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## STAND-UP COMEDIANS IN FOCUS: MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES AND COPING STRATEGIES DURING THE PANDEMIC ERA

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### ABSTRACT

This study looked into the lived experiences of stand-up comedians from Manila in managing mental health challenges and coping strategies during the pandemic era. The research design used was qualitative with phenomenology as an approach. The stand-up comedians were badly affected by the pandemic, with this, using the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, the study generated nine (9) superordinate themes which were: Looking on the Bright Side of Life and Considering Comedy as Therapy, Experiencing Difficulty and Unfavorable Emotions but Still Hopeful, Focusing on Oneself through Journals, Work, Meditations, Exercise, and Prayer, Managing Savings, Family Business, and Time, Communication with Children and Constant Support from the Family under any Circumstances, Income, Passion, and Freedom, Challenges turned into Persistence and Appreciation, Being More Productive in the Stand-Up Comedy Industry, and Setting Goals, Pursuing Passion, Having Fun, and Being Oneself.

While there were both positive and negative aspects to becoming a stand-up comedian as a career, it was concluded that their lived experiences during the pandemic were well worth the adversities. Positive psychology, a theory by Martin Seligman, was used in this study to develop and connect the themes from the shared experiences of the participants. To further discuss the themes that emerged from the study, the PERMA model of positive psychology was utilized. This included positive emotions, engagement, positive relationships, meaning, and

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# INSTABRIGHT e-GAZETTE

ISSN: 2704-3010

Volume V, Issue I

August 2023

Available online at <https://www.instabrightgazette.com>



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achievement. Furthermore, a successful move necessitated the support of one's family and friends. Their comedy or humor could help them cope with difficult situations. As a result of the research, suggested programs for stand-up comedians that would benefit them in achieving healthier and more productive well-being were made.



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## INTRODUCTION

*"After all, humor is the great thing, and it is the thing that saves the world." The moment it surfaces, all of our hardnesses melt away, all of our irritations and resentments vanish, and a brighter outlook emerges."*

*-Mark Twain*

People have believed that laughter heals the mind for years. After all, why not? Humor simply feels nice; in this way, people can focus on something other than problems and encourages a more positive outlook. Humor, or the ability to express or perceive what is amusing, is a form of amusement as well as a coping mechanism for unpleasant or uncomfortable situations and stressful occurrences. Moreover, laughter is enjoyable in and of itself, but comedy also serves other purposes. Being able to laugh can help to soften the emotional shock of a traumatic experience and to de-stress a tight situation. Therefore, humor may bring friends, family, and romantic partners closer together because it is a social connection and a shared experience. In addition to the positive feelings evoked by joking and laughing, Strick (2021) suggested that heightened feelings of social support and a better ability to reconsider distressing situations could be factors for the stress-relieving impact.

Olah and Ford (2021) evaluated the relationship between different humor styles and COVID-19 responses, finding that a healthy sense of humor is linked not only to lower levels of negative emotion such as stress and hopelessness but also to engaging in protective behavior recommended by health officials. Furthermore, humor has helped individuals relate with one another during lockdowns since people are significantly more prone to laugh at issues that are personally relatable to them. This, in turn, fosters a sense of community and solidarity, reducing the sensation of isolation. Joking about a fear, especially during a pandemic, might help feel less overwhelming, a phenomenon comedian's call "finding the funny." This is related to the

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"superiority theory," which states that people laugh because they think they're better than something or someone else.

In relation with humor, there are different kinds of entertainment career that deliver laughter to the crowd. In particular, there is a form of stand-up comedy in which a performer, usually alone on stage, recounts jokes or hilarious anecdotes to a live audience. It is not easy to be a stand-up comic. It is never easy to stand in front of people, but standing in front of people who criticize everything you say and expect you to chuckle every few seconds is even more difficult. Studying stand-up comedians and humor, in general, is a serious business that has fundamental relevance for understanding humor and creativity in general, no matter how light-hearted it may appear. The study of extreme degrees of comedic skill could shed information on everyday humor, even if professional comedians do not embody typical applications of humor. Although comedians do not represent the average person, understanding them can shed light on what people find hilarious and what they do not, as well as the creative process in general.

Furthermore, only a small percentage of comedians can persevere through their failures. With minimal employment security, stand-up comedy is a highly competitive field. A fantastic comic may be considered today, but there is no assurance that the audience will enjoy it tomorrow. This month or in the months to come. Each stage presentation has its distinct audience engagement. At the same club, jokes that threw the audience on the floor one night may not work the next night. In addition to the grueling career that awaits the comedians, their daily lives are difficult as well. The majority of comedians do not have agents to manage their careers and have to do everything by themselves. As a result, they must promote themselves, schedule their gigs with the club managers, and develop and practice their material, all while earning a minimum wage and frequently working at a second job. As they progress into a full act, they frequently do short acts of fresh material in small comedy clubs, often without any publicity for their appearance.

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However, in the present time, because of the pandemic, lots of comedians are making their stand-up routines online. All of the regulars, such as Jimmy Fallon, Steven Colbert, and Jimmy Kimmel, are putting out new stuff regularly. In like matter, local comedians are also accommodating virtual performances such as open mics through Zoom application only. Obviously, COVID-19 is a serious situation. Stand-up comedians may relate to high-anxiety situations and isolations where a joke feels like a much-needed outlet. They must find a method to manage with the threats and limits major mental health implications. And laughter may be the remedy for some. They lost their job during the pandemic. Pandemic started since 2020 and it has been 2 years that indoor entertainments are not allowed. Therefore, stand-up comedy shows are now performed virtually only via Zoom. Among all the entertainments, comedy has had a tougher time transitioning. As a result, stand-up relies on the crowd's instant reaction of a laugh. They lost their connections with their audience this pandemic. Comedians are having a hard time finding new ways to make audiences laugh in quarantine because they do not have the loud, reflexive laughter that makes their acts buzz.

With the above insights, the aim of this study is to perceive, assess, and comprehend clearly the essence of studying the lives of the newly virtual performers, with a particular focus on stand-up comedians' mental health stability during the pandemic, in order to fully comprehend what they went through in order to cope and survive the situation.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

The researcher employed the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to elicit answers in the study about the stand-up comedians in focus on mental health challenges and coping strategies during the pandemic era. The phenomenology side focused on understanding human experience, while on the hermeneutic side, it was interpretative activity since the

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researcher was also involved in the analytic process of researching with people. And it was for this reason that descriptive phenomenology was a useful tool for this study to understand the subjective experience and gain insight into people's actions and motivations, challenging long-held preconceptions and it could help to develop new theories, policy changes, or reaction changes.

