
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Dousing the Balls of Fire: Challenges Facing Station Chiefs

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| ABSTRACT

This is a phenomenological study on challenges faced by fire station chiefs. Phenomenological interviewing was used in data gathering and describes the meaning of the phenomenon. This study was conducted in Cebu, Central Visayas, Philippines. The informants were station chiefs who have experience in managing their fire stations. Twelve (12) informants had been selected through purposive convenience sampling. The study utilized an interview guide to elicit in-depth responses from the informants. In-depth interviews were conducted to arrive at the three-phase data collection needed in the study. The study sought to determine the following: experiences of the informants in managing their departments, informants' manner in addressing the issues encountered in managing their departments, and informants' aspirations for themselves and for their departments. Result revealed that two themes came up on the positive experiences of the informants in managing their departments which are: *Cooperation and Teamwork of Personnel and Accomplishment of Goals and Target: Obedience and Respect*. On negative experiences of the informants in managing their departments which are: *Miscommunication and Fail to Achieve Target and Lack of Personnel and Equipment*. On informants addressed the issues encountered in managing their departments, there were two themes which are: *Imposed Policies and Guidelines in the Station and Additional Personnel in the Station*. On informants' aspirations for themselves and for their departments, two (2) themes merged: *Job Dedication and Render Service to the Public*. In order to solve the perennial problems that most fire stations in Central Visayas have experienced, it is hereby recommended that the fire station chiefs request from the higher office the following, to wit: downloading of additional personnel for their respective fire stations; procurement of additional tools and equipment for rescue and emergency medical services and increase of allocation for the maintenance of firefighting equipment and apparatus.

| KEYWORDS

Station Chiefs, Dousing the Balls of Fire, Phenomenological Study, Philippine

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1. Introduction

Disaster, as defined by the International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC), is a sudden, calamitous event that seriously disrupts the functioning of a community or society and causes human, material, and economic or environmental losses that exceed the community's or society's ability to cope using its own resources. Though often caused by nature, disasters can have human origins. A disaster, in its natural forms, includes typhoons, earthquakes, tsunamis and volcanic eruptions; whereas, there is one destructive man-made disaster which is war. Fire is an example of a disaster that can be caused by both factors stated above. Fire is combustion or burning, in which substances combine chemically with oxygen from the air and typically give out bright light, heat, and smoke.

A fire disaster can be providential (natural) such as wildfires, accidental (human error or negligence) intentional such as the crime of arson. An intentional cause of fire, legally termed as arson, is the willful, malicious burning of property (as building) especially with criminal or fraudulent intent, which is a crime stated in criminal laws of most countries, one of which is the Philippines.

However, fires, even due to accidental causes, displace hundreds to thousands of families from their homes and cause hundreds of thousands to millions worth of damage to property. They may even be a cause of several deaths.

Disasters, especially fire-related ones, may be avoided or mitigated. However, the manner of doing so is greatly dependent on the leadership and management skills of the fire station chief of a given locale. It goes without saying that if a fire marshal in a certain community lays down a marching order among its subordinates to strictly inspect all establishments and see to it that defects or deficiencies that give rise to fire occurrences are corrected. Simple logic tells us that such community must be well-protected from the perils of destructive fire as compared to the other community whose fire chief is so lax with its men as regards going about any of their tasks.

In order to gauge the truth of the foregoing notion, this researcher devoted much of his time determining or noting the lived experiences of fire marshals in the various stations within Metro Cebu.

Fire marshals' lived experiences as to their leadership and/or management skills are directly correlated to the type of training they underwent. At the very least, no BFP personnel taking on a critical position as station fire marshal without first going through mandatory supervisory or fire senior leadership course or training. Mandatory trainings in BFP such as, but not limited to, supervisory, officers' candidate course, and officers' basic course, equitably contribute to fire marshals' competence.

Anent the preceding, this researcher endeavored to embark on a journey of noting the lived experiences of the fire marshals of various fire stations within Region 7, and collating the same into this thesis.

2. Literature Review

This study is anchored mainly on the following theories: Job Performance Theory by Campbell et al. (1990); Equity Theory by Adams & Freedman (1976) and Expectancy Theory by Vroom (2005).

Job performance assesses whether or not a person performs his or her job well. It, studied academically as part of industrial and organizational psychology, also forms a part of human resources management. Performance is an important criterion for organizational outcomes and success.

Campbell et al. (1990) described job performance as an individual-level variable, or something a single person does. This differentiates it from more encompassing constructs such as organizational performance or national performance, which are higher-level variables. Performance is defined as observable things people do (i.e., behaviors) that are relevant for the goals of the organization. The behaviors that constitute performance can be scaled in terms of the level of performance they represent. Further, individual performance behaviors exhibit sufficient patterns of covariation to yield reasonable factor solutions. There is not one outcome, one factor, or one anything that can be pointed to and labeled as job performance. Job performance really is multidimensional. A distinction is also made between performance and the outcomes or results of performance, which J. P. Campbell et al. (1990) called effectiveness.

Job performance theory also explains how well a person does a piece of work. High performance means high profit, which is the result that every organization pursues. Therefore, leaders or managers, as well as researchers keep exploring all kinds of factors that affect job performance for many years in order to practically improve employees' performance (Dai and Xiao, 2016). Job performance was measured by eliciting the performance intentions of top managers and frontline employees. Frontline employees are employees who interact directly with clients or customers and who are not supervisors or managers. Examples of frontline employees are bank tellers, secretaries, sales clerks, security personnel, office staff, library assistants, catering staff, etc. (Arnolds and Boshoff, 2000).

