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RESEARCH ARTICLE

HEROES IN THE FLAMES: UNVEILING THE VALIANT EXPERIENCES OF BFP PERSONNEL RESPONDING TO FIRE INCIDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the experiences of Firefighters in responding to the fire incident at Cabancalan, Mandaue City. In the course of the study, three (3) research problems were answered; namely: (1) What are the challenges encountered by the informants during the said incident; (2) How do the informants address the challenges; and What are the aspirations of the informants? . The chosen respondents for this study were BFP personnel who actively participated in responding to the fire incident that occurred in Cabancalan, Mandaue City on February 11, 2021. Selection of participants was undertaken with careful consideration of specific factors, such as their willingness to openly share their personal experiences and their dedication and enthusiasm for participating in the research. The criteria for selecting informants were as follows: (1) all informants should be currently assigned to the Mandaue City Fire Station, (2) they should possess a minimum of one year of service, (3) all participants were male, and (4) their ages ranged between 23 and 40 years. A phenomenological design was utilized in this study, and the collection of information techniques were: In-depth interviews and Focus Group Discussion. The informants were asked to sign the consent with the content of the terms and purposes of the interview, using an audio or video recorder for the purpose of recording the conversation. The in-depth interview was conducted in a place where it was favorable to the informants. The participation of the informants was voluntary, and they were assured of the confidentiality of their identity. A free flowing mode of conversation was obtained and the informants have shared their personal experiences. Nine themes surfaced in this study; namely; *The Unyielding Fatigue of Heroic Endeavors*, *Manpower Scarcity: The Ongoing Struggle for Adequate Resources*, *Persistent Health Threats: Firefighters' Enduring Battle for Well-being*, *The Boundaries of Human Endurance*, *Harnessing Progress through Technology* and *The Power of Unity*. Based on the findings of the study, personnel responding to fire incidents hold several crucial implications for practice: Incorporating the following key recommendations into firefighting practices is vital for enhancing the safety and effectiveness of firefighting agencies. Firstly, there is a critical need for Enhanced Training Programs, encompassing not only traditional firefighting techniques but also a strong focus on health and safety measures, thus better equipping personnel to handle evolving challenges. Secondly, Technology Integration should be actively pursued, involving modern equipment, data analytics, and communication systems to substantially boost safety and efficiency. Thirdly, drawing from Classical Management Principles can foster motivation and productivity among personnel by recognizing and rewarding exemplary service. Lastly, addressing Manpower Scarcity through effective recruitment and retention efforts is essential to ensure efficient emergency responses and prevent burnout. By prioritizing these areas, firefighting agencies can uphold their noble mission of saving lives and protecting property while ensuring the well-being of their personnel.

INTRODUCTION

In the wake of the prolonged, grueling Cabancalan, Mandaue City fire incident, lasting a relentless 20 hours, it undeniably ushered in profound life-altering experiences for the dedicated firefighting personnel.

These heroes face not only physical demands but also grapple with immense mental and emotional strains as they contend with the rigors of their daily responsibilities, particularly during actual emergencies. Exposure to traumatic events, environmental extremities such as searing heat, biting cold winds, and deafening noise further necessitates their adoption of personal coping strategies, as described by Lazarus and Folkman (1984).

Working under such adverse conditions invariably escalates the stress levels experienced by firefighting personnel in the line of duty. Existing research has primarily delved into how firefighters cope post-incident, overlooking the immediate challenges they face. Recognizing this gap, our research aims to explore the personal hardships endured by firefighting personnel during the Cabancalan fire incident. This 20-hour ordeal was undoubtedly arduous, and we seek to uncover their individual experiences, emotions, and coping mechanisms during the intense battle against the flames. By understanding their firsthand accounts, we hope to shed light on the resilience of these firefighters, delving into the depths of their emotions as they fought valiantly to protect lives and properties. Our study is not just an inquiry into their struggles; it is a testament to their bravery and determination. This research is vital for our community's safety. By comprehending the challenges faced by our firefighters, we can identify areas for improvement in their training, equipment, and support systems. We can pinpoint the specific needs of these heroes, ensuring their well-being and effectiveness during emergencies. Furthermore, armed with this knowledge, we can advocate for appropriate compensation and resources from the government, acknowledging the immense difficulty of their job.

