

Paano Ka Uuwi? An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis on the Lived Experiences of Tikling Commuters in Hagonoy, Bulacan

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ABSTRACT

The Philippines faces numerous environmental challenges, particularly in Hagonoy, Bulacan, which regularly experiences tidal flooding. While Tikling serves as the main transportation in Hagonoy, Bulacan, existing studies have mostly focused on technical and economic aspects of Tikling transportation, leaving a significant gap in overlooking the lived experiences and meaning-making processes of Tikling commuters. This study aimed to examine the lived experiences of Tikling commuters in Hagonoy, exploring Sikolohiyang Pilipino (SP) values that shape their *loob* (inner experiences), *labas* (external challenges), emerging cultural values, purposes of Tikling use, and perceived implications during flooding. The study employed a qualitative phenomenological design, utilizing Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) for an in-depth understanding. Data came from semi-structured interviews, observations, and Sikolohiyang Pilipino indigenous methods such as Pakikipagkwentuhan, Pagtatanong-tanong, and Pagpapatotoo with eight purposively and snowball-sampled participants. The findings exhibited five key themes that highlight the emotional coping, external barriers, cultural meaning-making, Tikling's dual role of benefit and sacrifices, and its essential mobility. Commuters showed resilience through collective practices, faith, and adaptability despite recurring risks. The research findings indicate that resilience is both relational and rooted in culture, influenced by the interplay of *loob* and *labas*. This underscores the necessity for transportation solutions that are sensitive to context and based within the community, particularly in areas vulnerable to flooding.

Keywords: Commuters, flood, Sikolohiyang Pilipino, Tikling, transportation

INTRODUCTION

The Philippines is prone and greatly vulnerable to the harmful effects of climate change [36]. Its archipelagic location inside the Pacific Ring of Fire results in the passage of approximately twenty (20) typhoons each year, along with strong winds, heavy rains, storm surges, and landslides [22, 16-17]. As a result, it is inevitable for the country to experience long-term problems regarding severe flooding. In a specific context at the local level, the province of Bulacan is no different from the risks and dangers of typhoons, as this leads to imminent sinking of some municipalities and towns [25]. Hagonoy is one of the most flood-prone municipalities in the province because of its close location to the bodies of water [40]. Among Bulakenyos, Hagonoy remains known for its long-term flooding, which is further exacerbated by the continuous development projects inside the municipality.

Given these circumstances, “*Paano ka uuwi?*” describes the frequent questions that Hagonoy commuters get asked as they face challenges related to flooding on their way home [40]. The prolonged flooding is affecting twenty-five (25) to twenty-six (26) barangays, disrupting transportation, commerce, and everyday life even in times of non-typhoon periods [7]. Beyond being flooded, their situations also put the residents in uncertainty as it disrupts their daily lives, particularly their transportation. From this question, the study focused on the reality of going home in Hagonoy, not merely as an activity, but as a continuous and relentless challenge shaped by those who experienced it themselves. The purpose of this section is to shed light on the lived experiences of Hagonoy Tikling commuters traveling through flooded roads, based on the existing body of knowledge, particularly centered on Sikolohiyang Pilipino (SP), as well as other related transportation and mobility studies. This section also shows the frameworks of the study that guided its phenomenological approach.

The Problem and Its Background

Flooding occurs when the levels of water rise to the surface. It could either appear gradually or suddenly. It reaches a point where the typical volume of water exceeds its expected limit before eventually returning to its normal level [18]. However, in some cases, water levels would not return to their normal state even though several days or weeks passed, which led to class suspensions and infrastructure casualties [5, 19]. Furthermore, class schedules of students in local elementary schools in Hagonoy are usually adjusted around tide levels, assuming that it would eventually subside in due time [37]. In cases where flooding was severe, the local government initiated total class suspensions until flooding subsided.

Disruptions of the daily lives and routines of residents in Hagonoy, Bulacan, were brought by these persistent issues of flooding. Due to these persistent challenges faced by locals, modifying vehicles such as Tikling became a practical means of sustaining the municipality's transportation, which enabled commuters to pass through flooded roads and, therefore, minimized the disruptions brought by flooding. While commuting is just a part of one's daily routine, it has become an essential and challenging aspect of life for the residents of Hagonoy, due to the frequent and severe flooding in the area. In some scenarios, commuters even had to rely on either improvised boats or Tikling as a primary mode of transportation despite the risks attached to utilizing them.

Living in these circumstances, the people of Hagonoy have learned to face and live with the daily realities of their flooded roads and streets that have always been submerged because of the rising water level from the ocean near them and the excessive rainfall that happens seasonally [12]. However, despite their adaptation in this situation through the birth of Tikling's modified design, locals still experience notable and multifaceted challenges in crossing the said flooded roads. Through this study's practical significance and the personal narratives of Tikling commuters, the researchers aim to shed light on the lived experiences and realities of Hagonoy's residents who have been collectively submerged, not only in floodwaters but also in the burdens it entails ever since.

By discussing the creativity, resiliency, and initiatives of Tikling commuters, this study offers valuable recommendations to policymakers, transportation innovators, and leaders to improve the mobility of people in flood-prone areas. This may offer solutions to the daily problems encountered by the people of Hagonoy with regard to their work, education, and economy. Most especially, the information to be used in the study would emanate from the experiences of the Filipino people, which agrees with the objectives of SP to understand the perspective, orientation, and psychology of the Filipino people as viewed from the perspective of the indigenous Filipino.

In understanding the experiences of the people of Hagonoy as commuters, the study is in consonance with the objectives of the Sustainable Development Goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity on earth [24]. SDG 9 focuses on building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and encouraging innovation. In this aspect, the use of Tikling as a vital mode of transportation may be considered an innovation that shows how the people of Hagonoy cope with their situations. SDG 11 focuses on creating sustainable cities and communities. It aims to create communities that are "inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable." In relation to the study, it is worth noting that in understanding the reality of Tikling commuters, it becomes more obvious how transportation in flood-prone places like Hagonoy should be appropriate.

Municipality of Hagonoy

Hagonoy is a municipality in Bulacan that is located in the coastal area of the Philippines, which experiences challenges in managing flood waters [23]. People who are living in this municipality are called Hagoños or Hagonoños interchangeably, although the latter was mostly used in their local government's referral to its constituents.

In the geographical aspect, it is near the coastal area and has a low elevation, which causes the nearby communities to be submerged during high tide and heavy rains. Up to date, news about road elevations in Hagonoy remains prevalent, as the local government has already completed a number of road improvements to

reduce the effects of flooding. However, several residents, especially those living alongside the waterways, are still not convinced whether these road modifications will provide long-term security [12]. The residents who were unable to keep up with these road elevations are the ones being affected the most, and some of them are pointing out the poor waste management as a factor why recurring floods happen [20], not to mention the recent entanglement of their municipality to the flood control controversy which also prompted local rallies and mobilization movements [30].

Because of the current challenges that the people of Hagonoy face from recurring floods to road elevations that result in several homes a few feet below, modifying their vehicles became a practical move to sustain their transportation system. This also helps the commuters to travel through submerged roads and avoid disruptions caused by floods.

Commuting

Commuting from home to work is a normal part of every person's daily life [28]. However, commuters face different challenges when travelling in inclement weather, which puts their safety at risk. There were times when unexpected rains occurred [6] that resulted in flooding, disrupting people's routines, and in turn, commuters face additional burdens such as increased travel duration and waiting time [36]. Whenever high tides occur in Hagonoy, the only mode of transportation that can navigate through the flooded roads is boats and Tiklings, leaving the commuters with only two options to travel through flooded roads [39]. In simple terms, despite the difference in fare cost compared to regular tricycles, commuters of Hagonoy choose Tiklings to travel to submerged roads regardless of the danger and risks associated with it.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section presents literature relevant to the lived experiences of Hagonoy's commuters, particularly those who use Tikling in their daily travel.

Hagonoy's Tikling tricycles

In Hagonoy, Bulacan, tricycle drivers and welders in the area joined forces to transform tricycles into what would be called Tikling, a project that began as early as 2021. These tricycles were then equipped with long extensions made of metal to raise the motorcycle as well as the sidecar above the floodwaters. The term used to call these modified tricycles was inspired by the Tikling bird species (*Gallirallus striatus*), which is recognized for its long legs as well as its capacity to move through a trap [3]. This project was a significant transportation innovation for the community as a response to the worsening flood situation brought about by the rise in sea levels. It was also an attempt to relieve the tricycle drivers of the financial issues they were facing in having their motors constantly fixed, as well as the need to provide transportation services despite the flood situation, especially in low-lying areas within Hagonoy. This innovation, therefore, contributed remarkably to the lives of the Hagonoños as a mode of transportation despite the flood situation.

However, despite Tikling providing an easily accessible solution, there was still an underlying concern that these vehicles were not constructed based on existing quality and safety standards. This situation posed a moderate level of risk because these vehicles were having difficulties in navigating through different depths of floodwaters and road conditions [12, 39]. Due to exposure to both saltwater and freshwater damage, there was a gradual deterioration of these vehicles, which also contributed to the stress felt by the driver because of the increasing cost of repairing and maintaining these vehicles.

The Tikling represented the adaptability, resilience, and resourcefulness of the people of Hagonoy, especially in handling their struggles against environmental challenges brought by the rise of sea levels, where their need to sustain their source of livelihood became more important than their need to adhere to safety precautions [38]. This demonstrated the balancing act required for one to sustain his or her source of livelihood while being confronted with actual challenges, such as accidents and the deterioration of vehicles due to corrosion. Therefore, it reflected the resilience, resourcefulness, and optimism of the commuters. However, this equally demonstrated the lack of knowledge regarding the underlying reasons for the behavior of the people, which is where this

present study came into play, creating an important opportunity to explore the untapped experiences of the people.

Tikling Commuters

In the flood-prone municipality of Hagonoy, Tiklings remain an essential mode of transportation to help its residents adapt to recurring floods [4]. Tikling commuters face these floods regardless of the risks anchored to it, which shape their similar yet tough experiences every day. However, existing studies about Tiklings and its commuters are not only limited, but are also insufficient, because the majority of the literature focuses more on the bigger transportation system and focuses less on the local study gaps.

Tikling commuters are the ones who ride Tiklings. Their age range varies from youth to the elderly. The only qualifying criteria for someone to be a Tikling commuter is riding a modified tricycle, regardless of how often they use it. With this, there is no clear definition from existing literature of what a Tikling commuter is, for it is self-explanatory in nature.

Regardless, based on available literature, it was reported that different challenges were faced by Tikling commuters while riding them. Similar to what was earlier stated, several studies revealed that there was a financial struggle being experienced by the Tikling commuters due to high fare costs. According to Antonio [4], the fare cost of a Tikling ride almost doubles during high tides. It ranges from more or less than ₱20 to ₱40 on a regular day, while on days of high tides, it costs ₱60, according to reports from locals and drivers. This shows a shared experience of commuters that rides Tiklings on a daily basis, wherein the increase in fare cost is not proportional and affects vulnerable families [39].

Aside from these, commuters also experienced longer travelling hours despite using Tiklings that negatively impacts productivity, attendance, and access to essential services. This kind of disruption is similar to what Abad et al. [1] discovered in Metro Manila, wherein flooding limits mobility and prolongs transportation hours. Concerns about safety are also a significant issue, as commuters experience a moderate level of danger when riding Tiklings amidst the strong currents and deep floods. This reflects the findings of Base et al. [8], which stated that safety and reliability play a big role in commuter satisfaction.

The inconsistency in the design of Tiklings causes different levels of comfort and danger to those riding them, which reflects a broader call for the betterment of the services they offer to the Philippine transportation system, such as jeepney modernization [41]. Despite these challenges, Tiklings remain a significant mode of transportation to flood-prone areas like Hagonoy. This showcases a clear contradiction between necessity and hardship in the daily lives of the Tikling commuters of the municipality.