The researcher utilized 10 guide questions to obtain relevant information: five 'what' questions about the phenomenon and obstacles they had, and five 'how' questions about how they resolved, coped, and learned from the phenomenon, which was used as a guide for stand-up comedians. According to Creswell and Creswell (2019), the total should range from 5 to 10 questions. Based on the theoretical and conceptual framework provided in chapter 1, the researchers created 10 interview questions. The researcher approached the stand-up comedians one-on-one and explain the scope of her investigation and the aim of the interview.

To understand this relationship, the following questions must be answered:

Structured Interview Guide:

1. How does comedy or humor help you cope with stressful situations?
2. What were your experiences as a stand-up comedian during the pandemic period? How does this affect your psychological well-being (physical, mental, emotional)?
3. What were your health routine to maintain mentally healthy during stressful situation?
4. How did you manage your responsibilities of your daily life?
5. How are you supported by your family/loved ones when it comes to your chosen career especially nowadays?
6. What makes you motivated to prepare for your comedy performance?
7. What were your experiences that challenged you to grow and become a better person during the pandemic?
8. How do you see yourself after these pandemic crises?

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9. What do you think is the very reason why you chose this career more than as it is your job?

What recommendation can give to the future stand-up comedians?

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis and interpretation of the data gathered in this study. The intention of this phenomenological study is to look into the lived experience of stand-up comedians during the pandemic. Methods of inquiry include phenomenological reflection on the data elicited through the investigation of stand-up comedians' experiences and investigation of the given phenomenon in the entertainment industry setting. As such, this research is guided by the following central question:

**What is the essence of lived experience among stand-up comedians as to mental health challenges and coping strategies during the pandemic?**

Meanwhile, the corollary questions have been answered in the tables provided.

**Corollary Question Number 1. How do stand-up comedians describe their experiences as to their mental health challenges and coping strategies during the pandemic?**

Provided in the tables that follow are the responses to ten (10) interview questions gathered from six (6) stand-up comedians from different parts of Manila.

**Interview Question 1: How does comedy or humor help you cope with stressful situations?**

When asked about how comedy or humor helped cope with stressful situations, Stand-up Comedian D felt positive as he shared how comedy helped him cope with stressful situations during the pandemic. He can still see the brighter side or can make a joke out of the situation.

The participants of the study had almost the same responses. One of the things that they mentioned which comedy made them cope stressful situations during the pandemic was they can

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see the positive side of it. They thought that there is always a funny side on every tragic moment depending on when to accept it and on how to process it. In addition, most of them also believed that humor is innate to every individual as everyone is capable to laugh.

In comparison to the experiences of the participants, Lee (2018) conceptualized humor as a method of understanding the world as well as a coping mechanism for anxiety and terror. This acquisition of humor and wit assists older persons to navigate through the problems they confront. When confronted with current issues, younger generations should consider this mindset.

In addition, Ruch et al. (2018) and Tagalidou et al. (2018) studied that the group administered humor training programs could improve emotional well-being, life satisfaction, psychological well-being, subjective health, positive mood, optimism, and reduce depression, stress, and suicidal tendencies.

**Interview Question 2: What were your experiences as a stand-up comedian during the pandemic period? How does this affect your psychological well-being (physical, mental, emotional)?**

When asked about the experiences of the stand-up comedians during the pandemic, Stand-up Comedian B showed dismay as he was about to level up in his career as a performer but then pandemic happened, it affected his career growth badly.

Most of the participants acknowledged that everyone, not only them, was affected by the pandemic, however, they expressed the feeling of hopelessness during the first few months of the pandemic. Some mentioned that they had gloomy, depressing days and even had suicidal thoughts, too. Some from the participants were experiencing breakthroughs in their career before the crisis but pandemic happened, their career was affected negatively and it made them feel stagnant as a living individual. They were hesitant to try stand-up comedy online for the reason that the energy on both end is way different from the usual performance. This experience is supported by Duddridge (2020) and Wright (2020) which stated that the pandemic resulted in significant changes in the delivery of comedy as a kind of entertainment. The face of stand-up

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comedy has changed as a result of social distancing policies. The differences are instantly apparent.

During the first phase of the pandemic, participants felt gloomy and depressing as they described the situation. This is supported by Zacher and Rudolph (2021) who stated in their study in Individual differences and changes in subjective well-being during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic that life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect decreased across the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Various stress assessments and coping mechanisms relevant to the pandemic were linked to general levels of subjective well-being during the epidemic but had relatively minor and mainly nonsignificant effects on changes in subjective well-being over time.

Moreover, most of the participants were able to move on and adjust to the new set-up of their career which led them to be hopeful as they can express again their craft. One of the participants compared the situation to the inmates in jail. At first, fear of what will happen is felt, and after is familiarity of the situation that calms the anxiety. However, it is still in jail, has restrictions.

### **Interview Question 3: What were your health routine to maintain mentally healthy during a stressful situation?**

When asked about the health routine to maintain mentally healthy during stressful situations, Stand-up Comedian D was very eager to share his routine on how to keep himself sane during the pandemic. He described that writing materials or jokes was also his way to journal his everyday living. In this way, it helped him to maintain his well-being.

In this question, the participants had different answers as they had different ways on how to help themselves. But the common denominator among their answers was busy themselves and get distracted by being more productive. One of the participants shared that he had to sell different products online or at the street near their house. In this way, he found a way to keep himself busy and at the same was able to manage his daily living with his family. This story is

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supported by Williams et al. (2020) as he submitted that avoiding negative mood involves keeping busy with work, studies, or other social activities. On the other hand, a participant's healthy routine to maintain his well-being was to ignore criticisms from different people online. Since the pandemic, his way to express his craft was through social media, however, some uncontrollable netizens bash him because of his posts. He learned to ignore them and only listen to the people whom he knew by heart. In this way, he was able to maintain mentally healthy. Hajian et al. (2017) revealed that avoiding potentially dangerous circumstances considerably reduced health problems and improved coping.

#### **Interview Question 4: How did you manage your responsibilities of your daily life?**

When asked about the management of the responsibilities of their daily life, Stand-Up Comedian E showed perseverance as he stated on how he looked for alternatives in order for him to continually support his family in terms of finances.

One of the most important things that concerned the participants during the time of pandemic was financial resources which affected their responsibilities in their daily living. One participant was in relief sharing that fortunately he listened to the advice of his mother to always save up and had been reminding him to save money from his online shows during the pandemic.

Good engagement is seen as an important factor to continuously do the responsibilities in everyday living. In terms of positive psychology, engagement refers to a specific method of participating in a task. It is frequently described as being so absorbed in an activity that time passes quickly. As stated by Madeson (2022), it is living in the present moment and focusing entirely on the task at hand.

