

Exploring "Amare et Servire": A Focused Ethnography in a North Sulawesi Hospital

James Richard Maramis¹, Abigail Asfas Tandilangi²

^{1,2}Universitas Klabat
^{1,2}Saint Louis University
jmaramis@unklab.ac.id

Abstract-Faith and cultural values can influence how nurses provide care. However, there is no ethnographic study available on how the Amare et Servire principle is practiced in nursing in Minahasa. This study aims to explore how nurses apply Amare et Servire in their daily work. It will also look at the cultural, religious, and organizational factors that affect this practice in a Catholic tradition private hospital in North Minahasa, Indonesia. The research design will be a focused ethnography with clinical nurses selected purposively (various units/service periods) until data saturation is achieved. Data collection will be conducted through semi-structured interviews, participant observation in service units, FGDs with nurses/patients/families, and institutional document analysis. Data will then be analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis and the assistance of the NVivo application. Validity is maintained through triangulation of sources and methods as well as selected member checking. Ethics approval will be requested from the relevant committee. This study is expected to produce a theme map and a conceptual model of Amare et Servire-based practice that can be translated into training recommendations and organizational policies to improve nurse job satisfaction, resilience, and retention. Through cross-disciplinary collaboration (nursing, hospital management, spiritual care, and traditional leaders), the findings have the potential to provide collaborative innovations that are relevant to transcultural services and can be adapted in similar contexts.

Keywords: Amare et Servire; focused ethnography; transcultural nursing; Minahasa; faith-informed care; nurse retention.

I. INTRODUCTION

Integrating ethics and cultural beliefs into healthcare is one of the things that shapes nursing practice. This is especially clear in healthcare settings where people's views are important, as religious beliefs often guide the way services are provided. The phrase "Amare et Servire", which means To Love and To Serve, which comes from religious and cultural practices, means a lot. This idea has been linked by researchers such as Ganss (1996) and Vina (2024) to beliefs that stress love and service as important parts of faith and social duties. These basic ideas have

helped nursing grow into a career whose goal is to help others without expecting anything in return (Dossey & Keegan, 2016).

'Amare et Servire' is still very important in current nursing, where love and service are treated as distinct but overlapping moral relational constructs in nursing theory and practice. Love is described as a nurse's commitment to want the good of the other before self, expressed as responsibility, attention, benevolence and risk taking in the therapeutic relationship, while service/care refers to enacted caring behaviours and system level improvements that make that commitment concrete in practice (Adib-Hajbaghery & BolandianBafghi, 2020; Fitzgerald & Van Hooft, 2000; Pereira & Botelho, 2020). Looking into how "Amare et Servire" concept is used in nursing tasks could help to figure out how to provide better service and care to the patients.

People in Indonesia are known for having a lot of different religions and cultures. Religion, culture, and medical care all affect each other in different ways. Some of the most interesting places to look at this intersection are in North Sulawesi, especially in Minahasa Utara. People in North Sulawesi are mostly Christians, not Muslims like people in the rest of Indonesia ((*North Sulawesi - Simple English Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia*, n.d.; Weichart, 2010)). The most popular religion in North Sulawesi is Protestantism; however, because nurses come from different parts of provinces and backgrounds, it is interesting to see how ideas like "Amare et Servire" are understood and used in the field.

The Minahasan culture has traditionally followed Christian beliefs. The culture is known for being open to outside influences while still holding on to its core identity. One of the main concepts that is held by the Minahasan is "Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou," which means "a man lives to make other men humans," and its application is similar to the "Amare et Servire" (Anthropology.id, 2013; Supit & Pangalila-Ratulangi, 2022) theme of service. This societal synergy makes it possible for nurses to show compassion in their work in a truly unique way.

Given that the majority of research on faith-based healthcare has been conducted in Western environments, there is a significant gap in our comprehension of the interpretation and application of this concept in Asian contexts. The purpose of this study was to address this deficiency by examining the lived experiences of nurses at a private hospital in North Minahasa, North Sulawesi, Indonesia.

