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Using the crisis in context theory (CCT) as an ecological framework to understanding human behaviors, the study examined organizational responses and individual employee coping behaviors to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing from the perspectives of psychology, organization development, and management, the research examined dependent and independent organization and self-initiated actions that employees deemed helpful in coping with the effects of the crisis. Qualitative data were gathered through online survey from 216 employees in the Philippines, a developing country whose major cities were on community quarantine to minimize the spread of the pandemic. The study identified organizational actions or responses to help employees adapt to the COVID-19 crisis. These are: 1) flexible work arrangements, 2) mental health and well-being programs, 3) physical health and safety measures, 4) financial support, 5) provision of material resources, and 6) communication of short and long term plans. Findings also surfaced coping strategies at the individual employee level and how these relate to organizational initiatives. Seven themes emerged from the data- 1) task-focused coping, 2) stress management, 3) social coping, 4) cognitive strategies, 5) learning and development activities, 6) faith-oriented coping, and 7) maladaptive strategies. The analysis highlighted the interrelatedness of organizational responses and employee actions (e.g. how individual task/social coping behaviors were enabled by the company's flexible work arrangements and provision of technological resources amidst physical distancing). Insights from the findings may orient organizational efforts to mitigate the impact of the pandemic as well as encourage and support positive employee coping behaviors.

Keywords: crisis in context theory, ecological framework, coping behaviors, organizational response, COVID-19

Even prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been widespread recognition that contemporary work organizations operate in complex and uncertain times (Bhaduri, 2019; James & Wooten, 2010). In recent years, numerous natural calamities (e.g. hurricane Katrina in 2005, typhoon Haiyan in 2013) and human induced crises (e.g. the 2001 9/11 terrorist attack and the 2007 global financial crisis) caused negative disruptions to societies and organizations. Nonetheless, the impact of the current pandemic, which has evolved from a global health emergency to a humanitarian and economic crisis, appears to have far greater impact to

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organizations, and employees (Cadena & Ferrari-Haines, 2020; McKee & Stuckler, 2020) as this has caused massive trade shocks and millions of job loss all over the world (ILO, 2020).

Reilly (1993) defined crises as situations that cause harmful disruptions at a considerable magnitude that require well-timed responses. Aside from those that arise from within the organization, crises can be unexpected external events (like the COVID-19 pandemic) that go beyond "the firms typical operating frameworks" (Reilly, 1993, p. 166). Given that crisis situations are atypical and require a sense of urgency, organizations and employees engage in actions to mitigate its impact (Boin et al., 2013). Immediately managing the impact of crisis is necessary to avoid greater damage to stakeholders (i.e. employees, customers etc.) and infrastructures (Boin et al., 2013) as well as lessen exhaustion of organizational resources (James et al., 2011) that will render the organization incapable of immediately resuming normal operations (Reilly,1993).

Organizations respond to crises situations through various crises management strategies such as activating a business continuity plan and a crisis management or emergency response team (Reilly, 1993; Teng-Calleja et al., 2020). Effective organizational response also includes communicating needed information and engaging employees in efforts to deal with the crisis as well as monitoring their situation, providing material/financial resources and addressing their need for mental health and psychological support (Bundy et al., 2016; Teng-Calleja et al., 2020).

Employees, on the other hand, use cognitive and behavioral strategies to cope with the effects of a crisis (De Longis & Holtzman, 2005). These individual coping strategies can be classified into two approaches – adaptive and maladaptive (Everly & Lating, 2002). Adaptive strategies include eating nutritious food, engaging in exercise and relaxation activities that reduce stress and enable wellbeing in the long term. Maladaptive strategies (e.g. substance use, interpersonal withdrawal etc.) are those that may immediately relieve stress but would, in the long term, negatively impact employee wellbeing (Everly & Lating, 2002).

Although there were studies that looked at how organizations respond to and manage the effects of crises (e.g. James et al., 2011, Reilly, 1993; Teng-Calleja et al., 2020) as well as literature that point to how individuals cope with crisis situations (e.g. De Longis & Holtzman, 2005; Everly & Lating, 2002), there seems to be a dearth of studies that relate these two levels of behavioral responses. To address the aforementioned gap, this study used the *Crisis in Context Theory* (CCT) as an ecological framework to understanding human experiences (Myer & Moore, 2006), by examining and relating organizational responses and individual employee coping behaviors to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, it looked at dependent and independent organization and self-initiated actions that were perceived as helpful by employees as they navigated through the effects of the crisis. Although ecological models have been used in proposing multilevel response to disasters (e.g. Beaton et al., 2008), there seems to be few empirical studies that use a contextual approach in exploring ways by which employees and organizations respond to crisis situations. As pointed out by Myer and Moore (2006 p. 144) "although many resources have been used to mitigate other problems that influence organizations while in crisis, addressing the human impact seems to be neglected".