Sikolohiyang Pilipino and the psychology of commuting

Sikolohiyang Pilipino, as established by Virgilio Enriquez [14], indicated that in order for a psychological study or inquiry to guarantee its genuineness, authenticity, and relevance, it had to be deeply grounded in the culture, language, and experiences of Filipinos. Core concepts of SP, such as *kapwa* (shared identity), *loob* (inner self or experiences), and *pakikipagkapwa*, positioned human behavior not in the domain of individual cognition but with consideration to the social and ecological domains that an individual naturally belongs to [27]. Regarding daily commuting under constant environmental stress, similar to what Hagonoy residents experienced, SP served as a suitable approach to their experiences as it provided a culturally sensitive approach to understanding resilience, meaning-making, and adaptive behavior outside the narrow, individualistic confines of Western paradigms [32], much like how *labas* (external conditions) provided an encompassing lens to these struggles.

Furthermore, studies that explored mobility and environment suggested that Filipinos possessed the ability to turn their everyday struggles into spaces for cultural transformations. For example, Kurata et al. [17] conducted a quantitative study about the factors affecting the disaster preparedness of flood-prone areas in the country and discovered that personal flood experiences in Luzon communities enhanced knowledge and resiliency. This enabled residents to reframe flooding not only as a physical threat but also as an opportunity to adapt and be more prepared for the next flood that may occur. From this, it was inferred that commuters demonstrated forms

of *diskarte*, a resourceful way of solving problems, rooted in one's *loob* when navigating disrupted transport systems. This reflected how traces of SP were drawn from existing studies, which helped in further understanding Filipinos' psychology through a rigorous understanding of its core.

Similarly, studies that delved into the facets of Filipino commuting exposed stress-coping patterns that were culturally modulated. Abad et al. [1] concluded in 2020 that during heavy rains and traffic congestion, commuters from Metro Manila experienced anxiety and time pressure. From an SP perspective, these were connected to Filipino values like *pagtitiis* or even humor-behavioral responses that resonated with SP's *bahala na*. Localizing this in rural and coastal areas, Umali et al. [39] explained how tidal flooding urged commuters to adjust their daily rhythms toward collective adjustments that translate to *pakikipagkaisa* or mutuality in facing uncertainty via *pakikiramdam*, such as ridesharing or improvised transport.

In the existing literature, the decontextualization of commuting psychology was also critiqued by SP, which tended to reduce mobility to mere optimizing indicators [28], a trend that researchers also observed. Conversely, the experiences of Filipino commuters were deeply rooted, thoroughly tied to familial responsibilities, community expectations, and fate [13]. In Hagonoy, where infrastructures are frequently inadequate or substandard, constant flooding positioned commuters in situations where they did not simply "adapt" but rather, engaged in various coping mechanisms with drivers, co-passengers, and local innovators that co-constructed individual meaning and shared behaviors that stemmed from the inconvenience.

While SP did not inherently view Filipino experiences as negative in nature, the researchers sought not to glorify the hardships experienced by commuters during the Tikling commute but to understand the varying facets that may be uncovered throughout the study. Consequently, applying SP to the psychology of commuting in flood-prone areas like Hagonoy shifted the lens of inquiry from behavioral outcomes toward their lived experiences into a more holistic, culturally mediated process. This perspective highlighted how Hagonoeños, particularly Tikling commuters, made their way through floodwater, emotional tides, and social relations on a daily basis.

Manifestation of Sikolohiyang Pilipino in the lives of commuters

Sikolohiyang Pilipino provides an indigenous lens in understanding how Filipinos face environmental challenges, particularly in the context of commuting in the flood-prone municipality of Hagonoy. The existing values and concepts of SP, such as *kapwa* (shared identity), *lakas ng loob* (inner strength), and *bahala na* (fatalistic determination), have emerged in studies about disaster resilience and migration, which indicated their possible significance in everyday transportation amid challenges [19, 21, 9].

For instance, *kapwa* may manifest in a built connection between Tikling drivers and their commuters, wherein they are both helping each other in their goal; the drivers strive to get the passengers to their destination safely and earn a living, while the commuters pay to value the effort and risk undertaken by the drivers. Also, the cooperation of the drivers and welders in constructing the Tikling can be an example of the relevance of *kapwa* in their situation [21]. Similarly, *lakas ng loob* could explain the courage of the commuters in riding the Tikling in the submerged roads of Hagonoy, such as the students and workers who continue despite fear and danger [9]. Hence, while not pre-assumed, these values may serve as a basis for understanding the decisions and actions of commuters.

Moreover, *bahala na* has been documented as an important coping mechanism immersed by the Filipinos in facing highly uncertain contexts where faith and action are integrated [9]. In the context of Tikling commuters, they may make use of *bahala na* as they decide to navigate the flooded roads, not as a passive surrender, but as a dynamic balance of acceptance and action [27]. This coping mechanism, along with *kapwa* and *lakas ng loob*, may work together in the lived experiences of Tikling commuters. These SP values serve as a flexible, indigenous lens to further explore the lived experiences of Tikling commuters, while allowing other possible values to emerge naturally later in the study.

In addition, the daily struggles of commuting reflect the broader theme of Filipino resilience in the face of uncertainty. Residents of Hagonoy are facing unpredictable situations, such as flooding, unstable routes, and limited transportation options. As stated by Rivelia [31], practical coping mechanisms often reflect Filipino

values that show resourcefulness and adaptability as cultural strengths. In this perception, Tikling tricycles are seen as more than just a vehicle, but also as a symbol of collective innovation and communal adaptation to survive.

On the other hand, this study shed light on the issues of vulnerability and agency of Tikling commuters. Through the lens of SP, the study uncovered the in-depth narratives of Tikling commuters who face long rides, get exposed to floodwaters, and face several safety risks. At the same time, the study also revealed the resilience, inventiveness, and adaptation that are anchored to the cultural values of *bahala na*, *lakas ng loob*, and *diskarte*. Finally, the study highlighted both the vulnerability and resilience of Tikling commuters, emphasizing how cultural values shape their responses to everyday challenges.

Synthesis

Existing studies indicated that travelling during floods was associated with economic, social, and emotional challenges that affected the driver as well as the passenger. Previous research pointed out that economic challenges were associated with the flooding, as noted by Umali et al. [39]. In addition, Antonio [4] noted that the flooding affected the mode of transportation used by operators like tricycle and Tikling riders to ensure that they earned their daily bread despite the challenges associated with the floods. All the studies highlighted the issue of resilience among the members of the transportation community, but had different focuses. Some studies focus on the challenges associated with local transportation, while others highlight individual experiences and strategies used to cope with the challenges.

These similarities imply that transportation services in the flood-prone areas like Hagonoy do not merely involve logistical considerations but also involve deeper social and cultural aspects that significantly affect how the residents view the risk they face. This tension between the acknowledgement of the risk and the need for mobility also underlines the need to understand the experiences of the commuter of Tikling, as they learn to live in uncertainty, inconvenience, and the need for adaptation as part of the normal experience of life.. As Marasigan et al. [19] explained in the context of overseas Filipino workers, this presents a form of resilience but also highlights how the system fails to provide the residents with the support they need through an effective transportation system.

However, there are still important gaps that need to be filled. Most of the existing literature on the Tikling has been focused more on the technical, economic, and tourism-related aspects, with less attention to how commuters actually live out their commuting practices based on the experiences gained over time and the cultural values instilled in them. Although the gaps in infrastructure and costs have been extensively discussed, there has been less research done on how commuters develop resiliency and purpose in the midst of their constant battle for reliable transportation. Most of the cultural values of the Filipinos still need to be explored, especially in the context of explaining the Hagonoeños' response to risk, as well as their development of resiliency.

Research Objectives

The study aimed to have an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of Hagonoeños, molded by their daily Tikling commutes in the flood-prone areas of their municipality. As the above-mentioned studies prove, Filipino commuters in general undergo varying challenges as they try to make their way back to their homes, such as costly fares, longer travel hours, and the physical hardship of navigating flooded roads. Particularly, Tikling commuters' perseverance and the ability to adapt have shown varying core principles that could be better understood through SP's indigenous lens and would, in turn, enrich the said field, and would contribute to broadening the scope of Filipino psychology. In line with this, the study pursued the following objectives:

1. To examine how the psychological aspects of Sikolohiyang Pilipino are reflected in the *loob* (inner experience) of Tikling commuters of Hagonoy, Bulacan.
2. To describe the everyday difficulties in the *labas* (external conditions) encountered by Tikling commuters in flood-prone areas of Hagonoy, Bulacan.

3. To understand how Filipino cultural values shape the lived experiences of Tikling commuters.
4. To explore the purposes attributed by commuters to the use of Tikling in flood-afflicted areas of Hagonoy, Bulacan.
5. To identify the perceived implications of Tikling use in the commuters' narratives amid recurring floods.

The Research Gap

Existing studies about Tiklings of Hagonoy, Bulacan are mainly focused on the technical, socio-economic, and tourism-related aspects of Tiklings, which left the voices of the commuters who ride Tiklings on a daily basis unheard, even though they were the ones who rely on Tiklings as their means of transportation every day. For instance, one study has showed how Hagonoeños modify their regular tricycles to Tiklings [39] because of flooding and how they view the risk, while another one focused more on the acceptance of Tiklings in the local tourism sector [12]. While these studies provided important information about Tikling's structural and practical aspects, they did not cover the lived experiences of the commuters.

Other studies in the Philippines also emphasized the infrastructure and economic issues, which created a knowledge and population gap about the Tikling commuters' general experiences, resulting in studies just focusing on the external issues instead of the internal, cultural, and psychological aspects of commuting.

A cultural-psychological perspective is vital in examining these gaps. Much like what the study of Marasigan et al. [19] found, wherein people shared their stories of struggles and success by balancing *hirap* (hardship) and *sarap* (joy), often incorporating how they present their experiences based on their audience. This helped in shedding light on how the Hagonoeños experience commuting with the use of Tikling, faced challenges such as flooding, traffic, and safety concerns, while navigating their everyday lives.

Similarly, issues about infrastructure, tourism, and economic aspects are the main highlights in several studies in the Philippines, but the actual experiences of the commuters are rarely reported, especially the ones residing in flood-prone areas or low-lying areas like Hagonoy, Bulacan. For instance, Caoleng [10] focused on the commuters' perspective in terms of the fare cost of tricycles, but it is centered only on the pricing and affordability rather than the emotional, cultural significance, and the everyday realities of commuters. Because of this, researchers found that there remains a co-existing knowledge and population gap in understanding how Hagonoeños face the challenges, adaptation, and resilience in their daily journey with Tiklings.

This study sought to address these gaps by focusing on their lived experiences, with the use of SP [27], extracting insights from their narratives through a culturally relevant approach, along with Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) by Smith and Osborn [34], which made interpretive sense of the said responses.

The Current Study

This qualitative study is an in-depth investigation of the lived experiences of Tikling commuters who are continuously affected by coastal flooding in Hagonoy, Bulacan. This study focused on a deeper understanding of psychological and cultural dimensions of commuting experience and how SP is manifested in these experiences. In this way, it addressed the gap in existing literature that is focused solely on economic and structural aspects of Tikling tricycles. Moreover, this study examines the routines, challenges, and coping strategies embodied by the Tikling commuters that help to further understand the participants' lived experiences. The approach allows any Filipino cultural values and unexplored psychological concepts to naturally emerge from the data, therefore contributing to making sense of how these concepts manifest in the commuters' attitudes, decisions, and behaviors. This study also has clear limitations, as it excludes commuters who are using different modes of transportation, such as jeepneys, pedicabs, regular tricycles, and boats. Also, generalizability is not the primary aim of this study, but rather to provide an in-depth understanding of subjective commuting experiences of Tikling commuters of Hagonoy.