Job performance is one of the most important constructs in both organizational psychology and human resource management. Job performance is a function that an individual can successfully perform within framework of normal constraints and available resources. What constitutes job performance differs from job to job. A few researchers developed some broad dimensions of job performance that could be generalizable across jobs (Springer, 2011).

On the other hand, this study is also supported by Equity theory, which focuses on determining whether the distribution of resources is fair to both relational partners (Guerrero et al., 2017).

The Adam's Equity Theory posits that people maintain a fair relationship between performance and rewards in comparison to others. In other words, an employee gets demotivated by the job and his employer if his inputs are more than the outputs. He proposed this theory based on the individuals that make contributions (inputs) for which they expect certain rewards (outcomes)

and to validate the exchange, an individual compares his input and outcomes with those of others and try to rectify the inequality.

Inputs, in the sense, that this equity theory term encompasses the quality and quantity of the employee's contributions to his or her work. Typical inputs include time, effort, loyalty, hard work, commitment, ability, adaptability, flexibility, tolerance, determination, enthusiasm, personal sacrifice, trust in superiors, support from co-workers and colleagues. While outputs in equity theory are defined as the positive and negative consequences that an individual perceives a participant has incurred as a consequence of his/her relationship with another. Outputs can be both tangible and intangible. Typical outcomes are job security, esteem, salary, employee benefits, expenses, recognition, reputation, responsibility, sense of achievement, praise, and thanks.

Thus, there are three types of exchange relationships that arise when an individual's input/outcome is compared with that of other persons. These are overpaid inequality, underpaid inequality and equity. It is overpaid inequity when an individual perceives that his outcomes are more as compared to his inputs, in relation to others; underpaid inequity when an individual perceives that his outcomes are less as compared to his inputs, in relation to others; and equity when an individual perceives that his outcomes in relation to his inputs are equal to those of others (Adams & Freedman, 1976).

Adams, J. S. (1963) asserted that equity theory shows the level of motivation among the individuals in the working environment. An individual is said to be highly motivated if he perceives himself to be treated fairly. While feelings of de-motivation arise if an individual perceives that they are being treated unfairly in the organization.

Thus, an individual's level of motivation depends on the extent to which he feels he is being treated fairly, in terms of rewards, in comparison to others. Moreover, Adams put it that payment is the main concern and therefore the cause of equity or inequity in most cases. In any position, an employee wants to feel that their contributions and work performance are being rewarded with their pay. According to equity theory, if an employee feels underpaid, then it will result in the employee feeling hostile towards the organization and perhaps their co-workers, which may result in the employee not performing well at work anymore.

Another support theory is the Expectancy Theory (or Expectancy Theory of Motivation) by Vroom (2005) which proposes that an individual will behave or act in a certain way because they are motivated to select a specific behavior over other behaviors due to what they expect the result of that selected behavior will be. In essence, the motivation for the behavior selection is determined by the desirability of the outcome. However, at the core of the theory is the cognitive process of how an individual process the different motivational elements. This is done before making the ultimate choice. The outcome is not the sole determining factor in making the decision of how to behave (Vroom, 2005).

In addition, Vroom (2005) defines motivation as a process governing choice among alternative forms of voluntary activities, a process controlled by the individual. The individual makes choices based on estimates of how well the expected results of a given behavior are going to match up with or eventually lead to the desired results. Motivation is a product of the individual's expectancy that a certain effort will lead to the intended performance, the instrumentality of this performance to achieving a certain result, and the desirability of this result for the individual, known as *valence* (Condrey, 2005).

Thus, Vroom (2005) introduced three variables within the expectancy theory which are valence (V), expectancy (E) and instrumentality (I). The three elements are important behind choosing one element over another because they are clearly defined: effort-performance expectancy (E>P expectancy), performance-outcome expectancy (P>O expectancy) (Subbarao & Rao, 2000).

According to Oliver (1974), expectancy is the probability that the individual assigns to work effort being followed by a given level of achieved task performance usually based on an individual's past experience, self-confidence (self-efficacy), and the perceived difficulty of the performance standard or goal.

Vroom asserts that an intensity of work effort depends on the perception that an individual's effort will result in a desired outcome. In order to enhance the performance-outcome tie, managers should use systems that tie rewards very closely to performance. Managers also need to ensure that the rewards provided are deserved and wanted by the recipients. In order to improve the effort-performance tie, managers should engage in training to improve their capabilities and improve their belief that added effort will in fact lead to better performance.

However, it would be deemed far more ideal if those foregoing theories were supplemented with the salient laws upon which the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) based its organizational deliverables.

BFP is under the auspices of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and is created by virtue of Republic Act 6975, otherwise known as DILG Act of 1990. It is primarily an agency tasked to perform and be responsible for the prevention and suppression of destructive fires on buildings, houses or other structures, forest lands, land transportation vehicles and equipment, ships and vessels docked at piers or wharves anchored in major seaports, petroleum industry installations, plane crashes and other similar incidents, as well as the enforcement of the fire codes and other related laws. It has the major power to investigate all causes of fires and necessary, file the proper complaints with the proper authority that has jurisdiction over the case (R.A. no. 6975, sec. 54).

In addition, BFP is in charge of executing national strategies identified with firefighting and fire avoidance and usage of the Philippine Fire Code (PD 1185), which has been canceled and supplanted by the new Fire Code of the Philippines (RA 9514). The same, having once been known as the Integrated National Police Fire Service, had been accountable for the organization and administration of city and municipal fire stations and crisis benefits everywhere throughout the nation. Rooted in its mission as stated in its governing law, Republic Act 9514 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation, BFP is mandated to prevent and suppress destructive fires, conduct investigations, provide emergency medical and rescue services and enforce the said governing law.

