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Narrating the experiences of *Balo*: Pathways toward diversity, equity and inclusion

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Abstract

This study presents the lived experiences of *Balo*, the vernacular for widowed persons, how they navigate widowhood. This research utilized a qualitative-phenomenological-narrative approach to deeply understand *Balo*'s experiences, focusing on their struggles in raising their families alone and on the ways they cope with the challenges posed by the loss of their partners. The study highlights the imperatives of diversity, equity, and inclusion by emphasizing that *Balo* deserve fair treatment, equal opportunities, and adequate support and protection. Through their narratives, the study underscores the need for more responsive government programs, including accessible financial assistance, sustainable livelihood opportunities, psychosocial support, and inclusive community initiatives that recognize their dignity and resilience. *Balo* diversely face difficulties related to food security, health, housing, livelihood, and financial stability. Despite these hardships, their stories reflect remarkable strength. Rather than being consumed by grief, they demonstrate courage, resilience, and determination to move forward for their families. These experiences have shaped them into stronger, wiser, and more empowered individuals. Their journeys inspire a deeper understanding of inclusion one that not only acknowledges their struggles but also celebrates their resilience and humanity. This study calls for collective responsibility from the government, communities, and institutions for inclusive society where *Balo* are not only supported but also valued, heard, and empowered to rebuild their lives with dignity and hope. Insights drawn from the study recommends the adoption of Basic Access to Livelihood Opportunities (BALO) Program, a pathway for *Balo* to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Keywords: *Balo*; Experiences; Diversity; Equity and Inclusion

1. Introduction

Widowhood is a major life transition that brings emotional, social, and economic challenges affecting family roles, financial stability, and social participation. In this study, widowed individuals are referred to in the vernacular as *Balo*, individuals who have lost a spouse due to death. In the Philippine context, many widowed individuals, particularly women, older adults, and those in rural communities, experience difficulties related to food security, healthcare, housing, livelihood opportunities, and financial resources. The loss of a spouse often compels them to assume multiple responsibilities such as caregiving, household management, and financial provision, which may result in physical, emotional, and economic strain. Although government agencies and community organizations provide social protection, livelihood assistance, and psychosocial support, access to these services remains uneven, leaving many widowed individuals socially and economically marginalized.

Widowed individuals are also commonly categorized as solo or single parents who must independently manage household responsibilities and provide for their families. Studies have shown that single-parent households frequently encounter financial hardship, limited social support, and challenges in balancing caregiving and livelihood responsibilities. These realities closely reflect the experiences of *Balo*, whose transition to widowhood often intensifies concerns related to food, healthcare, housing, children's education, livelihood, and financial stability. Data from the

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Philippine Statistics Authority (2020) revealed that women comprise the majority of widowed individuals in the country, highlighting their heightened social and economic vulnerability and the need for inclusive and equitable interventions.

This study entitled, *“Narrating the Experiences of Balo: Pathways Towards Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion,”* aimed to explore the lived experiences, challenges, and coping strategies of *Balo* in Barangay Tabuc Sur, Panit-an, Capiz, particularly in relation to food, health, housing, livelihood, and financial concerns. Specifically, the study sought to identify the challenges experienced by *Balo*, examine the coping mechanisms they employ, and draw insights toward diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

The study was primarily anchored on the Capability Approach of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum [13], which emphasizes individuals’ real freedoms and opportunities to achieve a life with dignity and well-being. It was further supported by Kimberlé Crenshaw’s Intersectionality Theory and the Basic Needs Approach, which collectively explain how overlapping social conditions and access to essential resources shape the experiences, inclusion, and welfare of widowed individuals. Through documenting their narratives, the study intends to contribute insights that may guide responsive policies and programs promoting diversity, equity, inclusion, and improved quality of life among *Balo*.

2. Literature review

The foundations of this research are anchored on the Capability Approach developed by Amartya Sen and expanded by Martha Nussbaum, which emphasizes that human well-being should be measured not only through income or material resources but through individuals’ capabilities and freedoms to achieve a dignified life. In the context of widowhood, this framework highlights the importance of access to food, healthcare, housing, livelihood, and financial security as essential conditions for social participation and well-being. Supporting this perspective, widowhood is recognized as a transformative life event that brings significant emotional, social, and economic changes, requiring widowed individuals to adapt to new responsibilities while coping with grief and social pressures [11].