The study aims to address the subsequent research inquiries: In what ways do nurses exemplify the principles of 'Amare et Servire' in their everyday routines? What cultural, religious, and organizational elements affect the execution of 'Amare et Servire' among nurses? What are the effects of implementing "Amare et Servire" on hospital staff, patients, and organizational culture?

This research offers insight into how religious and cultural beliefs influence healthcare practices, contributing to transcultural nursing. This research would lay the groundwork for future research examining how faith, society, and nursing practice interrelate. Administrators seeking to create policies and practices that improve healthcare can utilize the findings of this research to help them develop these models. This can help patients and healthcare professionals achieve better outcomes and be more satisfied with their work.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The phrase "Amare et Servire" is a Latin words meaning "To Love and Serve". It is a meaningful maxim closely linked to Ignatian spirituality, which is based on the teachings of Saint Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits) (La Vina, 2024; Latin is Simple.com, 2025). The motto is also being used as the school motto at Ateneo de Iloilo, Philippines. This philosophy centers on the imperative to discover God in all aspects of existence and to serve others with genuine and altruistic love. This transcends a mere physical act; it embodies a profound disposition of the heart that drives every action and connection (Ateneo de Iloilo, 2025; Nicholls, 2017; The Church of the Gesù, 2021).

The notion of "Amare et Servire," although originating from a religious context, possesses significant relevance and extensive applicability beyond religious confines, especially in service-oriented professions like healthcare. "To love" can be understood as cultivating empathy, compassion, and profound regard for patients and coworkers. This is also means acknowledging the dignity of each individual, irrespective of their origin or circumstances. At the same time, "to serve" explains the tangible efforts aimed at delivering optimal care, characterized by dedication, integrity, and a commitment to the welfare of others. These two connected philosophies emphasize intrinsic motivation ("love") and practical application ("serve"), underscoring a holistic approach to professional duty, fostering an environment where both caregivers and care recipients flourish (Dossey & Keegan, 2016; Gunn et al., 2019).

Christian service encompasses both spiritual independence and significant life contributions as indicated by several studies. Research suggests that each individual's journey to the Absolute, to God, is unique, yet the personal odyssey does not negate the imperative to assist others (Elst, 2020; Lantu et al., 2022; Myrna Colon, 2018; O'donnell, 1982; Кузнецова, 2023). This perspective harmonizes personal spiritual development with obligations to community service.

Additionally, Iqbal et al. (2020) in their study proved the positive effect of workplace spirituality on nurse work engagement. They highlighted that when nurses experience a spiritually supportive workplace where they find meaning, purpose, and connection in their work, they are more likely to expend greater energy, enthusiasm, and dedication to their tasks. Nurses who view their work as spiritually significant exhibit more engagement characterized by enhanced vigor, devotion, and concentration in their responsibilities. The beneficial effects may result in reduced turnover, increased job satisfaction, and improved patient care outcomes, hence enhancing overall organizational efficacy.

Nursing Practice and Education

Love and service are enacted across clinical roles and systems through education, practice frameworks, process improvement and interdisciplinary collaboration. The literature gives concrete examples of settings and approaches where caring/love has been translated into practice. In their paper, Pereira & Botelho (2020) explore how love plays a vital role in clinical practice and therapeutic relationships. They describe it as attunement, which fosters a deep

connection between caregiver and patient; reassurance, providing comfort and confidence; and holding space, creating a safe environment for self-expression. Love also involves a willingness to make personal sacrifices to support patients in their journey toward healing and recovery, highlighting the essential human elements in therapy. Karaca & Durna (2019) and Edvardsson et al. (2017) emphasized that caring behaviors, specifically concern for patients, effective communication, and physical presence are crucial for enhancing patient satisfaction and perceived nursing quality. By focusing on these elements, healthcare providers can significantly improve patient experiences and outcomes.

