

Unveiling the Experiences of the Vehicular Accident Victims

Alvin V. Anoba, Redem George P. Emperio, Reyb R. Pitogo, Relyn Kathlene R. Polinar, Angelita B. Alvarico & Jose F. Cuevas Jr.

College of Criminology, Misamis University, Ozamiz City, Philippines.

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2023.7726>

Received: 27 May 2023; Accepted: 13 June 2023; Published: 18 July 2023

ABSTRACT

Road accidents particularly vehicular accidents have been one of the most common causes of death around the world. It has been the leading cause of trauma, injuries, and even death to people who are otherwise the victims or the to someone who causes the accident. These accidents result from human errors contributed by the following risks factors, driving without a license and the right training, driving under the influence of alcohol and prohibited drugs which will result in speeding, driving without the proper use of safety equipment like the absence of the use of helmet and seat-belt and driving while being distracted. This study seeks to unveil the experiences/cases of the victims of the vehicular accident who otherwise have gone into traumatic experiences during and after the incident in order to determine the underlying concerns that need to be addressed for future reference in search for remedies to extend specific assistance needed concerning to the victims of the vehicular accident. There are fifteen (15) respondents that have gone into this study and permitted themselves to be the participants of the conducted study. Data gathering is achieved through interviews using Yin's Approach: plan, design, prepare, collect, analyze, and share in order to come up with qualitative data. Data gathered were analyzed and researchers have found the following themes: a. Emotional Trauma b. Psychological Trauma c. The Legal Process. The researchers have presented the implications of the findings and have commendations to concerned government agencies to provide assistance to vehicular victims and support them specifically in emotional and psychological recovery, legal process, and other assistance needed to serve the right of the victim.

Keywords: vehicular victims, vehicular accidents, emotional trauma, psychological trauma

INTRODUCTION

Road accidents were primarily caused by human error, including insufficient driving expertise, unfamiliar road signs and locations, passing out behind the wheel, losing control, and driving while inebriated. Other significant reasons were mechanical faults, including an electrical problem, a bad brake, a loose propeller, a blown tire, and a flat tire. (Philkotse.com, 2020). Other variables that contributed to pedestrian, driver, and passenger casualties comprised environmental concerns, road-related problems, and vehicle traffic involving driver overspeeding, drunk driving, poor overtaking, improper wheel turning, and even pedestrian jaywalking.

Also reported in MMARAS (2019) was the classification of accidents in Metro Manila into Fatal with 372 cases, Non Fatal with 20, 466 cases, and Damage to Property with 100,933 cases. The most common nature of road accidents was a collision with the following types: side-swipe, rear-end, angle impact, hit and run, multiple collisions, self-accident, hit a parked vehicle, head-on, and hit an object.

Motorcycles are subject to a much higher accident risk due to a lack of protection for the body of riders and passengers and a lack of stability of the motorcycle at the time of the accident (Zhou 2021). Accordingly, Khan et al., (2020) asserted that in low and middle-income countries, motorcycles and bicycles are major means of transport.

Notwithstanding the above, the trend in road accidents has been increasing for the past several years, hence a need for additional prediction and anticipation, and probably enhancing road traffic systems and automation using the Internet of Things (IoT), an emerging technology that has been adopted in developed countries in addressing road traffic issues of increasing complexities (Vijayaraman & Jayarin, 2019).

Furthermore, accidents and injuries are also influenced by a variety of other factors. According to Safaei et al., (2021), the state of pavements and the rate of deterioration can have a substantial impact on motor vehicle crash rates, especially motorcycle crashes. The most effective way to make people obliged to wear helmets is to abide by the law, as it requires that every driver and rider must wear it whenever they ride, to increase its usage, save money, and save lives. Its usage is the best way to prevent critical accidents on the road (Celik, 2017).

However, other significant factors contributing to motorcycle crashes include the age of the motorcycle riders, riding while intoxicated or under the influence of drugs, the technical condition of the motorcycle, the time of the ride (day of the week and hours of riding), and high-risk traffic conduct (Dapilah et al., 2017). By implementing the necessary training programs, enhancing the requirements for acquiring a motorbike license and also using a standard helmet, enforcing legal limits, and keeping an eye on drivers' behavior with police control forces, these variables can be reduced (Dapilah et al., 2017). Others are the inconvenience of removing a helmet in order to receive phone calls, the problem of storage to prevent being stolen when not in use, and the inconvenience of wearing a helmet in hot weather (Solagberu et al., 2017).