Going back meanwhile to the nitty-gritty of fire service, the perfect and genuine encounters of firefighters are caught by the five personal characteristics: camaraderie, personal factors, humanizing the hero image, role clarity, and community support. The outside layer of the pentagon speaks of the perfect encounters and the pentagon mapped along the internal layers, speaks of the members accounted for encounters. Encounters mapped nearer to the outside layer of the pentagon showed high compatibility between the revealed genuine encounters and the romanticized involvement. Encounters mapped nearer to the middle layer of pentagon are illustrative of the difference between what the members think their part should be and what they are really encountering. With regard to the present examination, members experienced high compatibility between their real and admired involvement in kinship, individual components, and group bolster (Jones, 2016).

As far as firefighters are concerned, the known job demands include experiencing extreme heat, conflict, and work-related events that surpass their ability to respond effectively. The occurrence of fire events is proposed as an operational demand that will cause the depletion of mental and physical resources, thus leading to the firefighters' decreased well-being. A fire event is the most demanding activity for firefighters, during which they are subject to considerable psychological and physical pressure. During such an event, firefighters often experience a high workload resulting from increased task demands, namely coordination with others, rough terrain and high temperatures, combined with acute stress levels that are triggered by the extreme situations in which they are performing. Hence, the occurrence of fire events over time is expected to be an operational demand since these events represent a threat to firefighters' physical safety and require sustained effort to be contained and suppressed. The extent to which fire events continue to occur over time causes strain which, when prolonged, will induce an emotionally exhausted state in firefighters (Angelo & Chambel, 2015).

Moreover, Arnolds and Boshoff (2000) found that the satisfaction with pay exerts a significant positive influence on the job performance of both top managers and frontline employees. The satisfaction with fringe benefits and relatedness needs from superiors did not influence the performance of top managers and frontline employees significantly.

In the firefighting literature, leadership is often regarded as a key element in building firefighters' firefighting capacity since it is highly correlated with performance and safety. Few empirical studies have established a relationship between fire chiefs' leadership styles and behaviors and critical variables, such as firefighters' well-being. Leadership theory that can provide valuable insight into the relationship between leadership and firefighters' well-being in fire events is the transformational leadership theory. Although there is evidence of a relationship between transformational leadership and well-being (Nielsen & Munir, 2009). Furthermore, they emphasize that fire chiefs with a transformational leadership style are more likely to lead in a way that will help firefighters deal with the physical (e.g., tiredness; pain; discomfort) and psychological (e.g., stress; fear; anxiety) challenges that may emerge during fire events.

According to Kelloway et al. (2014) transformational leaders are expected to promote the development of firefighters' self-efficacy beliefs regarding their ability to face the most demanding situations with enthusiasm and dedication. This feature of their role should function as a job resource to help firefighters deal with the challenges of their occupation and act as a protective mechanism for well-being.

The characteristics and attributes necessary for effective leadership in the operational environment of firefighters, particularly in times of uncertainty, are self-confidence, enthusiasm, effective communication, knowledge, vision, integrity, courage, honesty, pride, determination, faith, vigor, judgment, tact, endurance, initiative, responsibility, ethics, altruism, reliability, loyalty, consideration, self-discipline, and the desire to learn (Favreau, 1973).

In the recent study conducted by Pangasinan State University (PSU), it was revealed that the most common problems encountered by the Bureau of Fire Protection in the light of Managing the Fire Department in Urdaneta City are lack of firefighting equipment, lack of personnel, old and dilapidated fire trucks, lack of financial and logistical support, lack of cooperation or willingness on the part of the building/business owners/occupants on the fire prevention program, political interventions, inadequate communication equipment and lack of investigative gear and equipment to be used in fire investigation (Gandia, 2008).

With those preceding predicaments, it may be deemed worth-resorting to the basics of management. The latter cannot be fulfilled without touching on the functions of management. According to Gulick (1937), the major functions of management and/or administration can be described using the acronym POSDCRB. These are: Planning, Organizing, Staffing, Directing, Coordination, Reporting and Budgeting. He also underscored the principles of homogeneity for grouping by the persons of purpose, process, persons or things and place.

The Santiago Fire Department (from here referred to as SFD) lacks a fleet management strategy since their vehicles remain allocated in fixed fire stations, while the presence of seasonal patterns suggests that the frequency of events changes according to their geographical distribution. This fact has led to inequitable service in terms of response times among the nine zones of the SFD. In this empirical study we propose a fleet assignment model for the Santiago Fire Department to maximize the number of incidents successfully attended (standard responses). Results suggest that the implementation of the fleet management proposal will lead to an increase in the number of standard responses of between 6% and 20% with respect to the current situation. This increase in performance is especially significant since it does not require new vehicles; it just optimizes the existing siting via dynamic reallocation (Pérez et al., 2016).

Pearce (2001) too had this to say that governments are important to organization, establishing and enforcing the rules under which organizations operate. They as he stressed can make a course of action profitable or illegal. Governments may be stable guarantors of open and fair dealing, or they may be bumbling inept entities unable to control even their own officials. They are extraordinarily various, ranging from centuries-old tradition-encrusted institutions to the bandit in control of a small region, with every imaginable variation in between. Yet however various they are in form and practice, governments are always important to organizations and their participants. They establish the rules by which organizations must play and have the means to use physical force to coerce compliance.