Service is often operationalized through the demonstration of soft skills, a consistent delivery of high-quality, patient-centered care, professional competence, responsiveness, empathy, assurance, tangible support, and adherence to ethical standards, which are essential for effective, people-oriented care (Aase et al., 2021; Marcilla-Toribio et al., 2022; Ng, 2020; Pérez-Vergara et al., 2021). Service learning in nursing education further emphasizes the importance of direct community engagement, fostering both technical and interpersonal competencies.

Several nursing literatures from Indonesia documented the values of love and service based on the patient and the nurses perspectives themselves. Research shows that both nursing students and practitioners regard caring as a manifestation of compassion, which is basically shown through love to their patients (Mariyanti et al., 2025). In practice, this means nurses strive to build warm, empathetic relationships with those under their care. Dedi et al. (2008) in their qualitative study in a West Java hospital (Bandung) identified several key caring behaviors that reflect *Amare et Servire*. Nurses' love and service behavior is expressed when they attend to and fulfilling patients' needs, take responsibility to meet those needs, are friendly and hospitable in communication, remain calm and patient when assisting patients, stay ready and willing to help, provide encouragement or motivation, and show empathy toward patients and their families. These acts reflect "to love" through actual kindness and empathy, and "to serve" through attentive and responsible caregiving.

Cross-Cultural and Interdisciplinary Perspectives

African Context Applications

The literature reveals applications of love-service concepts in African contexts, particularly through the example of "Mamas Africa" who serve their communities. These women exemplify that the motivation for their actions is a profound faith in God, who is the wellspring of hope, and a belief that a Christian must serve others (du Plessis, 2014).

Interfaith and Universal Applications

The ideas behind "Amare et Servire" come from Christian faith, but they are useful in many religions. Literature says that "Christianity, Islam, and the eastern religions Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism", all see love as a divine quality (Ardiansah et al., 2025; Gorday, 2023; Kruger, 2016; Lombard, 2007; Mangalnidhidas, 2023; Obasanjo, 2019; Weiss, 2022; White, 2025). This suggests that combining love and service can work in any setting.

Secular Professional Integration

Contemporary studies show that these principles can still be integrated in professional settings that are not religious without losing their spiritual basis. There is no difference between 'secular or spiritual' work in the view of God and the Bible (Eppang et al., 2024), which means that these ideas can be used in more situations.

Major Themes and Theoretical Frameworks

Service as Love Expression

A recurrent theme in the literature is that sincere service embodies the genuine manifestation of divine love. Literature continually demonstrates that faith is therefore seen in deeds, specifically deeds of love (du Plessis, 2014; Przygoda, 2019), establishing service as the tangible expression of internal spiritual truth.

Holistic Human Development

The "Amare et Servire" concept encourages complete human growth by bringing together spiritual, emotional, and practical aspects. Research demonstrates that this approach enhances overall human well-being in relationships and interactions (Obasanjo, 2019).

Transformative Spirituality

The literature reveals that engaging in love-based service creates transformative spiritual experiences. Research shows that when Christians respond to this deeper love and knowledge of God with a genuine desire to serve both the Lord and the people with whom they come in contact, personal spiritual life becomes ever more deeply intensified (O'donnell, 1982; Sharma et al., 2023; Walter, 2021).

Community Building and Social Cohesion

"Amare et Servire" concepts contribute to community building and social stability. The literature emphasizes that love-based service promotes family, community, and global cohesion, wholesomeness, security, stability, and progress (du Plessis, 2014; Leal Filho et al., 2022; Obasanjo, 2019; Sharma et al., 2023).

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study will employ a focused ethnographic approach to explore nurses' experiences in embodying the "Amare et Servire" principle in their daily practice. Cruz & Higginbottom (2013) suggest that focused ethnography is more suitable, for studying aspects within a limited timeframe. This approach helps us as researchers because we both work full-time as university lecturers. It allows us to fulfill our teaching duties while also collecting data at the same time. By using this method, a thorough investigation can be conducted into the religious and organizational influences on nursing practices at a selected hospital.

