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PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF RESILIENCE AMONG HAEMODIALYSIS NURSES IN INDONESIA: A PHENOMENOLOGY STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Objective: Nurses represent the largest sector of the healthcare workforce, yet they encounter substantial stressors that impact their mental health. Resilience has been identified as a crucial factor in helping nurses cope with these challenges, enabling them to manage stress and uphold professional standards. This study aimed to explore the perceptions and experiences of resilience among hemodialysis nurses in Indonesia. **Methods:** This study applied a descriptive phenomenological approach with semi-structured interviews with 15 nurses across three focus groups until data saturation was achieved. Data was analyzed using thematic analysis. **Result:** The results analysis three primary themes: managing work-life balance, resilience-enabling factors (such as compassion and adaptability), and barriers to resilience, including administrative burdens and staffing shortages. **Conslusion:** These findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to foster resilience among nurses, supporting their mental health and the quality of patient care.

Keywords: COVID-19, Live experience, Nurse, Post-pandemic, Resilience, Qualitative study.

INTRODUCTION

Nurse is the largest occupational group in the health professional sector. According to the World Health Organization (Organization, 2021), they constitute approximately 59% of the global healthcare workforce and play a vital role in delivering patient care. Over the past few years, the nursing profession has witnessed significant expansion in its personnel on an international scale (Waltz et al., 2020). Nurses experience significant levels of stress and burnout in relation to their occupation, which has detrimental implications for their mental well-being (Khamisa et al., 2015). The presence of challenges that exert an adverse impact on the mental well-being of nurses can give rise to significant ramifications, including a decline in nursing professionalism, compromised quality of care, heightened social and financial detriments, as well as an escalation in

turnover and resignations (Guo et al., 2017; Hart et al., 2014; Kim & Chang, 2022; Yarbrough et al., 2017). According to Cooper (Cooper et al., 2020), successfully navigating the pandemic necessitates proactive measures and steadfast dedication, in addition to the ability to effectively address challenges and maintain a positive outlook on the future. These elements are part of resilience (Connor & Davidson, 2003), which is a process that aids a person in overcoming challenges and stressful situations while utilizing personal resources like self-efficacy, balance between work and personal life, laughter, confidence, and encouragement from others (Cooper et al., 2020).

Resilience is a construct that has been associated with favorable outcomes for nurses, enabling them to effectively navigate and surmount challenging circumstances (Cusack et al., 2016) By exhibiting resilience, nurses are able to respond to stressors in a constructive manner, ultimately leading to the preservation of their psychological well-being and mental health (Foster et al., 2020; Gao et al., 2017). In addition, previous research has established a positive correlation between resilience and work engagement (Chen et al., 2020), as well as a protective effect against mental illness (Manomenidis et al., 2019). The findings of recent research indicate that nurse resilience has a crucial role in mitigating nursing burnout, as demonstrated by studies conducted by (Guo et al., 2018; Wei et al., 2019a). The idea of resilience is gaining recognition as a significant factor in alleviating the psychological strain experienced by nurses and promoting their overall physical and mental well-being. Research has demonstrated that resilience plays a mediating role in the association between burnout and the physical and mental health outcomes of nurses (Arrogante & Aparicio-Zaldivar, 2017).

In current discussion, there is a growing recognition of the significance of comprehending an individual's cultural background in order to get insights into their resilience (Ungar & Theron, 2020). Consequently, while investigating resilience within the nursing profession, a pivotal occupational group within society, it becomes imperative to duly acknowledge and examine the cultural context of nurses. The majority of scholarly investigations pertaining to resilience within the nursing discipline have been disseminated throughout the past ten years (Zanatta et al., 2020). The findings of the study conducted by Kunzler (Kunzler et al., 2022) indicate that training interventions have the potential to enhance the resilience levels of nurses. Similarly, the research conducted by Spiva (Spiva et al., 2020) also suggests that training programmes can contribute to the development of resilience among nurse leaders. In addition, it has been suggested that nurse Resilience is a construct that has been associated with favorable outcomes for nurses, enabling them to

effectively navigate and surmount challenging circumstances who possess resilience have the ability to empower nurses through many means. These include demonstrating a sense of self-assurance, displaying genuine concern for their overall welfare (Tau et al., 2018; Wei et al., 2019b), assisting them in recognizing and leveraging their individual talents, fostering their growth and advancement in the profession, and promoting the need of self-care (Hudgins, 2016; Kester & Wei, 2018). The objective of this study was to investigate the attitudes and experiences of resilience among nurses in Indonesia in the aftermath of the coronavirus-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