#### **Interview Question 5: How are you supported by your family/loved ones when it comes to your chosen career especially nowadays?**

Major reason why they are still stand-up comedians is the support they get from their family or loved ones. They were excited sharing their experiences on how their family support them particularly sharing their comic act or posts in social media during the pandemic. Most of

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them were genuinely supported by their family allowing them to explore and to express themselves through the art of stand-up comedy.

When asked about the support of the family and loved ones, Stand-Comedian F proudly described her gratefulness to her husband as she was fully supported on her doing comedy by him.

They admittedly, that not everyone, will understand the nature of their work and how they are also well-compensated by their career. Almost all of them had to explain thoroughly to their family on how things work in stand-up comedy. At the same time, they certainly secured themselves not to be *pabigat* in their household. A study from Ogueji and Olley (2019) discovered that effects of social support, such as interacting with loved ones, and keeping hopeful, had a significant favorable impact on psychological well-being. Having encouraging relatives and friend's boosts motivation and makes it simpler to attain one's goal. The difficulties appear less intense when someone cheers on as working through challenging circumstances.

### **Interview Question 6: What makes you motivated to prepare for your comedy performance?**

When asked about their motivations on preparing for comedy performances, Stand-up Comedian C shared his confidence and assurance that he is not lacking of motivation at all. He also mentioned that comedy was the only thing he wanted to do.

Four from the participants half-jokingly answered that money was their motivation in doing comedy performances. At first, it started with a burning passion that they are doing it for free as their practice. But when time comes they get booked for shows on theater or corporate events, big pay is given to them. Nonetheless, it motivates them to do their job which is to spread happiness and make the audience laugh until the show ends. In addition, two from the participants has been declining corporate works offering them a high paying, they mentioned that of all, they would rather write jokes and perform on stage than go back to corporate work with a high salary. It would fill a hole in their life. Clarke (2017) stated in his article, Why Passion Is The

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Key To Success, that passion fuels the hard effort, commitment, and creativity required to achieve great things. People who have reached the pinnacle of their professions all have a deep motivation that allows them to work extremely hard even when it is unclear how, when, or even if they will be rewarded for their efforts.

### **Interview Question 7: What were your experiences that challenged you to grow and become a better person during the pandemic?**

When asked about the challenges to grow and become a better person, Stand-up Comedian A showed hopelessness when he described his observations on what was happening to the people he sees in social media. He believed that everyone must have the challenge to grow and become a better person. Sadness was felt by him when he thought of contentment from people who choose to stop growing.

The participants of the study have different experiences that challenge them to grow and become better people during the time of the pandemic. One of the participants shared his sentiments on how he sees himself growing as a person. He cited an example 70% of people are bad. Another participant shared his sentiments on how he took the things that were readily available for granted. He mentioned with disappointment that he had lots of opportunities back then and still complained about life.

### **Interview Question 8: How do you see yourself after these pandemic crises?**

When asked about how they see themselves after pandemic crisis, Stand-up Comedian E was excited to visualize himself that he will be back on more bookings and be more successful in his career.

Most of the participants see themselves having their breakthroughs in stand-up comedy after the pandemic. They were excited and positive to go back on stage and continue the passion they have in stand-up comedy. They stated that they just want to be comedian and improve on that matter. The ideas of achievement also influence how the definition of success. Krems et al. (2017) furtherly explained that many of the behaviors involved in realizing one's full potential are,

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both directly and indirectly, associated to status. Self-actualization is about realizing own dreams, which implies achieving it – whether to be a painter, a politician, a philosopher, or a teacher. In addition, Kaufman (2018) believed that self-actualization is a difficult objective to achieve because it requires a strong sense of purpose and self-awareness, as well as the fulfillment of one's basic needs. People who self-actualize at some point in their lives, on the other hand, may be able to maintain access to this level since they have learnt the skills required to achieve fulfillment.

**Interview Question 9: What do you think is the very reason why you chose this career more than as it is your job?**

When asked about the reason why they chose this career more than as it is their job, Stand-up Comedian D described his passion for the craft as he can freely express what he wants or who he wants to be. He believed that it is his freedom of expression at its best.

Most of the participants stated that they just want to be a stand-up comedian. Some of them dreamt of it. Some of them refused to go back in corporate work. Some of them were satisfied and fulfilled by the compensation they get from being a stand-up comedian. The passion that was felt by the stand-up comedians is comparable to the article written by Duckworth (2019) which mentioned that grit is passion and perseverance for very long-term goals. It is sticking with the future, day in, day out, not just for the week, not just for the month, but for years, and working really hard to make that future a reality.

**Interview Question 10: What recommendation can give to the future stand-up comedians?**

When asked about on recommendation can give to the future stand-up comedians, Stand-up Comedian C was willingly shared his advice to the aspirants based on his experiences. He wanted them to enjoy and have fun and firstly experience performing on stage.

Most of the participants wanted to encourage future stand-up comedians to try and to allow failure as it is part of the process. This statement is supported from the article, Learning the Art of Making Mistakes, Wooll (2022) mentioned that most of the errors can serve as good

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teaching opportunities. In truth, failure is frequently the source of success. It can enhance talents and progress in many ways through making mistakes.

## Corollary Question Number 2: What themes emerged from the testimonies of the stand-up comedians?

The themes were as follows: **Looking on the Bright Side of Life and Considering Comedy as Therapy, Experiencing Difficulty and Unfavorable Emotions but Still Hopeful, Focusing on Oneself through Journals, Work, Meditations, Exercise, and Prayer, Managing Savings, Family Business, and Time, Communication with Children and Constant Support from the Family under any Circumstances, Income, Passion, and Freedom, Challenges turned into Persistence and Appreciation, Being More Productive in the Stand-Up Comedy Industry, and Setting Goals, Pursuing Passion, Having Fun, and Being Oneself**

### Theme A

*Looking on the Bright Side of Life and Considering Comedy as Therapy*

With the theme **Looking on the Bright Side of Life and Considering Comedy as Therapy**, the participants almost had the same responses on their experiences on how comedy or humor helped them cope with stressful situations. Also, through this kind of situation, they were able to see the brighter side of it and make material from it. They were able to process the situation and make fun of it to ease the tension that is happening around them.