To obtain research approval, the hospital ethics committee will be consulted. Consent will be obtained from all participants, who must understand the purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw without penalty. The researcher will have access to stored data, and participant confidentiality and anonymity will be strictly maintained throughout the study.

This research utilizes a constructivist paradigm, which states that knowledge is formed through social interaction and collective experience. This paradigm aligns with an ethnographic approach, which facilitates a comprehensive examination of the cultural and social settings that influence participants' experiences and perspectives.

The implementation of Campinha-Bacote's principles entails thorough consideration of cultural sensitivity and reverence for beliefs in religion. The researcher will make sure that all theoretical applications comply with the ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice. The researchers will also maintain an attitude of constant reflexivity throughout to monitor the subjectivity and minimize our influence on the collection and analysis of data.

Locale and Population

This study will be conducted at a selected private hospital in North Minahasa, North Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. This hospital is deeply rooted in Minahasa culture and serves a predominantly Christian population. Nurses work in various parts of the hospital and treat patients, providing a broad overview of the real-life meaning of "Amare et Servire."

Purposive sampling will be used to identify participants, ensuring a good mix of nurses from various fields, roles, ages, and experience. Currently, there are 35 staff nurses employed at the hospital. However, it's important to note that only those nurses who are actively engaged in patient care will qualify to participate in the upcoming study. Additionally, eligibility is restricted to those who have been working at the hospital for a minimum of one year. The final count of participants will be determined based on the availability of existing data concerning this population. Furthermore, the study will continue to recruit participants until data saturation is reached, meaning that sufficient information has been gathered to draw meaningful conclusions, and no new insights are emerging from additional participants.

The study will be planned with input from community leaders and hospital officials to consider the local cultural environment and norms. Collaboration is essential to ensure the study is fair and respectful of different cultures. The primary goal of this is to conduct the study with understanding and care. Participants who choose to participate will be informed that their answers will be kept confidential and will be treated with care.

Data Gathering Tool

Data will be collected using semi-structured interviews, participant observation, document analysis, and focus group discussions with patients and their families. The researcher will use interviews and focus groups with the participants in order to gain their narratives and sharing of experiences, perceptions of care, informed by the principles of "Amare et Servire" (to love and serve) and "Si Tou Timou Tumou."

The researchers will adhere to the regulations to protect the participants' privacy and health throughout the data collection process. Before data collection begins, each participant will receive a consent form explaining the purpose, methodology, risks, and benefits of the study. Participants will have the opportunity to ask questions before signing the consent form, indicating their willingness to participate. They will also be informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without facing any consequences. The consent form will be provided in Indonesian for ease of understanding.

During observations in a hospital environment, the researchers will be fully submerged to examine how nurses engage with patients, colleagues, and their surroundings. Observations will be carefully managed to prevent disruption to patient care or hospital operations, while respecting the participants' professional boundaries. Furthermore, document analysis will include a review of hospital regulations, mission statements, and other relevant documents to gain insight into the situation. In addition to that, researchers will make sure the privacy of patients is well-guarded during the whole observation process.

Data Analysis

This focused ethnographic study will employ thematic analysis, following Braun & Clarke (2006) six-phase paradigm, and will employ NVivo 12 software to manage, code, and visualize qualitative data. This methodology aligns with the constructivist paradigm, facilitating a comprehensive study of how nurses exemplify the ethics of "Amare et Servire" within the Minahasan cultural and religious framework.

The analysis will proceed as follows:

Familiarization with the Data

The researcher will thoroughly engage with the data by regularly reviewing transcribed interviews, field notes, and documents while simultaneously listening to audio recordings. Initial impressions and reflections will be documented in a reflexive journal.

Generating Initial Codes

The researcher will use NVivo to create initial codes that summarize key concepts, behaviors, and narratives related to "Amare et Servire," "Si Tou Timou Tumou Tou," and culturally specific parenting practices. The codes will be both inductive (data-driven) and deductive (based on the Campinha-Bacote paradigm).

Searching for Themes

Codes will be collected and grouped based on possible themes. The query and visualization features will be used to discover patterns and links across the various data sources.

