
Lived Experiences of Community Clients on Holistic Care: Advancing Health Equity Through Comprehensive Healthcare Approaches

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the lived experiences of community clients receiving holistic care and how these experiences shape their perceptions of health equity within a community healthcare setting. Using a qualitative descriptive phenomenological design, the research focused on thirty (30) middle-aged adults aged 40 to 65 years residing in Barangay Roxas, Solano, Nueva Vizcaya. Participants were selected through purposive sampling and had received holistic care services within the past 6 to 12 months. Data were gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Colaizzi's seven-step phenomenological method, supported by NVivo software. Findings revealed that participants described holistic care as an approach that addressed their physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs, fostering a sense of support, comfort, and trust toward healthcare providers. Participants emphasized the importance of compassionate communication, cultural sensitivity, and inclusive service delivery in shaping positive healthcare experiences. Moreover, perceptions of fairness, dignity, and respect in care significantly influenced their sense of well-being and confidence in accessing community health services. The study highlights that holistic, person-centered care plays a crucial role in promoting health equity by ensuring that healthcare services are responsive, inclusive, and respectful of individual needs. These findings provide valuable insights for healthcare providers, community health programs, and policymakers in strengthening equitable and comprehensive healthcare delivery.

Keywords: Community clients, Health equity, Holistic care, Lived experiences, phenomenology

INTRODUCTION

Achieving health equity requires a comprehensive approach that addresses the physical, emotional, social, and cultural needs of individuals within their communities” (World Health Organization, 2021). Healthcare systems worldwide are emphasizing holistic, person-centered care to address not only patients' physical needs but also their emotional, social, and spiritual well-being. In the Philippine context, holistic community care remains uneven and underexplored, with limited qualitative evidence on clients' lived experiences, highlighting the need for context-specific research to understand how holistic care shapes perceptions of health equity and to support more inclusive and equitable healthcare practices.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This research study aimed to explore and describe the lived experiences of community clients in receiving holistic care and how these experiences shape their perceptions of health equity within their community healthcare setting.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of community clients in receiving holistic care, and how do these experiences shape their perceptions of health equity within their community healthcare setting?

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

This study explored and described the lived experiences of community clients who have received holistic care services and how these experiences shape their perceptions of health equity. The study includes 30 middle-aged community clients (ages 40–65) in Barangay Roxas, Solano, Nueva Vizcaya, who received holistic care services within the past 6–12 months, focusing on how these experiences shape their perceptions of health equity. Using a qualitative descriptive phenomenological design, data are gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews and analyzed using Colaizzi's seven-step method with NVivo support. While findings are context-specific and limited by self-reported data and potential biases, the study aims to provide meaningful insights to enhance holistic care practices, community health programs, and future research on health equity.

REVIEW RELATED LITERATURE

Holistic care is recognized as a comprehensive approach that addresses physical, emotional, social, and spiritual well-being, particularly important in community healthcare and in reducing health disparities. Existing literature highlights that clients' lived experiences significantly influence their perceptions of healthcare quality and equity, and that holistic care enhances patient satisfaction, trust, and engagement. Despite these contributions, significant gaps remain in understanding how holistic care is experienced and perceived by community clients, particularly regarding health equity, highlighting the need for in-depth qualitative research that centers clients' voices to support more inclusive, responsive, and equitable healthcare practices.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study is grounded in three complementary theories: Watson's Theory of Human Caring (1979), Tronto's Care Ethics (1993), and Sandel's Social Justice principles (2009), which together explain how holistic care experiences shape perceptions of health equity. These frameworks emphasize holistic well-being, relational and ethical care, and fairness in access and treatment, providing a multidimensional lens for examining clients' lived experiences of dignity, inclusion, and equity in community healthcare settings. Together, these frameworks provide a comprehensive lens through which the study explores how holistic care practices influence clients' lived experiences and shape their perceptions of dignity, inclusiveness, and equity in community healthcare settings, ensuring that findings are interpreted within a multidimensional perspective that integrates caring, ethics, and justice.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a qualitative descriptive phenomenological design to explore the lived experiences of 30 community clients aged 40–65 in Barangay Roxas, Solano, Nueva Vizcaya, who received holistic care within the past 6–12 months, and to examine how these experiences shaped their perceptions of health equity. Data were gathered through in-depth, semi-structured interviews, analyzed using Colaizzi's seven-step method with NVivo support, and validated through member checking, with ethical clearance and informed consent ensured throughout the research process.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study utilized a qualitative descriptive phenomenological research design. It focused on exploring and describing the lived experiences of community clients receiving holistic care and how these experiences shaped their perceptions of health equity. Through this approach, the essence of holistic care as experienced by participants in a community setting was carefully examined.