The pandemic greatly affected the lives of individuals, both physically and psychologically, and the need to cope with the situation was being strategized by some through comedy and humor. The **Always looking on the bright side of life**, specifically mentioned by Stand-up Comedian B, "*Pero yun, ah, any any tragic na moment or anumang mangyari, ahm, there is always a funny side to that depende na lang sa'yo when can you accept it.*" is a major mindset for the stand-up comedians. While, Stand-up Comedian D mentioned, "*yung pagsulat ko ng mga*

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ISSN: 2704-3010

Volume V, Issue I

August 2023

Available online at <https://www.instabrightgazette.com>



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*material lalo na kung may kinalaman sa pandemic. Oh f\*ck. Brutal pa rin yung pandemic ah. Pero you find the brighter side in it*” agreed with learning to change perspective can help uncover comedy and create a great narrative to tell. With the given situation, the choice is to continue to be anxious or angry, or shift a perspective and focus on what can be controlled.

Although there is no way to totally eliminate life's obstacles, having humor to cope with stress is a healthy and beneficial habit to develop. Given the oddities that punctuate the normal day, it is not difficult. It only takes a little work to change your attitude. Comedy and humor are coping strategies for some stand-up comedians even before the pandemic happened for they experienced stated as by Stand-up Comedian C, *“Pero comedy, at least garantisado na. Masaya 'to. All the way. All throughout. Di ba? So, ganun. Ganun yung value ko sa comedy. Hindi lang siya destressor. More of lahat. Kapag if you're feeling insecure, if you're feeling na may mga pro, may mga feelings kang hindi mo naproprocess very negative tas sa comedy ka pupunta eh.”* with the subtheme **Considering comedy as therapy.**

Laughter and smiling are used in humor therapy to help people heal and escape from troubling thoughts or sensations. A correlation exists between laughing, the mind, and the body. It has the ability to alter brain chemistry and aid in the healing process. Humor has the capacity to make a person feel more in control while also allowing them to release unpleasant emotions that can hurt the body, such as stress or worries related to health or external events.

According to certain studies, personality qualities like optimism and pessimism can have an impact on many aspects of your health and well-being. Positive thinking, which is often associated with optimism, is an important component of good stress management. Effective stress management is linked to a variety of health advantages. Positive thinking does not imply that disregarding the unpleasant aspects of life. It simply means approaching unpleasant situations in a more positive and productive manner.

People relate to everything in the world through people's perception. Muses (2018) stated that in Incongruity theory, the impressions of things in the real world are always partial and

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incomplete. Something humorous seemingly incongruous—makes the distinction between the world as it is and how people perceive it.

Supported by Bernstein (2019) mentioned that comedians discuss their mental health challenges as they all shared their personal experiences with despair, anxiety, self-doubt, and other events that formed them as people. "Comedy is a method to transform your darkest thoughts into a form that gives it a little less power," comedian Aparna Nancherla said in the documentary (Bernstein, 2019).

## Theme B

### *Experiencing Difficulty and Unfavorable Emotions but Still Hopeful*

With a theme, Difficulty in writing, Feelings of regret, Helpless, Hopeful, Following the desires, Depressing at first, Skeptical but hopeful, Disappointing, Still Persistent divulged that

### **Experiencing Difficulty and Unfavorable Emotions but Still Hopeful**

The majority of the participants accepted that the epidemic touched everyone, not just them, although they felt hopeless during the first several months of the pandemic. Some others admitted to having dark, melancholy days and even suicidal thoughts. Some of the participants were having career breakthroughs prior to the crisis, but when the epidemic struck, their careers were badly impacted, and they felt stuck as living individuals. They were afraid to try stand-up comedy online since the energy levels on both ends are so different from what they are used to as Stand-up Comedian B, "*Resistant (hesitant) ako dati na mag-online kasi parang sa stage ko na nag nag-cocomedy... Mas mas binigyan na ako ng more minutes to perform and then biglang nag-pandemic. And, uhh, f\*ck, oo, t\*ngina, oo, t\*nginang Covid 'to.*" with the subtheme **Feelings of regret.**

Experiencing difficulty and unfavorable emotions but still hopeful is experienced by the participants. Being hopeful, despite life's inevitable twists and turns, positive ideas of the future propel them to a destination. Each of them has a destiny, a best-case scenario for the future. But as keep getting in the own way and lose sight of the future as experienced by Stand-up Comedian

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ISSN: 2704-3010

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C, "phase 1 is lugmok, phase 2 nagkaroon ng konting hope, phase 3 nagsawa ako sa hope".  
Losing hope in the process is not avoidable. In his new book *Learned Hopefulness: The Power of Positivity to Overcome Depression*, clinical psychologist Dan Tomasulo, teaches how to restore balance through raising awareness and reframing what future could be, rather than telling to ignore the truth of the pain as also specifically mentioned by Stand-up Comedian D, "umpisa medyo depressing... doon nagulat ako na, oh f\*ck, nabalitaan ko na magkakaroon ng Zoom shows. Medyo skeptical pa ako noon kasi sa Zoom eh." with the theme **Depressing at first and Skeptical but hopeful**. And using imagination to connect with the greatest abilities and life's grandest possibilities in a way that have probably never experienced before. However, Stand-up Comedian A stated as he experienced, "nahirapan kaming magsulat kasi hindi kami makakalabas eh." with the theme **Difficulty in Writing**. Humor can help with emotional and mental resilience in addition to physical health.

To add the information, Menendez-Aller et al. (2020) conducted a quantitative study to see if different types of humor might help people cope with anxiety and despair. The claimed connections between humor and positive well-being were intuitive; it made sense that people with a good sense of humor would be better able to weather difficult situations, have more cohesive relationships, find enjoyment in a range of situations, and have better mental and physical health (Martin, 2019). Positive psychology was said to be a field focused on issues such as character strengths, optimism, life satisfaction, happiness, well-being, gratitude, and compassion including self-compassion, self-esteem and self-confidence, hope, and elevation.

## Theme C

*Focusing on Oneself through Journals, Work, Meditations, Exercise, and Prayer*

With a theme, **Focusing on Oneself through Journals, Work, Meditations, Exercise, and Prayer**, the participants' responses varied because they had different approaches to self-help. However, the underlying denominator in their responses was that they were busy and distracted by becoming more productive. Stand-up Comedian E mentioned having to sell

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various things online or on the street near their home, "Ahh, namimili kami ng mga halaman sa Tagatay, tas ibebenta dito online o ibebenta dito sa tabing kalsada. Ganun. Nagtitinda ng isda." with the theme **Having Different Sources of Income**. In this way, he was able to keep himself occupied while also managing his daily life with his family. A participant's healthy habit for maintaining his well-being, on the other hand, was to disregard criticism from other people online. Stand-up Comedian C specifically stated, "huwag tumingin sa mga comments masyado. Matagal na akong hindi nakikinig sa criticism..." with the theme **Ignoring Unnecessary Comments and Criticisms**. Since the outbreak, he's used social media to express himself, but some unruly netizens have slammed him for his posts. He learnt to tune them out and only pay attention to those he knew by heart. He was able to maintain his mental health in this manner. The participants shared on how they focus on the things that would divert their attention to a more positive mindset, hence, they get positive emotions instead of sulking in negative emotions. At some point in life, everyone endures criticism. Ignoring it can help avoid negative emotions which gains positive emotions that radiates healthy mind and body.

