

Navigating Trauma: The Interplay of Faith and Resilience among Survivors of the Marawi Siege in Marawi City, Philippines

Soraimie Dagalangit-Pundato¹, Mary Rachele R Wapaño²

¹National Commission on Muslim Filipinos, Philippines

²Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the experiences of survivors of the 2017 Marawi siege in the Philippines, focusing on their traumatic experiences, the role of faith in their recovery, and the resilience strategies they used. The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach was chosen for its strength in exploring deep personal experiences and the meaning individuals attach to them. Through in-depth interviews and purposive sampling, participants with direct experience of the siege were selected. Their stories underwent a rigorous process of case analysis, cross-case analysis, and identification of emerging themes using IPA.

The analysis revealed the profound role of faith in the healing journey of survivors. Deeply connected to Meranaw cultural norms, faith has been shown to be a key coping mechanism that facilitates acceptance, forgiveness and achieving financial stability. These stories not only demonstrated remarkable resilience, but also echoed existing literature on the importance of resilience in trauma recovery. The complex relationship between trauma, faith and resilience was evident, with survivors' experiences deeply rooted in the cultural values of the Meranaw community.

In conclusion, this study confirms the complex interplay between trauma, faith and resilience and highlights the importance of culturally sensitive post-traumatic interventions. Based on these findings, it is recommended that future interventions include faith-based and culturally sensitive approaches. Given the qualitative nature of the study and the potential for recall bias, further research using mixed methods is advocated for a more comprehensive understanding. The use of IPA enabled a nuanced exploration of survivors' experiences and ensured the validity of the study. A rigorous analytical process coupled with the identification of new themes further strengthened the reliability of the study. Limitations such as potential recall bias were carefully addressed by cross-referencing the stories and looking for consistent patterns across cases.

Keywords: Meranaw cultural values, faith, resilience, trauma healing, Marawi Siege.

INTRODUCTION

The Marawi Siege began May 23, 2017, the siege of Marawi City demonstrated disastrous and devastating effects of calamities caused by human activity. Set off by regional extremists drawn from the international Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), the siege resulted in the exodus of thousands of indigenous Meranaw people and Marawi City inhabitants, who took sanctuary in evacuation shelters (UNCHR, 2018). Thirty thousand evacuees showed signs of mental distress, and many of them required varying degrees of psychological intervention. The protracted nature of the conflict and the difficult conditions in evacuation centers resulted in a clear "mental health crisis." (Galac, 2017).

The aftermath of the siege left the city's infrastructure and its inhabitants in devastation and ruins. The most devastated districts saw the destruction of homes, businesses, and livelihoods, while the fear of residual

munitions persisted. The extent of the destruction was highlighted by the government's estimate that the rehabilitation of the city would take three to five years. Women, children, and the elderly are among the vulnerable groups that are in desperate need of ongoing humanitarian aid (Save the Children, 2020). Since the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) still carried strong memories of the siege, their resettlement to the Sagonsongan in Marawi area served as additional evidence of the trauma that persisted.

The survivors' mental health was evidently affected by the siege, in addition to wreaking devastation on the surrounding environment. Many struggled with the immense loss, going through severe mental and spiritual distress. Economic hardships compounded the effects of the siege, as many survivors looked for other ways to support their family (Bhandari, 2020). However, based on the interviews conducted, survivors consistently reported that they leaned on their spiritual beliefs to navigate the devastating aftermath, drawing strength and resilience from their faith.”

The effects of the siege go well beyond the physical relocation: It also involved severe psychological and emotional distress. Such significant impacts call for a more thorough understanding of the survivor's 's actual experiences. Recovery and adaptation after first-episode psychosis, for example, has expanded the definition of recovery from first-episode psychosis to include posttraumatic growth, emphasizing improved relationships and changed perspectives of others. Moreover, the importance of spirituality and faith as coping strategies in stressful situations is also evident. In a similar study, older African American women who are homeless also reported to rely on their spiritual and religious resources to help them deal with the traumas and difficulties of homelessness is evidence of this (Five Dimensions of Faith and Spirituality of Older African American Women, 2009). While previous research provides valuable insights into the process of trauma recovery, there is still a clear void in the current understanding of the distinct experiences of Marawi siege survivors, which this study seeks to fill.

The aftermath of the Marawi siege is still being felt by those who survived it, as the five-year anniversary of the incident draws near. To provide the right support and solutions, it is essential to understand and explain their experiences. The results of this study could influence trauma survivors' support networks, policies, and interventions in areas other than Marawi that are rife with violence. Recognizing survivors as active agents who use a variety of strategies to promote their well-being is becoming more and more important the understanding of trauma recovery develops (The Trauma Recovery Actions Checklist, 2021).

It is difficult to gauge the devastating impact of Marawi siege on the Meranaw community in the Philippines. The psychological effects of the fighting combined with the difficulties of relocation have had a long-lasting impact on the survivors' capacity to recover and rebuild their lives.

This study aimed to investigate the lived experiences of survivors of the Marawi Siege, emphasizing their experience of trauma and the critical role that faith plays in building resilience. The is a phenomenological approach used. An interview schedule was incorporated into the qualitative design. The experiences of the survivors in navigating the aftermath of trauma, their faith, their resilience.