This study will be anchored to Two Factor Theory of Motivation by Frederick Herzberg (1959). He defined this theory as a "the two-factor theory separates out job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction and suggests that they work independently of each other in the workplace." In this theory, you understand the core of this effectiveness theory about motivating your employees. He uses the phrase "hygiene factors" to explain things that can make people unsatisfied or depressed at work if they aren't present. He also uses the phrase "motivating factors" to define objects that, when present, have the power to make people happy or fulfilled at work. This theory will be supported by the Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory of Human Motivation proposed by Abraham Maslow which state that "Human motivation is focused on people finding satisfaction and improvement through personal development. Self-actualized people are happy and accomplishing whatever they set out to do." The hierarchy of needs theory starts with Physiological, Safety, Belonging and Love, Social needs or Esteem, and Self-actualization. It starts with the "physiological" where they are the most important things a person should have in order to live. Shelter, water, food, warmth, rest, and health are just a few of them. At this stage, a person's motivation is derived from their instinct to live. Second, "safety" a person's physical protection must be considered in order to find stability and security. This entails finding shelter from the weather, hostile situations, or health risks and illness. In modern societies, a person often requires economic security in order to survive and prosper. This relates to the need for a stable career, a steady income, and the ability to save. Third, Belonging and Love, humans are social beings that thrive when they are able to communicate with others. The need for friendship, family, and love is outlined at this stage of the hierarchy. Humans have a desire to give and receive affection, as well as to feel a sense of belonging in a community. Forth, Social needs or Esteem, A person's desire for recognition, prestige, and respect is linked to their need for self-esteem. Once a person's love and belonging needs have been met, they turn their attention to their confidence requirements. Lastly, Self-actualization, Self-actualization relates to the realization of an individual's full potential.

Another theory that will serve as a support to the anchored theory is the Adams' Equity Theory by John Stacey Adams, who developed his job motivation theory in 1963. Adams' Equity Theory acknowledges that subtle and variable factors affect an employee's assessment and perception of their relationship with their work and their employer. Employees become demotivated, both in relation to their work and to their boss, if they assume their inputs are greater than their outputs, according to the theory. Employees can react in a variety of ways, including de-motivation (generally to the degree that the employee perceives a difference between the inputs and outputs exists), reduced effort, frustration, or, in more severe cases, disruption. Good outcomes and high levels of morale can only be predicted when workers consider their treatment to be fair, according to Adams' Equity Theory of Motivation. Many factors can influence an employee's understanding of this. The aim of Adams' Equity Theory is to achieve a reasonable balance here, with outputs on one side of the scale and inputs on the other, both weighing fairly equally.

This relates to the theory of Frederick Herzberg which is the two factor theory and the Maslow's hierarchy of need theory "Human Motivation", lastly the equity theory of John Stacey Adams. In supporting our study about Experiences of BFP Personnel in Responding to the Fire Incident in Cabancalan Mandaue City, based on these assumptions, we would expect our firefighters to choose their conduct based on their perceptions or expectations of the degree to which their actions would result in desired outcomes. We must look at and understand both our firefighters and their surroundings because their actions are a product of both them and their environment. We need to find out what matters to our firefighters in terms of results, or what turns them on. Company officers who are qualified understand their firefighters' needs but do not attempt to alter them. It's critical that we express our goals, or the types of action we want from our firefighters, in a straightforward and concise manner. We must describe the outcomes we anticipate in reasonably precise, observable, and measurable terms, while also ensuring that they are achievable. Also, keep in mind that each firefighter has different requirements and expectations. Firefighters who perform poorly should not be compensated similarly to those who perform well. Firefighters aren't exactly the same. Recognizing that no two firefighters are identical and that we must be versatile in order to accommodate their differences offers powerful inspiration. We must consider motivation and the dynamics that affect our firefighters' motivation to come to work and work hard in order to influence their work actions and efficiency. The company officer is directly responsible for building a motivating atmosphere for their firefighters.

Vrooms's expectancy theory stipulates that behavior is a product of choices that are available for to be prioritized. The goal is to increase employee happiness while reducing unhappiness. Performance is determined by human characteristics such as personality and abilities. Performance, motivation, and effort are all within an individual's motivation, according to the theory, which is supported by variables like valence, instrumentality, and expectations. The greater the effort put in at work, the better the results. Bounded rationality implies the idea that humans take reasoning shortcuts that may lead to sub-optimal decision-making. Behavioral economists engage in mapping the decision shortcuts that agents use in order to help increase the effectiveness of human decision-making. One treatment of this idea comes from Cass Sunstein