According to Auerbach et al. (2016), humor was demonstrated to induce enjoyment, which was a key aspect of good emotions. They enable them to process more information, hold several concepts in their heads at the same time, and understand how diverse ideas relate to one another. Individuals were better equipped to learn and improve talents when positive emotions open up to new possibilities. As a result, it helped them to do better on tasks and tests. People that experienced a lot of good emotions in their daily lives were happier, healthier, learn faster, and get along with others better.

Positive emotion in positive psychology, emotions that people usually consider enjoyable to encounter. They are pleasant or desirable situational responses that separate from pleasurable sensation and undifferentiated positive affect," according to the Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology. They are valuable to cultivate not only as end states in and of themselves, but also as a means of achieving psychological growth and better well-being through time. Activities in

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daily life such as mentioned by Stand-up Comedian D, "*Ako nag... Naghana... Nagjojournaling ako kasi depressed ako tas may anxiety. Matagal ko nang ginagawa yung journaling,*" with the theme **Journaling** that is journaling assists in making sense of feelings, identifying patterns, and finding relief. It also helps lower stress, handle problems more effectively, and even enhance health, according to research. Moreover, as to positive emotions are being gained from daily routine such as stated by Stand-up Comedian F, "*I start the day with stretches, meditation / affirmations, and prayer.*" with the theme **Doing Stretches, Meditations, Prayer** that can wipe away the day's stress, bringing with it inner peace. The above-mentioned statements from the participants helped them to maintain a routine that could them maintain mentally healthy during stressful situations. Positive emotions are more than just a great sensation; science is proving that they have a hidden value that directly impacts and improves one's daily well-being.

## Theme D

### *Managing Savings, Family Business, and Time*

With a theme, Using the savings, Joining the family business, Facing difficulty with time management writing, divulged that **Managing Savings, Family Business, and Time**.

When asked how they manage their daily duties, Stand-Up Comedian E demonstrated tenacity by describing how he looked for alternatives in order to continue financially supporting his family. One of the most pressing concerns among the participants throughout the pandemic was their financial resources, which impacted their everyday tasks. One participant expressed relief, saying that he had heeded his mother's admonition to always save money, and that she had been urging him to save money from his internet shows during the pandemic. Stand-up Comedian C expressed his experiences, "*Well, noong una, buti na lang may ipon ako. Buti na lang napayuhan ako ng nanay ko na mag-ipon ka kasi may darating na mga bagay na hindi mo ano.*" with the theme **Using the savings**. Managing responsibilities during the pandemic was difficult for the participants as they are new to the situation.

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ISSN: 2704-3010

Volume V, Issue I

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They had to adapt and adjust as to how they will bounce back from losing their career. To add, Stand-up Comedian F shared her experience, *"I quit my corporate job at the start of the pandemic. I joined our family business which allowed me to work-from-home and spend time with my husband and 2 kids."* with the theme **Joining the Family Business**. They engage themselves to the activities that would help them to de-stress and at the same earn money from it. In this way, they busied themselves into something that could help them continue the responsibilities they have in their own. In terms of positive psychology, engagement refers to a specific style of becoming involved with a task.

Supported by Ruch et al. (2018) and Tagalidou et al. (2018) have studied that groups-administered humor training programs can improve emotional well-being, life satisfaction, psychological well-being, subjective health, positive mood, optimism, and reduce depression, stress, and suicidal tendencies. As a result, humor-based PPIs are predicted to be well-received by participants, resulting in a stronger commitment to practice and incorporate the activities into daily life. In contrary, Stand-up Comedian D had a hard time to manage his daily life as he specifically stated, *"Ako, eto ah, aminin ko dito medyo hindi ko namamanage. Mahina ako sa time management at organizing ever since pa nung bata ako."* with the theme **Facing Difficulty with Time Management**. Lucky are those who are able to handle or manage their daily activities wherein they divert negative emotions into their engagement in an activity that could help them to be productive and gain positivities.

## Theme E

*Communication with Children and Constant Support from the Family under any Circumstances*

With the theme, **Communication with Children and Constant Support from the Family under any Circumstances**. The support they receive from their family or loved ones is a major reason why they are still stand-up comedians. They were ecstatic to share how their families supported them during the pandemic, particularly through their humorous performance or social media messages as it was experienced by Stand-up Comedian B, *"My mom is my number*

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*1 fan. Palagi niyang isheshare, isheshare kahit anong ginagawa ko. Kahit naglalaba lang ako, isheshare niya sa online. Totoo kasi into performing arts din siya dati.*” Furthermore, Stand-up Comedian C also mentioned, *“Family ko ay super supportive. Always. Ahm, yung family ko, very supportive sila, kahit noong hindi pa nila alam na na yun yung gustong gawin ko as a career.”* And The majority of them had true family support, allowing them to explore and express themselves through stand-up comedy. Hence, **Constant Support from the Family under any Circumstances**, is a big factor to help stand-up comedians to improve and grow freely in their chosen career. They recognize that not everyone will comprehend the nature of their work and how highly compensated they are by their profession. According to Keisalo (2018) and de Jong (2018) studied in their research that a particular humor is demonstrating how the individual now has the self-awareness to recognize their peer relationships and take the required precautions to protect their mental and emotional health from potential attacks by others. It isn't about putting up with bad behavior. A strong sense of belonging to the family aids an individual in learning life skills and making the best decisions as adults. As agreed by the statement of Stand-up Comedian E, *“Lahat. Lahat. Ahm, yung, ah, tunay kong pamilya na nasa Tanauan, ah, very supportive sila sa akin. Lahat. Lahat sila. Mga hipag, mga bayaw ko, mga kapatid ng... as in my family din. Tsaka dito lahat, yung sabi ko ngang nandito, asawa ko, biyenang ko, mga bayaw ko.”* It also serves as a solid basis for the one's identity, allowing them to feel secure in exploring new things. An individual is likely to consider their choices thoroughly since they do not want to disappoint their parents. Even as they grow older and begin to go out and explore on their own, it is critical for them to know that they have a foundation to rely on in both good and difficult times. On the other hand, Stand-up Comedian A personally shared, *“In my case, ang kailangan ko lang pag-explainan ay yung mga anak ko eh. Yun lang eh. Pero kailangan ko pa ring ipaintindi sa kanila kung ano ang ginagawa kong mga katarantaduhan dito sa Maynila. And naintindihan nila. Yun lang.”* so as he believed that following his dream will also inspire his children to follow their own dreams regardless what people may think about them. He confidently set the standard of pursuing

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one's desire to his family. Having a positive relationship with family and loved ones really matter for an individual. With this, a theme was emerged **Communication with Children** as they are also important part of the family. Positive relationships, as describe by positive psychology, connect people to others. They also strengthen our sense of purpose. It is social support that helps people cope with stress and gives them the strength to continue and even thrive. People's personal connections can also help them stay motivated while they work toward their goals.