Accordingly, Khan et al., (2020) asserted that in low and middle-income countries, motorcycles and bicycles are a major means of transport. Motorcyclists constitute a large proportion of those injured or killed on the roads (Ackaah, 2018). Compared with other vehicles, motorcycles, and bicycles have a higher risk of being involved in a crash (WHO, 2017). This is because they often share the traffic space with fast-moving cars, buses, and trucks, and because they are less visible. In addition, their lack of physical protection makes the riders particularly vulnerable to being injured if they are involved in a collision (Alfukaar, 2017).

In relation, studies of motorcycle crashes indicate that helmet use significantly reduces the severity of injuries (Dissanayake et al., 2018). The use of quality and standardized helmets is essential to reduce the actual impact (Maimaris, 2018). Attempts to encourage motorcyclists' use of helmets through public awareness campaigns, publicity, or persuasion have had minor success (Liu et al. 2017). Another major problem is the widespread use of non-standard motorcycle helmets. The use of these helmets has the potential to undermine efforts aimed at reducing the burden of road traffic injuries associated with motorcycle crashes (Maimaris, 2018)

Henceforth, the study is conducted to determine the profile of vehicular accident victims in terms of their age, gender, address, and civil status. Explore the experiences of Vehicular Accident victims through the photo voice approach.

This study extends a careful investigation of community standpoints or opinions behind the impact of using standard helmets among motorcycle drivers in Ozamiz City with the use of the so-called self-administered questionnaire which may help to answer the problem of the study. Then, it also serves as the foundation for understanding more the different views and ideas, and it will also serve as an instrument for a recommendation that the local government units can have the information through conducting orientation programs to the community of how importance using the so-called standard helmet in Ozamiz City, and help the community to understand the Republic Act 10054 and create an ordinance or a law that would suffice the needs of the drivers and act to the implementation and compliance to the law, with the help of the Land Transportation Office (LTO) and the Traffic Enforcement/Operations and Management Offices in each Barangays of Ozamiz City. From these facts, researchers are looking into unveiling the experiences of

vehicular accident victims, understanding their trauma and determining their feelings while being in an accident, and knowing the legal actions that they have been into to address the problem.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study utilizes the qualitative approach using the case study design. A case study is an empirical investigation into a case or cases by answering “how” or “why” questions about the phenomenon of interest (Yazan, 2015). The researcher’s significant role and the field notes gathered through interviews played a crucial part in the coherent pattern. The study used research questions derived from the literature reviewed. This study is to ascertain the vehicular accident victims, acquiring an in-depth understanding of the factors that cause the accident.

This study was conducted in the selected Barangay in Ozamiz City, namely Banadero, Tinago, and Santa Cruz during the academic year 2022-2023. The researchers decided upon conducting the research to further investigate the case study on self-actualization among vehicular accident victims and also explore the importance of protective gear.

The respondents of the study are purposely selected persons who experienced vehicular accidents in the selected Barangay in Ozamiz City. The number of respondents that will be needed by the researchers in order to come up with accurate and meaningful results in regard to the study will be 15 vehicular accident victims coming from the said selected Barangay. The researchers will be using simple purposive sampling in gathering the data in which every vehicular accident victim had the chance point and also the other individual who they know experienced an accident. These selected respondents are subject to the conduct of the interview using the interview guide made by the researchers. The researchers assured the security and confidentiality of the results provided by the respondents.

The data from the participants are gathered by the researcher using the interview guide questions. Intercommunication and understandability for all participants; questions are translated into the vernacular language for better understanding. An introduction, opening, core, and closing questions are all included. In addition, the researcher utilized open-ended questions and narrative styles of answers to elicit the participants’ confessions during the in-depth interview.

The researcher uses digital recording equipment to record the necessary information during the entire course of an in-depth interview. The interview process is accurately and thoroughly documented using this procedure. The recorded data are then transcribed and evaluated to determine which themes arise from the participants’ responses.

Before the actual interview, the researcher first secures permission from the Dean of the College of Criminology to permit the researcher to conduct the study. Upon approval, the researcher will then proceed with the identification of the potential participants. Before the actual interview, all potential participants are evaluated if they qualified as participants based on the inclusion criteria of this study. The participants’ consent and their voluntarism were the top priority of this study. The researcher guaranteed to protect their rights by explaining that they can withdraw their participation at any time without penalty.

After obtaining their signature on the informed consent form, the researcher schedule an interview. During the actual interview, the researcher read the questions aloud and precisely. Furthermore, the researcher entertains clarifications related to the interview guide questions and the research process as a whole.