This study is further supported by Kimberlé Crenshaw’s Intersectionality Theory [14], which explains how overlapping social identities such as gender, age, socio-economic status, educational attainment, and geographic location shape widows’ experiences of marginalization and access to resources. Studies reveal that widows, particularly those in rural and low-income communities, often face financial insecurity, limited livelihood opportunities, inadequate healthcare access, and housing instability [6,14]. Economic vulnerability is intensified by limited access to inheritance rights, credit facilities, and formal employment opportunities, while traditional gender roles further constrain their financial independence [11,16]. Research also indicates that widows are at higher risk of depression, anxiety, and social isolation due to both spousal loss and reduced psychosocial support systems [17,18]

The study also draws from the Basic Needs Approach introduced by the International Labor Organization [19], which emphasizes that adequate food, shelter, healthcare, and income security are necessary before individuals can fully participate in society. Existing literature shows that widows frequently experience food insecurity, unstable housing, and limited access to health and social protection services, particularly in disadvantaged communities [12]. Despite these challenges, widowed individuals demonstrate resilience through coping strategies such as engaging in livelihood activities, relying on family and community support, participating in faith-based activities, and seeking emotional support through social networks [9,20]. Studies further emphasize that vocational training, financial literacy, and community-based support programs contribute to widows’ empowerment and social inclusion [21].

The reviewed literature highlights that widowhood is not only a personal experience of loss but also a condition shaped by structural inequalities affecting diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The Capability Approach, Intersectionality Theory, and the Basic Needs Approach collectively provide the theoretical foundation for understanding the lived experiences of *Balo* and examining how access to resources, social support, and inclusive policies influence their well-being, resilience, and participation in society.

3. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative narrative research design grounded in the transformative worldview, which emphasizes social justice, equity, inclusion, and the empowerment of marginalized groups. The qualitative approach was appropriate for exploring the lived experiences of widowed individuals or *Balo*, particularly in relation to food security, healthcare access, housing stability, livelihood opportunities, and financial sustainability. Guided by the principles of narrative inquiry, the study sought to understand how participants interpreted and gave meaning to their

experiences of widowhood within their social and economic contexts. As emphasized by D. Jean Clandinin and Connelly (2000), narrative research enables participants to share personal stories that reveal how individuals perceive and make sense of life experiences over time.

The study focused on *Balo* residing in Barangay Tabuc Sur, Panit-an, Capiz. This locale was selected to examine widowhood within a specific rural socio-economic setting where access to resources and support systems may be limited. Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure representation across different ages, educational backgrounds, and years of widowhood. The study involved nine widowed individuals aged 50 to 82 years old. The participants also varied in terms of family size, years of widowhood, household composition, social benefits received, and estimated monthly income, allowing the study to capture diverse experiences and socio-economic conditions among *Balo*.

Data were gathered through one-on-one, in-depth interviews that allowed participants to openly narrate their experiences, struggles, and coping mechanisms. Data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns, meanings, and themes emerging from the narratives. This method enabled a deeper understanding of how *Balo* navigate widowhood and adapt to their changing circumstances. Through this process, the study aimed to amplify the voices of widowed individuals and generate insights that may contribute to responsive policies and programs supporting their well-being and social inclusion.

Table 1 Profile of the Balo Participants

Participant	Age	Sex	Highest Educational Attainment	Number of Years as Widow	Number of Children	Number of Household Members	Occupation	Estimated Monthly Income (in Pesos)	Social Benefits Received
P ₁	60	F	Elementary Level	6	3	4	Unemployed	3,000 – 5,000	4Ps Ayuda Cash Aid
P ₂	54	F	Elementary Level	4	7	5	Unemployed	3,000 – 5,000	Cash Aid Ayuda Social safety
P ₃	59	F	Elementary Level	5	3	3	Laundry worker	3,000 – 5,000	Cash Aid Ayuda Social Safety
P ₄	60	M	High School Level	4	2	3	Farmer/ Construction Worker	3,000 – 5,000	Cash Aid Ayuda Social Safety
P ₅	79	F	Elementary Level	6	9	3	Unemployed	5,000 – 10,000	4Ps Ayuda Cash Aid
P ₆	82	F	Elementary Level	7	6	4	Unemployed	3,000 – 5,000	Cash Aid Ayuda Social Safety
P ₇	80	F	High School Level	14	3	3	Unemployed	3,000 – 5,000	Cash Aid Ayuda Social Safety
P ₈	64	F	College Graduate	4	6	1	Business Owner (Ready-to-Wear Merchandise)	3,000 – 5,000	Cash Aid Ayuda Social Safety