METHODS

Study Design

The utilization of a descriptive phenomenology approach was employed in this study due to its ability to uncover the authentic significance of the experiences reported by the primary informants. The researchers posited that the utilization of descriptive phenomenology enhances the comprehensiveness, expansiveness, and profundity of their subjective encounters. The research design employed a three-step method as stated by Spiegelberg (Spiegelberg, 1975), which encompassed the stages of intuiting, analyzing, and describing. The initial phase of this research design is sometimes referred to as intuiting. Immersion occurs when researchers deeply engage with the experience under investigation. During this step, the researchers made a conscious effort to minimize the inclusion of an extensive literature review, personal opinions, and any other statements that could potentially bias the interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation. However, the researcher assumed the role of a tool in order to reveal a precise depiction of the phenomenon. During the analysis phase, the researchers comprehensively examined the given data, taking into account the interrelationships, associations, and thematic groupings as deemed appropriate. In order to accomplish this task, the researchers thoroughly engaged with the data by carefully examining and repeatedly reviewing the transcripts. The initial phase is the process of effectively expressing or documenting the essential components necessary to accurately depict the event under investigation. In order to fulfil the objective of this phase, the researchers engaged in a comprehensive analysis of the study's findings from many perspectives.

Key Informants

For this study, we have chosen key informants from a specific city located in Bandung, West Java, Indonesia. In order to be eligible for participation in the study, specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were established. These criteria encompassed the following: (1) individuals classified as

older people, encompassing both males and females, who were above the age of 18; (2) individuals who had been employed inside a hemodialysis unit for a minimum duration of one year; and (3) individuals who possessed the capacity to provide informed permission. The study employed specific exclusion criteria, which consisted of three factors: (1) individuals with reduced cognitive functioning, (2) individuals who were unable to talk, hear, or understand, and (3) individuals with psychosocial difficulties. All the individuals identified as key informants and subsequently invited to participate in the study met the eligibility criteria. The researchers utilized deliberate sampling as the sampling technique for this investigation. Initially, the researchers created a digital poster and subsequently disseminated it to specifically chosen healthcare facilities inside the urban area. The individuals who provided essential information were subsequently identified through their relatives, acquaintances, or self-referrals. At the outset, our intention was to include 10-12 key informants in this descriptive phenomenology study. However, we found that data saturation was achieved after reaching a participant count of 15. This was due to the presence of evident commonalities in the narrative answers provided by the key informants.

Data Collection

The researcher assumed the role of the principal data collection instrument in qualitative research. The study employed open-ended questions derived from a semi-structured interview guide as outlined in box 1. These questions were designed to elicit comprehensive responses from the key informants. The semi-structured guide was initially prepared by the researchers and subsequently underwent review by internal reviewers linked with the university. However, the subsequent questions were formulated based on the answers provided in earlier responses. The interview was conducted in the Bahasa language and subsequently translated into English to facilitate comprehension for the main informants.

Box 1. The English version of the semi-structured interview guide is provided

Interview guide
Could you please provide information regarding your experience with the COVID-19 pandemic?
What are your thoughts and emotions around this particular experience?
In what manner do you envision yourself encountering this phenomenon?
What was the influence of that encounter on you? What are the obligations? The topic of inquiry pertains to the various interconnections and associations that individuals form with others,

encompassing familial bonds, friendships, and communal affiliations. How did you successfully navigate and transcend that particular experience? What factors contributed to your success? How would you articulate this experience in your own language?