The following research questions were investigated in this study: How do participants characterize their own lived experiences of recovering from the Marawi siege in relation to:

1. Their accounts of trauma and its consequences?
2. The role that faith played in the recovery?
3. The manifestations and development of resilience during and after the siege?

Insights into the lived experiences of Marawi Siege survivors are essential for mental health practitioners, allowing for tailored interventions for trauma caused by conflict. Based on these insights, policymakers can develop post-conflict rehabilitation programs while recognizing the critical influence of faith in building

resilience. This study adds to the scholarly conversation about trauma and resilience in conflict zones, offers optimism to affected communities, and guides subsequent research on the interplay between faith, trauma, and recovery

Trauma is thought to be a profound experience that can have a lasting impact on people and communities, particularly when it occurs during a time of war or other catastrophe. The horrific effects of man-made disasters, when pain is not just physical but profoundly psychological, are exemplified by the siege of Marawi City. Trauma is described as exposure “to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence” by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2013). It is an incident that overwhelms an individual’s capacity to respond, even in cases where there is no physical impairment. When such experiences undermine a person’s coping strategies and question their worldview, they can be traumatic. In this study, trauma is defined as an individual’s exposure “to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence”(APA, 2013). It emphasizes that trauma does not necessarily always involve direct physical harm and instead refers to an abrupt, overwhelming experience that exceeds a person’s ability to respond. When an incident goes against one’s beliefs and exceeds one’s capacity for adjustment, it might be considered traumatic. Within this context, trauma refers to the distressing experiences that survivors of the siege had, which had an effect on them on a personal, social, financial, spiritual, and psychological level.

Faith plays a pivotal role in helping individuals navigate the aftermath of traumatic events. According to Lewis (2010), faith is the ability to cling to convictions that reason has accepted despite shifting emotions. When faced with extreme difficulties, like a war or a catastrophe, faith becomes a protective factor against distress. It is related to trust, introspection, and spiritual well-being and is frequently based on the belief that things happen unfold according to a divine plan. The trauma experienced can either strengthen or weaken this faith, thereby influencing an individual’s resilience in the face of adversity. According to Lewis (2010), faith is defined as clinging to convictions that one’s reason had previously recognized despite shifting feelings. This study emphasized the role that faith plays in enhancing the post-siege resilience of internally displaced people (IDPs) This kind of faith is based on the conviction that things happen according to Divine will and it also includes trust, reflection, and spiritual health. The trauma encountered could either fortify or diminish their faith, serving as a testament to their resilience in the face of a grave crisis (Critical Literature Review on the Definition Clarity of the Concept of Faith, Religion, and Spirituality, 2019).

Resilience is the ability to adapt well in the face of adversity, trauma, or significant stress (APA, 2014). It is influenced by a combination of biological, psychological, social, and cultural factors. Kim-Cohen & Turkewitz (2012) suggest that resilience may change over time based on development and interactions with the environment. In the context of war and crisis, resilience becomes paramount as individuals and communities strive to recover and rebuild. The capacity to positive adjustin the face of hardship, trauma, tragedy, threats, or major stresses is known as resilience (APA, 2014). Resilience can evolve over time, influenced by developmental stages and environmental interactions (Kim-Cohen & Turkewitz, 2012).

This study of Marawi Siege survivors offers insight into tailored mental health interventions and informs policy makers on post-conflict rehabilitation, highlighting the role of faith in resilience. It also advances academic discussions of trauma in conflict zones and highlights the connection between faith, trauma and recovery.”

METHODS

• Research Design

This study explored the experiences of internally displaced people (IDPs) after the siege of Marawi using the qualitative research approach, specifically the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) is an idiographic method employed in psychological

qualitative research, which aims to explore how individuals interpret specific events within their unique contexts (Smith, et al., 2009). As a research design, IPA aligns with the core objective of phenomenological research, which seeks to understand phenomena from the participants' viewpoints (Mertens, 2005). Beyond merely being a design, IPA also functions as a research analysis tool. It facilitates a comprehensive exploration of individual lived experiences without the constraints of predetermined theoretical notions (Pain, 2015). This dual role of IPA, both as a design and an analysis tool, makes it apt for studies like the current one, which aims to probe into participants' experiences, especially concerning trauma, faith, and resilience. Its application in this context ensures a deep, nuanced understanding of the subjects' experiences, emphasizing their personal interpretations and meanings.

• Participants

Six internally displaced people living in the Sagonsongan Temporary Shelter were chosen as participants of this study. To justify the selection of six participants, especially considering the number of people affected by the Marawi siege, we can draw on the literature on qualitative research sample size determination: In qualitative research, sample size is determined not by statistical power but by the concept of saturation, where no new information or themes are observed in the data (Vasileiou et al., 2018). Emphasis is placed on depth rather than breadth in order to gain a deep understanding of the participants' experiences. Bekele and Ago (2022) emphasize that decisions about the number of participants in qualitative studies often depend on a variety of factors, including the research question, the nature of the selected group, and the area of inquiry. While there is no universally agreed upon number, a range of 20–60 is commonly observed, but smaller sample sizes can be justified based on the depth and richness of the data obtained. For the Marawi Siege study, the selection of six IDPs provides an in-depth exploration of their lived experiences, ensuring that the stories are detailed and comprehensive. Given the traumatic nature of their experiences, the smaller sample size allows for a more targeted and sensitive approach to data collection and analysis. Study participants were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Inclusion criteria specified that participants should have been directly affected by the Marawi Siege and be between the ages of 18 and 40. This method ensured that the selected individuals provided rich and relevant data related to the objectives of the study. The following groups were excluded: non-Muslims or anyone not affiliated with the Meranaw tribe; IDPs living outside of the Sagonsongan Temporary Shelter; and non-original residents of Marawi City or Lanao del Sur. The relevant location for this study is Sagonsongan, a barangay in Marawi City that houses Maranao internally displaced people while they transition.