P ₉	50	F	College Graduate	9	2	3	Barangay Secretary	Above 10,000	Cash Aid Ayuda Social Safety
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Legend: P₁- P₉, Participants of the study; Source: Data from survey by researchers

3.1. Research Instruments

This study utilized one-on-one semi-structured interviews to gather in-depth information regarding the lived experiences, challenges, and coping strategies of *Balo*. The semi-structured format allowed consistency in questioning while providing flexibility to explore participants' individual experiences and emerging themes. A researcher-developed interview guide was validated by experts to ensure clarity and relevance of the questions.

Interviews were conducted in private and comfortable settings to encourage open and honest responses. With participants' consent, interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to ensure accuracy and reliability of the data. Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout the study. Participants provided informed consent and were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality, privacy, and data security were maintained to protect the participants' dignity and uphold the integrity of the research process.

3.2. Data Analysis Procedure

This study employed a phenomenological-narrative approach to analyze the lived experiences of *Balo*, focusing on how widowed individuals described and interpreted their experiences. The approach combined phenomenology, which explores the essence of lived experiences, and narrative inquiry, which examines how individuals construct meaning through personal stories. Interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and repeatedly reviewed to ensure familiarity with the data. Significant statements were identified, coded, and grouped into themes reflecting common and unique experiences of widowhood, including financial hardship, emotional struggles, coping strategies, resilience, and support systems.

The analysis was guided by existing phenomenological studies which emphasized that widowhood is a transformative experience shaped by emotional distress, social exclusion, resilience, and access to psychosocial support [7,23,24]. Attention was also given to how participants narrated their life stories, particularly their experiences of loss, adaptation, and recovery over time. This narrative component allowed the study to understand not only the participants' challenges but also the meanings they attached to their experiences and coping mechanisms.

Through reflexive thematic analysis, the study identified patterns related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), revealing that while *Balo* experience varied personal circumstances, many face unequal access to government programs, livelihood opportunities, and social support systems. Findings also highlighted the important roles of family support, faith, and community relationships in fostering resilience and adaptation. Overall, the phenomenological-narrative approach provided a holistic understanding of widowhood as both a personal and socially shaped experience, offering insights that may guide culturally responsive and evidence-based programs for widowed individuals in the community.

4. Results and discussion

Challenges experienced by *Balo* related to Food, Health, Housing, Livelihood, and Financial Aspects. The findings revealed that *Balo* participants experienced significant challenges related to food security, healthcare, housing, livelihood, and financial stability. Many participants relied on unstable and informal sources of income, such as laundry work and construction labor, which were often insufficient to sustain their daily needs. Limited financial resources made it difficult for several participants to consistently afford nutritious food, medications, and housing repairs. These findings support the study of Fadlon et al. (2019), which explained that widowhood often results in financial instability and increased vulnerability to deprivation of basic needs due to the loss of household income.

Participant 3 a 59 year-old female shared that their monthly budget was no longer enough to sustain the daily needs of the household, especially with the increasing cost of commodities and the educational needs of grandchildren.

Participant 3 said: *"Even though my children are there to support me, I still choose to work washing even just a few buckets because every small effort helps put food on the table and reminds me that I can still stand on my own."*

As a coping mechanism, the family relied heavily on vegetables grown in their backyard and continued accepting laundry work despite support from children. The participant expressed gratitude for still being physically capable of caring for the family despite financial difficulties.

Similarly, Participant 4 said: *“We are not able to eat three times a day because we do not have enough money to buy what we need. Aside from the challenges related to food, our house also needs repairs since we are in a flood-prone area. It causes us fear that our house may not withstand a strong typhoon.”*

Participant 4, a 64 year-old rice farmer and construction worker, described struggles related not only to food insecurity but also to housing instability, as their house is located in a flood-prone area and could no longer be fully repaired due to the high cost of materials. The participant also expressed fear and anxiety over the possibility of stronger typhoons damaging their home. Participant 4 diversified responses and navigations relative to his widowhood.