According however to Mayo (1998), the results of Hawthorne experiment contradicted the traditional views of management emphasized by the classical theorists and led to the behavioral approach emphasizing concern for the workers. The study suggests that when special attention is paid to employees by management, productivity is likely to increase regardless of changes in working condition. As a consequence, Monahan et al. (2010) referred to the Hawthorne effect as the observer effect in which the individuals modify an aspect of their behavior in response to their awareness of being observed.

Ballaro & Blanchard (2018), studied the international understanding of the challenge's women face in achieving a position in the male-dominated career field of firefighting to determine if a transformational leadership style played a role in their success. They found out that mentoring, training, and education were significant factors in contributing to their success as fire chiefs. The barriers they faced in becoming fire chiefs were no different from any person moving up the ranks in an organization. The practices of recruitment, retention, and societal acceptance may be some reasons that women are not promoted to fire chief.

Barber & Smit (2014) also studied the ego-depletion predictions from the self-control literature in a computer simulation task that requires ongoing decision making in relation to constantly changing environmental information which is The Network Fire Chief (NFC). Ego-depletion led to decreased self-regulatory effort, but not performance, on the NFC task. These effects were also buffered by task enjoyment so that individuals who enjoyed the dynamic decision-making task did not experience ego-depletion effects. Their findings confirm that past ego-depletion effects on decision-making are not limited to static or isolated decision-making tasks and can be extended to dynamic, naturalistic decision-making processes more common to naturalistic settings. Furthermore, the NFC simulation provides a methodological mechanism for independently measuring effort and performance when studying ego-depletion.

However, Fonseca (2015) also studied the effects of both formal and informal mentoring practices and perceived career outcomes among the 139 Fire Chief Officers in the four largest fire departments in Tennessee. He found out that there were statistically significant differences among the chief officers' perceptions of their career outcomes based on their mentoring experiences and their ranking in the fire service. Chief Officers who held higher rankings in the fire service had more positive perceptions of their career outcomes and mentoring experiences compared to lower ranking Chief Officers. The second finding

was that there were statistically significant differences among Chief Officers' perceptions of their mentoring experiences and career outcomes based on their level of education. Chief Officers with associate degrees had more positive perceptions of their mentoring experiences and career outcomes compared to Chief Officers with high school diplomas, bachelors' degrees, and advanced degrees. No statistically significant differences were found among the Chief Officers' perceptions of their mentoring experiences and their career outcomes based on their race or the number of years they served in the fire service.

Meanwhile, as cited by Murell (2022), the Fire Chief is the formal leader of the department and is charged with meeting departmental and stakeholder needs. The National Fire Protection Agency highlighted the need for the Fire Chief to be motivated and stay motivated in a career with overall dwindling motivation. Proactive behavior is a self-initiated future oriented action to change or improve oneself and one's situation. Contributing factors that can impact motivation include loss of benefits, lack of recognition, or public scrutiny. Studies of motivation in school students and private sector employees resulted in recommendations to expand to other demographics and include proactive behavior. They suggested future research on proactive personality and other individual factors as the definitions are unclear.

Moreover, as cited by Fleming (2011) As a fire chief, you have a responsibility with respect to stewardship in terms of handing over an improved fire department to the individual who eventually succeeds you. It is essential that you manage and lead your fire department in a proactive, rather than a reactive, manner. It is also imperative that you avail yourself of professional development opportunities, and resist the tendency to feel that you do not need additional training and education or that you do not have the time to participate in these professional development opportunities.

Calderwood & Cirocco (2010) examined the way in which decisions are made by highly proficient personnel, under conditions of extreme time pressure, and in environments where the consequences of the decisions could affect lives and property. Fire ground commanders used their experience to directly identify the situation as typical of a standard prototype and to identify a course of action as typical for that prototype. In this way, the FGCs handled decision points without any need to consider more than one option. A recognition-primed decision (RPD) model was synthesized from these data, which emphasized the use of recognition rather than calculation or analysis for rapid decision making.

Sattler et al. (2014) examined the protective factors associated with resilience/posttraumatic growth and risk factors associated with posttraumatic stress among firefighters exposed to critical incidents. Posttraumatic growth was associated with being female, critical incident exposure, critical incident stress debriefing attendance, posttraumatic stress symptoms, occupational support, occupation satisfaction, occupational effort, problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping and personal characteristic resources. Posttraumatic stress symptoms were positively associated with years of firefighting, burnout, occupational effort and disengagement coping and negatively associated with critical incident stress debriefing attendance, posttraumatic growth, social support, internal locus of control, personal characteristic resources, energy resources and condition resources. Their findings supported conservation of resources stress theory and show that the maintenance and acquisition of resources can offset losses and facilitate resilience/posttraumatic growth. Implications of the findings for enhancing firefighter resources, facilitating resilience and minimizing occupational stressors are discussed.

As cited by David (2017), leaders in the fire service should have creative ways to handle the leadership issues found in today's fire service. Life in the fire service is never easy and can be quite complicated. However, moving backward in time instead of forward with proactive processes does not help leaders nor the fire service in general, and eventually affects the communities these fire departments serve. Leaders of any organization, especially chief fire officers, should continue to think deeply and self-assess their strengths and weaknesses and understand that when they make decisions, those decisions affect their firehouse as well as civilian families and communities. The leaders, communities, the firehouse and civilian families are truly fibers of life threaded together, so when one part of a life is impacted, the remaining fibers are impacted as well.

