye on any nonverbal behavior that may indicate that the participant is experiencing discomfort.

2.3 Background of Participants

The sample for this qualitative study consists of five Filipino male food delivery riders aged 22-45 years old using a motorcycle to deliver foods from houses and other infrastructures. Also, these participants have their own respective families, regardless of whether they are married or have lived-in partners. They have a working experience of one year and above and are employed in an online food delivery company. Furthermore, we excluded self-employed food delivery riders and those who use four-wheel vehicles or bicycles in this current study.

2.4 Procedures

The study sought purposive sampling to gather specified characteristics of the population of interest. This type of non-probability sampling is used to recruit participants in these ways: posting online advertisements on social media, especially in an online food delivery Facebook group, and by contacting those referred by the researchers' acquaintances. Thus, with these given procedures of collecting the required sample population, the researchers expected sample size of five respondents and one pilot respondent to be a part of this phenomenological study. Moreover, these methods create various experiences and coping strategies from food delivery drivers from different food delivery companies or online platforms, areas, and situations encountered during this crisis.

2.5 Preliminary Data Collection

The data collection process began with the interviewer asking for the participant's demographic data, such as their years of service as a food delivery rider, through chat on the messenger app. The information is then recorded onto the Personal Data Sheet (PDS). Datasheet determines the inclusion criteria for qualified participants, and once they are identified, consent for participation is secured. The actual interview began only if interviewees fully understood the informed consent and agreed to participate in the study. During the recording of the demographic data, the names of the participants are changed and encoded as participant numbers for confidentiality purposes. The researchers had also asked when the participants were available so that the researchers may set a schedule convenient on their part.

Before the interview, questions were translated into Filipino to comprehend the interview questions better. It also acts as a guide to keep the goal in mind and for the interviewer to have a generalized idea of asking the right questions. At the beginning of the interview, the interviewer acknowledged the participants' willingness and discussed what they should expect throughout the interview. During the interview, all the researchers were present as they had to observe and take note of each participant's behavior and non-verbal cues. Afterward, the interviewer asked a series of questions regarding the participant's experiences, such as their struggles, what kept them going, and how they adapted to the difficulties and changes.

Additionally, the interviewer had been spontaneous in her approach throughout the interview as not all the participants' answers were straightforward, or some needed probing to further give context to their experiences as food delivery riders. However, there were technical difficulties where the interviewer was removed from the call due to sporadic internet signal. By the end of the interview, participants received a simple token of appreciation delivered to their respective residences.

2.6 Transcription process

The pre-assigned researchers transcribed the recorded interview while the other researchers counterchecked through listening to the audio record while reading the transcript. The transcriptions were also checked by a professor in a Psychology course teaching Qualitative methods. Then, the questions from the interviewer and the participant's answers were encoded in a tabular format in Excel and Microsoft Word. This method was a measure to validate the accuracy of the transcriptions and check if it were correctly transcribed.

2.7 Coding process

The coding was done individually by each researcher, and the different coding techniques were applied, but the most common are descriptive, emotion, and in-vivo coding techniques. Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word were used for encoding the codes. However, Microsoft Word was eventually used to finalize the codes, find commonalities and patterns between the participants' responses, form categories, and sub-themes, and get emerging themes. A professor in charge of handling coding techniques reviewed the code carefully.

2.8 Theming process

The researchers analyzed each individual generated code and had clustered them into categories via the commonalities between participants, such as the emotions felt and phrases used. With the categories sorted out, the researchers had discussed which category would be needed. While in the process, four themes emerged, and some of the categories had become the corresponding sub-themes.

3. Results and Discussion

Table I presents four themes: struggles experienced by the food delivery riders, difficult customers, developed coping strategies, and emotions felt by the food delivery riders. Each main theme has a corresponding sub-themes.

Table I Four Main Themes with their Corresponding Sub-theme

Theme 1: Struggles experienced by Food delivery riders	Subtheme 1.1: Work-related Struggles Subtheme 1.2: Changes preCOVID19 and during COVID-19 Subtheme 1.3: Personal Struggles
Theme 2: Difficult Customers	
Theme 3: Developed Coping Strategies	Subtheme 3.1: Skills Development Subtheme 3.2: Motivation to continue delivering Subtheme 3.3: Safety precautions
Theme 4: Emotions felt by the food delivery riders	Subtheme 4.1: Affect towards customers Subtheme 4.2: Affect towards the pandemic Subtheme 4.3: Affect towards work

1st Theme: Struggles experienced by food delivery riders

Facing constant difficulty is not new to food delivery riders. May it be as simple as not having enough change for the customer to inevitable struggle such as the drastic changes brought by this pandemic. However, in the subthemes below, the researchers discussed considerable challenges they had categorized and analyzed.