Key informants were informed of their right to discontinue participation in the study at any point prior to the interview. Furthermore, it was communicated to the key informants that their answers would be documented. The interviews in this study were conducted employing a videoconferencing. In relation to concerns regarding the rigour of employing these data gathering methods, our reliance was placed upon the depth and comprehensiveness of the data, as well as the veracity of the accounts provided by the key informants. Given that the key informants were referred by an acquaintance, it was presumed that their narrative replies possessed a high degree of accuracy and reliability. Information was gathered from February 2023 to March 2023, and results were validated with a subset of key informants in April and May of the same year.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted promptly following each interview until the point of data saturation was achieved. The responses captured in audio format were transcribed in an exact and literal manner. The examination of the transcript employed Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step phenomenological method, encompassing various stages such as: Following the completion of the interviews, we proceeded to transcribe the audio recordings including the accounts provided by the main informants regarding the phenomenon under investigation. The transcripts were examined in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the key informants' narratives regarding the issue under investigation. The transcripts underwent individual participant-based analysis. The process of coding involved a meticulous analysis of the data, focusing on the principal purpose of the study. Following the completion of the initial coding process, we proceeded to revisit the coded segments in order to verify their accuracy in terms of coding. Significant meanings were categorised into a cluster of thematic groups. Subsequently, we conducted a comprehensive examination and contemplation of the developed cluster of themes in order to unveil the overarching patterns. Based on this thought, the various themes were consolidated into distinct clusters. Subsequently, a comprehensive and intricate portrayal was produced for each thematic element, and the fundamental framework of the phenomena was discerned. In order to authenticate the results, we revisited

specific key informants and shared the findings with the participants.

Trustworthiness/Rigor

Ensuring credibility is crucial in this study in order to authentically portray the experiences of the primary informants. The assessment of trustworthiness was accomplished by employing data saturation and employing extensive description, hence facilitating the generalizability of the findings to many contexts. Trustworthiness was upheld by adhering to the four evaluative criteria proposed by (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) which include credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

To uphold credibility, researchers bracketed preconceived assumptions before data collection and limited the literature review to minimize potential influence on data interpretation. Transferability was supported by discussing findings from multiple perspectives and diverse contexts, incorporating literature from nursing and other disciplines. Dependability was strengthened by validating the findings with individuals who had characteristics similar to those of the key informants. Three purposively selected volunteers were invited to review and comment on the findings. The findings were also presented to a community of older adults, whose perspectives provided additional insights into the phenomenon under investigation. Confirmability was maintained through an audit trail documenting the research process and analytical decisions. Furthermore, the findings were submitted to the institution's internal review committee for evaluation. Feedback obtained from the committee was considered and incorporated where appropriate. Collectively, these strategies enhanced the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the study, thereby strengthening the overall trustworthiness and rigor of the qualitative research process.

Ethical Considerations

The present study received approval from the Ethics Review Committee of STIKep PPNI Jawa Barat, with the assigned approval number (III/109/KEPK/STIKep/PPNI/Jabar/II/2023). The study adhered to ethical norms such as informed consent, ensuring complete secrecy, and maintaining anonymity. The principle of informed consent was upheld by the provision of comprehensive explanations of the research procedures and the rights of individuals to voluntarily participate. The act of agreeing to participate in the study signifies the individual's consent, so allowing the interview to commence. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, pseudonyms and codes were included in the transcripts. In the obtained outcomes, we have additionally eliminated any potential identifying details pertaining to the primary sources of information.

RESULT

A total of 15 participants from 3 different focus group discussion (FGDs) were included in this study (Table 1). The majority of the participants age were 30 years old, and 5 were male and 10 were female. Diploma III were 9 and bachelor degree were 6. The majority of nurse working position level 1-3 was 10 and 5 nurse level 3-5.

Three overarching themes emerged from this qualitative interview data. 1) balancing work and life including: distinguish the role, open-minded, and responsibilities of manager in workplace. 2) Factors that foster resilience include showing compassion, accepting uncertainty, and reinterpreting difficult situations. 3) barrier to enhance resilience: administrative tasks workload and overall staffing (Figure 1).

Table 1. Characteristics of participant in focused group discussions (n = 15).

