

Filipinos Amidst Double Disaster: A Case Study of Filipino Citizens Who Encountered the Occurrence of Typhoon Ulysses and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Sarah Ollanes Lumanlan

Faculty Member, National University Fairview

Abstract— Filipinos experienced a double disaster in the year 2020 when the occurrence of covid-19 pandemic and typhoon Ulysses struck the country. The double disaster leaved damage to the lives of Filipinos. In this light, this study explored the experiences and motivations of Filipinos amid double disasters through a phenomenological approach. The chosen participants are residents of Marikina, which is known for being a flood-prone area in Metro Manila, Philippines. The study highlights the importance of disaster preparedness, community engagement, and resiliency to withstand disasters or emergencies. This study can be a basis for producing Disaster Awareness, Preparedness, and Management projects.

Keywords— Covid-19 Pandemic, Double Disaster, Evacuation Centers, Marikina Citizens, Resiliency, Typhoon Ulysses

1. INTRODUCTION

While Filipinos are under the pandemic and need to recover from the economic recession, Typhoons Rolly, Ulysses, and Vicky beat the country in the fourth quarter of 2020. It damaged agriculture and infrastructure and caused loss of lives in cities and provinces. According to government reports, Typhoon Ulysses killed over 100 people and caused PHP20 billion in damages in Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) and National Capital Region (NCR). Over 3 million people from 5,594 barangays in 8 provinces are affected. The 283,656 affected Filipinos relocated to 2,205 evacuation centers, and 158,926 decided to stay home. Typhoons commonly affect Filipinos due to their geographical location. According to Disaster Reduction Center, typically, the Philippines is visited by 20 typhoons a year. Disaster evacuation programs are at hand to secure the community's safety during such times. While evacuation centers and programs are available to help typhoon victims, there are still challenges needed to handle.

Marikina is one of the cities in Metro Manila, Philippines, devastated by Typhoon Ulysses. Marikina is well known as the Shoe Capital of the Philippines and is famous for being a clean and disciplined community. The downside of Marikina is its flood-prone areas. Many storms have been fought and overcome by Marikina Citizens, from Typhoon Ondoy to Typhoon Ulysses. For the past years, some Marikina citizens have been experiencing the repeated washing out of belongings and houses. They still lived in Marikina despite challenges. However, Typhoon Ulysses is

different from other typhoons that hit Marikina. It happened together with the Covid-19 pandemic. The municipality of Marikina has calculated that Typhoon Ulysses caused up to P30 billion in damage to the city.

According to the city mayor, more than half of Marikina's citizens were trapped inside their houses or on rooftops.

The double disaster in 2020 enlightened this study to interpret the experiences of Marikina citizens during Typhoon Ulysses and the Covid-19 pandemic. Three research questions seek to answer in this study: (1) What are the challenges encountered during the occurrence of Typhoon Ulysses and Covid-19? (2) How did they recover from those challenges? (3) What are their motivations to stay in the community despite being a flood-prone area and pandemic?

This study's participants have been Marikina's citizens for over 20 years. The study uses in-depth interviews to generate more reliable shared lived experiences from the participants. The participants must encounter the occurrence of Typhoon Ulysses and Covid-19. The study's participants are limited to three since they work throughout the day to sustain their family needs, and they only agreed to be interviewed during their available time.

1.1 Double Disaster

As a result of the double disaster, the Covid-19 Pandemic and Typhoon Ulysses complicate the development of the pandemic and create challenges for

individuals and communities. A double disaster had mental health impacts on most participants, particularly stress and anxiety. As part of the coping strategies, a study mentioned “Bayanihan”, following government protocols, having alternate means of income, limiting their use of gadgets in critical situations, and leaning on faith (Agaton & Cueto, 2021).

1.2 Philippine Evacuation Centers

According to Porio, 2014, environmental degradation, fiscal reform deficits, inadequate infrastructure, and inadequate social services for disaster survivors compound the impact of natural disasters.

Dalisay and De Guzman (2016) suggest that the evacuation areas of the Philippines can be even more hazardous than living close to the coastline during typhoon Yolanda. The informants believed they were being relocated from death zones to hazard zones.

A study revealed that Metro Manila’s Disaster Risk Reduction Management Plan is at an early stage of development scattered across its 16 component cities and local government districts. Information regarding evacuation centers needs to consolidate in a comprehensive and current manner. A review of government policies regarding evacuation centers is necessary to confirm the existence of the implementation problem (Cajucum et al., 2019).

Moreover, participants of the study conducted by Agaton and Cueto, 2021, expressed worry concerning the virus spreading throughout the community, specifically in the emergency shelters where there was less of an emphasis on maintaining social distancing and insufficient hygiene facilities and sanitation, and there were shortages of necessities.

1.3 Filipino Disaster Resiliency

According to a 2018 study by Tindowen and Bagalayos, community effort and solidarity have a significant role in developing disaster resiliency among flood-prone areas because these two pro-social behaviors are employed as a mechanism, mainly when outside resources are not accessible. When typhoons and floods strike, the people’s strength comes from these two pro-social behaviors, which provides them hope for recovery.