Reviewing Themes

The researchers will ensure that the identified themes closely align with the dataset and effectively address the key research questions stated at the beginning of the study. This process

will also involve a thorough examination of the data obtained from interviews, observations, focus group discussions, and documents, to ensure that all relevant aspects are considered. During the data analysis, the researchers will engage in a triangulation process, where both researchers will cross-verify their findings. This collaborative approach will facilitate in-depth discussions about the interpretation of the data and promote a shared understanding of the emergent categories. By ensuring a diverse range of perspectives is included, the researchers will enhance the reliability and validity of the findings.

Defining and Naming Themes

Each theme will be carefully described and contextualized within the theoretical framework (Campinha-Bacote's model) and cultural context (Minahasa values). The researcher will create detailed narratives containing quotes from participants.

Writing the Report

The final analysis will be given in narrative style, augmented with NVivo-generated matrices, models, or concept maps to visually illustrate the relationships among concepts.

Data Management

All interviews will be audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and translated into English if conducted in the local language. Field notes from observations and document analysis will be prepared and organized consistently. Software will be used to organize the data obtained to facilitate coding and topic identification. This strategy involves examining the data to identify recurring patterns that embody the principle of "Amare et Servire" in nursing practice.

If interviews are conducted in a specific language or dialect, they will be translated first into Indonesian and then into English. This double translation procedure is crucial to ensure that the data is presented in a manner that is easily reviewed. There will be iterations during the coding phase to refine the process of grouping the data into themes.

The researcher will keep all recordings, transcripts, and field notes safe by putting them in encrypted files. This is to protect the privacy and security of the data. Pseudonyms will be used in the transcripts and any identifiable details will be removed from the dataset before analysis to safeguard the identities of participants.

Trustworthiness

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, various strategies such as member checking, triangulation, and journal maintenance will be employed. Member checking entails corroborating findings with participants to guarantee precision and reliability. Triangulation will be carried out by employing various data sources and methodologies to corroborate the results. Keeping a reflective field notebook will enable the researchers to critically examine our own biases and preconceptions, so augmenting the study's overall rigor and credibility.

Confirmability

The researcher will make sure that audit trails will be established to record the research process, choices, and interpretations for confirmability. This documentation enables audits to validate the study's findings.

Credibility

The study will establish trust with participants through prolonged engagement and continuous observation to gather data. Member checking will also be conducted to validate findings with participants. By combining data from interviews focus group discussions, observations and documents through triangulation the credibility of the results will be reinforced.

Dependability

Dependability will be ensured by following a research protocol that outlines study procedures, data collection methods and analysis techniques. This protocol facilitates replications of the study in settings.

Transferability

Detailed descriptions of research context including involvement and methodologies used will be provided. These descriptions will allow others to understand the context in which the research was carried out and evaluate how relevant the results may be in other settings.

IV. CONCLUSION

This focused ethnography will yield an empirically grounded understanding of how nurses implement Amare et Servire in daily practice at a Catholic hospital in North Minahasa and the cultural-religious-organizational factors that shape this implementation. The study is expected to provide (1) a thematic map and conceptual practice model of love and service in nursing, (2) practice-oriented training recommendations for staff development, and (3) concise policy briefs to guide implementation at the unit and hospital-wide levels. By outlining a clear pathway from findings to training and policy, this work aims to inform (rather than claim improvement) patient-centered care, staff well-being, and values-based organizational culture in similar non-Western settings. An in-depth description of the context will support transferability beyond this single site. In keeping with the ISC theme of collaborative innovation, this study engages nursing, hospital management, and pastoral care stakeholders to collaborate on translating and improving the quality of care.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Both authors have contributed to the writing of the paper. To ensure transparency, the researchers will have written down all plans and arrangements. The first researcher will lead the conceptualization and will be involved in developing the methodology, conducting the investigation, analyzing data, and writing both the original draft and revisions. He will also supervise and lead in conducting correspondence. The second researcher will help with the methodology and will focus on collecting and analyzing data..

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