• Material

Data were gathered using an interview schedule tailored to the research objectives. This schedule underwent multiple revisions and was translated into Maranao to ensure comprehension. The translation process followed the guidelines proposed by Hendricso (1989), emphasizing the importance of accuracy and cultural sensitivity in translation.

To collect information for this study, a series of interview questions was employed. The interview schedule was reviewed and revised multiple times to better suit the goals of the study. Additionally, the interview schedule was translated into Maranao to ascertain the participants understood what was being interviewed. After validation, a backward translation into Maranao was performed. In order to guarantee an appropriate term for analysis and interpretation for the forward translation, the participant replies were then translated to English. At least two separate translators translated the questionnaire's original text into the target language in order for it to be validated.

• Data Collection

The Institutional Research Ethics Board (XU IREB) ethical approval was obtained prior to starting data

collecting. The researchers declared on conflicts of interests in this study. The interview questions were refined during a pilot test. Participants were encouraged to narrate their experiences connected to the Marawi siege during the actual interviews. The interview questions were focused on the participants experience of trauma, resilience, and faith. The interview technique was generally non-directive.

• **Validity and Quality**

The study's criteria for judging the validity and caliber of the research were described in this section. Its primary objective was to demonstrate the reliability and validity of information in order to maintain correctness. According to Yardley's four principles, this study's quality issues are: sensitivity to context, commitment, and rigor, and reflexivity; and self-reflexivity.

Sensitivity to context. In this research sensitivity to context was demonstrated when as deeply engaging with participants, offering comprehensive descriptions of their experiences and the surrounding context. This is demonstrated through active listening, thick description, reflexivity, and member checking.

Commitment and Rigor. Yardley (2000) asserts that commitment is essential to ensure the quality, credibility, and trustworthiness of research findings. In this study, commitment to rigor was demonstrated through systematic data collection, reflexivity, transparency, and thorough analysis.

Reflexivity. As an ongoing process of critically reflecting on one's beliefs, values, and biases, is demonstrated through transparent reporting, discussion of researcher-participant dynamics.

• **Data Analysis**

The data was analyzed using the application of Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as described by Smith and Osborn (2003). The participants' narratives were recorded and transcribed, and classified them into distinct themes that effectively encapsulate the essence of their narratives. A comprehensive analysis was conducted to analyze the participants' narratives regarding their experiences and reactions during the Marawi siege, focusing on specifically trauma, faith and resilience.

To adhere to the idiographic nature of IPA, a comprehensive analysis of each interview was conducted as a preliminary step (Smith et al., 2009). Each recording was reviewed multiple times, with each instance being listened to at least once, and the transcript was carefully read on several occasions. Preliminary reflections on the topic, utilization of language, and remarks were documented in a specific margin (Smith, et al., 2009). Subsequently, the process of transcribing the interviews was carried out, followed by the conversion of the transcriptions into concise notes. This was done for each participant individually, in order to prevent any overlap of responses. The aforementioned level of analysis was employed for every interview until the entirety of the interviews had been conducted.

The present study then used a cross-case analysis methodology to examine and compare multiple cases in order to identify patterns, similarities, and differences across them. This subsequent phase involved the identification of trends across all instances. This task involved the development of a comprehensive inventory of group themes, which were subsequently organized into overarching themes that signify common characteristics at an abstract level. The dual hermeneutic nature of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was taken into account in order to ensure the credibility and openness of the findings. In order to obtain an internal viewpoint of an individual's experience, the methodology of

Ethical Considerations

Informed consent was given by the participants, and their privacy was protected. The participants had the

autonomy to withdraw from the study at any point, including subsequent to providing their informed consent, without facing any negative consequences. Given that the involvement of the participants in the study was voluntary, no remuneration was provided to them subsequent to the interview. The declaration of no conflict of interest was disclosed. Measures to safeguard participant privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality. Informed consent were also sought for voluntary participation. Participant privacy was protected by deleting the recorded file from the files. Considering the sensitivity of the topic, a distress protocol was put in place: where a psychological first aid can be readily administered by a licensed psychologist on call.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For those who survived, the Marawi Siege continues to be a painful chapter in their life, inflicting lasting psychological and emotional scars. In order to answer the complex question, “How do survivors describe their experiences of bouncing back from the Marawi siege, especially in relation to trauma?” the personal narratives of survivors were analyzed using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) methodology. This is to allow to gain insight into their experiences with trauma, recovery, and resilience.

• Experiences Related to Trauma

The Marawi Siege had a lasting impact on the individuals who survived the event. The participants’ encounters with trauma were characterized by a multitude of facets, as each individual recounted their distinct problems and obstacles. The reported experiences of trauma encompassed a wide range of factors.