After explaining all ethical protocols to the participants, the next step is to schedule the place and time of the interviews. The researcher provides the participants with a copy of the interview questions to help them

recall their experiences. For the condition of the area, it was necessary to have the right atmosphere to interview with less noise coming from the vehicles or people.

In this qualitative research, specific measures are first cleared and addressed, particularly the selection and the conduct of the interviews with the participants. The researchers conform to the ethical protocol set by the university. The researcher strictly observes the voluntary participation of all the participants. The researcher sought the first participants' voluntariness by allowing them to sign the informed consent. Their refusal to participate did not involve any penalty or loss of benefits. Their signed consent did not mean waiving any legal claims, rights, or remedies from this study.

Regarding the participants' identity, the researcher applied the measure to promote anonymity and secrecy by not mentioning the participants' names during the interview. Instead, the researcher addressed them with sir and ma'am. In any manner, the participants' names remained anonymous in all parts of the manuscript of the study. Furthermore, the signed informed consent and any identification of participants' identities were put in the cabinet and locked. Therefore, the data will be disposed of only after the completion of this study.

This study is conducted during the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. To prevent the spread of the virus, the researcher implemented preventive measures and compulsory health protocols during the whole process of the interviews, following the guidelines of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID or simply the IATF).

In the entire process of the study, the welfare of the participants was the priority of the researcher. The researcher adhered to the guidelines set by the Republic Act No. 10173, known as the "Data Privacy Act of 2012".

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study was participated by fifteen (15) participants from the selected Barangay of Ozamiz City who are purposely selected and who are victims of vehicular accidents. Based on the responses of the respondents during the conduct of the interview, the following themes were obtained: a. Victims' Emotional Trauma b. Victims' Difficulties in Realizing the Legal Processes.

Table 1. Profile of the Participants

RP – Research Participant

Code Representation	Gender	Age	Civil Status	Address
RP1	Male	34	Married	Tinago
RP2	Male	28	Married	Tinago
RP3	Male	19	Single	Tinago
RP4	Female	30	Married	Tinago
RP5	Male	25	Single	Tinago
RP6	Male	28	Married	Sta. Cruz
RP7	Male	22	Single	Sta. Cruz
RP8	Female	33	Married	Sta. Cruz
RP9	Female	30	Married	Sta. Cruz
RP10	Male	23	Single	Sta. Cruz
RP11	Male	20	Single	Bañadero
RP12	Male	36	Married	Bañadero
RP13	Male	27	Single	Bañadero

RP14	Female	30	Married	Bañadero
RP15	Female	22	Single	Bañadero

Vehicular Accident Victims Experiences

In unveiling the experiences of vehicular accidents, researchers were able to gather the following data that showed the emotional and psychological trauma among the victims and so with their difficulties in realizing the legal processes. These three were then categorized, analyzed, and interpreted as part of exploring the experiences of the victims of vehicular accidents.

Emotional Trauma

Trauma can be a result of severe shock from a certain incident in the victim’s life or a severe upsetting situation that the person found himself helpless over the said situation or event. Events or situations that give us the feeling of being exceedingly unsecured, unsafe, and frequently helpless might lead to emotional trauma. It may be the result of a single accident, situation, or event or a component of a pattern of behavior such as persistent abuse, bullying, discrimination, or humiliation. While some traumatic events, such as a vehicular accident or assault may also result in bodily injuries, emotional trauma can also occur without any physical injuries. This kind of trauma was verbally expressed by the victims of the vehicular accident during the conduct of the interview. These were revealed through the series of questions given to the participants.