	FGD 1 (n =5)	FGD 2(n =5)	FGD 3 (n =5)
Age, Mean ± SD	30.56±3.23	32.01±6.04	29.34±4.05
Gender			
Male	2	1	1
Female	3	4	4
Education level			
Diploma III	3	4	2
Bachelor	2	1	3
Working position			
Nurse level 1-3	3	4	3
Nurse level 3-5	2	1	2
Working experience, Mean ± SD	10.11±3.70	11.54±4.23	10.82±3.66

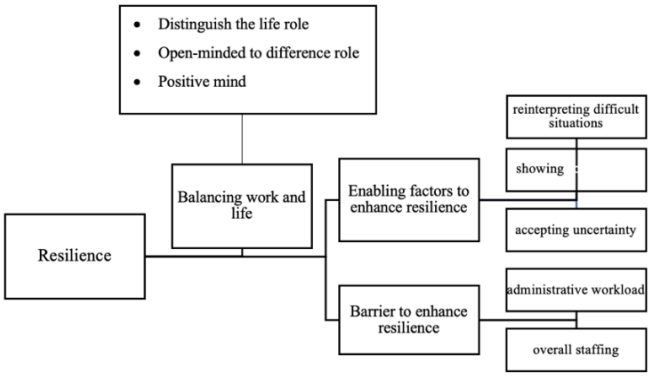

Figure 1. Resilience theme

Theme 1: Balancing work and life

Distinguish the life role

There was a notable distinction between nurses who were married and those who were single, as compared to the remaining individuals in the sample. The former was perceived as exhibiting greater benevolence and generosity, whilst the latter were regarded as embodying a more pragmatic and grounded perspective. Demonstrating comprehension of the obstacles encountered by married nurses within the professional setting.

" *As I have gotten older, I have come to acknowledge the paramount significance of the individuals in my social sphere. Consequently, I have endeavoured to enhance my own character.*" (Interview 2)

"I am able to discern the marital status of certain nurses inside my workplace. Married nurses exhibit a greater emphasis on patient care and their immediate environment compared to their single counterparts, who may prioritise task completion." (Interview 6)

Open-minded to difference role

Married nurses were perceived by certain individuals as possessing greater levels of maturity and tolerance. Participants exhibited a tendency to accord preferential treatment to married nurses due to their perceived higher level of experience. Additional concessions encompassed a reduction in night shifts and an increase in allocated weekend hours. Participants are required to strike a balance between the needs of married nurses and those of the entire workforce.

"The staff nurses were obligated to comply with my requests. I have achieved comprehension of the aforementioned individuals and am not inconvenienced by the necessity of awaiting responses from several nurses." (Participant 2).

Positive mind

Nurses offered techniques for maintaining a healthy mental attitude and overcoming bad emotions. For instance, certain nurses may have engaged in psychological preparation by acquainting themselves with a specific indicator or concept.

"Indeed, I consistently reassured myself that the personal protective equipment (PPE) provided by this institution is ample, so alleviating any concerns regarding the depletion of protective resources." (Interview 9).

Theme 2: Enabling factors to enhance resilience

Showing compassion

The establishment of a robust and empathetic bond between a nurse and their patients is crucial for fostering the advancement and maturation of resilience, as underscored by the theme of "demonstrating compassion." Various family members, including parents, spouses, and children, utilised social media platforms as a means to extend their support and provide words of encouragement to nurses. The individual's mental well-being was effectively bolstered by both the institution and the surrounding community, hence facilitating their ability to navigate the challenges

associated with high-pressure job environments. According to a nurse:

"I missed home when I thought about my young children. The way they ate, slept, and interacted with others were all things I worried about. My spouse consistently provided me with visual media content, including photographs and videos, featuring our kids, so alleviating any concerns or anxieties I may have had over their well-being." (Interview 8)

The nurse engages in self-compassion through several strategies, including promoting positive self-dialogue, countering negative self-dialogue, disengaging from stressful circumstances, refraining from personalising situations, and cultivating self-awareness and emotional intelligence.

"Based on personal experience, I can affirm the efficacy of this paradigm in examining consumer behaviour, since it has been beneficial in both assisting others and enhancing my own life." (Interview 2).