In the views of Participant 7, said, *“It hurts to grow old without your partner, and it continue to hurt.”* In the point of view of Participant 8, it was conveyed, *“I already carried our life on my own. When my husband passed away, I became even more motivated to strive to give them a better future.”* Similarly, but in a more hopeful expression, Participant 9 said, *“Totally, I accepted; no drama at all because I know everything happens for a reason.”*

The study further revealed that although many participants experienced financial hardship, strong family support systems helped lessen the severity of their struggles. Assistance from children, relatives, and siblings often provided food, shelter, and financial aid, enabling some participants to focus more on health and emotional concerns rather than financial survival. These findings are consistent with DiGiacomo et al. (2009), who emphasized that family support significantly reduces the financial burden commonly experienced by widowed individuals.

Participant 5 expressed: *“I am already old, which is why my grandchildren help prepare my food, while my children continue to support me financially and ensure that my daily needs are met; especially now that I can no longer fully take care of myself.”*

Health-related concerns also emerged as a major issue among elderly *Balo* participants. Several participants experienced age-related illnesses, mobility limitations, and difficulty accessing healthcare services and medical equipment. Participant 1, a 60-year-old female, shared that she has high blood pressure and that every time she tries to do household chores, she feels dizzy and sometimes nearly collapses.

Participant 1 said: *“I ask for medication assistance from the Rural Health Unit (RHU), and they gave me Losartan, as it is effective for people with high blood pressure. I am glad that I am still surviving every day. I hope I can see a doctor as often as possible so I will not worry about my health, especially now that it is summer.”*

The findings highlight the need for accessible healthcare, livelihood opportunities, housing assistance, and social protection programs tailored to the needs of widowed individuals. Overall, the experiences of the participants demonstrated resilience, perseverance, and strong commitment to sustaining their families despite the emotional, social, and economic challenges brought by widowhood.

Table 2 Challenges Experienced by Balo Related to Food, Health, Housing, Livelihood, and Financial Aspects

Major Theme	Emerging Theme	Narrative (s)	Frequency
Challenges			
Food	Food Insecurity	P ₁ “...budget not enough for half day food) P ₃ “... eat what is from the garden; do not eat meat” P ₄ “... not able to eat three times a day P ₇ “... able to eat twice in a day”	6 (P ₁ , P ₃ , P ₄ , P ₅ , P ₆ , P ₇)
Health	Lack / insufficient Medical support	P ₁ “... got only a blister pack of Losartan from Health Center.”	5 (P ₃ , P ₄ , P ₅ , P ₆ , & P ₇)

		P ₆ "...relying to pension but not enough"	
Housing	"One Roof for all"	P ₅ "... live with my children and grandchildren in one roof/house"	8 (except P ₇)
	Decrepit House	P ₄ "... fear that our house may not withstand a strong typhoon; no budget for repairs."	1 (P ₄ only)
Livelihood	Unstable	P ₃ "... on-call laundry work" P ₄ "... seasonal construction worker"	4 (P ₃ , P ₄ , P ₅ , & P ₆)
	Lack of Opportunity and Access	P ₁ "... age limit"	5 (P ₁ , P ₂ , P ₅ , P ₆ , & P ₇)
	Physical Inability to work	P ₁ "...over cleaning made me sick" ... I have high blood" P ₁ , P ₅ , P ₃ , P ₇ "...problem with eyesight" P ₅ "... experience joint and back pains" P ₆ "...suffering with tuberculosis"	4 (P ₁ , P ₅ , P ₆ , & P ₇)
Financial Aspects	Financial Unstable	P ₁ "...unemployed" P ₃ "...limited budget"	5 (P ₁ , P ₂ , P ₅ , P ₆ , & P ₇)
	Financial Dependence/ Stability	P ₁ "...children support" P ₇ "... receive social pension" P ₉ "...stable job" P ₈ , P ₉ "...enough salary" P ₈ "own and manage small business"	9 (P ₁ , P ₂ , P ₃ , P ₄ , P ₅ , P ₆ , P ₇ , P ₈ , & P ₉)

Legend: P₁-P₉, Participants of the study; Source: Data from the narratives of the participants

Coping Strategies of *Balo* to Adapt to the Challenges. Widowhood is considered one of the most stressful life experiences and is often associated with emotional distress, depression, and declining well-being [24]. Despite these challenges, the *Balo* participants demonstrated resilience through various coping strategies centered on livelihood, family support, and self-reliance. Many participants expressed the need for long-term programs related to healthcare, housing, and livelihood rather than temporary financial assistance alone.