1) *Trauma from Experiencing Separation.* The experience of separation resulting from the abruptness of the siege caused families to be forcibly separated. The participants provided narratives detailing the emotionally distressing experiences of being separated from their loved ones. Participant 1: expressed their distress, stating,

“I am unable to fathom the situation where my parents and I diverged on our respective paths.”

The psychological distress of this separation was further intensified by the cultural importance placed on familial connections within the Meranaw group. According to Miller (2013), sudden and large losses can result in profound emotional distress, characterized by strong grief and feelings of loneliness.

2) *Trauma from Financial Inadequacy.* Following the siege, a significant number of individuals experienced financial difficulties, resulting in the development of trauma associated with financial inadequacy. One participant expressed their observation of a significant disparity between their pre-siege and post-siege existence, remarking that their previous way of life differed greatly from their current circumstances. The economic downturn experienced by Marawi City subsequent to the siege further intensified their financial hardships.

3) *Trauma from Anxiety and Fear.* The aftermath of the siege was marked by widespread experiences of worry and panic, resulting in trauma. The participants were deeply affected by the recollections of the siege, as seen by one individual’s statement, for example Participant 2 revealed:

“I experience feelings of anxiety whenever I am exposed to loud noises.”

This persistent state of heightened vigilance aligns with the research conducted by Ergun (2008), which demonstrated elevated levels of depression among those who have been relocated.

4) *Trauma from exhaustion.* The aftermath of the siege resulted in a state of exhaustion, both physically and

emotionally, which had a profound impact on the affected individuals. Participant 3 conveyed their profound exhaustion, emphasizing the significant fatigue resulting from the continuous obstacles they encountered.

5) *Trauma from lack of security and safety.* The primary focus was on safety concerns, specifically the trauma resulting from a lack of security and safety. The participants provided accounts of their experiences, including the intense fear they felt while attempting to escape amidst ongoing explosions and the constant apprehension caused by the presence of stray bullets. Participant 4 recounted:

“The intense fear was overwhelming as we tried to escape amidst the deafening explosions.”

Participant 5 participant described:

“The constant apprehension was ever-present, especially with the threat of stray bullets around us.”

These accounts provide a glimpse into the traumatic experiences faced by the survivors. The threat encompassed not only physical harm, but also psychological distress, as individuals experienced anxiety for their own lives and the lives of their loved ones.

6) *Trauma from staying with relatives.* The experience of seeking refuge with relatives gave rise to a distinct set of difficulties. Conflicting situations and misinterpretations emerged, resulting in a sense of dislocation even inside familiar environments.

7) *Trauma and depression.* The emotional impact of the siege was significant, as several individuals experienced depression as a result. The emotional discomfort experienced by individuals was further heightened as they assumed the burden of caring for their children despite the prevailing instability.

8) *Trauma from Inability to Accept Reality.* The psychological distress resulting from an individual's inability to acknowledge and embrace the actuality of a situation was a significant challenge for numerous individuals in the aftermath of the siege. The experience of loss, encompassing both tangible and intangible aspects, served as a persistent reminder of the profound impact caused by the siege.

9) *Trauma from living as an evacuee.* The experience of residing in evacuation facilities was characterized by various challenges and adversities, resulting in psychological distress and trauma. The participants provided accounts of the difficulties they faced in adapting to these environments, highlighting the significant disparity between their current circumstances and their prior experiences.

Across individual narratives, certain commonalities emerge: The anguish resulting from separation, the difficulties associated with financial instability, and the pervasive emotions of dread and fear were universally encountered. The severity and presentation of these traumas exhibited variations depending on individual circumstances. Certain participants experienced greater difficulty in dealing with the emotional ramifications, whereas others were more impacted by the tangible losses incurred. The cultural environment exerted a substantial influence, as the values of the Meranaw community shaped the views and experiences of the participants. Notwithstanding these divergences, the underlying motif persists: the deep influence of the Marawi Siege on the existence of its survivors and their odyssey towards recuperation and restoration.

In analyzing the narratives provided by survivors of the Marawi Siege, it became apparent that a number of prominent themes emerged. Initially, it is important to note that the trauma they encountered was not limited to a solitary occurrence. However, it contained a range of issues that persisted well after the immediate aftermath of the siege. The trauma exhibited several manifestations, encompassing the emotional distress caused by separation from family members to the formidable challenges posed by financial uncertainty.

Furthermore, the trauma experiences of the Meranaw people were strongly influenced by their cultural environment. At the core of this phenomenon lay the community's prioritization of familial ties and the notion of "maratabat," denoting a sense of honor. The cultural principles mentioned served as a framework through which the individuals involved understood and maneuvered their circumstances following the siege.

Finally, interwoven among these accounts was an indisputable affirmation of the enduring strength of the human psyche. In spite of the considerable challenges encountered, individuals exhibited a resolute resolve to reconstruct their livelihoods. The resilience exhibited by individuals highlights the inherent ability of humans to persist and triumph against exceedingly formidable obstacles.

The survivors of the Marawi Siege encountered a complex range of traumatic experiences, which extended beyond the immediate terrors of the siege to include enduring difficulties over the period after the event. This perspective is consistent with the existing body of scholarly work on trauma, which suggests that traumatic experiences can result in enduring psychological, emotional, and societal consequences (Herman, 1997). The participants' accounts of experiencing emotions related to separation, financial insufficiency, and worry align with previous research conducted on communities affected by conflict. Similar studies have shown that displacement, loss of income, and persistent dread have a substantial influence on individuals' overall well-being (Goodkind et al., 2019).