Subtheme: Work-Related Struggles

There are unexpected dangers in being a food delivery rider, such as crimes and surprisingly wild dogs straying in the streets. Aside from sustained struggle with physical exhaustion and meeting daily their physiological needs, another additional trial that they have no control is fake bookings.

“Nangyari na po sakin yan Ma’am lalo na pag fake booking. Pag fake booking Ma’am minsan mahirap din Ma’am kasi 30 minutes bago antayin yung customer Ma’am” (FD4, L1241).

The participants had expressed difficulty working under the unmerciful sun, more so when heavy rainfall strikes.

“Noong october 12, noong October 12. Yung sobrang lakas ng ulan, nastranded ako rito sa may SM North pero buti na lang bago bumuhos yung napakalakas na ulan, nasa Balitawak na ako. Talagang sobrang baha na, ang ginawa ko, pumunta na lang ako ng SM North sa may Parking Bay at least kahit papaano kung sakaling abutin ako ng matinding baha, nasa SM ako, safe ako” (FD5, L1351).

Another work-related hustle most of the participants have encountered in locating the area of customers for food deliveries. Participants described that the web mapping service "Waze" sometimes hinders efficient deliveries instead of helping them accomplish each delivery quickly.

“Hindi ko alam yung lugar, ‘tas idadaan ako ng waze sa daanan na yun eh sarado na parang siguro dati bukas pa yon pero ngayon sarado na, sobrang... ayun sobrang hirap, minsan doon nauubos yung oras ko e, sa kakahanap tsaka kaka-antay po ganyan...” (FD3, L1001).

Subtheme: Changes: pre-COVID19 and during COVID19

All the participants had experienced the sudden transition from their work, whether minor or enormous. One participant had described the changes that happened during and before this pandemic as a "huge adjustment."

“Pagbabago? Malaking adjustment eh, so yung pagbabago for example last year, hindi na namin kailangan pumila dahil mayroon kaming special lane at hindi na rin namin kailangan magsuot ng face mask at face shield, ang laking adjustment sa amin kasi kailangan na natin mag-comply sa IATF so kami naman, kung dati eh, normal lang talaga hindi ka matatakot, ngayon nakakakaba pa kasi hindi mo alam baka ka mahawa...” (FD5, L43).

Participants also conveyed that the increase of new FDR's this pandemic has affected their income. It became a struggle to earn with several competitive food riders. Unlike before the pandemic, FDRs are scarce.

“Ano Ma’am, nakaka-apekto Ma’am sa sahod Ma’am kasi dati Ma’am nung, noon noon kasi Ma’am kumikita ako ng kinsenas (breathes). Kumikita ako ng mga nasa 50... ganun yung kita ko noon Ma’am kasi konti lang rider Ma’am talaga pero, andaming delivery nun... kumbaga mag sawa ka talaga (breathes). Pero ngayon Ma’am, ano-ano lang nasa mababa nalang 5+ ganun, 9” (FD4, L92).

Subtheme: Personal Struggles

With the mirage of difficulties mentioned earlier, financial insecurity is the primary personal struggle that bothers them most. FDRs do not mind

impending dangers coming their way and starve themselves so they can have decent take-home pay.

“Hmmm... mahirap na masaya kasi kahit covid kumikita ka, diba ang hirap kumita ng pera ngayon... ‘yun nga lang mahirap tska delikado” (FD2, L401).

“Ano Ma’am ahh ano tipid nalang, kunyari kung yung ulam mo tuyo ganun tapos minsan kanin lang, tapos minsan kanin kape lang, walang ulam. Ganun po...” (FD4, L2601).

2nd Theme: Difficult Customers

Participants are forced to deal with different attitudes of customers all the time. It is the element of unpredictability in their line of work. They do not know to whom they will deliver the foods while some customers have unbearable temperaments.

“Ehh ganun talaga Ma’am eh pagka may ganung mga maaarteng customer, Ma’am nag titiis nalang talaga ako. Kaysa naman hindi niya kunin Ma’am, wag naman po kasi sayang naman” (FD4, L1701).

3rd Theme: Developed Coping Strategies

The participants had adapted to the challenges they faced with their experiences as food delivery riders. Performing their jobs somehow taught them life lessons, developed competencies, and gave them a sense of meaningfulness.