The succeeding section describes CCT as an ecological model for understanding persons and organizations in crisis. It then describes the negative disruptions created by the COVID-19 pandemic at the societal, organizational, and individual levels.

Crisis in Context Theory

CCT was developed as an intervention approach in counseling psychology. This theory assumes that the effects and corresponding response to crisis needs to be examined using a contextual or ecological perspective (Myer & Moore, 2006). CCT draws from the assumptions of Bronfenbrenner's theory of human development as well as Lewin's field theory. Bronfenbrenner puts forth that individual development is a result of complex interactions of context, time, process, and person (Bronfenbrenner, 1995) while Lewin emphasized the role of the situation in shaping human behavior (Lewin & Cartwright, 1951). Both theories, as applied in crisis situations, point to the importance of considering contextual factors in understanding people's reactions and behaviors (Myer & Moore, 2006). In the case of employees experiencing the COVID-19 pandemic, critical external factors are circumstances created by the society and work organization that they are a part of. For example, national government impositions on physical distancing to reduce the spread of the disease rendered organizations and employees incapable of continuing normal business operations and work activities, respectively. These restrictions, at the level of society, shape the experience of the pandemic at the organizational and individual employee level. Nonetheless, in the work setting, organizational responses may serve as intervening factors on the impact of this societal restriction on employees. Organizational actions such as providing technological support to allow the continuation of work activities despite physical distancing will engender performance from employees. Being able to perform one's job contributes to the ability of the organization to continue business operations which may then add to the society's capacity to weather through the crisis.

Bronfenbrenner's (1995) ecological perspective has been used in studies on work behaviors (Johnson, 2011) as well as crisis situations such as disaster response and management (e.g. Beaton et al., 2008). What seems to make CCT different is its recognition of the dependent and independent relationship between individual and systems' reactions to crisis. In this particular study, the focal system would be work organizations. As seen in the literature presented above, organizations engage in crisis management to deal with the effects of crisis situations (e.g. James et al., 2011, Reilly, 1993; Teng-Calleja et al., 2020). Individuals, on the other hand, engage in coping behaviors to deal with the psychological stress brought about by experiencing the crisis (e.g. De Longis & Holtzman, 2005; Everly & Lating, 2002). Although the literature cited in the preceding statements emphasize independent actions of organizations and employees, there are studies that establish the interdependency of individual and organization reactions such as the empirical researches done by Myer and Moore (2006) on the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US and Teng- Calleja et al. (2020) on the organizational efforts to build organization and employee resilience in disaster situations.

While the study is guided by these dependent and independent approaches to looking at personal and organizational reactions, it also aligns with CCT's key premise that the impact of crisis has reciprocal effects among people and systems. The following quote from Myer and Moore (2006) describes this reciprocal effect and illustrates how this is aligned with Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective and Lewin's field theory:

> According to Bronfenbrenner (1986), the interactions are reciprocal, with the individual influencing the systems and each system having an effect on the individual. Lewin's understanding that behavior occurs within the context of the total situation also supports the inclusion of this idea in CCT. According to Lewin, the stimuli within the context of the situation influences choices made by the individual. There is a dynamic connection

between the situation and individuals that is critical in understanding any given characteristic of behavior (deRivera, 1976, p. 142).

This reciprocal effect may not be apparent, thus requiring scrutiny and examination of the different levels of systems affected by and responding to the crisis (Myer & Moore, 2006).

In the context of the current study, this involved recognizing the interactions among the coping behaviors of individual employees and responses of organizations at the onset of the pandemic based on the degree of disruptions (Myer & Moore, 2006) caused by this global crisis.

Figure 1 presents a modified CCT model as applied to this research. The model illustrates how the COVID-19 crises affected individual employees, the organization and the bigger society. The broken double headed arrows likewise reflect how reactions at the employee, organization, and societal level have co-interacting effects on each other. The succeeding section describes this impact of the pandemic to societies, businesses, and individuals. It particularly elaborates on the effects of the crisis on organizations and employees.