The emotional distress caused by separation, especially among the Meranaw community that highly values familial connections, resonates with the research conducted by Miller (2013), which emphasized the deep emotional impact of unexpected and substantial losses (Miller, 2013). The participants' stated experiences of worry and panic are consistent with the findings of Ergun (2008), who highlighted the increased prevalence of depression among those who have been moved (Ergun, 2008). The trauma experiences of the participants were greatly influenced by the cultural backdrop of the Meranaw community, as highlighted by Goodkind et al. (2019), who stressed the crucial significance of the cultural environment in the process of trauma recovery (Goodkind et al., 2019).

• The Role of Faith

This study also addressed this second research question: What is the role of faith in the the participants' experience of trauma and development of resilience?

The individual analyses case reveals that faith had a complex role in aiding survivors in navigating the aftermath of the siege.

1) *Faith to accept and forgive*: The survivors were faced with a decision following the siege, wherein they had to choose between nurturing feelings of resentment or adopting a mindset of acceptance. Drawing upon their profound reservoirs of religious belief, a considerable number of individuals chose to embrace acceptance, perceiving their lives following the siege as a fresh chapter rather than a tragic end. This perspective was deeply anchored in the Meranaw cultural ethos, which emphasizes surrender to God's will. As Participant 6

"I felt sad about what had happened. But we also need to move forward from what happened during the Marawi Siege." This viewpoint was firmly rooted in the cultural ethos of the Meranaw community, which places significant emphasis on the act of surrendering to the divine will. As articulated by a participant, there was a deep emotional response to the events that transpired during the Marawi Siege.

2) *Faith for financial refuge*: The economic consequences of the siege were significant, leading to a major impact on the financial stability. In the aftermath of widespread destruction and the subsequent loss of livelihoods, individuals faced the daunting challenge of navigating through a period of financial instability.

However, their steadfast belief served as protective factor that sustained them through these challenging periods. One participant's remark encapsulates the belief that individuals are not burdened with challenges beyond their capacity to endure. This attitude resonates particularly with the Meranaw community, who consistently uphold this belief. The participant emphasizes that if one fulfills their responsibilities, places their trust in God, and remains steadfast in the process, their prayers will be answered in due course.

3) *Faith in the ability to adjust to novel experiences.* The survivors of the siege were confronted with a novel and demanding world, requiring them to rely on their faith in order to adapt. Nonetheless, the individuals' religious beliefs, which are closely interconnected with the traditional values of the Meranaw people, provide guidance and comfort. One participant expressed their experience of adapting to the new normal as an evacuee, highlighting the challenges of adjusting to a temporary shelter. They mentioned the loss of their employment and the financial strain caused by their father's insufficient income. Despite the difficulties, they emphasized the necessity of adapting to the changes they had faced.

4) *Faith allowed them to move forward and survive.* The enduring impact of the siege's terrible recollections was mitigated by the survivors' reliance on their faith, which functioned as a protective barrier against feelings of hopelessness. The narratives presented by the individuals emphasized a deep-seated conviction in the notions of survival and the benevolent safeguarding provided by divine forces. One participant provided a firsthand account, stating that had they not vacated the vicinity, there was a distinct possibility of death. The recollection of events remains indelible due to the necessity of seeking refuge in order to evade errant projectiles. The uncertainty surrounding the potential detonation of explosives atop the residential structures in which they sought shelter further compounded the gravity of the situation.

5) *Faith as related to patience.* The survivors' religion experience prominently featured the concept of patience, referred to as "sabr." In spite of the numerous hurdles encountered, their steadfast patience and unwavering belief in the divine plan were evident. The feeling expressed in a participant's reflection can be summarized as follows: that the "belief in a higher power, belief in their own abilities, and belief in effectively managing the challenges they faced in their lives" is instrumental to their survival.

In analyzing the individual narratives, it becomes evident that participants consistently rely on their faith as a means of fortitude, effectively guiding them through the difficulties encountered in the aftermath of the siege. Nevertheless, there were observable discrepancies in the individuals' experiences, specifically in their strategies for dealing with difficulties and the level of severity they encountered. While certain individuals derived comfort from the assistance provided by their society, others relied significantly on their personal religious beliefs and familial connections. It appears that the Meranaw cultural values have continually exerted a substantial influence on their experiences, placing great emphasis on the significance of faith, family, and community in their process of recovery.

The cross-case analyses yielded a number of emergent themes that provided insights into the experiences and perspectives of the participants: The Multifaceted Nature of Faith emerged as a prominent theme. The narratives provided insights into the diverse and multifaceted nature of faith experienced by the participants. However, it was observed to be expressed in several forms, encompassing actions of acceptance and forgiveness, as well as gestures of patience and resilience.

The Cultural Context of Faith emerged as another prominent theme. The cultural context of the Meranaw community significantly influenced the religious experiences of the individuals involved. The cultural backdrop exerted a significant influence on their comprehension of religious beliefs, as well as shaping their perspective in interpreting and addressing the difficulties and circumstances that arose after the siege.