Subtheme: Skills Development

With years of experience, FDRs realized that they practiced various interactions, learned better communication, improved problem-solving skills, and transformed into better people upon dealing with customers.

“Skills, para sakin... mas gumaling ako lalo sa communication skills, face to face person. Dati kasi mahiyain ako eh, alam mo yung nahihya kang magtanong sa strangers? Kuya saan po ba dito yung ano, ngayon hindi eh, araw araw magtatanong ka, sir kilala niyo ba si ganito?” (FD5, L1691) “Ah marami. Syempre unang una pag-galang, kasi sa totoo kasi sumasagot ako sa magulang eh, unang-una, gagalang ka, kahit bata yang customer mo. Ah... pag-galang, pag-aayos sa pananagot sa mga taong ‘di mo kakilala” (FD1, L2721)

Aside from enhanced soft skills, another acquired skill that a participant learned is to be mindful of motorcycle driving.

“Ano Ma’am, ahh skills sa pag dadrive ganun, kumbaga dati kasi Ma’am harurot talaga ako ngayon hindi na eh (laugh). Yun lang Ma’am kumbaga, yung pag iingat kasi dati talaga” (FD4, L3181)

Subtheme: Motivation to Continue Delivering

Participants expressed that a significant motivational factor to endure from work is their family. To know that someone depends on them is a valid reason to approach work with perseverance.

“Syempre iisipin mo yung umaasa sayo, unang-una, nanay ko isa... nanay, nanay ko nalang magulang ko. Yung ibang kapatid ko naman may mga asawa na pero syempre ako lang ang lalaki edi aabot-abotan mo parin kahit papano” (FD1, L461) “Ano Ma’am kasi ang finofocus ko talaga sa sarili ko Ma’am makapag ipon kumbaga, makatulong sa misis ko, tapos yun. Kasi Ma’am kapag wala akong trabaho Ma’am, magagalit yun” (FD4, L1961)

Another motivational factor is the idea of seeing themselves pursuing this job where most people cannot afford it because of fear of infection, which makes them feel a very significant part of the entire community. As if they are fulfilling an essential role in alleviating the pandemic.

“Hmm nakakatakot na masaya kasi kahit paano, yun nga may naiuwi kang pera. Tas nakakatulong ka sa iba syempre sa mga frontliner, nakakatulong ka sa mga business nila, parang savior ganon... ayun po” (FD3, L721) “Ahmm, para sa akin napaka-important ng business namin, yung service namin especially sa mga taong hindi nakakalabas kailangan ng pagkain at inumin, gamot, kami yung nagp-provide” (FD5, L71)

Subtheme: Safety Precautions

With the rapid changes due to the pandemic, the food delivery riders have adapted safety precautions and extra care in keeping themselves always fit and healthy, knowing the risks of exposure to the Covid-19.

“Ay oo, mas ano ako ngayon eh, kasi, hindi ako pwede mawalan ng alcohol sa bag ko, ah... pamunas, dito unang una pamunas, dalawang mask lagi, ah... gloves, ah... full gear ako! Hanggang baba hanggang kamay meron, ayun iwas lang!” (FD1, L2381) “Dapat may alcohol ka na palagi, ayun kumbaga may pagkukulang ka lang din kaya ka nahawaan, dapat dalhin mo lang palagi yung ganun, alcohol tapos social distancing, ayun... nasa tao na rin siguro yon, kung paano nila ingatan yung sarili nila.” (FD3, L206)

Additionally, some participants explained other safety measures before this pandemic.

“Safety precautions, unang-una syempre sa sarili mo, kailangan hindi ka kulang sa tulog, kailangan hindi ka nahihilo. Ah, kasi kapag nakaramdam ka ng kulang sa tulog, hilo, kapag nainitan ka, aantukin ka. Ikalawa naman, chinichack ko rin yung motor ko, alaga sa maintenance yung motor ko, chini-check ko yung gulong kung kalbo na, kailangan magpalit

ng bagong gulong, yung brakes kailangan bago rin o 'di kaya, nagana, mga ilaw ko, electrical ng motor, yan kailangan yan" (FD5, L1551).

4th Theme: Emotions felt by the Food Delivery Riders

Customer satisfaction is a primary objective in food delivery services, especially in a highly competitive business environment. FDRs will do whatever it takes in the name of customers' happiness, making them wait in long queues in restaurants, face demanding customers, and take risks despite the prevalence of virus infection.