RP1	“...nashock ko, wala pako katingug dayun kay mebati man ko og kahadlok sa panghetabo, og kada madumduman nako ang maong insedente, kay mubalik sab ang akoang nabatian...”
RP4	“...mebate ko og kahadlok og kaguol – mag unsa nalang ang akoga pamilya kung namatay ko sa maong panghetabo...naminhud akoga tibuok kalawasan tungod sa kashock...mubati gehapon ko kahadlok kung akoga madumduman ang akong pagkaaksidente...”
RP6	“...wala koy nahimo sa pang hitabo kay aksidente man, pero sobra sobra ang akong kahadlok dili lamang sa akoga kaugalingon pati nasab sa akoang pamilya...”
RP7	“...mebati ko kahadlok og katagam, wala ko katuo sa panghetabo, maygane buhi pako...bahala angul basta buhi...”
RP9	“...nahadlok ko sa maong panghetabo, di ko kato, gakurog akoga tibuok kalawasan, wala ko kasabut sa akoga gebati tugod sa kaguol, kahadlok og kakulba...”
RP12	“...nakuyawan ko og nakuratan kay dali ra kaayu ang panghetabo, nahadlok ko para sa akong kinabuhi og mebati ko og kaguol para sa akong pamilya kung makabalo sila sa natebao sa akoga – hangtud karun mubate gehapon ko kahadlok kabahin sa panghetabo...”
RP13	“...wala ko katingug tugod kay gakurok akoga kalawasan – nashock ko og wala kato nga nadangat ko sa ingun adtung aksidenteha – ambot oi di masabut akoga gebati adtung panahuna ...”
RP15	“na ambut nalang, di jud masabut ako gebati tungod sa akong kahadlok og kakuyaw....kaguol og kashock, paspas kaayu ang panghetabo og tungod ssa kapaspas wala koy nahimo og nashock nalang....wala ko katuo og karun mahadlok nako nuon mudrive...”

Data gathered imply that vehicular accident victims are subject to emotional trauma in the event of such an accident and still can feel the same whenever the incident is recalled. Most of them admitted to being in a state of shock, state of fear, state of worry, state of panic, state of anxiety, and state of helplessness for not being in control of what had happened.

Recent research has revealed that emotional trauma can result from such common occurrences as an auto accident, the breakup of a significant relationship, a humiliating or deeply disappointing experience, the discovery of a life-threatening illness or disabling condition, or other similar situations. Traumatizing events can take a serious emotional toll on those involved, even if the event did not cause physical damage.

Regardless of its source, an emotional trauma contains three common elements: it was unexpected the person was unprepared there was nothing the person could do to prevent it from happening It is not the event that determines whether something is traumatic to someone, but the individual’s experience of the event. And it is not predictable how a given person will react to a particular event. For someone who is used to being in control of emotions and events, it may be surprising – even embarrassing – to discover that something like an accident or job loss can be so debilitating (Jaffe, Ph.D., 2005).

Victims’ Difficulties in Realizing the Legal Process

In the event of a vehicular accident, the victim who incurred the injuries has the legal right to file for compensation for the damage and injuries from someone who caused the accident. From the data gathered from the interview, researchers found out that vehicular accidents were having difficulties to realize the legal processes that they rightfully must achieve because of some contributory factors. These factors were revealed from their responses reflected below.

RP2	“...ang nakaaksidente sa akoo sir kay kwartaan dayun naay koneksiyon mao ang proseso sa paglihok sa akoo katungod kay kulang nalang ma thank you or lantaw nako dili patas...”
RP3	“...wala koy saktong pangwarta para ilihok sa pafollow-up sa maong kaso, hilabina jud kay wala nag assist nako pag aya sa unsa ang mga angay buhaton...kay mukaon man og oras ang pag sekaso og direktang maapektahan ang akong pagpanginabuhi...”
RP5	“...ang nakaaksidente nako sir kay pobre ra sab, nangebuhi rapud og naglisud pud og sulbad sa problema nga iyaha gedangatan mao madugay ang dagan sa pagproseso sa akong mga claims...”
RP8	“...na hit and run ko sir man, di masubay kung kinsa ang nasad-an, hinay pajud ang paimbestiga kay walay mubarog nga saksi sa maong...”
RP10	“...di ko kareklamo man sir bisan ako ang angul kay wala man ko lisensya...”
RP11	“...bias man kay lage impluwensyado ang nasad-an, wala jud nako nakuha ang tukmang hustisya isip usa ka biktima...?”
RP14	“...gesaad-saaran rako sir oi, para masettle ang damages og ang gasto sa akoo injury, wala man lang follow-up o assistance sa awtoridad, wala pud nagpakabana ang tag-iya sa sakyanan kay ang nakasala trabahante raman sad.

Data gathered shows the responses of the vehicular accident victims when asked about their experiences in imposing legal actions against the person who caused the accident. From their responses, researchers found out that they have through lots of difficulties in working on the following factors: justice bias, lack of finances, lack of settlement money on the person who cause the accident, unknown identity of the person who caused the accident, lack of legal driving requirement on the part of the victim and lack of knowledge of the victims in the matter to knowing his or her legal rights. These factors have caused much delay or if not denial of the victim’s rights. This is sad but true.