The aforementioned theories and legal bases are essential to the explanation in exploring the lived experiences of the Station Chiefs of the Fire Departments, in Metro Cebu. Its germane research will be conducted to evaluate and check on the experiences of the fire station chiefs in managing the fire departments in terms of their functions, difficulties encountered, and action taken.

3. Methodology

This section should contain detailed information about the procedures and steps followed. It can be divided into subsections if several methods are described.

3.1 Research Design

The design of this study used a qualitative phenomenological method of research using an interview guide in delving into the lived experiences of fire marshals in the different fire stations in Metro Cebu.

Phenomenology describes the meaning of lived experiences for individuals experiencing a particular phenomenon or concept (Creswell, 1998). Experience, in phenomenological sense, includes not only the relatively passive experiences of sensory perception, but also imagination, thought, emotion, desire, volition and action. In short, it includes everything that we live through or perform. Thus, we may be observed and engaged with other things in the world, but we do not actually experience them in a first-person manner. What makes an experience conscious is a certain awareness one has of the experience while living through or performing it.

Transcendental phenomenological method is a phenomenological tradition popularized by Edmund Husserl that brings added dimensions to the study of human experiences through qualitative research seeking to understand human experience (Moustakas, 1994). He aimed to establish a rigorous and unbiased approach that appears to arrive at an essential understanding of human consciousness and experience (Shosha, 2012). Phenomenology aims to: gain a deeper understanding of the meaning of people's everyday experiences; and direct the understanding of phenomenon which is consciously experienced by the people themselves (Polifroni & Welch, 1999).

Colaizzi's descriptive method (1978) offers opportunity for researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the individuals intended meaning (Edward & Welch, 2011). The Colaizzi's process for descriptive phenomenological data strictly follows seven steps (Sosha, 2012): step one, each transcript should be read and re-read in order to obtain a general sense about the whole content; second step, significant statements must be obtained from each transcripts that pertain to the phenomenon under study should be extracted and be recorded on a separate sheet noting their pages and lines numbers; third step, meanings must be formulated out from significant statements extracted; fourth step, all formulated meanings must be placed into categories, clusters of themes, and themes; fifth step; the findings of the study should be integrated into an exhaustive description of the phenomenon under study, sixth step, the structure of the phenomenon should be described; seven step, findings must be validated from the research participants to compare the researcher's descriptive results with their experiences.

3.2 Research Participants

The researcher selected twelve (12) informants who are fire station chiefs in the different city fire stations in the Metro, specifically in the cities of Cebu, Talisay, Mandaue and Lapu-Lapu. They have been managing the stations for at least three (3) years. Five (5) informants were individually interviewed while the other seven (7) were included in the focus group discussion. Of the five (5) informants to be interviewed individually, two (2) of them were from Talisay City Fire Stations, two (2) from Lapu-lapu City Fire District, and one (1) from Mandaue City Fire Station. The seven (7) informants for Focused Group Discussion (FGD) came from Cebu City Fire Stations.

3.3 Research Instruments

In the gathering of data, I employed a self-made-panel-approached interview guide consisting of the following parts: part 1, deals with the experiences of the informants in managing their departments; part 2, deals with how informants addressed the issues encountered in managing their departments and part 3, the informants' personal aspirations and for their departments. Each of the major questions is followed up with specific questions. I utilized field notes and a voice recorder to document accurately the responses of the informants. In this way, there was no confusion on my part during the transcription of responses of the informants.

3.4 Data Collection

Twelve (12) informants of the study were given an individual consent form to ensure approval of their participation in the conduct of the interview before the start of the actual interview. The researcher utilized a research journal and voice recording during the interview to make the study more reliable and preserved.

The recorded conversations were transcribed into detail and translated into the English language. Follow-up questions were raised to provide some answers. They were given the opportunity to express and elaborate their lived experiences as station chiefs in the different fire stations in Metro Cebu. After the recorded interviews, answers were personally transcribed, translated conversations were horizontally extracted into significant statements as they corresponded to sub-problems of this study and reviewed. Ensuring accuracy and reliability of the transcriptions, audio recording would be made available for necessary verification made by any concerned examiner/panel member. The results of the transcriptions were also made available to the informants and were signed by them as proof of their acknowledgement to avoid biases.

3.5 Data Analysis

The researcher utilized Colaizzi's approach in analyzing the data. Transcription and translation of the languages and experiences of the informants were carefully taken. The interview transcript was coded of significant statements from the interview transcripts

of informants. These significance statements were translated and formulated meanings were created. These formulated meanings were grouped and analyzed to form cluster themes. From these cluster themes, emergent themes which were identified. Emergent themes are the final themes which describe the experiences of the informants to the present phenomena being studied.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

I heartily considered ethical aspect of all informants involved in the conduct of the study. Safety and security, consent and approval and integrity and confidentiality are the most common consideration in making this research. With this, the researcher made sure that the identities of the informants were protected by not disclosing them to other persons. Consent and approval from the informants were considered prior to the conduct of interview. The researcher also explained to the informants the process and purpose of the said interview and made sure that the interviews were participating voluntarily by the said informants.

4. Results and Discussion

The data gathered were thoroughly read to obtain a feeling for the description of experience of the informants. Significant statements were extracted from the informant's transcript pertaining directly to the research phenomena. Formulated meanings were constructed from the significant statements and arranged them into cluster. Cluster themes were then regrouped and which evolved into emergent themes.

There were two emergent themes for each of the sub-problems of the study. I had created emergent themes out from the common responses of the informants. Below are the presentations of themes related to the experiences of the informants in managing their departments, informants addressed the issues encountered in managing their departments, the informants' aspirations for themselves and for their departments.