Participants 3, 8, and 9 remained active in income-generating activities such as laundry work, vending, and community service to sustain their needs and contribute to their families. Their continued engagement in work provided them with dignity, independence, and a sense of purpose, as they preferred not to depend entirely on their children for support. These findings support Karki who emphasized that widowed women engage in livelihood activities not only for survival but also to maintain self-worth and autonomy. Participant 3 shared that despite receiving support from her children, she continued accepting laundry work because every small effort helped provide food and reminded her that she could still stand on her own [8].

The narratives of the *Balo* participants revealed that they cope with widowhood through acceptance, emotional resilience, adaptation, and survival. Although they continue to experience grief and sadness, many gradually come to terms with their loss by finding strength in themselves, their families, and their life circumstances. Their children and grandchildren serve as important sources of motivation, emotional support, and purpose, helping them continue with daily life despite the absence of their spouses. Several participants also viewed widowhood as a life lesson, believing that everything happens for a reason. The *Balo* participants demonstrated diverse ways of navigating widowhood through emotional processing, practical adjustments, and reliance on family and community support systems. These coping strategies enabled them to transform loss into motivation and continue living with acceptance, resilience, and renewed purpose over time.

Table 3 Coping Strategies of Balo in Adapting to their Challenges in Food, Health, Housing, Livelihood, and Financial Aspects

Major Theme	Emerging Theme			Narrative (s)	Frequency (Participant)
Challenges	Strategies	Problem Focus	Emotional Focus		
Food Food Insecurity	Strict budget for food Reduced frequency of meal Food self-sufficiency	Hope for Government community assistance	Managing a small Business Looking for a seasonal work/job	P3 "... eat what is from the garden" "... do not eat meat" "...to eat only twice in a day"	5 (P3, P4, P5, P6, & P7)
Health Lack / insufficient Medical support	Self-care practices Home Remedies Homegrown Food	Acceptance of hardship Hopeful Resilience Emotional endurance	Ignoring symptoms Delaying medical consultation Relying on non-medical remedies	P7 "...I just use eye drops that pharmacy offer to me" P3 "...when my hands are shaking, I just massage it with efficassent oil"	5 (P3, P4, P5, P6, & P7)
Housing "One Roof for all" Decrepit House	Extended Family Arrangement House Maintenance And Risk Reduction	Acceptance of current living situations.	Extended family living arrangement Housing Risk Tolerance and Passive Endurance	P5 "... live with my children and grandchildren" P4 "... fear that our house may not withstand a strong typhoon."	8 (except P7) 1 (P4 only)
Livelihood Unstable Income Lack of Opportunity and Access Physical Inability to work	Survival Live-by-the day Strengthen weak structures Saving	Optimism for Better Life Hope for social benefits Hope for livelihood opportunities	Hard work Accept seasonal work Acceptance of circumstances Rely on social benefits	P7 "...relying to the support from my children" P1 "...too much household cleaning and chores result in dizziness." P6 "...swallow pride to get support"	5 (P1, P2, P5, P6, & P7)
Financial Aspects Financial Unstable	Prioritize Needs Income Generation Strategies	Reliance on Support Systems	Passive Adjustment to Poverty	P3 "... earning 350 pesos for 1 to 5 buckets of laundry is not enough."	6 (except P2, P5, P6, & P9)

Financial Dependence/Stability	Dependence on social benefits		Spend for needs No budget for wants or unnecessary spending	P8 "...my children manage all expenses" P9 "...sisters got me all the time." "...work hard"	
		Hope for Stability	"Hardship" a way of life		6 P1, P3, P4, P5, P6, & P7
		Positive Mindset	Faith-base	P3 "for the future of the children"	2 (P1, P9)

Legend: P1-P9, Participants of the study; Source: Data from narratives of the participants

Insights towards Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Drawn from the Study. The experiences of the *Balo* participants provide important insights into diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), particularly in relation to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1 (No Poverty), 5 (Gender Equality), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and 10 (Reduced Inequalities). Their narratives highlighted resilience, dignity, and independence despite the emotional, social, and economic challenges brought by widowhood. The participants represented a diverse sector whose lived experiences emphasized the importance of social inclusion and equal opportunities regardless of life circumstances.