Figure 1
Modified CCT Model as Applied to this Research
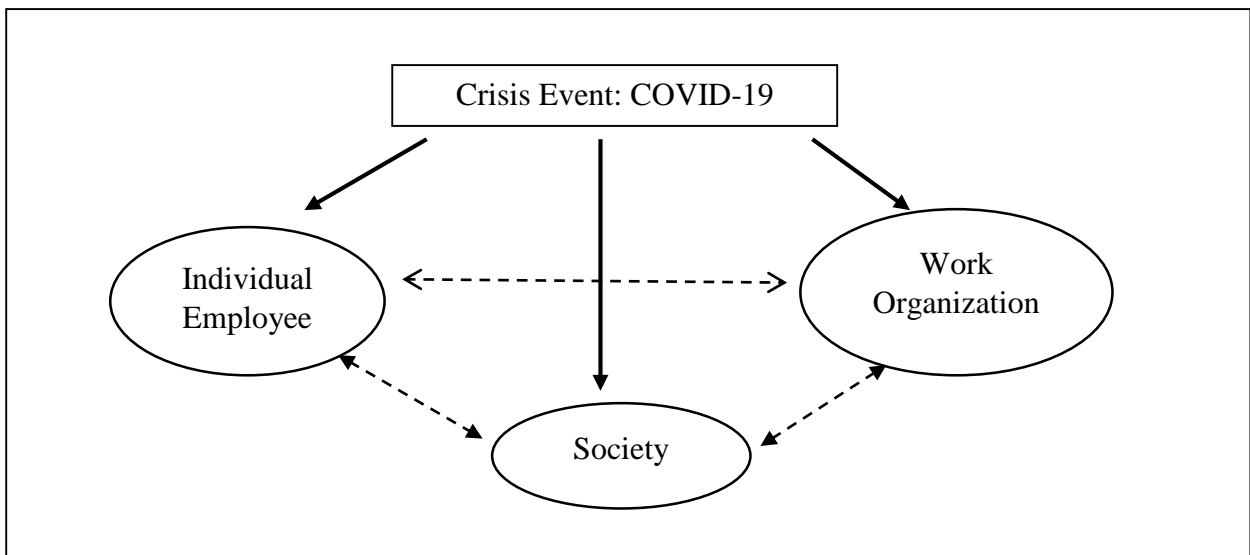
Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic to Society, Organizations, and Employees

As the coronavirus disease spread through different parts of the world in an unimaginable speed and magnitude, various nation states have implemented ways of protecting their citizens from being infected. To date, there are more than 21 million confirmed cases and more than 761,000 deaths worldwide (World Health Organization [WHO], as of August 16, 2020). Due to this, many countries are in lockdown or implements varying levels of community quarantine to ensure physical distancing. As will be seen in the literature presented below, this societal level response, although unarguably necessary, severely compromised people's livelihood (Cadena & Ferrari-Haines, 2020). Consequently, the way organizational operations were disrupted by the pandemic reflects on the impact of the crisis to individual employees. The interrelatedness of the impact of the pandemic from the society, organization and individual levels demonstrates the ecological approach in understanding crisis situations put forth by CCT.

Effects on Work Organizations

Many companies have stopped operations or have implemented a work-from-home (WFH) arrangement to abide by the lockdown/quarantine orders of their respective governments. These disrupted operations led to businesses struggling to continue paying for the salaries and benefits of their employees and covering for operational costs (Cadena & Ferrari-Haines, 2020). Most companies were forced to implement drastic changes in operations. For example, organizations that use digital platforms as secondary channels for delivering products and services needed to immediately shift to these as the primary mode of connecting to consumers (Accenture, 2020).

There are projections that a global economic crisis will occur as a result of this pandemic (e.g. McKee & Stuckler, 2020). Given the high probability that this will happen, organization leaders are wary about sustainability and adapting to post-lockdown scenarios especially if physical distancing will need to go on for months (Cadena & Ferrari-Haines, 2020).

Effects on Employees

The societal and organizational impact of the COVID-19 crisis naturally affects employees. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2020), global unemployment will most likely increase by 400 million. Aside from this, the decline in economic activities resulted in underemployment and significant income losses to employees (ILO, 2020). In developed countries, there is a massive increase in the number of employees seeking food support (McKee & Stuckler, 2020) or filing for unemployment benefits (Mutikani, 2020). These daunting effects on employees and their families are magnified in resource-constrained and developing countries that have fewer social protection policies and programs and where there are a lot more people living in poverty (Buheji et al., 2020).

Since organizations needed to shift to WFH arrangements or operate digitally, employees also needed to cope with these new ways of working (Accenture, 2020). These abrupt changes and uncertainties cause psychological stress and may affect employees' daily functioning and productivity (Mactal, 2020). Previous crisis situations such as the 2007 global financial crisis led to severely worsened health conditions (Case & Deaton, 2017) and large incidences of suicides in affected countries (Reeves et al, 2014).