and Richard Thaler 's Nudge. The researchers outlined relevant related literature and studies to support the needed information as a way of enriching the study according to various authors, website and other sources which served as benchmark of the study. Milen, David in 2009. The Ability of Firefighting Personnel to Cope With Stress can be linked to this study. The firefighting personnel in this study used six coping resources. The findings supported the literature, namely, that firefighting personnel are lacking in their use of coping resources to combat stress. In addition, exposure to various extreme weather conditions (e.g., heat, cold, humidity, wind) imposes adaptational measures that individuals may need to use (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Baker and Williams (2001) found negativity among firefighting personnel's attitudes in their desire to work, lack of camaraderie, and negative thoughts toward administration as the result of their exposure to stressful events. The study of two other factors in a positive work environment are flexibility and sensitivity (Edwards, 2010) can be linked to this study. Members of the Fire Service need a great deal of flexibility in order to meet their basic needs. The Fire Service's schedule and mission can be very exhausting and stressful, putting a strain on members and their families. These circumstances result in a significant loss for the member, and they may become significantly less efficient as a result. A proper balanced flexibility may enable the member to avoid dangerous distractions and to be more productive (Edwards, 2010). The Fire Service, as a whole, needs to become more responsive to their members' individual needs. They must be able to recognize and respect differences in individuals, cultures, ages, genders, and religions while being equal and inclusive. We can start making a positive influence as a leader by honing the leadership skills that are needed to make a big difference. We will have to change ourselves in order to change others. Honesty, respect, confidence, versatility, and sensitivity are all management strategies that we should learn and adopt.

Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy in 2012's " Path Goal Theory of Leadership" is also one of the studies linked to this study. The path-goal theory states that a leader's behavior is contingent to the satisfaction, motivation and performance of their employees. The BFP is responsible for ensuring public safety by preventing and suppressing all types of fires. Their theory is an excellent example of how management can influence social change by inspiring members of the fire service. It is the leader's responsibility to assist personnel in achieving their objectives and to provide the necessary guidance and resources to ensure that their objectives are aligned with the organization's objectives. Akhter, Shahnaz in 2014. Firefighters' view on Improving Fire Emergency Response: A Case Study of Rawalpindi can also be linked to this study. Chow and Tusi (2004) found that provision of fire safety is associated with proper implementation of fire safety management. This research also found that implementation of fire safety standards in high rise buildings can provide safety to occupants and minimize firefighters' risk for which neutral Building Control Authority is recommended to avoid favoritism and ensure proper implementation of fire safety standards as per building bylaws.

METHODS

This qualitative study adopts a phenomenological research design for its investigation, as utilized by the researchers in the project titled "Experiences of BFP Personnel in Responding to

the Fire Incident in Cabancalan, Mandaue City." The choice of this design stems from a profound belief in its capacity to provide intrinsic relevance and significance to the forthcoming findings, data collection, and the overarching objectives of the study's proponents. The researchers firmly assert that a phenomenological approach is the most fitting and apt method for this particular exploration. It has been chosen to gain an intimate understanding of the personal experiences of firefighters who valiantly battled a 20-hour inferno. The approach seeks to illuminate the myriad challenges and circumstances encountered by these heroes as they responded to the fire incident, as well as to reveal the rich tapestry of lived experiences that have shaped their years of dedicated service. The study will employed in-depth interviews using an interview guide equipped with open-ended questions, providing the necessary platform for our informants to candidly share their unique perspectives and invaluable insights. The Mandaue City Fire Station is located at A. Soriano Ave, Centro, Barangay Guizo. The chosen respondents for this study were BFP personnel who actively participated in responding to the fire incident that occurred in Cabancalan, Mandaue City on February 11, 2021. Selection of participants was undertaken with careful consideration of specific factors, such as their willingness to openly share their personal experiences and their dedication and enthusiasm for participating in the research. The criteria for selecting informants were as follows: (1) all informants should be currently assigned to the Mandaue City Fire Station, (2) they should possess a minimum of one year of service, (3) all participants were male, and (4) their ages ranged between 23 and 40 years. The interview process was divided into two distinct sets. The first set comprised in-depth interviews, involving two (2) of the informants. In the second set, focus group discussions took place, featuring the active participation of the remaining three (3) informants.