Overall, this study gives an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of Tikling commuters in Hagonoy and how SP values are reflected in their lived experiences despite various challenges. Through exploring how

Hagonoños demonstrated these values, this study could contribute to the broadening of SP, particularly in how individuals face risk with courage and creativity. Lastly, this study provided an important contribution to the discourse regarding indigenous psychological concepts by demonstrating how economic and cultural phenomena continue to shape the diverse ways Filipinos strive and rise during times of hardship.

Theoretical Framework

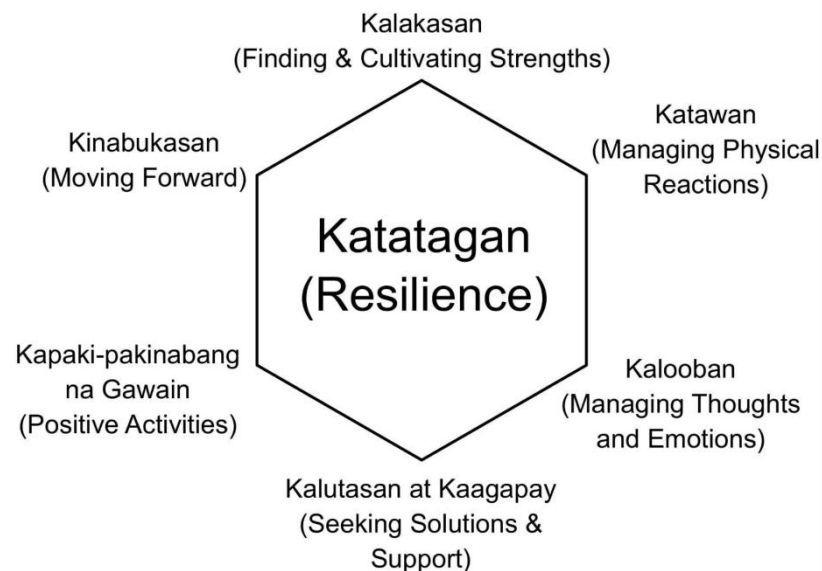


Figure 1. Katatagan Model by Hechanova et al. (2015)

The study was grounded in Sikolohiyang Pilipino, the indigenous psychology founded by Virgilio Enriquez [14] and his students, rooted in what Filipinos actually live in varying experiences, languages, and worldviews. It provided a great emphasis on “indigenization from within,” wherein the theories, methods, and interpretations of Filipino psychology must arise from within the culture itself over the typical Western paradigms. SP viewed these in a way, considering that previous studies conducted by foreign researchers about Filipinos' realities were interpreted from an outside and colonial perspective, instead of deep, culturally-mediated immersion in the people's culture [27]; yet, they were able to pass these from generation to generation, contributing to the distorted or even false Filipino identity.

SP's core objectives were fulfilled through the usage of various Filipino terms in the paper, as well as making it the main language of communication to the participants. Additionally, the researchers utilized SP methods such as *pakikipagkwentuhan* and *pagtatanong-tanong* in acquiring the participants' own accounts and stories, which helped in making sense of the meanings obtained in the findings.

Thus, to further solidify the study's alignment with SP, the researchers also anchored this study to be aided by the lens of the *Katatagan* Model by Hechanova et al. [15], which was originally made as an intervention framework for Filipino disaster survivors. This model showcased the Filipino cultural traits that the said survivors demonstrated as they navigate their lives post-disaster, mainly focusing on their *katatagan* or resilience.

This grounding of *Katatagan* Model emerged post-hoc to the study's findings, and while this concept was drawn from the context of resilience after surviving disasters, the researchers found that some of *katatagan*'s processes have been reflected in the lived experiences of Tikling commuters who regularly face structural transport risks, uncertainties, and physical struggles. In this study, this model (as shown in Figure 1) was used not as a comprehensive framework to simply outline the findings, but as a culturally grounded interpretive lens that had notably helped in understanding the much wider implications and meanings of their experiences, including their resilience and adaptive coping.

Drawing from the outside lens, the adaptive processes of Tikling commuters were also better understood through the usage of Psychological Adaptation Theory [29], which only served as a supplementary lens but was still fully subordinated to SP. Instead of adopting PAT as it is, the theoretical underpinning of various concepts such as “identifying the challenge”, “coping strategies”, and “cognitive reframing” was contextualized into the existing SP constructs (e.g., *ulirat*, *diskarte*, *bahala na*, *kapwa*), which led to a centrally positioned and culturally mediated perspective. Any facet of PAT that did not resonate with the participants’ narratives was strategically discarded.

Additionally, the researchers emphasized that despite the fact that PAT was embedded in the study, it did not override SP at all, as it was deliberately “Filipinized” and kept supplementary to SP. The *maka-Pilipinong pananaliksik* remained central and has notably influenced in the comprehension and interpretation of the data. Thus, participants themselves decided, expressed through their own narratives, which parts of Rachmad’s process were actually suitable to their Filipino experience and which did not. This integration maintained SP as the primary lens while addressing Enriquez’s call for a liberated and liberating psychology, which, in turn, equipped the study to speak meaningfully to changes Filipinos shared with the rest of the world.

Conceptual Framework

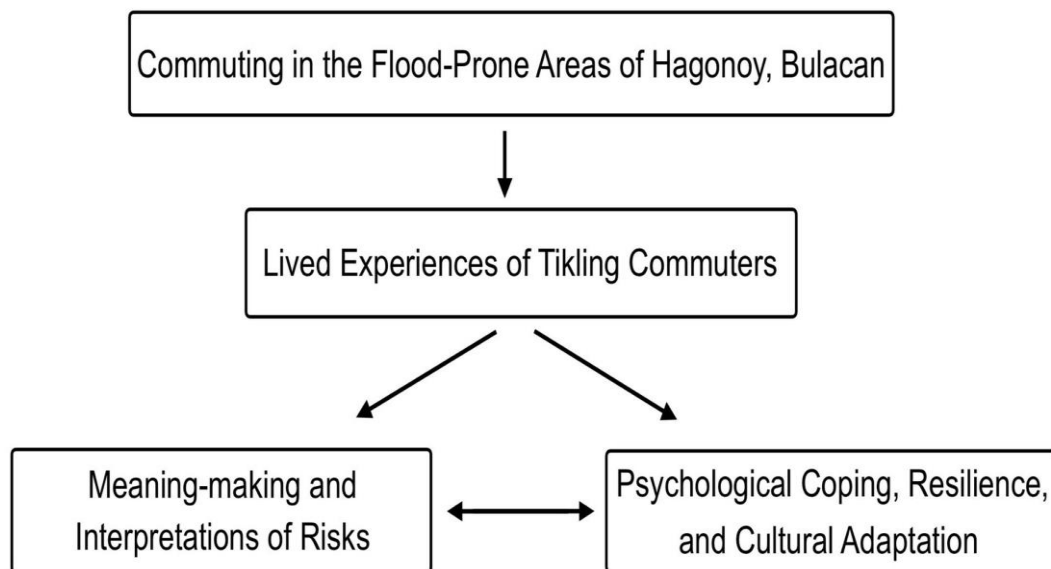


Figure 2. Conceptual framework of the study

The study’s conceptual framework was grounded in the phenomenological exploration of researchers into the lived experiences of Tikling commuters in the context of Hagonoy, Bulacan’s flood-prone areas. This framework illustrated that the daily commuting challenges faced constantly by the Tikling commuters actually shaped how they interpreted and made their own meanings, despite knowing the risks that come with it. These processes, in turn, not only allowed them to make sense of their collective struggles but also gave them the capacity to cope, adapt, and become resilient amidst their submerged situations, reflecting how Hagonoëños persisted in order to get home.

Additionally, this framework also proved that there is an interaction between meanings that have emerged from their lived experiences, along with psychological coping, resilience, and cultural adaptation. As aligned to IPA, this conceptual framework permitted the commuters’ narratives to come off naturally, allowing them to showcase the importance of their lived experiences, rather than being merely imposed by the researchers.

The direction of this framework flows from the environmental context through their lived experiences of Tikling commuters and their varying meaning-making systems, up to the parallel behaviors among them in terms of their way of coping and adaptation. It also demonstrated the study’s analytic understanding of their individual realities while digging deeper into comprehending human resilience and their adaptive behaviors in the context of Hagonoy’s informal commuting transport system.

METHODS

This section outlines the relevant methods that the researchers have undertaken, detailing the study's design, sampling, procedures, and data analysis.

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological design to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of Tikling commuters in Hagonoy, Bulacan. Particularly, the nature of this study was greatly inclined toward the utilization of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) [35, 34], which will be detailed in the data analysis. The researchers utilized IPA in such a way that it was able to discover varying aspects and primary meanings within the experiences that have been shaped by the commuters' infamous mode of transportation. In this sense, IPA has proved itself as the most appropriate approach for this study's nature, as its core objective was grounded in having a deeper, yet more personal grasp, of individuals' lived experiences and how they interpret these converging realities with their own meaning-making mechanisms, with which the researchers have also interpreted the very essence of their similar circumstances.

The data for this study have been gathered through semi-structured interviews and participant observation, hence the reason why the participants were also able to express not only their lived experiences as they are, but also their personal views and feelings about their Tikling commute. *Pakikipagkwentuhan* has also been helpful as the participants came from local communities filled with laypeople, although one of the key challenges was to build trust and rapport. This indigenous research method allowed the researchers to talk with the participants in a much more informal and less rigid manner [27], which aided in the rich participatory storytelling and genuine insights from the commuters' accounts. Moreso, it permitted the seamless, more natural, and reciprocal exchange of conversation, aligning with IPA's objective in understanding the participants not only during the data analysis period but also prior to it, which was during the interview process itself.

Apart from this, the researchers also utilized other indigenous research techniques by Pe-pua [26], such as *pagpapatotoo* (validation) and *pagtatanong-tanong*. These are firmly followed by the researchers and the study to remain anchored on the true essence of Sikolohiyang Pilipino (SP), which is mainly to understand the Filipino psychology from Filipinos themselves through Filipino researchers. *Pagpapatotoo* and *pagtatanong-tanong* aided the researchers in cross-checking whether the participants' narratives were interpreted according to what they meant to say, thus, allowing the results to truly reflect their lived experiences and not just to simply answer a series of formal questions.

Finally, this study followed an interpretivist paradigm, which put great emphasis on the importance of understanding multiple social realities from the perspective and interpretation of individuals who live within it, which in turn, greatly varies. Overall, these methodological integrations allowed the researchers to discover the embedded personal meanings and cultural importance attributed by Tikling commuters to their transportation and lived experiences, instead of simply extracting data for the purpose of generalizability.

Participants

Eight (8) consenting participants were selected by the researchers through purposive and snowball sampling. Through purposeful selection, individuals were chosen based on their attainment of the inclusion criteria provided by the researchers, which were relevant to the research objectives, in order to filter those who could give deep insights about their Tikling commute experiences in Hagonoy, Bulacan. The said criteria have been posted on the Facebook accounts of the researchers, acknowledging the wider and more efficient reach of social media across the masses. These said criteria were as follows:

- Individuals aged 18 years or above
- A resident of Hagonoy, Bulacan, specifically those from the low-lying portions of their municipality
- Uses Tikling two (2) to three (3) times a week

Consequently, while the social media post was helpful, it took a reasonable amount of time for the researchers to complete all of its participants. The first participant was able to refer another Tikling commuter who not only fit the criteria, but also knew another person who utilizes the same mode of transportation. This referral chain adheres to snowball sampling, which gathered qualified participants who were also able to provide rich responses in accordance with the aims of the study. Table 1 provides a summary of the participants' profiles.