Moreover, a study conducted in Tacloban evaluated solidarity and resilience intervention for Filipino disaster

survivors. The results showed significant improvements in adaptive coping behaviors and decreased anxiety and depression. The conclusions demonstrate the value of culturally nuanced and group-based interventions (Hechanova et al., 2015).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Method

The study will be in a phenomenological research design. A phenomenological study aims to comprehend how people perceive and comprehend a specific occurrence and the lived experiences of a group in a specific phenomenon (Pathak, 2017). The design chosen for the study is a good fit because it will concentrate on the participants’ sentiments regarding their ventures in the occurrence of Typhoon Ulysses and COVID-19.

2.2 Theory

Resilience theory underpins this study. Resilience theory explains that how we respond to misfortune is more important than its nature (Moore, 2019). Resilience aids us in overcoming hardship, bad luck, or irritation. It not only aids in our ability to endure, bounce back from, and even flourish after hardship. The theory is relevant to the study because it aims to explore the experience and motivations of citizens living in Marikina despite being in a flood-prone area and during a pandemic.

2.3 Data Gathering procedure

The instrument of the study is an in-depth interview to enable participants to share their experiences in the occurrence of Typhoon Ulysses and Covid-19. The study requires 3 participants who have been Marikina residents for over 20 years to generate more dependable sentiments. 3 to 10 participants are enough in a phenomenological approach (Creswell, W. J., & Creswell, D. J, 2018).

3. ANALYSIS OF DATA

After the interview with the participants, their responses are transcribed in a verbatim manner. The following are the answers collected from them:

- 3.1 What are the challenges encountered during the occurrence of Typhoon Ulysses and Covid-19? Participant 1. The first participant is a 74-year-old vendor in Marikina. She has been in Marikina for over 30 years. The first participant lost her belongings as well as her merchandise. She said typhoon Ulysses is different from other disasters because it is along with

the covid-19 pandemic. She experienced a total washed out in the occurrence of Typhoon Ulysses. The first participant also mentioned that it was hard because her blood sugar increased, and her joint problems worsened. She stayed in a multipurpose near their house because she was afraid to stay in an evacuation center because of the virus. Participant 2. The second participant is a 62-year-old driver. He has been in Marikina for more than 20 years. He stated that the occurrence of typhoon Ulysses is far different from other typhoons because of the lack of funds to survive their needs during the disasters. He mentioned that they are tightly consuming their supplies because it is hard to earn money as a public transportation driver during the pandemic. The participant also experienced a loss of belongings, a house full of mud, no food to eat, and no clothes to wear. He also mentioned that during the typhoon, they did not evacuate. His family experienced riding in things floating in flood to survive. He also added that there is no water supply to clean the mud in their house. Participant 3. The third participant is a 58-year-old housewife. She has been a resident of Marikina for over 40 years. She describes typhoon Ulysses as the most challenging experience because it is along with the covid-19 pandemic. She added that she did not know what to do during the disaster because of the threat of virus transmission. She decided to stay in her house even though the flood was approaching their area. She experienced constantly transferring from one roof to another to survive the disaster. She lost all her belongings, even documents. Her house is full of mud, and it is hard for her to clean it since she is alone.

- 3.2 How did they recover from those challenges? Participant 1. She recovered by borrowing money in lending that she used to buy new vegetables to sell. She also mentioned the help of monthly pension and private organizations to sustain her needs. Participant 2. He narrates that he recovered through the help of the private organization, politicians, relatives, and praying to God. Participant 3. The third participant said that she recovered with the help of her children and private organizations. She also mentioned that she is thankful because her children are willing to help even though they have their own families now.
- 3.3 What are their motivations to stay in the community despite being a flood-prone area and pandemic? Participant 1. The first participant said she does not mind being in a flood-prone area because it is easy for her to earn money in her community. She also mentioned that she could not afford to rent a

house in flood free area. She also added that she loves Marikina because she stayed in the area for so long with her family and friends. Participant 2. The second participant said he is staying in Marikina because he cannot buy a house in a flood-free area. He also mentioned that he loves Marikina and that it is tolerable for him and his family to stay in Marikina because flood is not happening every day. Participant 3. The third participant said she will stay in Marikina even though it is a flood-prone area because she gets used living in the community.

4. THEMES

- 4.1 Lack of Disaster Preparedness Plan - Upon reviewing their responses, participants needed more time to prepare for disaster because they could not save their belongings in emergencies. Moreover, participants did not follow the Local Government Unit's Disaster Preparedness Protocol to avoid possible virus transmission in the evacuation centers. They believe they can survive floods more than the threat of the covid-19. In times like this, residents must evacuate before the flood approaches the area.
- 4.2 Importance of Community Engagement - Help from private individuals, organizations, and relatives contributed to the participants' recovery. They received relief goods and even cash from different individuals or private organizations. This situation is always happening in Marikina since it is a flood-prone area, but still, participants are not preparing funds for emergencies. Fortunately, Filipinos are there to help and support their fellow citizens.
- 4.3 Resiliency to Disasters - The participants are motivated to stay in Marikina despite disasters happening in the community. Upon reviewing their responses, the foundation of their strength is their families. They believe that everything is tolerable if they are with their families. Moreover, participants agreed that looking for necessities in their community is easy, so there are better options than leaving.