- I. Experiences of the Informants in Managing their Departments
 - A. Positive Experiences
 1. Cooperation and Teamwork of Personnel
 2. Accomplishment of Goals and Target: Obedience and Respect
 - B. Negative Experiences
 1. Miscommunication and Failure in Achieving the Target
 2. Lack of Personnel and Equipment
- II. Informants Addressed the Issues Encountered in Managing their Departments
 1. Imposed Policies and Guidelines in the Station
 2. Additional Personnel in the Station
- III. The Informants' Aspirations for themselves and for their Departments
 1. Job Dedication
 2. Rendering of Service to the Public

4.1. A Positive Experiences of the Informants in Managing their Departments

This research question elicits responses from the informants about their experience, strategies, and positive experiences in managing their departments. This highly emphasized that station chiefs had a positive experience in managing their department toward their personnel in the Bureau of Fire Protection. However, fire station chiefs observed that their personnel show cooperation within the stations and willing to obey and respect their superiors and be able to do the assigned task to achieve the department's goals and targets.

4.1. A. 1 Cooperation and Teamwork of Personnel

This theme narrates the positive experiences of the informants in managing their departments. The cooperation and team work of the personnel encourage the station chiefs to achieve their goals and targets in the station. Informant 1 was able to experience cooperation of her subordinates and said:

I felt happy because, in the first place, my station won the best fire station regionwide award. Such accolade cannot only be attributed to me but to our whole workforce who truly showed genuine teamwork and cooperation. It is indeed fulfilling on my part to have exercised good leadership, complemented with the full support of my subordinates. Such development was beyond doubt behind our bagging of one of the most prestigious awards in our entire fire service career, considering our being highly-committed firefighters. It was such a big accomplishment (IDI 1: SS2).

Informant 2 was also happy and satisfied because of the teamwork of her personnel in the station and said:

Teamwork is a picture of a team that seriously focuses on the same goals and results. Members support each other in such a way that they will make all goals possible to achieve (IDI 2: SS8).

Power (2018) said that major emergencies are extreme team decision making environments. They are complex, dynamic, high-stakes and fast paced events, wherein successful resolution is contingent upon effective teamwork. Not only do emergency teams coordinate at the intrateam level (police team), but they are increasingly required to operate at the inter-team level (police, fire and ambulance teams). This is in response to the desire for networked and cost-effective practice and due to the evolving nature of modern threats, such as extreme weather events and terrorist attacks, which require a multi- rather than single-agency response. Yet the capacity for interoperability between emergency teams is under-researched and poorly understood. Much of the teamwork research is based on student-samples or in artificial lab settings, reducing the salient contextual demands of emergencies (high-stakes, meaningful risk).

Hoogland (2016) mentioned that it is the whole department that makes it happen; if there are people who just show up to the fires they want to or doesn't show up for training ratings show that kind of thing. No matter what it is, if we don't roll with the proper equipment; if it's a small fire or a large one, we have to do it the right way. It's important to the department to show that it is doing a good job. The ratings help show the strong effort. However, Fighting fires and ratings need cooperation.

4.1. A. 2 Accomplishment of Goals and Target: Obedience and Respect

This theme narrates the positive experiences of the station chiefs in their department where their personnel appear to be obedient, respectful and willing to do the tasks given to them. Informant 1 responded and said:

The main factor that I observed in my station for us to be able to achieve our goals is respect for each other (IDI 1: SS4).

Informant 2 emphasized that his subordinates are encouraged to do the work assigned to them, he said:

Being hailed as the best fire station in the entire Philippines has become a benchmark for us. From that time forward, we have continually maintained and improved ourselves and our service to achieve the common goals of the organization (IDI 2: SS7).

This theme explains about informants' observation toward their personnel cooperation and teamwork in order to accomplish the goals of the department. All of those goals are definitely consistent with their primary mandate which is to prevent and suppress destructive fires, investigate its causes; enforce fire code and other related laws; respond to man-made and natural disaster and other emergencies.

Carter (2007) mentioned that, fire service leadership involves a combination of the attributes associated with many different leadership models that can be modified to fit the demands of the emergency service role of the fire service. There is no simple, one size-fits-all leadership model that fits the fire service. An analysis of the various models suggests, at least for the fire service, that while a leader must understand the tasks to be accomplished by his organization, it is more important to understand the people being led. The use of leadership in any life and death situation is neither simple, nor is it easy.

4.1. B Negative Experiences of the Informants in Managing their Departments

This research question elicits responses from the informants about negative experiences in managing their respective departments and they found that there have been miscommunications in the stations and, most of all, the problem of lack of personnel and equipment appears to be prevalent.

4.1. B. 1 Miscommunication and Failure in Achieving the Target

This theme narrates the negative experiences of the station chiefs in managing their personnel within the station. The informants' experiences were appropriately noted in the context of personnel not being able to perform well the tasks given to them by the former. Informant 2 was discouraged and dissatisfied and said:

I felt bad whenever I observe miscommunication among my subordinates at station. This kind of problem is downright inevitable as people have individual personalities (IDI 2: SS3).

Informant 3 also emphasized of his negative experience in the station, he conveyed that:

Yes, I felt sad whenever my station fails to achieve the targets set by the higher office. Such failure cannot wholly be attributed to our fault but perhaps it may be due to the fact that we have been overwhelmed with our work (IDI 3: SS5).

This theme emphasized that informants observed that their personnel had miscommunications and misunderstandings toward their co-personnel in the station and they underscored that such dilemma really affects the attainment of organizational goals and targets in the department.