The research team developed a comprehensive interview guide designed to unearth the rich and diverse lived experiences of each informant. This meticulously crafted guide was structured with open-ended questions to facilitate in-depth interviews with the researchers' informants, both in one-on-one settings and during the focus group sessions, consisting of three distinct sets of probing questions. Before the interviews were conducted and the potential insights were unveiled, the interview guide underwent a crucial phase of content validation and approval. It was first submitted to a panel of experts for their rigorous scrutiny and validation, ensuring its precision and relevance in extracting valuable information from the participants. All data gathered were subjected to Content Analysis method which is the common methods of analyzing qualitative data. The responses of the subject during the interview were interpreted appropriately. This method of analyzing data was used to analyze documented information in the form of texts, media or even physical items. This method was used to analyze responses from interviewees. For this study, the researchers applied all the gathered information and transcribed the information into their deeper understanding that produced the good interpretation of the gathered data. The researchers of the study ensured the respondent's that their data will be treated with utmost confidentiality and that the study is purely for educational purpose only. Furthermore, the researchers re-assumed the anonymity of the respondent's identities.

RESULTS

The information presented in this study is a product of the insightful responses provided by the informants during both individual interviews and focus group discussions. The researchers painstakingly immersed themselves in these transcripts, repeatedly reviewing them to grasp their full significance. Within these transcripts, noteworthy statements were carefully extracted, and a meticulous process of logical organization ensued, grouping these statements into coherent clusters for improved comprehension. This process allowed the researchers to distill meaningful insights from the statements, which were then subjected to thorough examination and further grouped into overarching cluster themes. These emerging themes were subsequently refined and restructured, forming a cohesive representation of the Bureau of Fire Protection personnel's personal experiences during the Cabancalan, Mandaue City fire incident. They evolved from the critical assertions made by the informants and were distilled into a series of themes in response to the subproblems, summarized as follows:

What are the challenges encountered by the informants during the said incident?

Theme No 1: The Unyielding Fatigue of Heroic Endeavors

- This theme delves into the profound and unpreventable exhaustion experienced by the firefighting personnel during their relentless battle against the Cabancalan fire. Through their accounts, it became evident that the arduous, continuous hours of firefighting exacted an immense physical and mental toll. Their narratives painted a vivid picture of the unyielding fatigue that accompanies heroic endeavors, highlighting the extraordinary resilience these individuals displayed amidst overwhelming exhaustion. This theme not only illuminates their immense dedication but also underscores the human limitations faced when confronting such formidable challenges. According to the informants, When they battled the flames during the Cabancalan incident, it felt like an unending struggle. The physical exhaustion is one thing, but what's equally demanding is the mental fatigue. Knowing that lives and property are at stake, they press on, pushing their bodies and minds to their limits. It's in these moments of exhaustion that they truly realize the price of heroism. But it's a price we're willing to pay, day after day, to safeguard the communities. Sheena Ahmed's (2014) Theory of Human Fatigue can be linked to this theme. Workload and time are both linked to weariness, according to this study. Because they are firefighters, they are used to having severe workloads, especially since their employment requires them to respond to fire emergencies such as the one that occurred in Cabancalan, Mandaue City. Aside from their hefty responsibilities, they will have to deal with a slew of other issues that will leave them fatigued.

Theme No. 2: Manpower Scarcity: The Ongoing Struggle for Adequate Resources

- Within this theme, the enduring battle for adequate manpower resources is exposed. As shared by the informants, a pressing issue that plagues the firefighting personnel is the glaring lack of personnel, a deficiency that profoundly impacts their ability to execute their duties effectively. The voices of the informants resound in unison, emphasizing the critical need for more hands and hearts to ensure the proper and efficient functioning of their life-saving operations. This theme brings to light the stark reality of a

workforce stretched thin, shedding light on the urgency of addressing this fundamental concern to fortify the frontlines of emergency response. Informants shared that during the Cabancalan incident, it became painfully apparent how they could benefit from more hands on deck. The shortage of personnel hinders their ability to respond effectively and efficiently. They find ourselves stretched thin, working tirelessly to cover the gaps. It's an ongoing struggle that demands their attention, as they need adequate resources to ensure the safety of the communities and the effectiveness of the life-saving operations.

Theme No. 3: Persistent Health Threats: Firefighters' Enduring Battle for Well-being

- Amidst the unwavering commitment of firefighting personnel, the theme of 'Persistent Health Threats' emerges as an enduring concern. The informants shed light on the continuous challenges they face when it comes to their well-being, whether in the short-term or long-term. Their accounts underscore the profound difficulties encountered during the Cabancalan incident, especially when toxic paints were involved. This theme unravels the persistent health risks that are an integral part of their heroic role, emphasizing the need for protective measures, awareness, and support to safeguard the health of these valiant first responders. Informants stated, Throughout their service, whether in the Cabancalan incident or countless other emergencies, they grapple with health concerns that remain a looming presence. The incident involving toxic paints was a stark reminder of the persistent risks they confront. Their enduring fight for well-being often involves confronting invisible foes, like the toxins in the air they breathe, which can have lasting health implications. It's a testament to their commitment that, despite these ongoing health threats, they continue to serve the communities with unwavering dedication, always striving to minimize these risks while protecting those they serve.