The effects of the pandemic to individual employees are not just shaped by what is happening to society and work organizations. Employees have varying dispositional characteristics, differential access to resources outside of what the organization provides, as well as diverse personal concerns that may or may not be work-related. Thus, the way individual employees respond or cope with the effects of the pandemic may vary. Although these responses may be influenced by the nature and extent of support provided by the organization, there may also be actions taken by the individual that are independent from the organization. These perspectives reflect the assumptions of CCT on the reciprocal relationship and dependent and independent actions of individual employees and organizations in crisis situations that guide this study. Given this assumptions, the study looked at independent actions of organizations and individuals to deal with the effects of the pandemic. In recognition of the reciprocal nature of these actions, the research also examined the interrelatedness among the coping behaviors of individual employees and responses of organizations. Specifically, the study asked the following research questions:

1. What were programs or actions implemented by organizations to help employees adapt to the COVID-19 crisis?
2. What were the coping behaviors demonstrated by employees to manage the work-related changes and stressors during this crisis?
3. How do the actions of the employees relate to the support provided by the organization?

Method

The study used a qualitative research design. Data were gathered through an online qualitative survey from employees in Philippine organizations. This approach was used because of the exploratory nature of the study and the need to abide by physical distancing guidelines. Thematic analysis using the procedures of Braun and Clarke (2006) was utilized to examine the data.

Research Setting

The Philippines is a developing country located in Southeast Asia and has seen 182,365 total cases of COVID-19 as of August 21, 2020 (CNN Philippines, 2020). Of this number, 64,906 are active cases and 2,940 are deceased. The government of the Philippines placed the country in a state of calamity and a state of public health emergency which prompted the creation of an Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF). The IATF gives recommendations to the President on what policies need to be enacted and has the authority to call upon law enforcement agencies to assist in the implementation of these policies (Vallejo & Ong, 2020). Due to the COVID-19 crisis, it is estimated that the country's economy will lose around PhP 276.3 billion to PhP 2.5 trillion or around US$ 5.5 billion to US$46.9 billion (Abrigo et al., 2020) because of government-mandated enhanced community quarantine or ECQ that restricts movement of non-essential workers. The ECQ is the strictest of all the announced community quarantines that restricts the movement of all citizens regardless of age, prohibits businesses and transportation to operate unless they are for essential services (i.e., food, electricity, water), and suspends physical classes in all levels (Maingat, 2020). The ECQ prompted many organizations to shift to WFH arrangement or to transition to having skeletal forces for minimum/partial operations. In a National Mobile Phone survey by the Social Weather Station, the adult unemployment rate is at 45.5%, half of these respondents shared that they lost their jobs and livelihood because of the COVID-19 pandemic (Esguerra, 2020). This community quarantine, which has been one of the longest lockdowns in the world, started on 16 March and has continued in changing levels of strictness until present day (The Economist, 2020).

Participants

Purposive sampling was used in gathering data. Participants were employees with tenure of at least six months to ensure familiarity with organizational processes. The researchers assumed that this amount of time is enough for the employee to know what programs and policies were implemented as a response to the pandemic and what policies were already in place prior to COVID 19. The employees who answered this survey were not asked to disclose their company name and were only asked to identify the industry that they work in. A total of 216 employees participated in the study. The survey respondents belonged to different organizations from 25 industries. Most of the participants were in the academe (12.04%), business process outsourcing (7.4%), manufacturing (6.48%) and government (6.48%) sectors.

The rest belonged to health, retail, utility, infrastructures, real estate, and non-profit organizations, among others. Sixty-nine percent (69%) were female and 31% were male. The average age is 37 with ages ranging from 21 to 67. Participants came from various industries with retail and manufacturing representing 24% of the respondents. Majority (77%) have a WFH arrangement during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data Gathering Instrument

The research was part of a larger study conducted from April 14 to 20, 2020 by a University-based center for organization development and research. Questions asked through the online survey that was used in the study were - "Please describe what your company / organization has done or is currently doing to help its employees adapt to the COVID-19 crisis," and "As an employee, what do you do to cope with work-related changes or stressors during this crisis". Demographic data such as age, sex, industry, and work arrangement during community quarantine were likewise collected.

Data Gathering and Analysis Procedures

Due to the government-mandated social distancing, the researchers administered the online survey questionnaire through social media and email blasts. The online questionnaire was sent out first to those that are in the database of the center that spearheaded the research. The email message came with a request to not just answer the survey but to share it with work colleagues that also fall within the inclusion criteria. QuestionPro was used as the survey platform. Informed consent was obtained from all the participants prior to presenting the survey questions. The consent form specified the research objectives, ensured voluntary participation, and confidentiality of responses. The data gathering was conducted in April 2020 while the whole of Metro Manila was under the government-mandated enhanced community quarantine (ECQ or lockdown where no offices and classes were being held in the University). Given this, the University's research ethics office did not accept research ethics protocols for review. Nonetheless, we followed the office's research ethics guidelines especially in crafting the informed consent section of the survey.

Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step procedure in conducting thematic analysis was used to examine the qualitative responses. The process starts with familiarization with the data through reading and re-reading before coding. Initial codes were then created to identify the participants' responses to the questions. The initial codes that were related and recurring were clustered together to identify potential themes. The identified potential themes were reviewed and discussed based on their inter-relationships and their fit with the research objectives. While responses to the first two research questions were analyzed straightforwardly, findings that correspond to the third question were drawn from the researchers' examination of the relationship between organization initiatives and employee coping behaviors in crisis situations. This comes from the examples presented in the paper of Myer and Moore (2006) that shows how interrelations among the behaviors of individuals and response of organizations to crisis situations may not be apparent thus requiring in-depth scrutiny.

Once the overall fit was established, the themes were further refined and labelled. Two members of the research team independently created initial codes using the same questions and dataset. A series of discussions with the three researchers were also conducted until the themes were finalized. This process was done to enhance the validity and reliability of the analysis.

Actual quotations from the dataset will be used to expound on the themes presented in the succeeding results section. The respondent numbers were noted in parentheses to indicate the source. Quotes embedded in the presentation of results were translated to English. Original verbatim quotes may be made available upon request.

Results

The section will first describe the initiatives implemented by work organizations to help employees adapt to the pandemic amidst the community quarantine. This will be followed by a discussion of the coping behaviors employed by individual employees to mitigate the impact of the crisis.

Organizational Initiatives to Help Employees Adapt

The study identified organizational actions or responses to help employees adapt to the COVID-19 crisis. Six themes emerged from the responses: 1) flexible work arrangements, 2) mental health and well-being programs, 3) physical health and safety measures, 4) financial support, 5) provision of material resources, and 6) communication of short and long-term plans.

Flexible Work Arrangements

This involves reducing the number of employees who have to physically report to work, and maintaining a skeletal workforce "whose functions are critical or in the operations" (109). Participants also reported that their organizations shifted to flexible / shortened schedules and lighter workloads. Many organizations adopted work-from-home (WFH) arrangements. Organizations leveraged on technology to support remote work ["laptops are provided so we can do our work remotely" (203)] and made "work from home guidelines, protocols and goal monitoring" (30) systems. Flexibility was also observed in the restructuring of roles, processes and structures. As one participant noted, "all teams were tasked to reinvent their roles. I am an HR practitioner so in this time, we all became generalists to help other departments who need manpower" (55).

Mental Health and Well-being Programs

Organizations helped ensure employees' psychosocial health through engagement programs. Social media groups were established to connect with employees and keep them updated. As shared by one participant, "we established a Facebook group where we post updates and announcements, share amusing content, hold contests, and support one another" (4). There were also efforts to conduct *kumustahan* (check-up) sessions such as "daily chat groups and pulse checks and huddles to mitigate isolation" (51). Moreover, respondents mentioned that their companies provided "mental and psychosocial support" (115) and "encourage PFA (psychological first aid) counseling and assessment" (58). Finally, fostering mental health and well-being made employees feel that they are part of a "caring community" (201), and that "the company cares for its employees" (121) and "prioritizes their health" (121).

Physical Health and Safety Measures

To protect employees from the virus, some companies provided protective supplies such as "personal protective equipment - masks, gloves, face shields" (200) and "personal hygiene

kits" (121) that included soap, vitamins, and alcohol. Safety measures such as "no mask, no entry" (200) policies, social distancing, and temperature checks were enforced. Also, "sanitizers, alcohol and disinfectants are made readily available within the facilities for employee use" (200). Physical health and safety measures likewise include "continuous data gathering on status of employees" (103) and monitoring their physical health.

Financial Support

Early disbursement of salaries and benefits were implemented despite the fact that "most…projects are on-hold" (48). Financial benefits and aid include "advance 13th month pay" (8), "an option to use (our) leave credits" (78), and cash loans or calamity assistance so employees "can buy essentials like food, medicines, etc." (126). Some participants reported that their organizations provided "hazard pay to those who need to physically work in the office" (9) and "subsidized internet bill payment" (71) for those who have to work remotely. Loan deductions were also temporarily suspended. Finally, organizations helped process financial aid from the government.

Provision of Material Resources

Non-monetary support was also given to employees. Accommodations were arranged for employees who have to physically report to the office. As one participant reported, "we set up temporary housing in a nearby apartment so employees who volunteered to work could walk to work: provided mattresses, electric fans, basic housing amenities, and supplied face masks" (45). Relatedly, "transportation services back and forth" (41) and meals were provided for employees who need to report to work. Groceries and vitamins were also given. Moreover, "efforts to provide assistance to employees with internet connection issues" (203) were made. Participants noted that WFH arrangements were made feasible "by giving everyone laptops, headsets, subsidized internet bill payment" (71) and by providing "pocket wifi for those who have unstable internet connection" (104).