## Theme F

*Income, Passion, and Freedom*

With the theme, **Income, Passion, and Freedom**, stand-up Comedian C expressed his confidence and assurance that he is not lacking in motivation when asked about his motivations for preparing comic acts. He specifically said, "*Motivated? Always akong motivated eh. Kasi ito lang yung gusto kong gawin sa buong buhay ko eh. Wala akong ibang gustong gawin...kapag hindi ko ito nagawa, parang hindi ako nakakahinga. Parang ganun ang pakiramdam ko. So, motivation is not lacking at all.*" He also stated that comedy was the only thing on his mind which shows his passion with the theme **Passion**. It all started with a deep desire to help others for free as a form of practice as Stand-up Comedian B was willingly shared, "*Getting rich! You talk sh\*t and get rich! I think siguro, at first, parang may passion talaga na burning passion na gagawin ko 'to ng libre. I will do what I love and ganun.*" with the theme **Getting rich and Passion**.

It inspires them to execute their job, which is to share joy and make the audience laugh till the end of the play as paralleled to the statement of Stand-up Comedian E, "*Oh di, noong una hiya-hiya ako, pero naisip ko dito akong kumukuha ng pinapakain ko sa pamilya ko, bakit ko ikakahiya? ...nagperform ako at maraming sumaya. Palakpak yung tenga ko. Kasi ang sa akin, hindi sila nalugi sa pagkakakuha sa akin.*" with the theme **Source of income and Source of happiness for the audience**. As Raban-Motounu (2018) pointed out, laughter has both physical and emotional effects that could lead them to be passionate. True delight, enthusiasm, and a

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high level of anticipation for the task at hand are all brought out by passion. Passion is the most potent weapon that can have. The most effective and happiest individual in every career are motivated by their passion. It is what allows them to progress in their craft and, as a result, live better lives.

Furthermore, two of the participants have been turning down corporate jobs that pay well, stating that they would rather create jokes and perform on stage than return to a high-paying corporate job. It would help them fill a void in their lives. Stand-up Comedian A humbly shared his experience, "*Money! I wanna get paid, brother! I would rather write jokes na sabihin mo ng, ah, hindi parang, yung parang sabihin mong korni. I would rather do that than go back to corporate work na may malaking sweldo. Mas gusto kong gumawa ng bobong jokes dahil yun talaga yung gusto ko sa buhay ko eh, men eh. And yun yun eh.*" with the theme **Money and Freedom to do one's desire.**

Individuals who are passionate about what they do will be both happier and more productive at work, according to a substantial amount of evidence-based career guidance. They are passionate about what they do or where they work because they are personally invested in and motivated by its objective. The only way to do outstanding work is to love what you do," Steve Jobs famously said on work enthusiasm.

## Theme G

### *Challenges turned into Persistence and Appreciation*

With a theme, Taking challenges to grow, Having a dynamic human spirit, Appreciating little things, Not giving up, Getting vaccinated despite the stress and hesitations divulged that **Challenges turned into Persistence and Appreciation.** The participants answered different challenges of growing and becoming a better person. Stand-up Comedian A expressed hopelessness as he detailed what he saw on social media, "*Dapat lahat tayo, di ba, pakiramdam. Dapat dapat siguro lahat tayo may ganung challenge to grow. Yung iba nakukuntento parang*

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*mawawalan na sila ng tanong sa utak nila. Parang parang ang sad nun.*”with the theme **Taking challenges to grow.** He felt that everyone should be challenged to grow and improve.

When he thought of people who chose to stop growing, he felt sad. The study's participants have had a variety of experiences that have challenged them to grow and become better people during the pandemic. One of the attendees expressed his thoughts on how he sees himself developing as a person, *“And what made grow is there are, like, sabihin natin 70% of people are bad, let's say, like, very basic analogy ah. Paano na yung 30% who are fighting the good fight. Like, it's... it's... it is selfish of you to give up just because na, oh f\*ck, marami kang nakikitang kupal. So, ano yun, magiging kupal ka na rin, like, yeah, that's that's what I kinda learn to grow.”*with the theme **Not giving up.** He used the example that 70% of people are terrible, but what about the other 30% who are waging the good fight? Does this imply that because the majority is terrible, the others will follow suit? Another participant expressed his feelings on how he took for granted the goods that were easily available as he specifically mentioned, *“The things that you were doing before, like, kahit mag-dine in ka lang sa restaurant or, uhhh... Naappreciate mo siya eh. Yeah. Stuff like that. The things that were, uhh, that was readily available to you before is, uhh, naappreciate ko siya lalo.”*with the theme **Appreciating little things.**

He expressed his dissatisfaction by saying that he had many opportunities back then but still complains about life. Moreover, Auerbach et al. (2016) mentioned that humor has been demonstrated to induce enjoyment, which is a key aspect of good emotions. Fulfillment increases our agency over our experiences by bringing the locus of control inside us. Happiness, on the other hand, is more externally driven, leaving the vulnerability to external factors or changing circumstances. Meaning, in positive psychology, is finding a purpose in life larger than self. The meaningful existence, according to Martin Seligman, is defined as using your signature qualities and virtues in the service of something far larger than yourself. Knowing the meaning in one's life also means that it motivates to improve and grow as a person.