In terms of equity, many participants relied heavily on family and community support for food, healthcare, and financial needs, reflecting unequal access to resources and livelihood opportunities. These findings underscore the need to strengthen social protection systems, healthcare access, and sustainable livelihood programs to improve the quality of life of widowed individuals. Inclusion was reflected through the support received from families and communities; however, some participants still experienced social vulnerability and exclusion, particularly women who remained economically disadvantaged after losing their spouses.

The findings suggest that while *Balo* participants demonstrated resilience and social integration, there remains a need for more inclusive and equitable programs that reduce poverty, expand livelihood opportunities, and strengthen community support systems. In response, the study proposed a *Balo*-responsive pathway toward DEI through the Basic

Access to Livelihood (BALO) Program grounded in Ramos' (2020) Bibingka Theory or "sandwich strategy," which emphasizes collaborative support from government, communities, and institutions to provide continuous and inclusive assistance for vulnerable sectors such as widowed individuals [25].

5. Conclusions

The study concludes that *Balo* participants in Barangay Tabuc Sur experience interconnected challenges related to food security, healthcare, housing, livelihood, and financial stability following the loss of a spouse. Financial instability emerged as the most pressing issue, as many rely on irregular or informal income that is insufficient to meet daily needs, often forcing them to prioritize food over healthcare, housing, and other essential expenses. Alongside economic hardship, participants also experience emotional struggles such as loneliness, grief, and stress, yet they continue to demonstrate resilience and responsibility toward their families.

The findings further reveal that *Balo* participants cope through livelihood activities, acceptance of their circumstances, spirituality, and reliance on family and community support systems. Their experiences show that widowhood is not a uniform condition but varies depending on age, livelihood, number of dependents, and access to social support. Despite ongoing vulnerabilities, participants continue to strive for survival and stability, reflecting determination and strength.

The study emphasizes that widowhood is both a personal and social issue requiring inclusive and responsive interventions. Comprehensive support systems such as livelihood programs, healthcare access, housing assistance, counseling, psychosocial services, and community-based support are essential in promoting the dignity, well-being, social inclusion, and long-term resilience of widowed individuals.

Recommendations

The study recommends that Balo individuals pursue economic self-sufficiency through livelihood opportunities, vocational training, entrepreneurship, and government or community assistance programs. Proper budgeting, accessible healthcare services, free medical check-ups, and emotional support systems are also essential in helping them manage daily challenges and improve their well-being. Family members, especially children, are encouraged to provide emotional support, companionship, and care to reduce feelings of loneliness and strengthen family relationships.

The study further recommends that Local Government Units (LGUs), government agencies, mental health professionals, schools, and social welfare institutions strengthen programs for widowed individuals through financial assistance, livelihood training, employment opportunities, counseling services, scholarships, psychosocial support, and healthcare access. Policymakers are encouraged to establish laws and policies, such as the proposed "Widowed Persons Assistance Act," to institutionalize social protection programs, healthcare, housing support, and livelihood assistance for Balo individuals.

In addition, barangay health workers, Rural Health Units (RHUs), the Department of Health (DOH), and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) are encouraged to provide regular health monitoring, counseling, home visits, and community-based support programs. Future researchers are also encouraged to conduct further studies on widowhood, intervention effectiveness, and the experiences of widowed families to strengthen evidence-based programs and policies.

Finally, the study recommends the adoption of the "Basic Access to Livelihood and Opportunities" (BALO) Program grounded in the Bibingka Theory of shared responsibility. The program emphasizes coordinated support from government institutions, communities, and families to provide livelihood opportunities, healthcare access, social inclusion, financial assistance, and empowerment for Balo individuals. Through this integrated approach, the program promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion by helping widowed individuals achieve dignity, resilience, and sustainable well-being.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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