Theme No. 4: The Boundaries of Human Endurance

- Within the tales of firefighting personnel's valor, the theme 'The Boundaries of Human Endurance' emerges as a poignant revelation. The narratives from informants paint a vivid picture of the sheer physical and mental limits they encountered during the Cabancalan incident. This theme highlights the profound challenges they faced, showing that even heroes have their bounds. It serves as a powerful testament to the extraordinary courage and tenacity exhibited by these first responders when confronting adversities that push the boundaries of human capability. Informants shared that it is during the most arduous and challenging moments, like the Cabancalan incident, that they confront the stark limits of what they, as firefighters, can endure. Physically, they push their selves beyond ordinary boundaries, their bodies straining as they work tirelessly to save lives and property. But the endurance required goes far beyond the physical; it's a mental and emotional test as well. The knowledge that lives depend on our unwavering resolve drives us to persevere, even when faced with seemingly insurmountable odds.

How do the informants address the challenges?

Theme No. 5: Training Fosters Continuous Growth - In the tapestry of emergency response, the theme 'Training Fosters Continuous Growth' shines brightly. The shared experiences of firefighting personnel illuminate the transformative power of training, emphasizing its pivotal role in their constant evolution.

Through their narratives, it becomes evident that rigorous and targeted training programs enable them to refine their skills, enhance their knowledge, and adapt to ever-evolving challenges. This theme celebrates the proactive commitment to learning, acknowledging that the pursuit of excellence is not static but an ongoing journey. It underscores the vital importance of investing in continuous training, which serves as the cornerstone for elevating the standards of emergency response and ensuring the safety of both the responders and the communities they serve. According to the informants, throughout their careers, they've come to understand that training is not merely a phase but a lifelong journey. It is through the rigor of training that they hone their skills, expand our knowledge, and adapt to evolving challenges. In their experiences, training serves as the compass guiding us towards excellence. Whether it's learning new techniques, mastering advanced equipment, or staying updated on safety protocols, training equips them to become more effective and responsive in their roles.

Theme No. 6 - The Art of Precision - Here, the informants' insights highlight the crucial role that techniques play in their demanding profession. A technique serves as the masterful method for executing specific tasks, elevating their ability to confront fires with dexterity and skill. Their accounts underscore that the mastery of tactics and proper techniques not only simplifies their arduous duties but also enhances efficiency. This theme unveils the refined craftsmanship and precision that underpin the firefighting profession, showcasing the significance of honing the right skills and methods for the safety and welfare of all. Informants shared, Their job isn't just about courage and strength; it's equally about finesse and expertise. The art of precision in our field is what sets us apart and makes our efforts more effective. It's about getting every move right, ensuring the safety of those we protect, and making every second count.

What are the aspirations of the informants?

Theme No. 7 - Nurturing Excellence Through Training - The shared experiences of firefighting personnel accentuate the transformative power of structured training programs, underscoring their pivotal role in the ongoing journey of enhancement. These narratives illuminate how rigorous training enables them to refine their skills, expand their knowledge, and adapt to ever-evolving challenges. This theme applauds the proactive commitment to learning, recognizing that the pursuit of excellence is not a static destination but an enduring voyage. It underscores the vital importance of investing in continuous training, which serves as the bedrock for elevating the standards of emergency response and ensuring the safety of both the responders and the communities they serve. Informants expressed that each training session is an opportunity to grow, to learn new techniques, and to master advanced equipment. It's about staying up-to-date with the latest safety protocols and techniques that will keep us, and those we protect, safe.

Theme No. 8 - Harnessing Progress through Technology - This shines as a beacon of empowerment, the insights of firefighting personnel underscore the profound impact of technological advancements on their capabilities. These narratives reveal how cutting-edge tools and innovations are pivotal in enhancing their effectiveness, safety, and adaptability in the face of adversity. This theme celebrates the

symbiotic relationship between technology and heroism, highlighting the instrumental role of modern advancements in the realm of emergency response. It signifies the continuous journey towards harnessing the power of technology to save lives and protect communities. According to the informants, in the face of ever-evolving challenges, they embrace technology as a force multiplier, allowing them to adapt and respond with precision.