Communication of Short and Long Term Organizational Plans

Transparency during the crisis was practiced through "regular updates on the company's status" (59), giving employees "comprehensive information about what is happening" (69), and having "very clear communications about difficult situations and decisions to be made, including options and suggestions of how to cope" (51) with the crisis. As part of the organization's short-term initiatives to immediately respond to the crisis, communication lines were open ["there's a 24/7 hotline for any employee concerns" (12)] and "current contact numbers & address were updated in case the need to support (financial, emergency situations, food needs, etc.) each other arises" (36)]. The presence and concern of leaders during the crisis were felt through "daily email messages" (12), "encouraging words" (18) and by the "leadership team (country and region) taking biggest pay cuts" (82). Efforts were also made to ensure job security.

In addition to these, other plans were also made in order to help establish how work will be done in the future. Long-term plans include establishing business continuity programs, "complete with policies and regulations on WFH arrangements, skeleton workforce etc." (139). Online platforms were tapped so that teams can align on "daily priorities and give updates every afternoon on the end day accomplishments. "This helped all employees to have daily focus on

works that needs to be done based on priorities" (154). Some organizations also created task forces or incident management teams. Finally, compliance with government mandates such as the "ban on local and international travels" (128) were enforced.

Employee Coping Behaviors

The study also explored coping strategies at the individual level and how these might relate to organizational initiatives. Seven themes emerged from the data- 1) task-focused coping, 2) stress management, 3) social coping, 4) cognitive strategies, 5) learning and development activities, 6) faith-oriented coping, and 7) maladaptive strategies. These strategies and behaviors as well as their related organizational initiatives are summarized in Table 1 and elaborated on below.

Table 1
Employee Coping Strategies and Their Related Organizational Initiatives

Employee Coping Strategies	Organizational Initiatives to Help Employees Adapt
1. Task-focused coping	Flexible work arrangements.
	Communication of short and long-term organizational plans
2. Stress management	Flexible work arrangements
	Financial support
	Provision of material resources
3. Social coping	Flexible work arrangements
	Mental health and well-being programs
	Physical health and safety measures
	Financial support
	Provision of material resources
	Communication of short and long-term organizational plans
4. Cognitive strategies	Communication of short and long-term organizational plans
5. Learning and development	Flexible work arrangements
	Financial support
	Provision of material resources
	Mental health and well-being programs
6. Faith-oriented coping	Flexible work arrangements
	Financial support
	Provision of material resources
7. Maladaptive strategies	Flexible work arrangements

Task-focused Coping

Task-focused coping involves attending to work concerns, with participants trying to "focus on the individual goals and deliverables set for the year" (35) and to "attend to work-related activities at home" (157). Some employees tried to continue previous work practices or routines, by attempting to "simulate the work setting by wearing corporate attire" (8), or observing "a routine similar to when I need to go to work (wake up at certain time, pray, stretch /exercise, bath, breakfast)" (156). One employee also reported setting up "a space in my room so that I can feel that I am in the office" (121). Employees also made lists of tasks that need to be accomplished, as well as established a daily routine. In between work tasks, employees also ensured that they took breaks. This includes setting "a limit until what time I do work (although, mostly extends)" (156) and making it a point to have "at least 15-minute breaks in the morning

and in the afternoon" (154). Task-focused coping also involves organizing tasks and setting schedules for when to accomplish them. Finally, compliance with directives from the government ["by just staying at home" (92) and working remotely] or the company ["obey as much as I can all the directives about work" (134)] was also reported as means of coping.

Task-focused coping is made possible largely because of the flexible work arrangements adopted by organizations. That is, employees were allowed to continue working and "keep busy with work-from-home tasks" (18) because of their continued job security. Through the business continuity programs and directives on how to do remote work communicated by the organization, employees were guided on what is expected of them ["follow instructions given to us" (87)] and how to structure their tasks from home.

Stress Management

Stress management involves a "variety of activities to alleviate stress" (62) and cope through enjoyable activities. This includes playing video games, "watch videos online" (151), reading books, and listening to music and podcasts. Some participants also reported practicing their creative skills as means of relaxation, such as painting, drawing, sewing, and doing calligraphy. Exercise through "home workouts" (104) also appears to be a key coping mechanism. Household chores, such as "cleaning around the house" (41), caring for plants, home improvement initiatives, doing the grocery and cooking/baking were also mentioned. Trying "to catch up on much needed sleep" (158) and having "'me'/'self' time" (33) also helped employees cope. To manage stress levels, employees also tried to "avoid negative news as much as possible" (28) and "refrain from opening Facebook and emails" (64).

Stress management activities generally appear to be based on individual preferences and interests. However, this coping style can be related to flexible work arrangements, which gave employees the freedom to pursue all these home-based activities. Financial and material support for technological needs may have also allowed employees to pursue stress-relieving activities that require internet connection ["watching Netflix and other online videos" (180)].