RESEARCH STEPS

The study followed Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step phenomenological method, which began with transcribing all interview data verbatim and repeatedly reading the transcripts to gain a full understanding of participants' experiences. Significant statements were then extracted, conceptualized, and organized into themes using NVivo software, with findings validated through member checking to ensure accuracy and credibility.

DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLE SELECTION

Data were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 30 purposively selected community clients aged 40–65 in Barangay Roxas, Solano, Nueva Vizcaya who had received holistic care within the past 6–12 months. Ethical clearance, permissions, and informed consent were secured, and interviews continued until data saturation was achieved.

DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

The data were analyzed using Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step phenomenological method, which involved verbatim transcription, repeated review of transcripts, identification of significant statements, and formulation of meanings, which were clustered into themes. NVivo software was used to organize and refine themes to accurately represent participants' lived experiences of holistic care and health equity.

RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS AND VALIDATION

The study assumed that participants could accurately recall and honestly describe their lived experiences of receiving holistic care. It also assumed that these experiences reflected their genuine perceptions of health equity within their community healthcare setting. Furthermore, the researcher assumed that the data gathered through interviews were sufficient to capture the essence of the phenomenon under investigation. To ensure validity, the interview

guide was expert-reviewed, pilot-tested with nonparticipants, and findings were verified through member checking.

STUDY LIMITATION AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The study was limited to thirty (30) middle-aged community clients aged 40 to 65 years old residing in Barangay Roxas, Solano, Nueva Vizcaya, who had received holistic care services within the past 6 to 12 months. It focused only on their lived experiences and perceptions of health equity, and findings were not intended for statistical generalization to other populations or settings. The study also relied on participants' self-reported data, which may have been influenced by recall bias or personal interpretation. Despite these limits, it aimed to provide in-depth insights into holistic community care, while strictly observing ethical standards, including ethical clearance, informed consent, confidentiality, and participants' right to withdraw.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings revealed that community clients experienced holistic care that was comprehensive, personalized, and respectful, in which healthcare providers addressed not only physical conditions but also emotional, social, and spiritual needs. Participants described their overall experiences as positive and emphasized being treated as whole persons rather than just clients, which strengthened their trust and comfort in the healthcare system. In terms of well-being, clients reported improvements in physical health through regular monitoring and health education, emotional relief through empathetic communication and counseling, and enhanced social and spiritual well-being through family involvement and respect for personal beliefs. Regarding responsiveness and inclusiveness, participants perceived healthcare services as attentive, accessible, and accommodating, with providers responding promptly to their needs and ensuring equitable access to care. Furthermore, clients consistently expressed that care was delivered with fairness, dignity, and respect, which made them feel valued and included in the healthcare process. These experiences collectively shaped their perception of health equity by fostering a stronger sense of fairness, increasing trust in healthcare services, and enhancing their awareness of their rights and access to quality care within their community.

SUMMARY

The study explored the lived experiences of 30 community clients receiving holistic care in Barangay Roxas, Solano, Nueva Vizcaya, and how these experiences shaped their perceptions of health equity. Findings revealed that participants experienced holistic care as comprehensive, personalized, and respectful, addressing their physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs. They reported improvements in overall well-being, stronger trust in healthcare providers, and positive perceptions of fairness, dignity, and responsiveness in care delivery. These experiences collectively influenced their understanding of health equity, leading to increased awareness, empowerment, and confidence in accessing healthcare services within their community.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that holistic care plays a significant role in improving client well-being and strengthening perceptions of health equity. When healthcare services are delivered

in a respectful, inclusive, and person-centered manner, clients experience greater satisfaction, trust, and engagement. Holistic care was found to enhance not only physical health but also emotional, social, and spiritual well-being. Overall, the findings confirmed that holistic and equitable care are essential in promoting positive healthcare experiences in community settings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that healthcare providers continue to strengthen the delivery of holistic, patient-centered care by addressing clients' physical, emotional, social, and spiritual needs. Community health programs should further promote fairness, inclusiveness, and responsiveness in service delivery to ensure equitable access to care. Continuous training for healthcare workers on communication, empathy, and cultural sensitivity is also encouraged. Lastly, future researchers are advised to explore holistic care in different communities and settings to further enrich understanding of health equity and client experiences.

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AI DECLARATION STATEMENT

AI-supported tools helped with grammar and structure in creating this article. No AI tools were used to collect, analyze, or interpret data; all authors are credited for their academic contributions.

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