The concept of Resilience of Faith became prominently evident. Despite the multitude of hardships and challenges presented by the siege, the participants demonstrated unwavering faith. The anchor functioned as

a guiding force for the individuals, leading them through the turbulent aftermath of the siege and directing them towards a trajectory characterized by optimism, restoration, and revitalization.

The survivors of the Marawi Siege found faith to be a crucial coping strategy. This finding aligns with a substantial body of research that underscores the significance of faith in offering comfort, purpose, and guidance when confronted with challenging circumstances (Pargament, 1997). The research on post-traumatic growth also reflects the particular expressions of faith, like acceptance, patience, and resilience (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). This study suggests that those who have undergone traumatic events may have heightened spiritual growth and a strengthened dependence on faith. The influence of cultural environment, specifically the values held by the Meranaw community, had a notable impact on the religious experiences of the individuals involved. This highlights the significance of comprehending trauma and the process of healing within distinct cultural and religious frameworks. According to Hinton et al. (2020), the interpretation, coping mechanisms, and recovery processes of individuals in the face of traumatic experiences can be strongly influenced by cultural ideas and practices.

Participants in the study indicate that their faith serves as a coping tool that allowed them to navigate the challenging and chaotic aftermath of the siege. This is consistent with the findings of Nickerson et al. (2022), who emphasized the significance of religious beliefs in the process of healing from trauma within refugee communities (Nickerson et al., 2022). The cultural values of the Meranaw people, namely their stress on submission to the divine will and the significance of familial connections, align with the research conducted by Hinton et al. (2020) into the relationship between cultural values, religious beliefs, and the process of healing from traumatic experiences.

• Experience of Resilience

The participants' tales exhibited a prevalent theme of resilience, which was observed in diverse manifestations.

1) *Resilience because of family.* The participants placed significant emphasis on the importance of family in their rehabilitation, attributing their resilience to the support and influence of their family members. A participant expressed a poignant sentiment, emphasizing the challenges associated with leaving their families. The individuals who fled Marawi consistently monitored their families in Ground Zero, but their concerns were resolved upon being reunited, as they were no longer anxious about the potential loss of both parents and family members. This sentiment highlights the significance of familial ties within the Meranaw culture, where strong and supportive families are regarded as essential sources of resilience.

2) *Resilience because of duty and responsibility.* The participants demonstrated a notable level of resilience, which might be attributed to their sense of duty and obligation, particularly in relation to their families. A participant expressed that their engagement in work has acted as a means of diverting their attention away from the events that transpired during the siege. This shift in focus towards their professional obligations and responsibilities has functioned as a coping strategy, enabling them to progress and navigate through the aftermath of the siege.

3) *Resilience from acceptance.* The individuals exhibited a strong resolve to persist despite encountering severe setbacks, which can be attributed to their resilience, as one participant expressed, "We live in a small multipurpose house. It was hard, but we accepted that our life now is far different from what we had before."

4) *Resilience from humility and compassion.* The participants demonstrated a willingness to embrace humility and compassion as they handled the challenges of their life following the siege. They recognized

the significance of these virtues in facilitating their recovery process.

5) *Resilience as source of family strength.* The participants shown resilience in addressing their weaknesses and refusing to succumb to them. They acknowledged their vulnerabilities but exhibited a steadfast will to overcome them. One participant indicated that all individuals, including themselves, experienced a loss of hope. However, they felt compelled to exhibit strength for the well-being of their family.

The cross-case analysis aims to identify commonalities and differences across individual narratives, providing a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under study. The cross-case analysis of the resilience narratives following the Marawi Siege revealed the following themes:

1) *Family as pillar of strength:* The common thread of family as a pillar of strength is seen in all narratives, highlighting its universal significance. The enduring presence of family, whether at times of emotional distress, moments of happiness upon reuniting, or during the collective challenges following a siege, consistently provided a steadfast foundation of support. The Meranaw community's traditional emphasis on familial ties was apparent via the participants' reliance on their families for both emotional and practical assistance.

2) *Faith as anchor.* Regardless of personal circumstances, faith served as a consistent anchor for the participants. The Meranaw community found peace and guidance through their steadfast conviction in a higher power, which was further reinforced by the cultural importance of faith. The aforementioned religious belief not only facilitated the individuals in comprehending their personal encounters, but also provided them with a sense of optimism for an improved forthcoming period.

3) *Diverse expressions of resilience.* The participants demonstrated diverse manifestations of resilience, despite the common theme underlying their experiences. Certain individuals derived strength from their obligations and tasks, but others relied on their capacity to adjust and advance in their own journeys. The fundamental determinant was an inherent motivation to surmount challenges and reconstruct their livelihoods.

4) *Economic challenges and adaptability.* The period following the siege was characterized by widespread economic challenges and the need for adaptability, since financial problems were encountered by all. Nevertheless, the individuals demonstrated their ability to adapt by seeking alternative sources of income. The individuals' resolve to support their families was apparent through their engagement in entrepreneurial endeavors and assumption of additional responsibilities.

5) *Cultural values and resilience.* The interplay between cultural values and resilience is seen in the Meranaw community, where the cultural values of "maratabat" (pride) and the strong emphasis on familial ties have significantly influenced the development of narratives surrounding resilience. The aforementioned values exerted an impact on both the participants' views and their strategies for coping.