Social Coping

Nurturing relationships with others is an important coping mechanism. As stated by one participant, "I see how support system plays an important and crucial role in these trying times so I make it a point that I stay connected to my family and friends despite the physical limitations" (200). Social coping involves spending "quality time with the family" (203), such as "bonding thru movie marathon" (163) and assisting children with their homework. Communication with "loved ones and friends" (59) was also mentioned. In the work domain, respondents also regularly communicated with colleagues on work and non-work matters. As one participant noted, "I talk to my colleagues and my boss about how I am doing and listen to them when they also share how it is like on their end" (41). Technological tools appear to be highly helpful. Social coping also extends to the greater community, with respondents providing "help to the community in terms of donation, coordination, etc." (28) as well as "repacking goods" (192) or driving for healthcare workers.

Flexible work arrangements allowed employees who work-remotely to be physically present at home and spend time with family ["I take the opportunity to have family bonding" (163)]. Moreover, social coping was very much linked to employee engagement activities and

the check-ins encouraged under mental and physical health initiatives of organizations. Maintaining communication with others was also an integral part of social coping during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, it can be said that financial and material support for internet and other technologies, as well as opening of communication lines among co-workers helped facilitate social coping ["maintain contact with family, friends, colleagues by using the internet" (132)].

Cognitive Strategies

Cognitive strategies include acceptance, reframing, being flexible, and focusing attention. For employees, acceptance involves acknowledging that "this is a huge phase where everything will change" (54), that circumstances are beyond their control, and that "WFH set-up will be the new normal" (110). It also involves the belief that life is more important than work. Participants noted that "adjustment in the situation is the 'key'" (163), and that one must practice flexibility given the current circumstances. Being prepared for the future, "should this happen again" (26), and finding ways to "adapt to the changes that need to be done once this is over" (93) were also reported as coping strategies. Making plans on how to care for the self and family given potential threat to job security was also mentioned. Another cognitive coping strategy was focusing and controlling thoughts, through mindfulness ["being mindful of only those things that I have control of" (54)] and meditation. Positive thoughts and reframing were also practiced. Respondents reported trying to "focus on the blessings as opposed to everything else that's happening around" (216) and learning "to appreciate what we have and how to maximize the resources that we currently have" (22). Focusing on tasks was also done by staying busy in order to not "let the anxiety take root" (193).

Similar to stress management, cognitive coping approaches seem to be based on individuals' own reflections on the situation. However, communication of organizational plans appears to also play a role in shaping the beliefs and attitudes of people towards the situation. For example, messages regarding work, and the sharing of business continuity plans, may have helped employees "understand the decision and steps of the company in coping up with this pandemic" (83) and somehow accept and adapt to the current situation

Learning and Development Activities

Respondents also reported engaging in activities to further their knowledge and skills, and promote personal or professional development. This includes continuing education ["finish my Master's thesis" (1)], learning new skills (i.e., foreign language), attending webinars, and fostering professional growth ["I do a lot of research, read articles, videos for professional development" (49), "Intensified online learning through our corporate university -employees with laptops have more time to take up courses now" (28)]. This also involves reading news and studies about COVID-19 to be more informed, and learning how to effectively cope with the crisis.

Flexible work arrangements allowed for greater opportunities to pursue "continuous learning at home" (32), whether for personal and professional development. Moreover, being able to go online for "eLearning Programs" (139) and "free webinars" (76) was facilitated through financial and material support from organizations. Avenues for learning were also encouraged or promoted through employee engagement activities and the companies' "sharing of online courses and webinars" (13).

Faith-Oriented Coping

Spiritual coping mechanisms such as the belief in a higher power ["trust in divine providence" (24), "just believe in our God" (207)] were also reported. Faith-oriented activities like spending more time in prayer, and attending "church online" (47) were done alone or with family.

Faith oriented coping strategies appeared to be personal choices of individuals, depending on their level of spirituality. However, this theme is tangentially associated with technological (both through material or financial) support from the organization, which makes online religious services more accessible. Remote work arrangements also gave more time for employees to pray as "time saved from usual traffic became added time for prayer/bible reading" (30) and to do faith-oriented activities in the company of family.

Maladaptive Strategies

One respondent mentioned avoiding the topic of burnout with family because "it will add to their worries and stress" (145). Substance use ["smoke" (122), "drink alcohol" (185)] was also reported as an individual coping strategy. Maladaptive behaviors seem to be based on personal dispositions, preferences and circumstances. However, avoidance of discussions about workload may be indirectly related to continuation of work through flexible work arrangements during COVID-19.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine organizational initiatives and employee coping behaviors to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This research also located the interrelations of these organization and individual-level responses using crisis in context theory as framework. Both organizations and employees engage in actions to mitigate the impact of crises (Boin et al., 2013). The results corroborate with existing literature (e.g. Bundy et al., 2016; Teng-Calleja et al., 2020) on how organizations effectively respond to crises by communicating useful information, providing resources and addressing employees' psychosocial needs the study found timely action by organizations to develop and enforce policies on flexible work arrangements, implement health and safety interventions, as well as provide financial/material and psychosocial support. These strategies helped protect employees and facilitated their transition to the new work conditions. The organizational actions allowed employees to remain productive while coping with the crisis. It appears that the contextual factors (the experience of pandemic and quarantine at the societal level) intensified the creation and adoption of organizational responses.