This theme is supported by Job Performance Theory of Campbell (1990) which explains that job performance theory is closely related construct to productivity. One can think of productivity as a comparison of the amount of effectiveness that results from a certain level of cost associated with that effectiveness. In other words, effectiveness is the ratio of outputs to inputs—those inputs being effort, monetary costs, resources, etc. Performance as behavior is defined as one which is something done by an employee. Utility, another related construct, is defined as the value of a particular level of performance, effectiveness, or productivity. Utilities of performance, effectiveness, and productivity are value judgments.

4.1. B. 2 Lack of Personnel and Equipment

This theme covers or focuses on the negative experiences of the informants as to the fact that they cannot perform their duties and responsibilities properly due to lack of personnel and equipment. Informant 2 described the hardships in managing the station by saying that:

Challenging times are those that challenge our operational capabilities due to shortage of personnel and equipment (IDI 2: SS4).

Informant 5 also responded about his negative experience in the station and said:

It saddens me when my station fails to achieve its targets or fails to comply with the directives or demands required by the higher office because of lack of personnel and equipment (IDI 5: SS10).

This theme emphasized that informants observed that the station they managed lacked personnel and equipment which predicament affected the movement of the organization in achieving goals. The informants reveal that this is the primary problem in station due to which they could not reach the target and finish the task in a specific time.

The Expectancy theory of Vroom (2005) which is based on these three components: one (1) expectancy, two (2) instrumentality and three (3) valence. However, expectancy can be described as the belief that higher or increased effort will yield better performance. This can be explained by the thinking of "If I work harder, I will make something better." Conditions that enhance expectancy include having the correct resources available, having the required skill set for the job at hand, and having the necessary support to get the job done correctly. Furthermore, instrumentality can be described as the thought that if an individual performs well, then a valued outcome will come to that individual. Some things that help instrumentality are having a clear understanding of the relationship between performance and the outcomes, having trust and respect for people who make the decisions on who gets what reward, and seeing transparency in the process of who gets what reward. Lastly, Valence means "value" and refers to beliefs about outcome desirability. There are individual differences in the level of value associated with any specific outcome. For instance, a bonus may not increase motivation for an employee who is motivated by formal recognition or by increased status such as promotion. Valence can be thought of as the pressure or importance that a person puts on an expected outcome (Nemati, 2016).

4.2. Informants Addressed the Issues Encountered in Managing their Departments

4.2.1 Imposed Policies and Guidelines in the Station

This theme explains how the informants handle their undesirable experiences with respect to enforcement of applicable station policies and guidelines and the way they solve the problems related to the same. Informant 1 emphasized how he deals with the germane problems in the station and put it:

We have existing policies and guidelines, as well as implementing rules and regulations, at station. If our personnel choose not to follow and/or deliberately violate the same, they shall be dealt with accordingly. Personnel committing first offense shall be subject to reprimand. Should personnel transgress twice, we will file charges against them for insubordination (IDI 1: SS3).

For Informant 8 in the focused group discussion, she elaborated and stated that:

About my personnel, I have to stretch or broaden my patience, that is, while imposing policies and guidelines, I have to understand their situation and also give them some friendly pieces of advice (FGD8: SS1).

This theme explained that the informants believed that in order for them to solve the issues within the station, it is necessary to properly impose policies and guidelines so that the personnel will be properly guided by their duties and responsibility and will always be reminded of their specific job as firefighters.

Wildfire science acknowledges, but often struggles to address community functioning or the occurrence of social fragmentation as important contributors to ongoing discussions surrounding wildfire management. People and their influence on management possibilities are pervasive across landscapes where fire plays an important, but increasingly uncertain role. Ongoing trends and patterns in human development are one important indicator of social diversity—but they are only echoes of deeper dynamics surrounding variable human perspectives, values, ways of knowing, and interactions with the landscape that add considerable complexity to the development of collective management approaches.

4.2.2 Additional Personnel in the Station

This theme narrates the context that based on the informants' responses one of the main problems in the station is lack of personnel yet they have big areas of jurisdiction. As such, they cannot perform their job well and, as a result, the operations within the department will be affected. Informant 3 responded that in order to solve or address some of the problems, they need to add personnel to their station, so he said:

The best way to do in order to solve the problem is to add personnel to my station but because of the limited human resources that perennially haunted the BFP, we were forced to resort to table inspection, albeit limited to small and compliant establishments (IDI 3: SS7).

Informant 4 also conveyed that adding personnel to the station is necessary, he said that:

The best way is to add personnel to my station, along with the thrust that targets be acquired earlier. As for financial aspect, the higher office has to allocate funds in preparation for ordinary apparatus trouble (IDI 4: SS9).

Emate (2011) mentioned that lack of personnel and firefighting apparatus and equipment still haunt the fire stations in Region 7, otherwise known as Central Visayas. The latter is composed of the provinces of Bohol, Cebu, Negros Oriental and Siquijor. BFP Region 7 Director, Senior Supt. Ma. Luisa Hadjula said these were the most common problems raised when she and the other officials of the regional fire department visited the fire stations regionwide. Hadjula said the purpose of their visit was to know the current problems and concerns of the BFP personnel and fire marshals. Most of the fire stations allegedly raised concerns on their lack of personnel and insufficient firefighting apparatus.

An ideal fire station has one fire truck and is manned by seven personnel per shift but most fire stations in Central Visayas do not meet the requirement.