Theme No. 9 - The Power of Unity - In the orchestration of emergency response, the theme 'The Power of Unity' takes center stage, reflecting the collective desire for optimal manpower. The informants' insights emphasize the vital importance of having the right number of individuals in a team, enabling streamlined tasks and focused efforts. Their narratives underline the profound impact of manpower on productivity, showcasing the direct correlation between team size and job efficiency. This theme underscores the essential role of a well-equipped and adequately staffed team in realizing ambitions swiftly and effectively, highlighting the urgency of having the right manpower to ensure the seamless execution of tasks and the safety of all involved. According to the informants, Inr line of work, they understand that success is not a solitary endeavor but a collective effort. It's about coming together as a team, each member contributing their unique strengths, skills, and commitment to a common goal: the safety and well-being of our communities.

DISCUSSION

This study is anchored on Two Factor Theory of Motivation by Frederick Herzberg (1959) and supported by the Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory of Human Motivation proposed by Abraham Maslow which state that "Human motivation is focused on people finding satisfaction and improvement through personal development and the Adams' Equity Theory by John Stacey Adams, who developed his job motivation theory in 1963.

The Unyielding Fatigue of Heroic Endeavors - The Unyielding Fatigue of Heroic Endeavors delves into the profound exhaustion experienced by firefighting personnel as they relentlessly battle formidable blazes, as exemplified by their recent efforts in the Cabancalan fire. This theme sheds light on the extraordinary resilience displayed by these individuals in the face of overwhelming physical and mental fatigue, emphasizing both their dedication and the inherent human limitations encountered when confronting such monumental challenges. Sheena Ahmed's (2014) Theory of Human Fatigue proves insightful in understanding the fatigue experienced by firefighters in the Cabancalan fire incident. According to Ahmed's theory, workload and time are closely linked to weariness. Firefighters, by the nature of their profession, contend with severe workloads, especially during emergencies such as the Cabancalan fire in Mandaue City. Responding to crises places immense pressure on these individuals, contributing to their fatigue. Firefighters not only face the physical demands of combating fires but also grapple with the emotional toll of witnessing the devastation caused by such incidents. The constant need to remain vigilant, make split-second decisions, and coordinate efforts with a team intensifies their workload. As Ahmed's theory suggests, the cumulative effect of these challenges significantly contributes to the unyielding fatigue experienced by firefighting personnel.

The time-sensitive nature of firefighting adds another layer to the exhaustion narrative. Fire emergencies demand immediate response, and firefighters often work extended hours without breaks. The Cabancalan fire, like many other emergencies, required sustained effort over an extended period. The unrelenting nature of their tasks, coupled with the urgency of their responsibilities, exacerbates the fatigue these heroes endure. While physical fatigue is undeniable, the narratives also highlight the mental resilience required in firefighting. The constant need to stay alert, make critical decisions, and adapt to evolving situations places immense strain on their cognitive capacities. The mental toll is an integral part of the unyielding fatigue experienced by these heroes, showcasing the multifaceted challenges they face in the line of duty.

Manpower Scarcity - Adam Ozimek's (2013) *Alternative Theory of the Skills Shortage* offers an insightful perspective that resonates with the theme at hand. His theory suggests that employers, in their pursuit of hiring skilled individuals, often encounter a formidable challenge. The difficulty doesn't solely stem from a lack of available personnel but rather from the stringent standards they have set for potential candidates. In essence, this theory echoes the struggle outlined in the theme of "Manpower Scarcity." It reveals that employers are grappling with a personnel shortage not because skilled individuals are entirely absent from the labor market, but because the criteria they've established for the positions are exceptionally high. These employers are diligently searching for individuals who possess the precise qualifications and abilities required for the job, a task that is far from straightforward. Ozimek's theory highlights the intricacies and complexities involved in finding the right personnel, aligning with the experiences of firefighting personnel who face similar challenges in their quest to have adequate resources. It underscores the importance of reevaluating and adapting recruitment standards to bridge the gap between the demand for skills and the supply of qualified candidates in various industries, including the heroic field of firefighting.

Persistent Health Threats: Firefighters' Enduring Battle for Well-being: This theme resonates strongly with Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, which provides a profound framework for understanding human motivation. Maslow's theory posits that human motivation is intricately tied to the pursuit of personal growth and satisfaction. At the pinnacle of this hierarchy are self-actualized individuals who find contentment and fulfillment in achieving their goals and aspirations. The Hierarchy of Needs theory comprises several fundamental layers. It starts with Physiological needs, including essentials like shelter, water, food, warmth, rest, and health. At this foundational level, a person's motivation is primarily rooted in the instinct to survive. Ensuring these basic needs are met is crucial to advancing to the next stage. The second layer, "safety," is where considerations for one's physical protection, stability, and security come into play. In the context of firefighters' experiences and the theme of 'Persistent Health Threats,' this stage becomes particularly relevant. Firefighters must navigate through potential hazards and toxic environments, making safety a paramount concern.