Subtheme: Affect Towards the Customers

Food delivery riders are fully aware of their inability to control some job elements. It frequently occurs in the various condominium policies and unexpected long lines at restaurants. Sadly, the unwanted attitude of the customers is also an aspect they cannot predict. Some participants stated that a negative encounter with a customer could affect their performance and even their mood for the whole day.

*"Di tinawagan ko si customer sabi ko, "Sir, bawal ho umakyat," "***** ka eh wala naman akong kasama rito!" "Ano? ***** ako? Halagang singkuenta pesos mumurahin mo 'ko?" Tapos sinabi ko, "Ano, magkano ba pera niyo?" "Isang libo, umakyat ka rito, papalit mo." "Ah ganun ho ba? Sige, ganito na lang ho, mag-intay ho kayo diyan, hindi ko na ide-deliver 'to." Oo, tapos minura niya ako, "***** mo, ***** mo! Mabunggo ka sana!" Sabi ko, "Eh 'di mamatay ka sana! Kasi may sakit ka na, salbahe ka pa eh." Ginanun ko siya, eh ayaw akong papasukin ng gwardiya anong magagawa ko? First ride ko sa kanya, sinira niya araw ko." (FD1, L366).*

Other participants also expressed embarrassment for some customers show disgust towards them as if they were the precursor of the virus.

"Parang, parang kumbaga ano, parang na- yung mga tao sa min, Ma'am, parang nangdidiri ba kasi it eh. Parang umbaga, parang ang tingin nila sa amin na- syempre diba may, mayroon kaming haak na pera, kumbaga baka my virus 'to ganun..." (FD4, L104).

Subtheme: Affect Towards the Pandemic

The participants see the pandemic as something they must conquer in the name of their loving family. Despite feelings of deep apprehension towards the virus itself, they must thrive to provide for their loved ones, which matters most to them.

"Hindi, hindi ako natatakot diyan, Mas natatakot ako kapag wala akong maipapakain sa pamilya ko." (FD5, L159)

Subtheme: Affect Towards Work

Working as a food delivery rider requires immense patience. It involves long periods spent on the road while ordering in fast food chains or restaurants and waiting for the customers. They see no other options but to proceed and labor under the summon of customers.

“Meron po Ma’am, ganun po. May ganun po, Ma’am. Kaya no choice rin po, kaya minsan Ma’am, sinusunod na lang talaga namin Ma’am eh, kung ano yung sinasabi nila, ginagawa na lang namin.” (FD4, LI06)

However, some participants felt grateful for the mere fact of at least having a source of income while the world seems in a state of endless uncertainties.

“Para rin kino-consider ko na rin kasi yung sarili ko na isa ako sa mga blessed na tao dahil ako, may trabaho so, bakit pa ako mangagamba kung weekly may kinikita ako, unlike ng iba na yung iba nating kawawang driver, nanghihingi na lang sila ng limos sa kalsada, ayoko naman ng ganon.” (FD5, LI67)

Synthesis

There had emerged four main themes with their corresponding subthemes. The first theme envelops the struggles experienced by food delivery riders, where it depicts the hardships and the possible risks of their job, especially with the ongoing crisis. In connection with this theme is the second theme, Difficult Customers. The participants shared that some customers show demanding behavior and aggressive tendencies, such as cursing the food delivery riders and name-calling. These two themes show the difficulties they face daily; thus, with these difficulties, the third theme emerged: the coping strategies they had developed. In coping with the struggles of their experiences, participants stated that their years of delivering Food helped them acquire and learn skills along the way. They were patient and respectful, finding strength in their family and taking safety measures to reduce the unexpected dangers of their work, particularly during this COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the fourth theme is about the emotions the food delivery riders had towards different aspects such as their work and the pandemic wherein they had described a plethora of emotions such as feelings of exasperation towards the difficulty of customers and determination to provide for their family.

Discussion

The primary focus of this study was to examine the experiences of food delivery riders in the Philippines during this COVID-19 pandemic how these Filipino food delivery riders coped with the struggles they faced amidst the time of the global crisis. The results provided significant themes and their corresponding subthemes specifying the experiences and coping mechanisms of the participants in the current study.

Findings show the challenges experienced by the participants in the food delivery industry. Earlier research suggested that customer demand increased during poor weather conditions; however, it drastically reduced the job enjoyment of the riders' work since work-related risks were more significant (Goods et al., 2019). It is also very evident in the work-related struggles of the food delivery riders. They continue to bring their customers' food orders during this crisis and even during heavy rains or hot weather since the demand for deliveries increased more in times of inclement weather.