Table 1. Characteristics and demographics of participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Area in Hagonoy	Occupation	Frequency of Tikling Use
Edgar	21	M	Sagrada Familia	Artist	Daily
Tolentino	20	F	Sto. Rosario	Student	Daily
John	24	M	San Agustin	Student	Daily
Raquel	22	F	Sta. Monica	Student	Daily
Rosario	23	F	San Miguel	Student	Daily
Cristina	44	F	Mercado	Solo-parent	Daily
Rosalinda	46	F	Mercado	Housewife	Daily
Anne	38	F	Mercado	Vendor	Daily

The eight (8) participants fell within the proposed six (6) to ten (10) Tikling commuters. The determined sample size and the number of actual participants remain to be aligned on the updated comprehensive guide in terms of participant quantity for qualitative phenomenological studies [11], as well as the rule of thumb in IPA studies [34, 35] concerning the saturation of responses, with which depth was prioritized over breadth. While the current study follows Tallara [37] for having six (6) participants in exploring the lived experiences of elementary teachers in Hagonoy, the researchers took into consideration the addition more participants as they were deemed needed to enrich the data further, and was then cutoff at eight (8) since new information no longer bring forth fresh and relevant insight to the research questions [2].

Instrument

To fully understand the participants' lived experiences, interviews were conducted. The researchers drafted an interview guide composed of open-ended questions, which was reviewed and examined by the thesis adviser to ensure that the constructed questions, methods, and approaches are appropriately sensitive to the participants and aligned with the study's objectives. The thesis professor validated these questions.

As for the participants, they have answered the interview questions verbally and individually during sessions. Their responses were audio-recorded with prior consent to produce accurate transcriptions for the data. This interview guide allowed the participants to express and share their experiences freely. The researchers ensured that the interview guide was thoroughly checked, verified by the thesis advisor, and was sensitive to the participants' feelings and emotions.

The interview guide was designed to address the following research questions:

1. How are the psychological aspects of Sikolohiyang Pilipino reflected in the *loob* (inner experience) of Tikling commuters of Hagonoy, Bulacan?
2. What are the everyday difficulties in the *labas* (external conditions) encountered by Tikling commuters in flood-prone areas of Hagonoy, Bulacan?

3. How do Filipino cultural values shape the lived experiences of Tikling commuters?
4. What are the purposes attributed by commuters to the use of Tikling in flood-afflicted areas of Hagonoy, Bulacan?
5. What are the perceived implications of Tikling use in the commuters' narratives amid recurring floods?

Procedures

This study employed purposive and snowball sampling in recruiting participants. The inclusion criteria required participants to be male or female active Tikling commuters aged 18 years old and above residing in Hagonoy, Bulacan. To reach the higher potential of participants, the researchers first posted an online call for participation on the social media platform Facebook, and coordinated with local Tikling drivers to help identify the Tikling commuters in their community. Interested individuals were contacted by the researchers and screened based on the inclusion criteria. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted along with participants' observations, which allowed the participants to express their commuting experiences, especially during the rainy season and uncertain weather conditions.

Focusing on the Sikolohiyang Pilipino roots of this study, the qualitative phenomenological approach is suited to understanding how SP occurs in the Lived experiences of Tikling commuters of Hagonoy, Bulacan. This study is grounded in the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach by Smith and Osborn [35] and Pe-Pua's *pagpapatotoo* [26].

Prior to the actual data collection, the interview guide underwent pilot testing with one commuter who met the study criteria. This was done to evaluate the clarity and relevance of the interview questions. Minor modifications were implemented in the wording and order of certain questions to improve the flow of the interview and ensure that participants could easily understand them.

Once eligible participants were identified, the researchers invited them to participate in the study and arranged the schedule and location of the interview based on the participants' availability and mutual agreement. Interviews were primarily conducted face-to-face in accessible locations within Hagonoy, Bulacan, while an online interview option was provided for participants who preferred a virtual setup. Two interviews were conducted with individuals at Bulacan State University - Malolos Campus, specifically at the Office of the Student Publications, who were also recognized as active Tikling commuters.

Before the interview began, each participant was given an information sheet and an informed consent form, which explained the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, confidentiality and anonymity measures, and the right to withdraw at any point without penalty. Participants were given sufficient time to read the documents, to comprehend their content, and ask questions before signing the consent form.

After obtaining consent, the researchers asked approval to audio-record the interview and informed participants that field notes would also be documented to capture contextual information and non-verbal signals associated with their narratives. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured format, starting with broad inquiries regarding the participants' commuting routines before gradually moving to deeper questions concerning their experiences using Tikling during periods of flooding and unpredictable weather conditions. The interviews included open-ended questions and lasted approximately 20 to 45 minutes, depending on the depth of the participants' responses.

At the end of the interview, the participants underwent a quick debriefing, during which the researchers explained the purpose of the study once more, answered any questions from the participants, and expressed appreciation for their participation. Each participant was then provided with a debriefing sheet that included a summary of the study along with the researchers' contact information for any additional questions they might have. As a token of appreciation for their time and contribution, each participant was offered a small compensation, which could be a small monetary allowance or a snack after the interview.

In alignment with the principles of Sikolohiyang Pilipino, the researchers employed both *pagtatanong-tanong* and *pagpapatotoo* throughout the data gathering process. The interviews were done in the spirit of *pagtatanong-tanong*, wherein the researchers engaged participants in a dialogue that was both conversational and culturally sensitive, allowing them to narrate their experiences using their own language, while follow-up questions were asked to clarify important points in their responses. Meanwhile, *pagpapatotoo* was practiced by returning to the participants, either virtually or face-to-face, to confirm the researchers' understanding of their statements and interpretations. Key points from the interviews were revisited with the participants, who allowed them to confirm, clarify, or expand upon their responses to ensure that the interpretations accurately represented their intended meanings and lived experiences, with which their *pagpapatotoo* sentiments have been duly and manually noted.

While the researchers are not Tikling commuters, they still acknowledged that their outsider positionality could have influenced their interpretation of the participants' experiences. Examining the experiences of participants from a similar external viewpoint enabled the researchers to remain open and curious in understanding the narratives shared by the participants, which was further enriched through immersion in their accounts and through the researchers' own experience of riding a Tikling.

To ensure credibility and reflexivity, the researchers engaged in *pagpapatotoo*, which involved ongoing reflection on their interpretations and the validation of the meanings expressed by the participants. This was supported through ongoing self-reflection, maintaining comprehensive field notes, and conducting peer debriefing sessions as recommended by Shaw et al. [33]. These practices were useful in monitoring potential biases and ensuring that the interpretations remained firmly rooted in the participants' construction of meaning regarding their lived experiences within the framework of Sikolohiyang Pilipino.

Throughout the course of the data gathering procedures, researchers encountered no external interruptions during the interview process. It has been greatly emphasized with the participants as well that the researchers remain open to any dialogue in such cases, so that they might withdraw their responses or further elaborate their answers. As of writing, no participant has reached out to withdraw their participation.

Data Analysis

The researchers utilized Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), specifically following the guidelines for IPA studies by Smith and Osborn [35], which are rooted in phenomenological, idiographic, double-hermeneutic philosophies. This approach helped in studying the lived experiences of Tikling commuters. IPA focused on how people made sense of their own experiences. This approach was crucial for understanding the personal meanings that commuters attributed to flooding, risks, and coping strategies. By adopting the double hermeneutic perspective, the researchers were able to acquire a detailed analysis that considered the cultural and contextual factors deeply rooted in Sikolohiyang Pilipino (SP), as both researchers and participants made sense of the data. Moreso, the idiographic approach was kept through analyzing the acquired data from each participant separately.

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews. It focused on the actual experiences of Tikling commuters, including their usual commute process, perception about risk, and their sensations about flooding. Prior to the actual conduction of the study, the group of researchers performed bracketing and reflexivity that helped in minimizing biases and reflected on individual perceptions, emotions, and stance with regard to the topic of interest. Each interview was audio-recorded with the consent of the participants. After the interview, each recording was manually transcribed and reviewed thoroughly by the researchers. Each interview recording was analyzed through continuous reading and re-reading, initial noting (even with the pilot testing phase), development of emerging themes, finding connections between emerging themes, transitioning from one participant to another, and looking for the usual patterns across all data. All of the transcripts of interviews were first-hand written in Filipino, but were eventually translated into English.

The initial analytical process began through an immersive review of transcripts to identify descriptive, linguistic, and conceptual significance of the data, eventually followed by the careful extraction of valuable statements that captured the idiographic essence of each narrative. Significant statements were turned into emerging themes and

organized into subordinate clusters through the "hermeneutic circle", an iterative, laborious cycle of analyzing and refining labels within and across all data. Subordinate themes were created through the researchers' utilization of a dendrogram and employed four crucial analytical techniques: abstraction to group based on similarity, subsumption to elevate specific significant themes, polarization to observe divergence, differences, and contextualization to ensure findings are relevant to the actual life of the participants. This structure enabled researchers to explore complex patterns, which led to the development of superordinate themes that represented the overarching, fundamental nature of meaning-making of the participants.

All throughout the data collection process, the researchers reflected on their own perspectives to ensure a thoughtful and sensitive interpretation of the data. Following Pe-Pua's *pagpapatotoo* (validation) [26], the researchers conducted brief follow-up *pagtatanong-tanong* sessions with all of the participants to share and validate emergent themes. Participants were invited to confirm, modify, and critique extracted themes to help co-construct actual meanings of their experiences as anchored in SP. The group of researchers worked together to refine the themes and sub-themes that had to be fixed, drawing on significant statements from participants to emphasize the richness of their lived experiences. Ultimately, the IPA provided a deeper understanding of their Tikling commutes, viewed as a dynamic experience shaped by personal, systemic, and cultural factors. This approach went beyond simply looking for patterns and offered a thorough, contextual process to confirm the actual meaning of their Tikling commutes in the Filipino experience, particularly in Hagonoy, where flooding was a common occurrence.

Ethical Consideration

The researchers adhered to the Code of Ethics for Philippine Psychologists and Psychometricians, along with the guidance of their research adviser. All of the participants have been given and presented with the informed consent, explaining it in their preferred language. The consent form was accompanied by other communication papers, such as an information sheet containing relevant context concerning the study. Participants have been made aware of the study's risks and benefits, with great emphasis on their right to withdraw at any point in the study without any repercussions or reprimand.

Apart from these, the questions and the researchers' approach took into consideration the feelings and well-being of the participants during the time of their respective interviews. These were done to further encourage them to share their experiences meaningfully and truthfully, without undue judgment from the researchers. Their anonymity and the confidentiality of their data have also been safeguarded in the conduct of this study through the usage of pseudonyms in transcribing the statements and reporting the findings. The audio-recorded files have also been secured in a virtual folder that requires a password in order to be accessed, adhering strictly to Republic Act No. 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

RESULTS

This section presents the study's findings grounded in the thematic analysis of interview data gathered from all participants, further enriched by embedding interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) to deepen the interpretation of the lived experiences of Tikling commuters in Hagonoy, Bulacan, as anchored to the principles of Sikolohiyang Pilipino (SP). Table 2 shows the five superordinate themes and twenty (20) subordinate themes that have emerged from the rigorous analysis of all transcripts.

The first superordinate theme, 'Navigating emotional challenges, psychological coping, and the emergence of resilience in the *loob* (inner experience) of Tikling commuters,' illustrated the reported internal manifestations inside the commuters' minds and their accompanying emotions. The second superordinate theme, 'External commuting barriers of riding a Tikling in flood-prone environments,' revealed the participants' tangible challenges under five subordinate themes: (a) Forced dependence of commuters on scarce Tikling transport during flooding, (b) Constant flooding redefined which mode of transport remains viable among others, (c) Commuting struggles as a result of systemic infrastructure neglect, (d) Embodied commuting hardships caused by inevitable floodwater exposure, and (e) New accessibility barriers in transportation as introduced by the elevated Tikling design.