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## Theme H

### *Being More Productive in the Stand-Up Comedy Industry*

With a theme, To be funnier, To write more, To book shows, To achieve a one-hour special show, To continue being a stand-up comedian, To believe in the renewed hit of stand-up comedy divulged that **Being More Productive in the Stand-Up Comedy Industry**. Stand-up Comedian E was ecstatic to imagine himself booking more shows and becoming more successful in his business, "*Ayun. Nakikita ko na naman yung sarili ko na boboom na naman pagkatapos ng pandemic. Kasi ngayon biglang nawala, biglang nawala pansamantala yung pandemic. Nagboom na. Nagboom na ulit kami eh.*" with the theme **To Believe in the Renewed Hit of Stand-Up Comedy**. After the pandemic, most of the participants see themselves breaking into stand-up comedy. They were ecstatic and optimistic about returning to the stage and continuing their stand-up comedy careers. In addition, Stand-up Comedian B specifically mentioned "*Always booking shows and magbubook ng shows and continuing to magdagdag ng oras ko and I think every comedian ang pinaka-goal is to at least achieve a one-hour special.*" with the theme **To book shows and To achieve a one-hour special show**. They mentioned that all they want to do is be a comic and get better at it. The definition of success is also influenced by achievement notions as agreed by the statement of Stand-up Comedian C, "*Kung nandito tayo ngayon, gusto ko lang mag-stand-up talaga. Like, at least, once a month...Pero and all and be all, komedyante pa rin ako. Kung papapiliin mo lang ako ng gagawin ko ng isang bagay, magcocomedy ako. Yeah. Stand-up.*" with the theme **To continue being a stand-up comedian**.

From the article of Perera (2020), self-actualization is the full realization of one's potential, abilities, and appreciation for life. It is defined as one's full participation in life and realization of one's potential. Self-actualization, according to Goldstein (1939, as cited in Perera, 2020), the ultimate objective of every organism was related to man's drive for self-fulfillment and an individual's proclivity to become actualized in his potential. Stand-up Comedian A revealed in his answer, "*Gusto ko lang, gusto ko lang maging nakakatawa pa. Or ano pa yung pwede kong isulat.*"

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ISSN: 2704-3010

Volume V, Issue I

August 2023

Available online at <https://www.instabrightgazette.com>



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*Yun lang. Ano pwede kong isulat. Wala nang... wala nang ibang ano. Yun lang.*” with the theme **To be funnier and To write more.** Achievement, in positive psychology, is about more than getting successes in the chosen career. The participants know a feeling of accomplishment when they can observe their own progress in learning and mastering a skill.

All they wanted to do after pandemic is to continue doing comedy and improve from it. They may foresee themselves a grand plan ahead of them but they acknowledge the simplicity of their progress as long as they do stand-up comedy regardless the time frame.

## Theme I

*Income, Passion, and Freedom*

With a theme, **Income, Passion, and Freedom**, Stand-up comedian D expressed his love for the trade by saying that it allows him to freely express himself and who he wants to be, *“Ah! Kasi, very easy, kasi I can say what I want, I can be who I want, at ako lang yung boss ko... Ako pwede ko sabihin yan on stage kasi, it’s... itong career path na ito, Jessica, is the, it is the freedom of expression at its be... at its best. That’s why I picked this.”* with the theme **Being oneself and Freedom of expression.** He considered it to be the pinnacle of his freedom of expression.

The majority of the participants clearly indicated their desire to be a stand-up comedian. Stand-up Comedian C mentioned, *“So, yun yung the very reason is because I feel like if you focus on it, uhh, if you focus 100% on something, mas gagaling ka eh. Like, back up, sabihin mo, p\*ta, may potential 'to eh. P\*ta, edi magdusa ka for it, maghirap ka for it, mamulubi ka for it.”* with the theme **Passion.** Some of them fantasized about it. Some of them refused to return to their previous jobs. Some of them were content and contented because of the money they make as stand-up comedians as correlates to Stand-up Comedian E, *“Eh dito sa trabaho ko bilang comedian, ang isang guesting ko parang kulang-kulang na isang buwan na sahod sa kumpanya.”* with the theme **Income.** According to Wellenzohn et al. (2016a) discovered evidence for savoring happy feelings as a functional mechanism in humor-based PPIs.

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An individual can stay dedicated to a task that is tough or dull if this kind of happy feelings is being possessed. To persevere is to remain with it; to keep working hard even when faced with adversity or failure. Being naturally gifted and intelligent is wonderful, but in order to genuinely succeed and grow, the ability to persevere must be acquired. Stand-up Comedian F stated *"...being a stand-up comedian makes me feel like I am able to share the talents that I am set out in this world for."* with the theme **Sharing the talent to the world.**

Talent without guts may be nothing more than untapped potential. Talent becomes a skill that leads to achievement only through effort (Duckworth, 2016, as cited in Brauchman-Felman, 2017).

## Theme J

*Setting Goals, Pursuing Passion, Having Fun, and Being Oneself*

With a theme, **Setting Goals, Pursuing Passion, Having Fun, and Being Oneself**, the majority of the participants elaborate on their recommendations to Set goals, Do what they desire, Have fun, Let the jokes define them, Avoid being shy, Be oneself, Learn more about oneself, and Discover oneself.

Stand-up Comedian C generously gave his experience-based advice with the candidates. He specifically mentioned, *"Future stand-up comedian, kung nagsisimula ka pa lang, just have fun with it. And ang pinaka sinasabi kong advice sa mga tao, do not define your jokes, let your jokes define you. Kapag hindi mo ma-gets yun, magperform ka pa. Magegets mo yun."* with the theme **Have fun and Let the jokes define them.** He wanted them to enjoy themselves and get some stage experience initially. The majority of the participants wanted to encourage future stand-up comedians to embrace failure as a necessary part of the process. In addition, Stand-up Comedian A mentioned that *"Kapag nagawa ko siguro, naexpress ko siya nang mabuti and nagawa ko nang tama nang naayon sa goals na gusto... Everything follows na pwede kang makitaan ng example ng mga next next na wave na mga gustong magsubok na baka sakaling seryosohin nila."* with the theme **Set Goals.** Boen et al. (2020) stated that an individual responds

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more slowly in the next round after making a mistake, according to numerous scientific research. This could be because the brain is attempting to give itself extra time in order to prevent repeating the same error. Furthermore, Stand-up Comedian E revealed, “*Well, ah, ganito maipapayo ko lang sa mga tubong komedyante, huwag mahihiya. Be yourself lang kasi kapag itinago mo yung hiya, wala kang mararating.*” with the theme **Avoid being shy and Be oneself**. Accordingly, Craik et al. (n. d., as cited in Heintz, 2017) stated that humor-based therapies must have a great deal of potential for promoting well-being. Given the wide range of humorous behavior in everyday life, it would be interesting to investigate whether certain of these behaviors are more strongly related to desired changes than others, and whether personality and/or sense of humor moderate the effects of interventions based on various humorous behaviors. Accomplishment/Achievement is defined in the PERMA model as a manner of reflecting on one's attempts to do something and the degree to which it generates a good feeling of mastery or performance.