6) *Distress and coping.* The prevalence of emotional distress, encompassing conditions such as depression, anxiety, and dread, emerged as prominent recurring themes. The participants in the study adopted a range of coping mechanisms, including seeking support from their communities and diverting their attention towards their work and obligations.

A collective experience of personal development materialized, notwithstanding the numerous obstacles encountered. The participants expressed their experiences of acquiring knowledge, undergoing personal growth, and discovering untapped abilities when confronted with challenges. The narratives expressed by participants encompassed not just the aspect of mere survival, but also encompassed the themes of personal

and communal development.

From the detailed narratives and several emergent themes became evident:

- 1) *Pervasive nature of Resilience*: Resilience was not solely a response to the siege, but rather a deeply rooted attribute that individuals relied upon in diverse facets of their existence. Despite facing financial hardships and mental pain, their tenacity was evident.
- 2) *Cultural Context of Resilience*. The cultural context around resilience is a significant factor in understanding the narratives of resilience. In the case of the Meranaw culture, the strong emphasis placed on family relationships and pride has played a crucial part in constructing these narratives. The perceptions and coping techniques of the participants were significantly influenced by the deeply ingrained cultural beliefs.
- 3) *Role of Faith*. The role of faith in fostering resilience was observed as a prominent theme as it served as a guiding force for individuals throughout their process of recovery. The individual's resolute belief, which was deeply entwined with their cultural principles, offered comfort and resilience in the face of challenges.

When considering the second research question, it becomes apparent that religious and cultural values held a significant roles. The participants significantly relied on their religious beliefs, utilizing them as a source of strength to manage the difficulties encountered in the aftermath of the siege. The narratives provided by the individuals are rich in providing valuable insights into their ability to overcome adversity, maintain their belief systems, and navigate the complex dynamics of cultural values during their process of recovery.

In summary, it can be observed that there were common elements that resonated universally with individuals in the aftermath of the Marawi Siege, despite variations in their particular experience: The dynamic interaction between cultural norms, religious beliefs, and personal factors contributing to resilience presented a diverse range of stories, illustrating the unwavering tenacity exhibited by the Meranaw community.

The Marawi Siege has had a lasting impact on those who endured it. The survivors' tragic experiences and subsequent road towards recovery offer a valuable and multifaceted perspective on the complex dynamics between trauma, faith, and resilience. The objective of this discussion is to contextualize the findings of this study in light of existing research, exploring how the results align or diverge from previous literature.

Resilience is a psychological construct that refers to an individual's ability to adapt to novel or difficult situations. The resolute resolve exhibited by individuals to reconstruct their lives in the face of great challenges serves as an evidence to the indomitable nature of the human spirit. This discovery is consistent with the research conducted by Nickerson et al. (2022), which stressed the significance of resilience in the process of recovering from trauma (Nickerson et al., 2022).

Resilience is not solely an inherent attribute, but rather frequently nurtured by a blend of individual, societal, and cultural elements. The Meranaw community, characterized by its strong adherence to familial, religious, and communal principles, is believed to have had a substantial part in cultivating the resilience shown in its members. The collective experience of the siege and the subsequent collaborative endeavor to reconstruct the town fostered a profound feeling of purpose and guidance, thereby enhancing both individual and social resilience.

The present study's results align with the research conducted by Nickerson et al. (2022), which investigated the impact of resilience on the process of recovering from trauma. Nickerson et al. (2022) underscored in their study that resilience should not be solely seen as the absence of psychological distress, but rather as a dynamic process characterized by positive adaptation in response to adverse circumstances. They proposed that resilience is a complex construct that includes various dimensions, such as emotional, psychological,

and social aspects. The survivors of the Marawi Siege demonstrated resilience through their emotional strength, psychological coping mechanisms, and social networks that offered support and unity.

In addition, the research conducted by Nickerson et al. (2022) posits that the cultivation and enhancement of resilience is a process that can occur gradually. Interventions that prioritize the enhancement of coping skills, the cultivation of social support, and the utilization of pre-existing strengths have been found to substantially enhance resilience in individuals who have experienced trauma. The significance of interventions is shown by the experiences of survivors of the Marawi Siege, as their process of rehabilitation was frequently aided by communal assistance, coping mechanisms rooted in faith, and a resolute sense of purpose.

The study's findings indicate that the resilience exhibited by the survivors of the Marawi Siege serves as evidence of the capacity of the human spirit to triumph over challenging circumstances. The resolute resolve exhibited by individuals to reconstruct their lives despite formidable obstacles is consistent with the findings and theories presented in the existing body of literature on the process of recovering from trauma. The significance of cultural and community solidarity in the process of trauma rehabilitation cannot be overstated. The healing journey of individuals who have experienced trauma is significantly influenced by cultural practices and values, as indicated by a study on the cultural determinants of trauma recovery conducted by Gee, Hulbert Kennedy, and Paradies (2023). The significance of Meranaw cultural values in defining the experiences of survivors of the Marawi Siege is apparent in their narratives. These accounts repeatedly highlight the crucial role played by values such as faith, family, and community in their process of rehabilitation.