On the third superordinate theme, ‘Making sense of commuting in flood-prone areas through Filipino cultural values,’ shows how commuters interpret and endure their commuting experiences through culturally embedded ways of coping and understanding adversities, reflected in three subordinate themes: (a) Enduring everyday commuting risk through *pagtitiis*, (b) Demonstrating *bayanihan* towards fellow Tikling commuters in times of commuting crisis, and (c) Creatively improvising transportation in response to flooding (*diskarte*).

The fourth superordinate theme, ‘Tikling as essential mobility to sustain everyday life during flooding,’ revealed how Tikling transportation functions according to the situation and necessity of the commuters, with four overarching subordinate themes: (a) Flood conditions transform Tikling from optional transportation into situational necessity, (b) Tikling as a means of sustaining livelihood and everyday roles, (c) Tikling maintains commuters' dignity and comfort during flood commuting, and (d) Choosing Tikling as the most efficient transport option during flooding.

Finally, the fifth superordinate theme, ‘Tikling commuting entails both benefits and sacrifices,’ captured the complex implications of relying on Tikling, uncovering four related subordinate themes: (a) Tikling shifts commuting uncertainty into mobility security, (b) Making financial sacrifices to afford and maintain transportation during flooding, (c) Accepting safety risks in commuting to maintain mobility, and (d) Relying on limited and inconsistent transportation alternatives during flooding.

Table 2. Summary of superordinate and subordinate themes

SUPERORDINATE THEMES	SUBORDINATE THEMES
<p>SP1. Navigating emotional challenges, psychological coping, and the emergence of resilience in the <i>loob</i> (inner experience) of Tikling commuters</p>	<p>SB1. Purposeful trust and emotional regulation amid uncontrollable commuting risk</p> <p>SB2. Intentional faith-based resilience as a psychological coping</p> <p>SB3. Persistent situational fear experienced during Tikling commute due to past incidents</p> <p>SB4. Experiencing emotional fatigue due to prolonged environmental adjustment</p>
<p>SP2. External commuting barriers of riding a Tikling in flood-prone environments</p>	<p>SB5. Forced dependence of commuters on scarce Tikling transport during flooding</p> <p>SB6. Constant flooding redefined which mode of transport remains viable among others</p> <p>SB7. Commuting struggles as a result of systemic infrastructure neglect</p> <p>SB8. Embodied commuting hardships caused by floodwater exposure</p> <p>SB9. New accessibility barriers in transportation as introduced by the elevated Tikling design</p>
<p>SP3. Making sense of commuting in flood-prone areas through Filipino cultural values</p>	<p>SB10. Enduring everyday commuting risk through <i>pagtitiis</i></p> <p>SB11. Demonstrating <i>bayanihan</i> towards fellow Tikling commuters in times of commuting crisis</p> <p>SB12. Creatively improvising transportation in response to flooding (<i>diskarte</i>)</p>

<p>SP4. Tikling as an essential mobility to sustain everyday life during flooding</p>	<p>SB13. Flood conditions transform Tikling from optional transportation into a situational necessity</p> <p>SB14. Tikling as a means of sustaining livelihood and everyday roles</p> <p>SB15. Tikling maintains commuters' dignity and comfort during flood commuting</p> <p>SB16. Choosing Tikling as the most efficient transport option during flooding</p>
<p>SP5. Tikling commuting entails both benefits and sacrifices</p>	<p>SB17. Tikling shifts commuting uncertainty into mobility security</p> <p>SB18. Making financial sacrifices to afford and maintain transportation during flooding</p> <p>SB19. Accepting safety risks in commuting to maintain mobility</p> <p>SB20. Relying on limited and inconsistent transportation alternatives during flooding</p>

Figure 3, on the other hand, shows the overall mapping of all extracted findings from the current study, presented through a dendrogram, to aid in the clustered illustration of superordinate and subordinate themes.

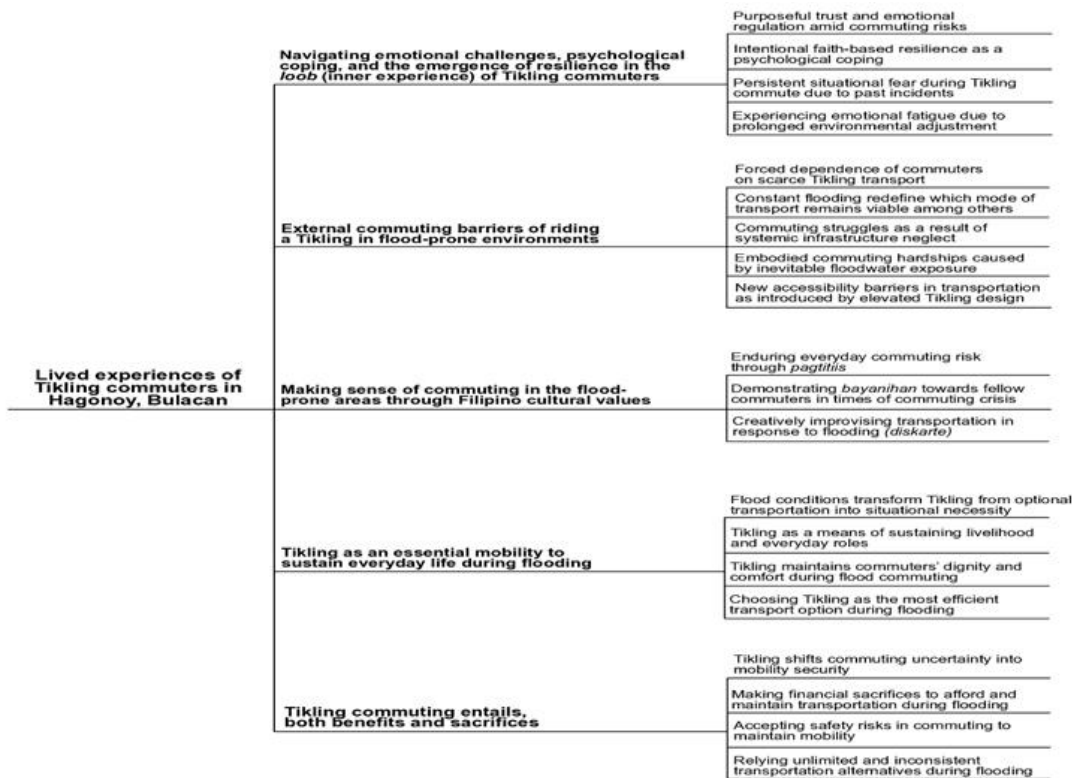


Figure 3. Dendrogram of the lived experiences of Tikling commuters

Superordinate theme 1: Navigating emotional challenges, psychological coping, and the emergence of resilience in the *loob* (inner experience) of Tikling commuters

This theme encompasses the participants' internal experiences and how their internal selves faced the challenges they would normally encounter as they ride a Tikling, revealing multifaceted feelings, psychological coping mechanisms, and resilience, all of which were happening inside their minds.

Purposeful trust and emotional regulation amid uncontrollable commuting risk

The participants' recollection of their Tikling commute revealed how they would demonstrate trust, surrender, and emotion regulation amid uncontrollable risks of riding a Tikling. Commuters' trust towards the drivers are reasoned. It is, after all, not a form of blind surrender. In a statement, one participant shared:

Rosario: "We just tend to trust the driver because hopefully, they made those tricycles safe. At least, they know it won't tip over, so I just believe it won't."

This proves that the trust of Tikling commuters was placed intentionally because it allows them to cope with the impending risks they all collectively know about. Given the stress they embrace as they ride a Tikling, trusting the driver has helped them maintain their calm and to still continue their commute. Sometimes, they even resort to cracking a joke with the driver, as said by another participant.

Raquel: "Sometimes, we jokingly tell the driver to be careful while driving because it is a hassle whenever a Tikling falls over."

This action shows social signaling and proactive coping, that even in such risky situations, humor has been their own way of regulating their emotions. This socially active engagement aids them in managing the thoughts of the risky Tikling ride, maintaining a sense of control, and reducing their anxiety amidst their commuting environment.

Intentional faith-based resilience as a psychological coping amid commuting risks

In the context of faith, along with the wide influence of Catholicism and Christianity in the country, even Tikling commuters demonstrate resilience that is rooted in their belief in God, a higher-being to whom they turn to for their prayers, not mouthed, but within them (*loob*), as they ride a Tikling. In a statement, one participant said:

Rosalinda: "We really just pray that we may be able to cross safely."

Commuters also know the danger or what could possibly happen, and that they pray to God, hoping that He will somehow be of help to manage that fearsome possibility. Supported by yet another statement, one participant then cited tipping-over incidents of Tiklings.

Tolentino: "They [Tikling] often tip over, so when you ride it, you really need to have trust in God."

Thus, one striking statement also revealed that in some cases, faith is given, not only because it helps them be resilient, but because there is a lack of choice or other measures that could be of contingency to their situations.

John: "We just trust God because we have no choice."

In this essence, trust is placed because the commuters acknowledge the fact that not many options are available, and that they believe God would take over the said uncontrollable situation. It is both resignation and acceptance, not some sort of passivity, but is accompanied by hope that once they pray, risks will not become tragedy. Therefore, commuters pray as a way to cope and to withstand the uncertainties, not merely as a ritual. Beyond that, it also soothes them and eases their worries during Tikling commute.

Persistent situational fear experienced during Tikling commute due to past incidents

While Tikling commuters managed to develop internal psychological coping mechanisms rooted not only in their minds but also within their faith, the emergence of unpleasant inner experiences has been reported to be present. Commuters were found to actively anticipate danger in their Tikling ride. One participant shared:

Raquel: "There's also that nervousness that it might tip over. There have been instances where they really did tip over, so you can't help but you still think about the possible worries, stuff like that."

From this, it can be drawn that commuters think of what comes worst even before it happens. And because they are persistent in nature, commuters are emotionally engaged with the risks that could become a possibility.

John: "The road also has a high slope. Of course, you'd be scared. Then, sometimes the road is rocky. What if the tikling might break or fall, it's really high. It's scary too. That's how it is."

This statement represents the fear towards environmental hazards, the things outside of Tikling that could greatly impact their commute, and Tikling itself. Despite the fear, they are aware of the hazards outside their chosen transport. As they also narrated these fears, commuters tried to place the researchers in a scenario they had experienced. They framed it with how they felt during that time, emphasizing the possibility of tipping over.

By recalling and anticipating the worst-case scenarios in reference to the past Tikling incidents, it reveals how 'situational fear' elevates their anxiety, but at the same time, it has also taught them how to be aware of their surroundings. It further proves that for commuters, riding a Tikling is a constant emotional negotiation with risk during their travel.

Experiencing emotional fatigue due to prolonged environmental adjustment

As the commuters are constantly exposed to their submerged situations and challenging mobility system, it is normal to assume that the presence of normalization and desensitization could take place. However, while Tikling commuters reported being 'used to' their situations, there are underlying implications found by the researchers as they dissected the transcripts and statements. During the interview, one participant said:

John: "At first, of course, it's disheartening. But as time goes by, you get used to it."

From this lens, it can naturally be concluded that while the commuters felt rather down, time eventually allowed them to get used to the situation. However, another participant notably shared the same feelings, with a different underpinning:

Rosalinda: "It's always high tide here, the water level is always high, and I'm getting fed up with it."

From this, frustration is evident due to the repetitive exposure of the commuters to such experiences. It can be inferred that despite constant exposure to flooding and Tikling commute, participants still reported how emotionally and psychologically tiring the whole situation is. From constantly fearing, anticipating, and adjusting, emotional fatigue becomes long-term and has been revealed to impact emotions, given that the burden accumulates over time.