During this crisis, employees displayed coping behaviors to manage work-related changes and stressors. Employees demonstrated coping mechanisms, such as task-focused and social coping, stress reduction and cognitive techniques, and learning and faith-oriented coping. There were also a few employees that reported behaviors that were unhelpful and unhealthy to cope with the crisis. These employee level actions are aligned with coping behavior found in literature that reflects adaptive and maladaptive behaviors (Everly & Lating, 2002). The coping behaviors likewise illustrate both cognitive and behavioral strategies (De Longis & Holtzman, 2005).

Based on the results, it appears that individual level actions were shaped by the responses of the organization within which the person is a part of. Examining this from the lens of crisis in context theory (Myer & Moore, 2006), the findings reflect a more dependent than independent reciprocal relationship between the individual and the organization. Locating this dynamic interaction is important in designing and implementing crisis response, and recovery interventions (Beaton et al., 2008). The individual coping strategies of employees appear to be enabled by organizational provisions and programs. For example, organizations have implemented changes in their business operations and work arrangements that made it possible for employees to work remotely through digital platforms. As seen in the results, the policy on flexible work arrangement and material/financial support capacitated employees to deal effectively with the crisis. The organizational actions enabled the employees' capacity to engage in various coping strategies such as managing work schedule and prioritizing work or home tasks, performing activities that reduce stress, enhancing social connectedness by spending more time with family and significant others, allocating time for learning new things, adjusting to digital technology, and practicing personal faith-oriented activities.

This study provided empirical data on how ecological models, particularly the crisis in context theory, can be applied in a health pandemic. Previous studies (e.g. Adger et al., 2005) emphasize how crisis management requires multilevel response. The findings of this research demonstrate how strategies to control the spread of the disease while addressing employee needs reflect in the action of the government (e.g. quarantine guidelines especially on physical distancing) and the organizations (e.g. financial support, material provisions, mental-health and well-being programs). Results also demonstrate how employees' coping behaviors (e.g. task-focused coping, learning and development activities) seem largely dependent on organizational response which imply the significant role of organizational interventions in the employees' capacity to deal with the effects of a large-scale crisis.

Practical Implications

Leaders may find the outcomes of this study useful in developing appropriate crisis responses that affect both the organization and employees. Examination of the data using an ecological perspective showed that individual coping behaviors were largely dependent on organizational initiatives. Given this, organizations need to touch base with employees in order to gain more insights into their needs, concerns and coping behaviors, while employees need to openly communicate needs and suggestions to the organization. Through this, organizational initiatives can be more targeted or relevant to the workforce. Findings can also serve as inputs to efforts of organizations to review their business continuity or risk management plans. It may provide valuable insights on whether the human side of organizations are given considerable attention in efforts to ensure organizational sustainability.

The findings may also be utilized by clinical psychologists or those in professions that help employees deal with the impact of crises. The coping behaviors identified in the study as well as the identified importance of organizational support may shape individual-level interventions that draw from the employees' systems of support.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

Although the study was able to describe organizational level and individual level efforts to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not without limitations. First, the sampling

procedure limits the generalizability of the research findings. Participants were limited to employees in a developing country context and to those with internet access. Future studies may expand the scope of the research to other demographics. Second, participants' demographic profile was not considered in the analysis. Other research directions can be explored such as unpacking gender roles, variations in women and men's experiences as well as marital status, and generational differences. Industry-level analysis or size of organization can also be considered in examining organizational responses. Third, data gathering was done at the onset of the pandemic and used cross-sectional design. Future research may utilize a longitudinal design. The qualitative data may also be used for developing a survey tool that can be used for a quantitative study that may relate the organizational and individual-level responses and behaviors to other variables (e.g. quality of life, stress levels, employee engagement and commitment)

Conclusion

The study used CCT as an ecological approach to understanding organization responses and individual coping behaviors to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings reflect how policies and guidelines at the societal level shape organizational interventions and employee coping strategies. Results also highlight the dependency of employee actions to organizational interventions. Insights from the findings may orient efforts to minimize the organizational impact of this pandemic, enhance programs to support employees as they cope with the crisis, and improve the readiness of the organization to weather through similar crises in the future.

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