Furthermore, the examination of resilience in the process of recovering from trauma has been investigated across multiple contexts. The study named "Dynamism: Reconceptualising Resilience in Recovery From Trauma" highlights the importance of adopting a culturally sensitive perspective on resilience, particularly in contexts involving interactions across different cultures (Wyatt, 2021). The resilience exhibited by the survivors of the Marawi Siege can be interpreted as a manifestation of dynamism, wherein their religious beliefs and cultural principles equipped them with the fortitude to confront the difficulties in the aftermath of the siege. In addition, the ecological perspective on psychological trauma posits that the effectiveness of interventions focused on trauma is contingent upon their capacity to improve the relationship between individuals and their communities, as well as to attain a state of "ecological fit" within diverse settings of recovery (Harvey, 1996). The accounts of the survivors of the Marawi Siege underscore the significance of communal assistance and the interdependence between individual and communal resilience.

The resilience exhibited by the survivors of the Marawi Siege is consistent with the findings and theories presented in current scholarly literature on the process of recovering from traumatic experiences. The capacity to derive resilience from one's religious beliefs, cultural principles, and communal assistance highlights the importance of cultural and communal cohesion in the process of recuperation.

LIMITATIONS

The research conducted on the survivors of the Marawi Siege, providing valuable insights also has a number of limitations. One of the main limitations pertains to the size and demographic composition of the sample. The composition of participants in the study may not adequately reflect the wider population impacted by the Marawi Siege, potentially resulting in a limited representation of different experiences. This limitation is exacerbated by the intrinsic subjectivity of qualitative data, which, although abundant in detail, may not provide a comprehensive perspective of the occurrence. Given the retrospective nature of the study, it is important to acknowledge the potential presence of recall bias, wherein participants' recollections may be subject to the effect of subsequent experiences. Furthermore, although the Meranaw cultural environment

was taken into account, there may have been limited examination of the nuances or sub-cultural variants present within the community. The design of the study, which provides a momentary glimpse, does not incorporate longitudinal data that could offer valuable insights into the dynamic interplay between trauma, faith, and resilience over time. Finally, it is important to acknowledge the possibility of researcher bias in qualitative research due to its interpretative nature.

While the research on the survivors of the Marawi Siege presents certain limitations, these very constraints underscore the significance and worthiness of the study. Here's the justification: The limitations associated with the sample size and demographic composition highlight the depth and focus of the study. By concentrating on a specific group, the research offers a detailed, intimate exploration of their experiences, which might have been diluted in a broader sample. The intrinsic subjectivity of qualitative data, while seen as a limitation, is also its strength. It provides rich, nuanced insights into individual experiences, capturing the essence of human emotions and perceptions that quantitative data might overlook.

The potential recall bias, inherent in retrospective studies, emphasizes the importance of understanding how memories evolve and are influenced over time. This dynamic nature of recollection can offer insights into how trauma is processed and remembered, adding another layer of depth to the study. While the research considered the Meranaw cultural environment, the potential oversight of sub-cultural nuances underscores the complexity and diversity of the community. It highlights the need for further studies, emphasizing the vast scope of exploration within this domain. The study's design, offering a snapshot in time, sets the stage for future longitudinal studies. By establishing a baseline of experiences and perceptions, it paves the way for tracking the evolution of trauma, faith, and resilience over extended periods. Lastly, the possibility of researcher bias, a common concern in qualitative research, underscores the interpretative richness of the study. It brings forth the researcher's perspective, adding another dimension to the narrative. In essence, while the limitations highlight areas for caution, they also emphasize the depth, focus, and interpretative richness of the study, making it a valuable contribution to the academic discourse on trauma and resilience in conflict environments.

RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this, the recommendations are put forth here:

1. **Tailored interventions:** Mental health professionals should develop tailored interventions that take into account the unique experiences and cultural nuances of Marawi siege survivors. These interventions should include faith-based approaches, recognizing its key role in the healing process.
2. **Community Engagement:** Engage more deeply with the Meranaw community to understand potential subcultural nuances. This would ensure that interventions and future research are culturally sensitive and relevant.
3. **Memory and trauma workshops:** Because of the potential for memory bias in retrospective studies, memory and trauma workshops can be organized. These would help survivors understand the evolving nature of memories and provide tools to process traumatic memories.
4. **Extending Research Methods:** To complement rich qualitative data, consider using mixed methods in future research. This would provide both depth (qualitative) and breadth (quantitative) to the findings, offering a more comprehensive understanding.
5. **Strengthen support systems:** Recognizing the role of faith in resilience, community faith support systems should be strengthened. This could include faith-based counseling, support groups, and community healing sessions.
6. **Policy recommendations:** The findings should be presented to policymakers to develop post-conflict rehabilitation programs that recognize the importance of faith and cultural nuances in the healing process.

7. Collaborative Research: Support collaborative research efforts that bring together experts from diverse fields, such as trauma specialists, cultural experts, and religious leaders, to provide a multidimensional view of survivor experiences.

These recommendations aim to increase support for survivors of the Marawi siege and guide future research efforts in this area.

In conclusion, This study of Marawi Siege survivors highlights the interplay between trauma, faith, and recovery. Their resilience, rooted in the Meranaw cultural ethos, underscores the profound impact of the siege and the enduring strength of the human spirit. While the research offers valuable insights, its specific cultural and contextual focus deserves recognition. The stories of those who survived are a testament to human resilience in the face of adversity.

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