The Boundaries of Human Endurance: This theme can be linked to the study of two other characteristics in a healthy work environment: flexibility and sensitivity (Edwards, 2010). In order to address their basic demands, firefighters involve significant deal of flexibility. The schedule and mission of the

Fire Service can be grueling and stressful, putting strain on members and their families. The member suffers a considerable loss as a result of these circumstances, and they may become significantly less efficient as a result. A member with a healthy mix of flexibility may be able to avoid unsafe distractions and be more productive (Edwards, 2010). The concept of job weariness is contained under the construct of tedium, which has been characterized as "a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion generated by long-term involvement in demanding settings" in the study of Pines et al. (1981). Job burnout appears to be linked to emotional weariness in people working in a variety of fields, including human services, healthcare, social services, and education (Jackson et al. 1986).

Training Fosters Continuous Growth: This concept closely aligns with Edwards' (2010) exploration of flexibility and sensitivity as pivotal elements in fostering a positive work environment. The relevance of this to the issue of training becomes evident as it highlights the inherent requirement for flexibility in training programs. Flexibility in this context refers to the adaptability of training methods and content to suit the evolving needs of the workforce. The dynamic nature of emergency response and the ever-changing challenges faced by firefighters underscore the importance of maintaining adaptable and attentive training approaches. Training should not be rigid but should respond to the current demands and evolving circumstances. Just as firefighters must be adaptable and responsive during incidents, their training should mirror these qualities, allowing for a more effective preparation process. The concept of flexibility in training extends to acknowledging individual weaknesses and addressing them effectively. Training should be personalized, allowing each firefighter to focus on areas where they may be less proficient. By identifying and honing these weak points, firefighters can enhance their overall readiness to meet the basic demands of any emergency, regardless of the conditions they face.

The Art of Precision: This theme can be linked to Fredrick Herzberg's (1959) study on the two-factor theory of motivation. Factors affecting hygiene and motivational factors. The theme is tied to that notion; it is their method of motivating their employees to work hard. It's a tactic they use to encourage their employees to work harder at their jobs. Regardless of how difficult their job is, if their leader is willing to motivate them, they will become even more motivated. This is the most effective strategy for motivating employees not just at work but also in any situation. They can improve their work even more since they have confidence in themselves.

Nurturing Excellence Through Training: This can be linked to the book Gagne's *Nine Levels of Learning* Robert Gagne (1916–2002). The approach may be applied to any sort of learning, but this piece will focus on using it to train your team in a business setting. This also helps the firefighter in gaining and provides a step-by-step guide to assist managers, trainers, and facilitators in organizing their training so that their students or teams get the most out of their learning opportunities. Each level emphasizes a channel of discussion that is beneficial to the learning process. Learners are significantly more likely to be engaged and retain information or skills when each stage is performed in order. Firefighters remember how to plan their sessions so that their people have the best possible learning experience if they utilize this strategy before any form of training session or presentation.

Harnessing Progress through Technology: This theme celebrates the synergy between technology and our commitment to heroism, recognizing that our capacity to save lives and protect communities is significantly amplified through the thoughtful integration of modern advancements. It's a testament to our ongoing efforts to harness the power of technology in our mission to serve and safeguard. 'Technological determinism theory' was coined by the American economist and sociologist Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929). Advanced technologies may change and transform lives, and our firemen can really adapt to the modernization of technology today and be potentially beneficial in their field of work as a good material that can actually detect the presence of fire, which would assist them to be effective. The reductionist notion of technological determinism asserts that technology shapes society. According to this theory, technology advances inexorably down a track that can be followed and linked to societal advancement. The utilization of scientific information for practical goals is known as technology. As a result, technical determinism refers to a relationship between technology and society in which society is predetermined to be formed by how scientific knowledge is used in practical ways. Thorstein Veblen, who believed in a strong causal link between technology and every culture, is attributed with this hypothesis. He believed that technology determines a society's values and culture on its own.