Goods et al. (2019) also stated that riders also expressed their frustration because of the delivery applications disregarding their complaints or suggestions, exhibiting little interest in problems that arose at work. It is similar when the participants shared their disappointment in encountering fraudsters' fake bookings while they patiently waited. It resulted in feelings of exhaustion and stress due to long hours of work and difficulties finding a specific location to deliver, even with a map application. Furthermore, a study conducted by Li et al. (2020) and in the article of Perkiö et al. (2020) addressed the precariousness of workers like FDR's in terms of balancing their financial status and health and mental well-being. Based on the FDR's transcripts, it is identified that they have also experienced work-related situations putting their well-being at risk, such as exhaustion, verbal abuse, and traffic accidents. In addition, participants are in a state of financial constraints, as shown in their struggle to maintain their budget and expenses daily. Earlier research stated that delivery services are already implementing changes in delivery procedures (Riordan et al., 2020).

One of the participants' struggles is difficulty adjusting to the necessary changes this Covid-19 pandemic has caused them. Compliance with changes and strict management procedures of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) is daunting and an added burden to their situation. Like most restaurants and other Food services are currently not accepting diners, yet high demand for Food remains; hence, brick and mortar stores still thrive and operate on a delivery option basis. However, other nonfood-related businesses like *Angkas* app (passenger transport service app) set their foot in food delivery service (Malasig, 2020), increasing competition in the playing field. Due to the swelling number of food delivery businesses during COVID-19, participants find it hard to earn more for their families.

Additionally, findings suggest FDR participants' versatility in managing a new and challenging situation, referring to their coping strategy. About the Covid-19 pandemic, Apouey et al. (2020) directed those who continued working this lockdown to take safety precautions to protect their health as well as the people they met in person. Customers initiate less contact with food delivery workers using digital payments (Nguyen & Vu, 2020). Similarly, the participants have also followed safety precautions like wearing protective equipment, bringing hand sanitizers and ethyl alcohol, and

following the protocols of IATF as a coping strategy for the Covid-19 pandemic. The participants embraced the new situation as a need to adapt to the changes in this unprecedented time. Apouey et al. (2020) also suggested that FDR's enjoyed some aspects of their work to give satisfactory services to customers' delight and meanings derived from work. Direct feedback on performances as to how they conduct tasks properly satisfies FDRs. The extracted central theme refers to the emotions and positive attitudes the FDRs developed at work. The participants also showed gratefulness and acceptance in their field despite the difficulties they confront continuously. The researchers found the different struggles the FDR's are facing before and during this time of the pandemic. In addition to that, the FDR participants' coping strategies have surfaced amidst the Covid-19 Pandemic.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

While front-liners have been working around day and night, we should also not fail to remember the unsung heroes during this time of the pandemic, the food delivery riders. Hence, this qualitative study reflects the experiences of Food delivery riders as they deliver meals to customers, despite the strain of dealing with customers' poor treatment, weather conditions, risks of COVID-19 pandemic, underpayment, and other extreme circumstances. FDRs deserve work benefits similar to regular employees and improved work conditions. Therefore, this study contributes to the further understanding of the struggles experienced by food delivery drivers and how they cope with them, especially in this time of crisis.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

The researchers are aware that the study is limited to its growth. One reason is the availability of participants, as the researchers can only invite participants upon readiness for the mediated type of interview. Second, since there is an ongoing pandemic, there is difficulty finding participants willing to participate in an hour-long interview via call or social media. The researchers had gone for only the available participants, thus could not specify who the participants of this study are. Lastly, the researchers were only limited to a few literature numbers since there is a lack of literature regarding food delivery riders, especially their experiences and coping techniques.

Whereas towards future researchers, if they are allowed to explore this topic further, some participant suggestions are: female food delivery riders to see if there are differences in perceptions of the work. Moreover, suppose there is possible sexism in the workplace or differences in handling compared to male food delivery riders. Another is to study the difficulties and learnings of those newly hired food delivery riders, those within a time frame of a month to less than a year, to see how they adapt to being in a

different work environment from their previous jobs if they had one. Lastly, are working students who work part-time as food delivery riders. They can study the time management skill, unique working style, and mental fortitude of being a student and a food delivery rider. It could also be highly beneficial and significant to the production of further researches and input in another context for food delivery services.

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