Superordinate Theme 2: External commuting barriers of riding a Tikling in flood-prone environments

This superordinate theme is divided into five subordinate themes of (a) Forced dependence of commuters on scarce Tikling transport during flooding, (b) Constant flooding redefined which mode of transport remains viable among others, (c) Commuting struggles as a result of systemic infrastructure neglect, (d) Embodied commuting hardships caused by inevitable floodwater exposure, and (e) New accessibility barriers in transportation as introduced by the elevated Tikling design to discuss how environmental conditions dictate the nature of local transportation in Hagonoy, Bulacan, specifically through the use of Tikling.

Forced dependence of commuters on scarce Tikling transport during flooding

In the context of the flood-prone municipality of Hagonoy, the systemic issues experienced by commuters are defined by an interplay between worsening environmental conditions and infrastructure limitations. When tides rose, there was a scarcity of these elevated vehicles, which led to increased demand and significant delays, forcing commuters into a state of mandatory reliance.

Rosalinda: "If the water is high, you will wait in line for a long time. You will wait for a long time to get a ride because they really wait for high tricycles [Tikling]."

A particularly insightful perspective obtained from the commuters was their perception of the issue not solely attributable to natural environmental conditions, but to the combination of man-made factors, such as ongoing road constructions and natural phenomena like the rising of tides. This interplay heightened the frustration and daily struggles of commuters, which reflected the vulnerability of commuters and how these factors paralyzed their daily functions.

Tolentino: "I wait for 20 to 30 minutes since the road in our area is under construction and there is water (flooding)."

From this lens, the issues that persistently confronted Tikling commuters would be addressed not only in the inevitable rising of tides, but with the aspects traceable to authorities.

Constant flooding redefined which mode of transport remains viable among others

The shift in mobility and surrounding issues reflected how constant flooding redefined which mode of transport remains viable among others. Moreso, commuters expressed that regular tricycles are immobile during floods and therefore ceased their operations; this paved the way for the emergence of Tikling, which became the new standard of local transportation.

Rosalinda: "Low tricycles won't operate anymore. Their tricycles will just sink."

This narrative further confirmed the understanding regarding the transition of commuters from using conventional, normal tricycles, to accepting the Tikling as the new standard of transportation in Hagonoy.

Commuting struggles as a result of systemic infrastructure neglect

Persistent flooding pushed people to restructure their transport trend, whereas the regular tricycles became obsolete, and Tikling became essential. However, participants viewed this redefinition of transport not as a natural occurrence but rather as the government's failure and result of systemic infrastructure neglect. The participants recognized a larger issue in Hagonoy, expressing that solving the issue of flooding should have been the number one priority of the government, and they called for systemic change.

Tolentino: "The people of Hagonoy should choose good governance over scholarships, because Tiklings wouldn't even be necessary if the governance in our town were efficient."

A particular narrative expressed a dramatic and valuable perspective regarding the systemic issues of transportation and flooding in Hagonoy, which considered government initiatives as "band-aid solutions". This remark expressed the commuters' inability to trust the government's authentic pursuit of creating permanent and efficient solutions that would make the lives of locals easier.

Rosario: "I thought to myself that this is because of the government. They've only been making band-aid solutions. They just keep on elevating the roads, but they don't take care of the drainage or the river."

These attributions were further supported by participants' claims that Tiklings were not supposed to exist if only governance in Hagonoy is competent and proactive enough, interpreting Tikling as a monument and symptom of total government neglect.

Raquel: "Tikling is also a product of the government not being very [proactive] in Hagonoy."

In its essence, this narrative offered a new perspective on the issue of flooding and transportation in Hagonoy. This emphasized the lack of proactivity and competency of the local government of Hagonoy, and recognized the issue not totally attributable to nature.

Embodied commuting hardships caused by inevitable floodwater exposure

While the Tikling sustained transportation despite flooding, it introduced significant physical and social burdens. This is characterized by the embodied hardships of commuting caused by inevitable floodwater exposure. Participants expressed profound frustration over the struggle of frequent changing of footwear, the gradual deterioration of the shoes, and the physical discomfort of aching feet. A sense of *panghihinayang* was also observed towards their view of their personal belongings that got ruined by constant flood drenching.

Rosario: "Then, on your way home, you'll get wet again. Plus, your shoes will end up getting ruined. Even slippers will start to peel. And if you wear plastic slippers, they really hurt your feet. It's truly frustrating."

Additionally, a sense of loss of dignity (*kahihyan*) was captured as participants felt embarrassed for having shoes drenched in floodwaters in moments of boarding another vehicle, such as a jeepney.

Rosario: "Of course, it's a bit embarrassing to put on shoes inside the jeep, especially when it's really crowded."

The commuter's inevitable exposure to floodwater despite the utilization of an elevated vehicle signified a partial solution to a chronic issue. Accounts concerning the embarrassment of changing shoes in public transportation took a psychological toll on commuters. These drawbacks further increased the tension, as commuters noted that they eventually experienced spasms in the long run.

Rosalinda: "Even if you ride Tikling, if the floodwater is really high, your shorts, backside, and slippers will often get wet. Frequently, we're not wearing shoes or sandals, for they will also get soaked in water. Whenever we wear them, our feet will experience spasms because we will walk through water."

This concluded the profound frustration of commuters that despite the utilization of alternative modes of transportation, that did not shield them from underlying, secondary issues attached to Tikling.

New accessibility barriers in transportation as introduced by the elevated Tikling design

These experiences were not mere issues of "exposures" with water, but the issue of daily bodily inconvenience and overall discomfort that is brought forth by flooding. These difficulties led to new accessibility barriers in transportation as introduced by the elevated Tikling design. The actual height of the Tikling acted as one of the major physical and accessibility struggles. It intimidated commuters, as this form of transportation required physical exertion that excluded the vulnerable, particularly the elderly, women, and commuters carrying many belongings.

Cristina: "You'll be riding an elevated tricycle, which is tough for the elderly. It's hard to get on because, as you get older, climbing up and stepping down can sometimes be a struggle. It's also difficult, especially when you're carrying a lot of things."

This proved that solving an issue on a surface level often created secondary problems. While Tikling became an answer to the flood commuting, it also created accessibility issues. Something like a trade-off in terms of adaptive infrastructure, where not all adaptations guarantee win-win situations for both parties. This was further supported by a particular narrative, indicating that environmental conditions dictated their personal preferences, such as clothing.

Rosario: "When you're stepping up, it's often really high. For example, if you're wearing a skirt, you won't be able to step up easily, of course. The skirt isn't that flexible. So you'd really have a hard time, and it's the same for the elderly. That's what I really struggle with, climbing up."

This struggle of women, with regards to the back and forth of climbing up onto and getting off that vehicle, represented the battle of commuting in Hagonoy.

Superordinate Theme 3: Making sense of commuting in flood-prone areas through Filipino cultural values

This theme reflected how participants navigated everyday commuting risks through acceptance, collective support, and creative adaptation, as seen in the subordinate themes of enduring commuting risks through *pagtitiis*, demonstrating *bayanihan* among fellow commuters, and improvising transportation strategies through *diskarte*.

Enduring everyday commuting risk through *pagtitiis*

Commuters are getting used to the safety risk brought by the Tikling, gradually accepting and enduring these challenges as part of their everyday commuting experience, reflecting a form of *pagtitiis* toward the difficulties of flood-related travel. Meaning, their hardships do not simply become some sort of normalization but also a form of internalized endurance.

Edgar: "As time goes on, you just get used to it. It has become normal here, even when it's a bit dangerous."

This shows that repeated exposure to the same commuting conditions leads commuters to gradually become accustomed to the experience. Over time, the risks associated with riding the Tikling are acknowledged but accepted as a normal part of their everyday travel.

John: "It's like we've just gotten used to it, whether there's floodwater or not, we'll still ride, because it's already part of our lives."

In addition, Tikling has become commuters' usual transportation choice regardless of the surrounding conditions. Their continued reliance on it reflects how the practice has become familiar and embedded in their everyday commuting routine.

Demonstrating *bayanihan* towards fellow Tikling commuters in times of commuting crisis

Commuters respond to difficult commuting situations by helping one another, particularly during moments of uncertainty and danger brought about by flooding. Assisting fellow commuters is not merely seen as a voluntary act but as an expected response rooted in *bayanihan*, reflecting a shared sense of collective care, responsibility, and mutual aid within their community.

Rosario: "When something falls over, we really help each other out. You can't just leave it."

This sense of mutual support becomes especially visible during unexpected incidents that occur while commuting, where immediate assistance from fellow passengers becomes necessary. In these moments, commuters demonstrate *bayanihan* by actively helping others regain balance, lift fallen belongings, or assist those who are in need, showing that collective action and concern for others naturally emerge in response to shared vulnerability during the commute.

Tolentino: "Before, a Tikling tricycle once overturned while ascending by the bridge, I helped out along with the other men because the passengers were in a pitiful state and were soaking wet."

Such acts of cooperation are illustrated in situations where commuters respond collectively to more serious accidents. This highlights how commuters instinctively extend help to others in distress, reinforcing the presence of communal responsibility and solidarity even among individuals who may not personally know each other but share the same commuting realities.

Creatively improvising transportation in response to flooding (*diskarte*)

Tikling tricycles emerged from the drivers' need to creatively respond to recurring flooding conditions. The modification is not simply as mechanical changes but as a practical solution developed through local ingenuity, reflecting a form of *diskarte* where drivers adapt transportation to ensure mobility despite environmental challenges.

Rosario: "The tricycle was elevated. There was no model. The tricycle drivers developed it themselves. They came up with the idea because they were the ones who really had to adjust so they wouldn't sink."

This highlights how the development of the Tikling tricycle is rooted in the drivers' lived experiences with flooding, where practical knowledge and resourcefulness guide their responses to environmental constraints.

Raquel: "Almost all of the tricycles there in Hagonoy have already been modified into tikling, because there are times when the water is so high that normal tricycles can't handle it. They're fine."

Through *diskarte*, drivers transform existing transportation into a flood-adaptive solution, allowing commuters to continue moving even when regular tricycles cannot pass. In this way, the Tikling becomes not only a mode of transport but also a reflection of local ingenuity and community-driven adaptation to recurring environmental challenges.

Superordinate Theme 4: Tikling as an essential mobility to sustain everyday life during flooding

This theme comprises the experience of the participants in relying on the tikling as an indispensable mode of transport in the flooded environment, the experience of the flooding that makes the tikling a necessity, the experience of the tikling in the maintenance of the participants' livelihood and obligations, the potential of the tikling in maintaining the dignity and comfort of the commuters, and the experience of the tikling as the most efficient mode of transport in the flooded environment.

Flood conditions transform Tikling from optional transportation into situational necessity

The narratives of the participants revealed that while tikling is not an essential mode of transport in their usual daily commute, it is structurally necessary in the context of flooding that disrupts the normalcy of urban mobility. The use of tikling is conditional and situational; it is a mode of transport whose use is triggered by the presence of flooding and whose use renders other modes of transport inadequate or non-existent.

Edgar: "When there's no flooding, it feels like you don't really need to ride a Tikling. You just kind of ignore it."

While the issue of commuting is perceived as a personal preference, the commuter's choice is indirectly influenced by the frequency of environmental disruptions. For instance, the frequency of flooding acts as a constraint on the options for commuting, which transforms a "choice" into a necessity. In this sense, the choices in transportation serve as adaptive responses to the unstable environmental conditions that allow the commuter to carry on with their daily routines.

Anne: "Ah, yes. That's the thing, when it's not flooded, you have the choice to just take an ordinary tricycle. But since it's always either raining or flooded, a 'Tikling' is the better choice so you can actually get going."

Essentially, the use of Tikling is a demonstration of the ways in which the mobility of people in flood-prone environments is more defined by the environment than by the personal preferences of commuters. Thus, the seemingly simple choice of transport is actually a limited and adaptive response to the disruptions of the environment.