### **Corollary Question Number 3: Based on the findings of the study, what output may be proposed?**

The **Developing Self-care Plan** might be tough to build a consistent self-care plan when life was stressful and uncertain, especially during this time of the pandemic. This would be used as a guide for stand-up comedians in properly managing themselves in daily living. Stand-up comedians would benefit greatly when they took time to look after their physical, emotional well-being, and mental fitness. Self-care plans also helped people avoid unhealthy habits by teaching coping skills that would help stand-up comedians deal with difficult situations and life events. On the other hand, the **Mental Health Webinar** was made due to the continuous surge of the COVID-19 pandemic. This affected most of the stand-up comedians. It had a massively bad impact on one's mental health. Some comedians were afraid of getting sick, losing loved ones, having financial issues, and being stuck in their career growth. All of these factors were combined

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to create a perfect storm of anxiety, stress, and other bad feelings. The struggle began within. Mental health issues could be difficult to notice and discuss. This webinar would provide a clear starting point for focusing on inner strength when facing problems. Learning how to deal with stress caused by uncertainty is critical to keeping the mind calm and healthy. This would also serve as a gateway to promote mental health awareness particularly the mental health professionals.

## CONCLUSION

### Consolidated Findings and Reflections

This phenomenological study acquired the well-being of stand-up comedians as to mental health challenges and coping strategies during the pandemic era. The semi-structured interview of these participants focused on their experiences during the pandemic as they were badly affected by the crisis. The respondents in the study were unanimous in their responses with regards to the generalized knowledge and experiences of being a stand-up comedian who was socially connecting to the world starting **Looking on the Bright Side of Life and Considering Comedy as Therapy, Experiencing Difficulty and Unfavorable Emotions but Still Hopeful, Focusing on Oneself through Journals, Work, Meditations, Exercise, and Prayer, Managing Savings, Family Business, and Time, Communication with Children and Constant Support from the Family under any Circumstances, Income, Passion, and Freedom, Being More Productive in the Stand-Up Comedy Industry, Challenges turned into Persistence and Appreciation, and Setting Goals, Pursuing Passion, Having Fun, and Being Oneself.**

Under the first theme, Looking on the Bright Side of Life and Considering Comedy as Therapy, Stand-up Comedian A, Stand-up Comedian E, and Stand-up Comedian D mentioned that in every tragic moment, there was always a funny side of it. They were able to process the

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ISSN: 2704-3010

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situation and could turn it into funny which also made them believe that it depended on the timing. Stand-up Comedian C stated that in comedy, like in movies or shows, it was an assurance that throughout was just fun and happiness. Comedy was like their therapy. Through their sense of humor, they saw the positive side of life, and laugh their problems away.

For the second theme, Experiencing Difficulty and Unfavorable Emotions but Still Hopeful, Stand-up Comedian A and Stand-up Comedian D felt gloomy and depressing during the first few months of the pandemic. Stand-up Comedian B and Stand-up Comedian E were having their career growth but eventually become stagnant because of the pandemic. Different phases were experienced from hopelessness to familiarity with the situation to hopefulness.

Under the third theme, Focusing on Oneself through Journals, Work, Meditations, Exercise, and Prayer, having positive emotions to keeping themselves busy was most of the health routine during stressful situations to maintain mentally healthy. They found alternatives to divert their attention and chose to be productive despite the given situation. On the other hand, Stand-up Comedian C chose to ignore negativities like criticism on social media. It helped him to focus himself to improve and to keep himself sane.

For the fourth theme, Managing Savings, Family Business, stand-up Comedian C and Stand-up Comedian F engaged themselves in something that made them focus on the task at hand. It was described as being so engrossed in an activity that time flies by. It meant being completely focused on the work at hand and living in the present moment.

Under the fifth theme, Time, Communication with Children and Constant Support from the Family under any Circumstances, positive relationships which involved understanding and acceptance helps the stand-up comedians to continue what they are doing. They were misjudged at first but when family or loved ones start to accept and to understand the nature of their work, all out support was given to them. And it was a big source of motivation and inspiration for them as they could freely do what they wanted to do, as long as, they were not *pabigat* in their family.

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For the sixth theme, Income, Passion, and Freedom, stand-up Comedian A, Stand-up Comedian B, and Stand-up Comedian C admitted that they had this burning passion for them to be motivated to prepare for comedy performance. This passion made them fuel the hard effort, commitment, and creativity to achieve great things. Stand-up Comedian C shared that if the time would come that he could not do comedy, a hole in him was needed to be filled. It made him incomplete. On the other hand, aside from passion, Stand-up Comedian D and Stand-up Comedian E believed that good compensation makes them motivated in every comedy performance they do. Once they did their job well and made the audience laughs out loud, they feel motivated and inspired to do more comedy performances. Stand-up Comedian F was persistent to improve herself. In this way, it made her motivated in doing comedy.

Under the seventh theme, Being More Productive in the Stand-Up Comedy Industry, being more productive in the Stand-Up Comedy Industry was their vision of themselves after the pandemic. Self-actualization was said to be a tough goal to achieve because it demanded a strong sense of purpose, self-awareness, and fulfilling one's basic needs. People who reached self-actualization at some time in their lives, on the other hand, might be able to keep access to this level since they acquired the necessary abilities. Writing jokes and comedy performances were the only things they wanted to continuously do even after the pandemic. They just wanted to improve their skills and be funnier on stage.

For the eighth theme, Challenges turned into Persistence and Appreciation, the passion that sustained persistence in doing the craft was one of the reasons why they chose this stand-up comedy more than it is their job. They were willing to embrace sacrifices and sufferings in the journey just to become a successful comedian. Skipping to the good part was never in their option to succeed. They stuck to the idea of being a comedian even if it did make any sense to the majority. Being a comedian was like therapy, too, for Stand-up Comedian D and Stand-up Comedian F. It was like a catharsis wherein they could process and release, and thereby provided relief from strong or repressed emotions.

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Under the last theme, Setting Goals, Pursuing Passion, Having Fun, and Being Oneself, being a stand-up comedian required to fail on stage and learning from it. Stand-up comedian A wanted to set an example to future stand-up comedians. He believed that if he was able to manage it, future stand-up comedians would be serious of pursuing it as well. He also admitted that it was not an easy or instant process to become one. Accordingly, Stand-up Comedian B and Stand-up Comedian C mentioned that becoming stand-up comedians would require enduring the process and finding out if this career would fit by exploring, learning from it, and deciding to embrace it or not.

Stand-comedians remained to be mentally stable during the pandemic time as they knew how to process stressful situations and could turn them into a funny side. Apparently like everyone else, they also experienced anxiety, depressing and losing hope during the first few months of the pandemic. But eventually, they managed to survive through comedy and being productive at the same time. They were also hopeful to have more bookings and shows after the pandemic as they believed that they had been embracing the craft both live and online set-up.

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ISSN: 2704-3010

Volume V, Issue I

August 2023

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