The right to a fair trial and fair justice is one of the important pillars of a democratic society. This right must be given to all who have experience injustice at any cost in the existence of the justice system of the country.

Without proper functioning and assistance to the vehicular accident victims – rights and democracy are delayed (Ang, 2005).

CONCLUSIONS

The study showed that despite the fact that vehicular victims have been through emotional trauma from the accident that was been inflicted on them, they indeed also faced difficulties on fight for their rights to attain justice in doing their legal process. These may be the result of the contributions that have been presented

from this study however it is an important factor that each person has the right to proper justice. For whatsoever reason, the government, itself must find a means to realize the amendment of the delay of the justice system of the country. All Filipinos deserve it regardless of status. Whereas, research does not mean conclusive totally on the results of the study however it was always understood that anecdotally observed from this study that it is always the poor, the unknown, and the knowledgeable are the losing end.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the result of the study, researchers have ended up with these recommendations: PNP personnel should have provided person-in charged to make follow-ups to anyone who is the victim of vehicular accidents, from here, victims would likely receive any assistance with any concerns they are faced to and of course, the delay of claiming their rights as victims would likely be prevented. The government also must provide counseling to vehicular victims who have been into a traumatic experience when needed – they deserve the peace of mind that being haunted by the traumatic experience that would like will result in a change of behavior in the future.

Declarations

Source of Funding

This research work did not receive any grant from funding agencies in the public or not-for-profit sectors.

Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare no competing financial, professional and personal interests.

Consent for publication

Authors declare that they consented for the publication of this research work.

REFERENCES:

1. Ang, Alvin (2005) Determining the Costs of Delay in the Philippine Criminal Justice System https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Alvin-Ang/publication/299410736_Determining_the_Costs_of_Delay_in_the_Philippine_Criminal_Justice_System/links/
2. Ackaah, Y. (2019). Helmets: a road safety manual for decision-makers and practitioners. Geneva: World Health Organization 2018. <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/helmets-a-road>. Retrieved on April 21, 2019.
3. Adefalu, M. (2019). Helmets for preventing injury in motorcycle riders. Cochrane Database Syst Rev.2008:CD004333. Retrieved on June 02, 2019 from <https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD004333.pub3>.
4. Alfukaar, (2019). The prevalence of non-standard helmet use and head injuries among motorcycle riders. Retrieved on October 06, 2019 from 1999;31:229–33.<https://doi.org/10.1016/s0001-4575>.
5. Buckley, B et. Al (2019). Head injury mechanisms in helmet-protected motorcyclists: prospective multicenter study. J Trauma. Retrieved from January 06, 2019 from 2001;51:949–58. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00005373-2001>.
6. Dissanayake et al., (2019). Observation of motorcycle helmet use rates in Michigan after partial repeal of the universal motorcycle helmet law. Accid Anal Prev. 2016; 95:178–86. Retrived on May 13, 2019 from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.aap.2016.07.009>.
7. Jain, S., Choudhari, P., & Srivastava, A. (2021). The fundamentals of Internet of Things: architectures, enabling technologies, and applications. Healthcare Paradigms in the Internet of Things Ecosystem, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-12-819664-9.00001-6>

8. Kim, C. (2019, September 19). Road Accidents in the Philippines: Causes, Facts & Latest Statistics. Philkotse.Com. <https://philkotse.com/safe-driving/road-accidents-in-the-philippines-causes-facts-latest-statistics-5455>
9. Ryan M. Paradina, Marvin I. Noroña (2021). Applications and Challenges of Adopting Internet of Things (IoT) in Reducing Road Traffic Accidents. Proceedings of the Second Asia Pacific International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management Surakarta, Indonesia, September 14-16, 2021 <http://ieomsociety.org/proceedings/2021indonesia/204.pdf>
10. Road Traffic Injuries. (2020). <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/road-traffic-injuries>
11. Sachdev, S., Macwan, J., Patel, C., & Doshi, N. (2019). Voice-Controlled Autonomous Vehicle Using IoT. *Procedia Computer Science*, 160, 712–717. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2019.11.022>
12. Safaei et al., (2021). “Association between speeding and use of alcohol and medicinal and illegal drugs and involvement in road traffic crashes among motor vehicle drivers,” *Traffic Inj. Prev.*, vol. 1–7, Jan. 2019, doi:10.1080/15389588.2018.1518577.
13. Zhou, L. (2021). Knowledge, attitude, and practice of commercial motorcyclists in the use of crash helmet and other safety measures. *Traffic Injury Prevention*, 8(2), 137–141