

Resilience in the Face of Poverty and Depression: Beekeeping as a Form of Resilience and a Rhetorical Act that Accomplishes Personal Growth and Community Development

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Resilience is a practice that is shaped not only interpersonally (e.g., communication among members of families and communities) but also intrapersonally (e.g., communicating with one's inner self). It consists of the ability to fight poverty and overcome psychological dilemmas such as depression. It is a fundamental need that permeates practically all human experiences, activities and conditions.

This study is framed within two theoretical models, the Motivation-Opportunity-Ability model (Olander & Thogersen, 1995) and the Rhetorical Tradition of Communication Theory (Craig, 1999). The MOA model posits that success can be achieved in dire times through the predictive power of motivation, opportunities and abilities. On the other hand, the Rhetorical Tradition of Communication Theory (Craig, 1999) theorises communication as the practical art of discourse and problems of communication as social exigencies requiring collective deliberation and judgment. Framed within these two theories, this study aims to explain beekeeping through the lens of a beekeeper and farmer in Leyte named "Mr. Bee". I conducted in-depth conversational interviews (Anderson, 2014) as my research methodology for Mr. Bee to share his story more freely. Informal and less strict as they are, I conducted these interviews both face-to-face and through Messenger calls and chats. I also utilised Mr. Bee's Facebook posts as additional narrative data.

In my thematic analysis of narrative data, I found that beekeeping is both a form of resilience and a rhetorical act that accomplishes personal growth and community development. As a form of resilience, (1) beekeeping provides Mr. Bee the platform to find purpose and meaning in life, especially after experiencing depression caused by his mother's sickness and death, (2) it enables him to pursue his passion for beekeeping and escape the poverty trap, and (3) it offers him the opportunity to contribute to socio-economic and socio-ecological development, particularly in his hometown in Leyte, Philippines, as he helps provide the local people with opportunities for self-development and employment. As a rhetorical performance, beekeeping consists of the following rhetorical acts: (1) showing or modelling, (2) appealing, and (3) mindset-changing. The outcome of showing or modelling is that the people in the community learn the basic concepts of beekeeping as a natural way of producing abundant agricultural harvest due to pollination made possible by bees. The outcome of appealing is that the people in the community become reflective of their daily activities that harm the environment. The outcome of mindset-changing is that the people in the community will have the agency to take action in terms of protecting and preserving the environment for a better life and a brighter future for their community. As a rhetorical performance, beekeeping is recognised and appreciated more fully with the help of social media and word-of-mouth.