Acknowledging uncertainty in workplace

The subject matter of this discourse centres on the apprehensions and uncertainties experienced by novice nurses as they prepare to embark on their professional journey in the healthcare industry. In the field of nursing, the utmost importance is placed on prioritising patient care as the primary focus. A significant number of nurses have encountered instances of psychological crises, physical discomfort, apprehension, and various manifestations of distress. Nurses were had to engage in the acquisition of knowledge and the application of measures pertaining to environmental and infectious disease precautions. Additionally, they were compelled to attain a high level of proficiency in the proper donning of protective equipment. Furthermore, nurses had to devise strategies to navigate the constraints imposed by personal protective equipment (PPE) due to the highly transmissible nature of COVID-19 through droplets and direct contact.

"*On the initial day, I engaged in an eight-hour work shift, notwithstanding the utilisation of personal protective equipment (PPE) and exposure to high-pressure heat. Additionally, I encountered challenges such as navigating through unfamiliar environments, coping with limited supplies, and adapting to different nursing practices.*" (Interview 5)

The nurses exhibited signs of stress, expressing concerns about potential errors and displaying fatigue as a result of their occupation.

"*During the night shift, the unfamiliar setting resulted in substandard labour and apprehensions around the administration of incorrect medication or injections. The concerned party expressed fear regarding potential omissions in their treatment regimen and uncertainty regarding any forgotten aspects*." (Interview 1).

Reframing burdensome experiences

The central concept posits that individuals can acquire knowledge and enhance their abilities through the process of confronting and

surmounting obstacles. The training proved advantageous for nurses as it facilitated the identification of their inherent strengths in terms of resilience, offered valuable prompts for areas of improvement, and introduced novel opportunities for personal development.

"*Resilience encompasses the ability to flexibly adapt while maintaining steadfastness, so facilitating the capacity to persist, exhibit ingenuity, and achieve favourable outcomes in the face of challenging circumstances and obstacles*." (Interview11)

"*Effectively managing stress and cultivating a happy mindset upon awakening, even adverse circumstances.*" (Interview 12).

According to nurses, the training facilitated a realisation of the significance of self-care and the well-being of their colleagues. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged by some participants that nurses on occasion encountered criticism and a dearth of support from their colleagues:

"*There have been reports of negative remarks made regarding nurses experiencing high levels of stress. As an illustration, it was reported that one of my colleagues was observed to be "experiencing intense anger while working on a computer," a circumstance that was particularly distressing given my awareness of her earlier encounter with aggression earlier that day.*

." (Interview 3)

Barrier to enhance resilience

Overall staffing

In order to enhance the quality of care provided, there was an augmentation in the number of nurses assigned to each shift, with particular emphasis on the critical "burning" shift that plays a pivotal role in patient care. Consistent adherence to the nursing schedule is crucial.

"The implementation of the plan proved challenging due to the substantial number of nurses and patients involved, hence making it difficult to maintain coherence and consistency.". (Nurse 11).

"In order to effectively manage our workload, it is advisable to incorporate frequent and extended breaks into our routine." (Interview 10).

Administrative workload

The participants in the study said that there was a rise in the amount of documentation being conducted as a result of an inequitable allocation of administrative responsibilities among nurses. The individuals experienced a sense of powerlessness as a result of the policy, although maintained the belief that implementing results monitoring would enhance their professional performance. The nursing profession provides a platform for the examination and contemplation of matters pertaining to the quality of patient care. The participants expressed their optimism over the potential of enhanced documentation to facilitate the improvement of nurses' individual practices and foster a more equitable allocation of administrative responsibilities.

" There exists a significant degree of diversity. The data input method leads to a significant rise in administrative workload that is twice as onerous." (Interview 3).

DISCUSSION

Based on this study's findings, nurses, when confronted with challenging circumstances, actively sought to recognize these situations by balancing professional responsibilities with personal life demands. A primary goal of this research was to distinguish the roles, open-minded attitudes, and responsibilities of managers in the workplace, viewed here as a preparatory framework for problem-solving. This aligns with broader resilience traits identified in previous studies, including self-efficacy, optimism, emotional intelligence, and self-management, which are critical for resilience training programs in nursing. The resilience attributes highlighted here, such as self-efficacy and commitment to personal growth, reinforce previous research findings, supporting resilience training as integral to nurse development.