Tikling as a means of sustaining livelihood and everyday roles

In the context of the flood-prone communities, the systemic challenges faced by commuters are influenced by the interplay between recurring disruptions in the environment and the scarcity of transport infrastructure. This is best illustrated by the forced use of Tikling as a mode of transport during flooding. When flooding occurs, other modes of transport become unusable due to their immersion in water, leaving only a few elevated modes of transport such as Tikling. The scarcity of this mode of transport forces commuters into a state of constrained dependency.

Raquel: "If you are a student, you would much rather ride a Tikling than take a regular tricycle when it is flooded. In that way, you do not even have to bother taking off your shoes and socks."

Tikling maintains commuters' dignity and comfort during flood commuting

From the participants' narratives, it is apparent that their use of Tikling is not only for practical purposes but also for dignity and power in coping with the floods. The participants' stories underscore the significance of staying dry, keeping their personal belongings dry, and getting to work or school in a decent state. The participants' concern is not only for convenience but also for their self-respect and the maintenance of their role in society amidst environmental instability.

John: "For me, it is safe to ride Tikling, especially with the current flooding. When you are carrying your belongings with you, it is more convenient. Actually, I always have a lot of belongings with me whenever I go home to Hagonoy."

In the same way, a particular observation from the information gleaned from the commuters is their use of Tikling not merely as a convenient mode of transport but as a means to save dignity and minimize psychological strain in the context of flooding. The information obtained from the commuters appears to imply that the challenge of commuting in a flooded city is already significant in itself, and the use of Tikling helps commuters avoid additional discomfort and stress. The above observation underscores the interrelationship between mobility and psychological comfort.

Tolentino: "It's convenient and gives you less to worry about since you won't get drenched by floodwaters. It's like, you will just think about where your house is, and you'll be right there to get off."

Choosing Tikling as the most efficient transport option during flooding

As the flooding develops in Hagonoy, the participants consider the strategic transportation decisions that are made in the midst of the availability of multiple transportation options. As multiple transportation options, such as boat,s are available, the choice of Tikling was seen to be the most viable and effective choice, not necessarily by default, but rather through strategic consideration of what is the most viable option in the midst of the flooding. This selection of Tikling over other options is a form of optimization strategy wherein the most viable option is selected on the basis of the requirements of the users.

Raquel: "If it is flooded, it is much faster and easier than taking a boat. That is the better option, since a regular tricycle is lowered, you will not be able to pass through."

Superordinate Theme 5: Tikling commuting entails both benefits and sacrifices

This theme captures the dual nature of Tikling as the primary mode of transportation in Hagonoy. The experience of commuters reveal a balance between the relief and reliability Tikling provides against the challenges brought by flooding, and the inevitable drawbacks in finances, safety, and limited options that shape their daily commutes.

Mobility security and comfort through Tikling use

The participants' accounts highlight how Tikling serves as a reliable anchor in an otherwise unpredictable commuting landscape, transforming potential immobility into assured access. This subordinate theme underscores the psychological and practical comfort derived from Tikling's design and availability, fostering a sense of security that integrates into commuters' routines.

Shifting commuting uncertainty into mobility security

The participants described Tikling as an important means of transportation, which helped them to travel despite flooding. It provided a sense of ease and relief for commuters, as they had an alternative transportation in Hagonoy that supported mobility, which is crucial for their daily functions. Tikling attended to the stress of commuters, brought by persistent flooding in the area. This enabled participants to shift from uncertainty into security, due to the advantages of this modified vehicle.

Rosalinda: "Tikling is very important to us. It really helps ease our worries. It's good for the Hagonoy residents that we have a tall vehicle we can ride."

This statement reflects the purposeful reliance of commuters on Tikling, where trust in its evident functionality provided emotional relief to the overall community. Another participant supported this reality, by noting that Tiklings were able to eliminate their anxieties during travel:

Rosario: "Of course, even if the water is high, you don't have to worry about how you'll get to your destination; you already have a ride."

Here, there is an evident assurance of ride despite flooding, and that turns their stress into security, illustrating how Tikling acted as an immediate solution in the face of environmental adversity.

Negotiating economic and safety trade-offs in Tikling commuting

This subordinate theme shows the compromises that commuters endure to sustain mobility, which include financial sacrifices, acceptance of risks, and adaptation to inconsistent alternatives. It reveals a tension between necessity and burden, wherein accessibility is dominated by financial needs and dangers attached to utilizing Tikling.

Making financial sacrifices to afford and maintain transportation during flooding

Participants expressed that riding Tikling during floods involves financial compromises through increased or even doubled fares, and is municipality-wide accepted as a necessity due to limited options. This demonstrates that prioritizing mobility requires proper budgeting and that this form of transportation has its cost.

Raquel: "Firstly, when we ride Tikling, it is certain that the water level is high. What happens is the fare will get doubled from the usual."

This narrative illustrates the environment's major role in the variations of fares, where operational challenges make the case for higher charges. Another participant further the understanding about the financial toll of prioritizing mobility in Hagonoy.

Carlos: "If I don't ride the Tikling or pay the fare they're asking for, I won't be able to get home."

This showcases the powerlessness of commuters in the face of adversity against the environment and the cost of maintaining the transportations in Hagonoy. Also, this reflects the dilemma of the reality of the inability of commuters to return home for not following, and compromising finances.

Accepting safety risks in commuting to maintain mobility

Commuters accept risks associated with commuting using Tikling despite their total awareness of it. Participants described bad road conditions, and recounts instances where Tikling tips over in the past, but were still overriding it for the sake of mobility and the necessity to attend to their respective responsibilities. Therefore, illustrates a trade-off between risks and necessity.

Rosalinda: "As you know, the Tikling has long legs, so it's taller. Sometimes, when the front part is weak, that's when it usually happens [tipping over], especially if the road is steep and rocky."

This statement identified flaws of the Tikling's design, which was worsened by road conditions by increasing the risks of potential accidents. Moreover, participants expressed fear from environmental factors.

John: "The road also has a high slope. Of course, you'd be scared. Then, sometimes the road is rocky. What if the Tikling might break or fall? It's really high. It's scary too. That's how it is."

This statement revealed an appearance of emotional responses like fear that was present during Tikling commutes, but commuters remained for negotiation with mobility despite associated risks.

Relying on limited and inconsistent transportation alternatives during flooding

Locals, particularly commuters improvised with the use of boats or regular tricycles, whenever Tikling was not available. As a result, commuters endured inconsistent fares and availability that forced resourcefulness despite hardships of commuting.

Rosario: "It's because ordinary tricycles really stop operating when the water level is high, even if it's only knee-deep. The water reaches their fuel tanks, and they start smoking. But some still operate, but we just have to pay a huge amount. It's the same price as the Tikling, our fare is doubled for those."

Due to the challenging environmental condition of Hagonoy, regular tricycles suffered from mechanical failures, which led to increased fares and significant delays for both commuters and drivers. One participant offered a perspective on the boat's systems, its price and the experience of commuting with it.

Rosario: "It depends on the driver. But usually, they want the boat full, just like in a jeep, but you'll still pay double the normal fare. One time I rode it, like just going from BulSU to Conve, that's 100 or 50 if the driver is feeling kind."

This narrative showed how reliance on inconsistent and scarce transport in Hagonoy increased the tension that commuters experienced. With boats, there are inconsistencies with fares depending on the driver, which forced commuters, especially students to compromise financially.

DISCUSSION

This section outlines the findings of the study relevant to the research objectives. It cascades how the research questions have been adequately addressed, and positions the findings in the context of Sikolohiyang Pilipino (SP). Embedded in this section is the researchers' double hermeneutic approach as aligned to the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), recognizing that understanding their lived experiences involves interpretation. This section will also provide an assessment of the strengths and limitations of the study, recommendations for future studies, and a conclusion that restates the problem and contribution of the study to the existing body of knowledge.

The lived experiences of Tikling commuters

Findings of the study revealed how commuting in Hagonoy, Bulacan, was not a simple way of travelling from one place to another. It is not as cerebral as how the researchers, being commuters themselves, navigate their way from home to school, with chronological sequences and mostly, anticipated occurrences. Rather, Tikling commuters undergo complicated experiences that were shaped by their community's ever-changing environment, the demand to cope psychologically, the embodiment of cultural values, and the structural realities of their community's transportation amidst recurring floods. This directly reflected the second objective of the study, which focused on the *labas* (external conditions) that shaped the commuters' experiences.

The five superordinate themes revealed that commuters continuously make meanings of their daily experiences and mobility, touching and influencing both their internal and external dimensions as human beings under the same situations. Internally, commuters narrated their felt emotional fatigue, the persistent fears, and the psychological toll of carrying the burden of commuting despite being submerged in floodwaters constantly. These experiences align with the researchers' emphasis on SP's *loob*, which underscores the internal emotions and psychological processes that individuals use to make sense of their respective hardships [27]. Along with this, the external conditions, as described by the participants in great detail, reflect the dimension of *labas*, where structural realities influence how they face these challenges, interpreting them together with their life's routines. This supports both the first and second objective in bridging the internal and external dimensions of their experiences.

These findings are directly tied to the reviewed literatures which explored commuting under stressful environments, similar to Hagonoy's flooded landscape. Abad et al. [1] suggested that flooding disrupts people's mobility and burdens them with longer travel time while also causing them notably higher levels of stress. Affirming this claim, Kurata et al. [17] found that communities that are known as flood-prone areas drive the people who live within them to develop an adaptive mindset and become resilient, which is their response to constant endangerment brought forth by their geography. This reinforces how consistent flood exposure greatly contribute in the psychological strain and the adaptive resilience observed in and by the participants themselves.

The narratives of Tikling commuters support these findings as they were able to showcase *diskarte* in facing adversities, accompanied by internal coping mechanisms such as emotional regulation, faith-based resilience, and purposefully trusting the driver, reflecting culturally rooted coping strategies discussed in one of the mentioned SP literature [32]. These responses illustrate how repeated exposure to constant flooding gradually yet strongly shapes people's perceptions of risks differently, and in turn, makes way for these commuters to somehow normalize environmental disruptions as one facet of their everyday lives parallel with Kurata et al. [16] on adaptive reframing of disaster experiences.

At the same time, the findings also reinforced prior observations pertaining to how transportation in a flood-prone environment is typically involved in the loop of necessity versus hardships. Mentioned studies and articles emphasized how commuters rely on Tikling despite the worries for their safety, the costly fare, and the visible structural challenges it poses [4, 39], reflecting the contradiction between the need for mobility and risks identified in existing literature. This pattern can be observed in the current study as participants' accounts reported financial sacrifices to simply afford a Tikling ride, while also revealing accompanied safety risks, and the lack of other alternatives in times of high tide or flooding.

However, while a number of existing studies focused their lenses on the structural and economical aspect of commuting, this study deviated from their course in the sense that these structural and economic facets are only a part of a much bigger whole, since the research focused heavily on interpreting the psychological and cultural meanings that commuters attach to their lived experiences. Still, it consequently fill the gap in the literature about the lived and meaning-making aspects of commuting.

Despite the similarities with previous studies, the findings also revealed nuances that broaden existing literature. For example, the outline of earlier studies was mostly focused on *katatagan* as a direct result of calamity exposure. On the contrary, the narratives of the participants suggest that *katatagan* emerged not only as an automatic response but as a complex process that shapes cultural values and interactions in society, consistent with the emphasis on dynamic resilience processes of the *Katatagan Model* by Hechanova et al. [15]. The participants often show habits of *pagtitiis*, *bayanihan*, and *diskarte*, which served as rooted cultural coping mechanisms that helped them navigate through uncertain conditions in commuting. These values illustrate how Filipino cultural frameworks influence the interpretation of daily struggles, reinforcing the relevance of SP in examining experiences within a specific socio-cultural context.