The Power of Unity: The theme can be illuminated by its connection to "Classical Management Theory," a foundational management concept that underscores the importance of understanding employee motivation in the workplace. Classical management theory, originating from the early 20th century, is grounded in the belief that workers primarily have physical and economic needs. It's a theory that, in contrast to more contemporary management theories, doesn't account for social needs or job satisfaction as central motivators for employees. At the core of classical management theory are several key principles, including the specialization of labor, centralized leadership and decision-making, and the pursuit of profit maximization. These principles may seem quite different from the challenges faced by firefighters, but there is a common thread: the recognition that employees, or in the case of firefighting personnel, responders, can be motivated by various factors. One significant aspect of classical management theory is its emphasis on financial rewards as a primary motivator for employees. This notion suggests that employees will exert greater effort and become more productive when offered incentives based on their work. In the context of firefighting and the theme discussed, this translates into the need for recognizing and rewarding the dedication and commitment of responders. In many ways, this classical approach aligns with the theme of unity and the power of coming together as a team. Firefighters, like employees in other fields, are motivated by incentives that go beyond just financial compensation. They find motivation in the sense of belonging, camaraderie, and a shared mission. When they see their efforts acknowledged and rewarded, it not only boosts morale but also reinforces their commitment to achieving shared goals.

CONCLUSION

In the poignant exploration of "Heroes in the Flames: Unveiling the Valiant Experiences of BFP Personnel Responding to Fire Incidents," we have delved deep into the extraordinary world of firefighting. Through the lens of this

discussion, the bravery, dedication, and resilience of Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) personnel have been vividly illuminated. These valiant individuals, often unsung heroes, face daunting challenges ranging from physical exhaustion and persistent health threats to the relentless demands of their profession. This discourse not only honors their heroic efforts but also underscores the vital importance of understanding their experiences. The themes revealed – from the unyielding fatigue endured during firefighting missions to the transformative power of training and technological advancements – all point to a shared narrative of unwavering commitment and continuous improvement within the firefighting community. The discussion has highlighted the synergy between classical management theory and the firefighting ethos, emphasizing the significance of recognizing and rewarding the sacrifices made by these courageous responders. As we conclude, it becomes abundantly clear that the valiant experiences of BFP personnel are not just individual stories but a collective testament to human spirit, unity, and resilience. Their sacrifices in the face of perilous flames stand as a beacon of inspiration, reminding us of the extraordinary courage that resides within ordinary individuals, making them true heroes in every sense.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Implications for Practice: The insights gleaned from this discussion on the experiences of BFP (Bureau of Fire Protection) personnel responding to fire incidents hold several crucial implications for practice:

Enhanced Training Programs: Firefighting agencies should prioritize the continual improvement of their training programs. These programs should not only encompass traditional firefighting techniques but also place a strong emphasis on health and safety measures. By providing comprehensive and up-to-date training, agencies can ensure that their personnel are better equipped to handle evolving challenges.

Technology Integration: Firefighting departments should actively embrace and integrate modern technological advancements into their operations. This includes using state-of-the-art equipment, data analytics, and communication systems. Such technological integrations can substantially enhance the safety and efficiency of firefighting efforts.

Adaptation to Classical Management Principles: Firefighting agencies can adapt certain elements of classical management theory to improve the motivation and productivity of their personnel. Recognizing and rewarding exemplary service can enhance morale and foster a sense of belonging and motivation among responders.

Addressing Manpower Scarcity: Firefighting departments should actively work towards addressing the issue of manpower scarcity by recruiting and retaining qualified personnel. Adequate staffing ensures that firefighting personnel can efficiently respond to emergencies and prevent burnout. Incorporating these implications into the practice of firefighting can help ensure the well-being of BFP personnel and, by extension, enhance the safety of the communities they serve.

By prioritizing these areas, firefighting agencies can continue to uphold their noble mission of saving lives and protecting property.

Implication for Future Studies:

This discussion on the experiences of BFP (Bureau of Fire Protection) personnel responding to fire incidents reveals several key implications for future studies in this field:

- Future studies should delve deeper into the psychological well-being of firefighters. Examining the long-term emotional and mental effects of firefighting and potential interventions to support their mental health is a critical area of research.
- Research on strategies to address manpower scarcity in firefighting agencies is essential. Identifying innovative recruitment and retention methods, as well as analyzing the impact of staffing levels on response times and effectiveness, can provide valuable insights.
- Research into community engagement and support for firefighting agencies can provide insights into public perceptions and preferences. Understanding the expectations and needs of the community can inform resource allocation and strategic planning.

Future studies in these areas can contribute to the continuous improvement of firefighting practices, the well-being of personnel, and the safety of communities. By addressing these crucial aspects, researchers can help shape the future of firefighting and emergency response for the better.

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