The study further corroborates prior research on the positive influence of resilience on nurses' adaptability. Key elements of resilience training, including internal protective characteristics like optimism and emotional regulation, have proven beneficial in multiple healthcare settings. Nurses with high resilience demonstrated a proactive approach to problem-solving and personal growth, favoring gradual progress over crisis continuation. These findings underscore the universality of resilience traits such as positivity, previously observed in diverse groups, including patients with chronic illnesses. Given that the nursing workforce generally comprises relatively young and healthy individuals, this resilience aspect diverges from patient resilience, often heavily dependent on external support. The proactive, life-affirming approach of resilient nurses could guide future intervention studies to strengthen nurses' adaptive capacities, a critical priority for advancing their resilience (Alameddine et al., 2023; Dousin et al., 2021; Widayana et al., 2025).

When faced with adversity, nurses adapted by showing empathy, accepting uncertainty, and reframing complex situations. Moreover, they took pride in their career choices, underscoring their profession's significance even in the face of hardship. This notion of resilience in nursing goes beyond traditional resilience definitions, as it involves planning for a positive future, valuing the nursing profession's societal role, and aspiring for professional growth. Studies emphasize resilience as a critical trait for managing healthcare crises, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, where resilience was often compromised by heightened job demands and emotional toll. Scholars advocate for resilience interventions that prioritize self-exploration and promote positivity, enabling nurses to overcome challenges and foster

personal growth (Luo et al., 2025; Shi et al., 2024).

Administrative burdens and low staffing remain significant barriers to resilience, as they add stress and limit time for recovery, both essential to resilience-building. Research demonstrates that fostering a positive work environment enhances resilience, supporting nurses in their critical role during crises. Effective resilience interventions could thus reduce burnout, improve job satisfaction, and support nurse retention, especially under high-stress conditions. Studies have found that nurses with relational leadership and strong interpersonal skills foster resilience within teams, contributing to workplace satisfaction and cohesion. Prior research has also highlighted the role of relational leadership in creating positive environments and enhancing resilience by strengthening professional relationships and promoting job satisfaction (Abou Hashish & Abdel Razek, 2025).

Moreover, the resilience observed in nurses can significantly impact patient care quality. Nurses with high resilience are better positioned to advocate for and empower patients, despite the complexities of healthcare settings. Relational leadership styles and effective communication skills among nurses can improve job satisfaction and foster retention, especially during high-demand periods like the COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, resilience programs for nurses should emphasize interpersonal and advocacy skills, supporting their ability to empower patients and maintain high standards of care, regardless of stress levels. This study's findings are pivotal for the design of resilience programs, which should aim to integrate these attributes, ensuring that nurses can effectively navigate their roles in an increasingly demanding healthcare landscape.

Limitations of the Study

The present study focused on the emergence of a particular process, namely resilience. This investigation relied on the analysis of narrative answers provided by the key informants. The chosen research design employed a descriptive phenomenological technique, which has the potential to restrict the detection of confounding variables that could potentially impact the stories provided by key informants. The participation of fifteen key informants in this study was dependent on data saturation, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other nurses in the study's specific area.

CONCLUSION

In summary, the resilience exhibited by nurses encompasses various aspects, such as effectively managing the demands of both their professional and personal lives. This includes the ability to differentiate and comprehend the distinct obligations and expectations associated with their employment, as well as maintaining an open-minded approach towards their work and the

managerial dynamics within their workplace. Resilience is nurtured by various factors such as demonstrating compassion, embracing ambiguity, and reframing challenging circumstances. The barriers to enhancing resilience include factors such as the workload associated with administrative activities and the overall workforce levels. This study contributes to the comprehension of resilience within the nursing profession, and offers a suitable framework for doing resilience research within a contextualized setting. In order to boost the quality of nursing care, it is imperative to focus on the development of diverse intervention programmes that effectively bolster the inner strength of nurses.

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