5. CONCLUSIONS

These are the following conclusions during the study: (1) With the fear of being harmed by the covid-19 virus, they are willing to ease the danger of flood and loss of belongings than staying in an evacuation center. (2) All participants need outside sources of funds and help to recover. They depend on private organizations' help to recover from disasters. (3) All participants love staying in the community despite disasters. They do not mind being in a flood-prone area because they get used to it, and for them, it is tolerable. Living with their families

and the idea of attachment to the community motivated them to stay.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

These are the recommendations for the study: (1) There should be seminars or campaigns to educate the residents regarding the importance of following the community's disaster preparedness plan and that the government should make ways for the people to trust their management in evacuation centers. (2) The government should provide programs or projects to help the residents earn extra income so that they can prepare funds and do not have to wait for outside sources to help them. (3) The government should prioritize projects relocating residents living in flood-prone areas. They should also consider the possible source of income if they relocate the residents from flood-prone areas.

REFERENCES

- [1] Deiparine, C. (2020, December 10). Death count from "Ulysses" rises to over 100, damage now at P20 billion. The Philippine Star. <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/12/10/2062853/death-count-ulysses-rises-over-100-damage-now-p20-billion>
- [2] Asian disaster reduction center (ADRC) . (n.d.). Adrc.Asia. Retrieved February 3, 2023, from <https://www.adrc.asia/nationinformation.php?NationCode=608&Lang=en>
- [3] Santelices, S., & Santelices, S. S. S. (2019, August 22). Marikina continues to thrive as the shoe capital of the Philippines. Preen.Ph. <https://preen.ph/99684/marikina-continues-to-thrive-as-the-shoe-capital-of-the-philippines>
- [4] Gonzales, C. (2020, November 17). Damage caused by Ulysses in Marikina City estimated at P30B. Inquirer.net. <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1361580/damage-caused-by-ulysses-in-marikina-city-estimated-at-p30b>
- [5] GMA News Online. (2020, November 12). More than half of stranded Marikina residents yet to be rescued, says Teodoro. GMA News Online. <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/topstories/metro/763886/more-than-half-of-stranded-marikina-residents-yet-to-be-rescued-says-teodoro/story/>
- [6] Cueto, L. J., & Agaton, C. B. (2021). Pandemic and typhoon: Positive impacts of a double disaster on mental health of female students in the Philippines. Behavioral Sciences, 11(5), 64. <https://doi.org/10.3390/bs11050064>
- [7] Dalisay, S.N. and De Guzman, M.T. (2016), "Risk and culture: the case of typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines", Disaster Prevention and Management, Vol. 25 No. 5, pp. 701-714. <https://doi.org/10.1108/DPM-05-2016-0097>
- [8] Cajucom, E. P., Chao, G. Y., Jr, Constantino, G. A., Ejares, J. A., Quillope, S. J. G., Solomon, H. M., & Ringor, C. L. (2019). Evaluation of the spatial distribution of evacuation centers in Metro Manila, Philippines. ISPRS - International Archives of the Photogrammetry Remote Sensing and Spatial Information Sciences, XLII-3/W8, 79–85. <https://doi.org/10.5194/isprs-archives-xlii-3-w8-79-2019>
- [9] Agaton, C. B., & Cueto, L. J. (2021). Experiences, coping strategies, and lessons learned during double disaster in the Philippines: COVID-19 pandemic and typhoons. In Research Square. <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-322295/v1>
- [10] Tindowen, D. J. C., & Bagalayos, H. L. N. (2018). All for one, one for all: the role of Filipino pro-social behaviours in building a disaster-resilient community. International Journal of Sustainable Society, 10(3), 243. <https://doi.org/10.1504/ijssoc.2018.096275>
- [11] Hechanova, M. R. M., Waelde, L. C., & Ramos, P. A. P. (2016). Evaluation of a group-based resilience intervention for Typhoon Haiyan survivors. Journal of Pacific Rim Psychology, 10, e12. <https://doi.org/10.1017/prp.2016.9>
- [12] Pathak, V. (2017). Phenomenological Research: A Study of Lived Experiences. 3. http://ijariie.com/AdminUploadPdf/Phenomenological_Research__A_Study_of_Lived_Experiences_ijariie3960.pdf
- [13] Moore, C. (2019, December 30). Resilience Theory: A summary of the research (+PDF). Positivepsychology.com. <https://positivepsychology.com/resilience-theory/>
- [14] Creswell, W. J., & Creswell, D. J (2018). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach. Sage publications.