According to Casayuran (2021), Senator Ronald 'Bato' Dela Rosa is pushing to expand the powers and functions of the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), considering the agency's crucial role in saving lives and properties in times of fire and various disasters. He also sought the hiring of 20,000 additional firemen. In his Senate Bill 1832, or the Bureau of Fire Protection Modernization Act of 2020, reported by the Senate Committee on Public Order and Dangerous Drugs last year, Dela Rosa pointed out the urgent need to expand BFP's powers and functions which should include the agency's authority to inspect structures within the Special Economic Zones for fire safety as well as to conduct necessary probe in the event of destructive fire.

4.3 The Informants' Aspirations for themselves and for their Departments

4.3.1 Additional Personnel in the Station
This theme pertains to the informants' hopes and dreams for their departments and for themselves.

4.3.1 Job Dedication

This them narrates based on the responses of the informants in connection with informants' hopes for their subordinates in light of the achievement of their goals and targets, preservation of harmony within the workplace, and advancement of the best interest of the Bureau of Fire Protection. Informant 1 emphasized the point that dedication to the job is very important in the bureau, he said that:

All we have to do is accept the reality that it is our calling to be firefighters and thus do the right thing that would contribute to the improvement of the Bureau. The key is to have dedication to our job (IDI 1: SS1).

Informant 2 added that, job dedication is a must, he said:

To fire safety advocates, we must have dedication to our job. In that sense, we have to reach out to people within the family circle and the community, and constantly remind them that life is precious and that our efforts and hard work should not be put to waste. That is why we have to be educated on and be aware of the ill effects and dangers of destructive fires (IDI 2: SS4).

The informants hope as far as the stations they managed are concerned that their personnel are dedicated to their job as a firefighter, considering that they are needed in the community in times of disaster whether man-made or natural calamities, are expected to respond to any emergency, and are committed to prevent and suppress hazardous fire and investigate its causes, as mandated.

Siehel (2020) mentioned that dedication to the job is a vague and generic term that encompasses many traits and often goes by other names. Regardless of what you call it, it is essential that firefighters are hard-working, hard-training people who take pride in their work and want to be the best at what they do. Firefighters should never settle for mediocrity within themselves. They must strive for excellence at all times no matter how menial the task may be. They must be dedicated to the job and all that it entails, the glamorous and not so glamorous, the fun and exciting and the boring and monotonous.

4.3.2 Rendering of Service to the Public

This theme narrates on the context that the fire personnel render services to the people, as mandated. Informant 1 stated that the fire personnel render duty to the people, he said that:

We have to inspire our personnel to render duty which is to protect the lives and properties of the people because we have been receiving decent salaries, albeit depending on our ranks. Besides, we have to do the same with utmost diligence and dedication (IDI 1: SS2).

Informant 6 in the focused group discussion also emphasized the significance of rendering duty to the people, so he said that:

Rendering service to the public, which is grounded mainly in saving their lives and properties, is all about happiness, fulfilment, faithfulness, and benevolence in doing so (FGD 6:SS15).

This theme emphasized informants' hope towards their personnel to render service to the public by way committing themselves to suppress and prevent hazardous fire, involve themselves in firefighting and any rescue operations, and investigate all fire-related cases.

This theme is supported by Equity theory by Adams (1963) the theory emphasized, in order to maximize individuals' rewards; we tend to create systems where resources can be fairly divided amongst members of a group. Inequalities in relationships will cause those within them to be unhappy to a degree proportional to the amount of inequality. The belief is that people value fair treatment which causes them to be motivated to keep the fairness maintained within the relationships of their co-workers and the organization. The structure of equity in the workplace is based on the ratio of inputs to outcomes. Inputs are the contributions made by the employee for the organization.

5. Conclusion

There are eight (8) emergent themes that were derived from the responses of the participants. From the inquiry's findings, the following recommendations, suggestions and measures for implementation may be useful.

Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) must recruit additional personnel in order to meet the minimum requirements being prescribed by the Republic Act 9514, the law amending P.D. 1185. As mandated, BFP personnel have to commit themselves to preventing and suppressing destructive fire, investigating its causes, and responding to man-made and natural disasters and other emergencies. The Bureau must allocate sufficient budget for the procurement of additional equipment like fire trucks, firefighting personal protective equipment (PPE) and other related apparatus and materials. All of these are anchored on the BFP's vision of attaining a modern fire service fully capable of ensuring a fire safe-nation by 2034 and also on the thrust of making sure the safety of its personnel during firefighting, rescue and other related operations.

Fire marshals, however, must equip themselves with appropriate training and seminars so as to develop their skills in leading their subordinates at their stations. In effect, station goals and targets, more predominantly that of the promotion of the Oplan

Ligtas ng Pamayanan (OLP) will be easily achieved. As a public servant, fire marshal is duty-bound to build a strong relationship with the community he or she is serving.

BFP personnel must exhibit utmost dedication to and responsibility for their job as firefighters for the reason that they are the exclusive agency clothed with power and authority in matters pertaining to the prevention and suppression of dangerous fire, and enforcement of the fire code of the Philippines. The bureau must not waver as regards its thrust of sending its personnel to a plethora of relevant seminars and trainings for the latter to become more competent in the fields of firefighting, investigation, inspection and the like. Issues hounding the BFP are primarily affecting such fields.

Local Government Units (LGU) must constantly support the program implemented by the Bureau of Fire Protection in order for them to attain their common goals of having a safe and secure community and nation, as a whole, against dangerous fires and other calamities.

Community must cooperate, follow and obey legal orders during occurrences of destructive fire. In this manner, the community is helping the fire protection personnel in achieving goals and targets of securing a fire safe community. In fine, they must constantly follow Republic Act 9514 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) being enforced by the Bureau of Fire Protection.

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