Another meaningful insight that emerged from the study was the contradiction within the narratives of the commuters. Even though the participants recognize the risks associated with riding Tiklings, including accidents, weak structural design, and exposure to flooded waters, they all described the transportation using Tikling as a reliable and necessary means of mobility, reiterating existing findings about risk acceptance in flood-prone transportation systems by Umali et al. [39]. This contradiction reflects the tension between the vulnerability and agency experienced by the commuters. On the other hand, they recognized the risks inherent in their commuting habits; on the other hand, the commuters expressed their trust in the drivers and their acceptance of these risks to maintain their daily responsibilities. This co-existence of fear and trust shows how individuals deal with uncertainty by balancing awareness of risks with the practical necessity of mobility.

Such contradictions are consistent with broader observations in studying transportation, which highlight how these individuals keep doing risky habits when there are no alternatives available, strengthening the structural constraints covered in the body of current transportation literature. In the case of Tikling commuters, the lack of a concrete transportation system leaves locals with very few choices. This forces them to change what they expect and decide for themselves what is considered 'safe enough' for travel. Instead of viewing these

contradictions as errors, we should see them as a reflection of the harsh reality that the commuters face. A reality wherein safety, making a living, and everyday routines are more often important than perfect safety conditions.

The findings of this study suggest a new idea that describes the actual experiences of commuters traveling in flood-prone areas: *pakikipagsapalaran*. In the context of Tikling, *pakikipagsapalaran* is a conscious and purposeful choice to face uncertainty and danger to fulfill daily routines like work, school, and family obligations. Instead of giving up or leaving it all to fate, *pakikipagsapalaran* includes an active willingness to face unpredictable conditions such as flooded roads, unreliable transport, and safety risks in order to keep moving and survive.

This construction has similarities with the Filipino concept of *bahala na*, which is often interpreted as a form of surrender to fate or trust in a divine purpose [27, 9]. However, it emphasizes a different definition of *pakikipagsapalaran*, highlighting willingness to act despite the risk, rather than relying solely on luck, thereby extending existing SP constructs. The commuters in this study showed consciousness of the dangers brought about by Tikling transportation in times of flooding, but they continued to ride these tricycles as a practical and necessary option. Their decisions did not stem from ignorance of risk but from a cultural knowledge of readiness to navigate uncertainty through courage, adaptability, and trust in community actors such as drivers and fellow passengers.

In this sense, *pakikipagsapalaran* reflects a cultural orientation based on resilience wherein individuals actively negotiate risk within constrained structural conditions. The construct captures how Tikling commuters carry out their daily ease of movement as an act of perseverance, where uncertainty becomes a shared social experience rather than merely an individual burden. Through their narratives, participants described how facing environmental and infrastructure challenges becomes part of the collective process of safety, adaptation, and cultural resilience.

This emerging construction captures the dynamic connection between risk awareness and purposeful action observed in the participants' narratives. Tikling commuters do not easily endure the flooding; instead, they actively choose to navigate these conditions through courage, trust, and practical improvisation. In this sense, *pakikipagsapalaran* reflects a culturally embedded orientation towards facing uncertainty, where individuals recognize the presence of risk but continue to move forward because of social responsibilities, economic needs, and collective resilience.

From the perspective of Sikolohiyang Pilipino, the emergence of the said construct highlights the value of fundamental psychological inquiry within a cultural context, as emphasized by Enriquez [14] on indigenization from within. Sikolohiyang Pilipino emphasizes that the psychological concepts of Filipinos should come from the experiences and language of the people themselves. The narratives of Tikling commuters showed how the indigenous meanings of resilience, cooperation, and risk-taking are continuously shaped by local environmental conditions and social realities. Through their daily commuting routines, Hagonoeños not only adapt to flooding but also create new ways of understanding courage, safety, and mobility.

Taken together, the results of the present study served to illustrate that the experiences of the Tikling commuters have interactive relationships between the environment, structural constraints, psychological coping mechanisms, and cultural values. uncovering gaps in safe and resilient transportation systems in line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11 on sustainable cities and communities. It also illustrated local innovation and resilient infrastructure in line with SDG 9. And so, from the perspective of SP, the experiences of the commuters were indicative of how people in general create spaces of cultural meaning in the face of adversity. Thus, the study served to contribute to the larger understanding of the experiences of disaster-prone communities in terms of mobility by focusing on the experiences of the commuters themselves.

Ultimately, the question '*Paano ka Uuwi?*' goes beyond a simple question that Tikling commuters get asked by their peers, colleagues, and other people who know where they live and what kind of situation they are about to face as they try to make their way home. For people like Edgar, Rosario, Raquel, and the others, this question reflects a much deeper meaning and a typically overlooked struggle. Their constant negotiation between what they have to sacrifice, where they have to go, and what awaits them as they commute reveals that their lived

experiences are not only strained by physical movements but are also tested in terms of their emotional endurance, their continuous attempt to make sense of these plights, and their adaptive response to these risks. Their responses, or rather, stories, demonstrated that Filipinos act on their values even towards the attainment of mobility, and that the environmental constraints experienced by the people of Hagonoy are not mere logistical challenges, but a lived psychological and cultural experience.

In etching the voices of these Tikling commuters in scholarly studies much like this, anchored in the bold attempt to understand them as Filipinos, the findings of this study contribute to a deeper understanding of how Hagonoyenos undergo *pakikipagsapalaran* just by simply trying to get by. The emergence of this SP construct is a culturally grounded way of describing the intentional and purposeful engagement of individuals in struggles they are well-aware of, even with uncertainty. By doing so, the study then underscores how the act of *pag-uwi* (going home) transforms into a meaningful expression of resilience, agency, and survival within the lived realities of Hagonoy's Tikling commuters.

CONCLUSION

The study delved into the lived experiences of Tikling commuters in one of Bulacan's most flood-prone municipalities, Hagonoy. The study centered on how the said commuters make sense and respond to the risks and challenges that they face in terms of their mobility. The findings revealed that commuting in this context is not a simple transportation conversation but is also about how Tikling commuters navigate their lives despite uncertainties, environmental risks, and very limited options available. Through the participants' narratives, the commuters uncovered their undue emotional stress, safety concerns, and the financial toll of attaining such transportation, while also demonstrating positive Filipino cultural values to continue their commutes despite the challenges.

The study also found that the lived experiences of Tikling commuters were shaped through the interaction between their flood-prone environment, their meaning-making mechanisms, and their individual responses towards risks. The participants' responses have shown how commuters adjust to their environmental conditions in order to fulfill the roles they have (e.g., student, worker, vendor, or parent) and to remain present in those obligations.

From SP's perspective, the findings highlight how Filipino cultural values play a crucial part in how people understand and respond to adversities they encounter. Participants evidently demonstrated culturally grounded forms of resilience, among others. Beyond those, the Tikling commuters' narratives also suggest an emerging SP construct in the form of *pakikipagsapalaran*.

Overall, the researchers position this study in such a way that the lived experiences of Tikling commuters, along with the frequent question '*Paano ka uuwi?*', carry a deeper meaning for people who live in flood-afflicted communities like those who came from Hagonoy. The Tikling commuters' pursuit to go home is not only a transportation challenge but a form of courage and determination that they embody daily. By interpreting and documenting these lived experiences, the study contributes to a better understanding and a fresh perspective towards mobility, resiliency, and risk interpretations among commuters, who, like Tikling commuters, live their lives in submerged situations.

Implication

The results of this research have significant theoretical, methodological, and practical implications. Theoretically, this research provides a complex understanding of resilience as a culturally mediated, everyday process that arises from the interplay of *loob* and *labas*. Based on the principles of Sikolohiyang Pilipino, the results of this research provide a theoretical stance that can be characterized as everyday relational resilience, wherein resilience, risk-taking, and adaptation are collectively constructed through shared meanings, social relations, and structural conditions.

From the narratives of the commuters, everyday decision-making was often centered on a simple yet crucial concern—*paano ka uuwi?* In the context of constant flooding and limited transportation options, commuters are

continuously negotiating with uncertainty and danger for the purpose of getting to their destination. Based on these experiences, the researchers propose a potential SP construct called *pakikipagsapalaran*, which shows the culturally embedded readiness to face uncertain and risky situations as part of meeting daily responsibilities like commuting, work, and other life duties. *Pakikipagsapalaran* reflects an actual need of engagement, wherein individuals knowingly continue despite fear, discomfort, and unstable conditions as their priority is to reach one's destination. In the context of Tikling commuting, it is demonstrated through the readiness of commuters to ride an elevated tricycle, endure the physical strain, and navigate flooded or uneven roads despite the risk that comes with it.

As an emerging construct, *pakikipagsapalaran* highlights how these commuters actively face uncertainty as part of their everyday realities, demonstrating how resilience and adaptation are not merely internal traits but culturally situated responses shaped by shared experiences, structural limitations, and the demands of daily life.

This theoretical stance critiques the hegemonic Western conceptualization of resilience, which is highly individualistic and control-oriented, and instead emphasizes the ways in which Filipino commuters normalize risk and maintain functionality through collective practices, religious coping, and culturally mediated meaning-making. In this sense, this research extends SP by showing how indigenous psychological concepts are lived out and practiced in everyday, non-disaster situations such as commuting during chronic flooding.

Methodologically, this research confirms the importance of combining Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) with indigenous research methodologies such as *pakikipagkwentuhan* and *pagpapatotoo*. This approach enabled the participants to describe their experiences in a culturally and psychologically valid manner, indicating that future qualitative research in the Philippines may also benefit from methodological practice. The results of this research also underscore the significance of studying everyday, taken-for-granted activities such as commuting as valid sites of psychological inquiry, particularly in situations where structural vulnerability is normalized.

In terms of practical application, the results of the study can be used to inform transport planning, disaster risk reduction, and community-based interventions in flood-prone areas. While Tikling allows for mobility and resilience, the normalization of risk that this study has identified also shows how systemic failures force commuters to resort to risky conditions. Policymakers and LGUs can utilize the findings of this study to inform the design of transport solutions that take into account the lived realities of commuters while prioritizing safety, accessibility, and sustainability. These can include standardized safety protocols for Tikling, participatory planning with commuters and transport operators, and community-based interventions that build on existing bayanihan practices rather than replacing them with external solutions.

Limitations

This study also poses certain limitations, primarily the localized and small sample size, which restricted the generalizability of the results to the experiences of commuters in other flood-prone areas. While the study has given an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of Tikling commuters in Hagonoy, Bulacan, the results shown may reflect context-specific realities which could have been greatly influenced only by environmental and social conditions.

Moreover, despite the researchers' facilitation of bracketing prior to the study and the applied reflexivity, the findings may have been affected by the innate perspective of the researchers in some other ways, such as the IPA's interpretive nature and SPs' indigenization from within, along with the researchers' lens being *maka-Pilipino*. Due to this, findings of this study were laid down through the researchers' interpretation of the participants' personal narratives, and therefore, inevitably fall under the interpretive lens that has been utilized in the course of data analysis.

Additionally, this study limits replicability due to the idiographic, context-dependent approach of this study and the time-intensive demands of in-depth analysis that brought fatigue to the researchers, which may have affected the total analysis of all data. Despite these limitations, the study provided insightful findings on the lived

experiences and the meaning-making processes of Tikling commuters as they continue to navigate their lives around their submerged realities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study may serve as a guide for practical steps which could, in turn, raise the awareness and support not only towards Tikling commuters, but also for all commuters of varying transportation modes. Tikling commuters' persistence to navigate their lives around their flood-afflicted environment, along with the study's rich data, may be utilized as a leverage and basis for local government units (LGUs), youth organizations, and independent community groups to produce information materials such as infographics, short-form informative videos, or even social media reels, shedding light on the risks they have to brave daily and how these realities are constantly dealt with by Hagonoy's Tikling commuters. One sample of the said material mentioned may be seen in the appendices of this paper. These materials, if produced rightfully, may help in the productive discourse of safer commuting practices and may also highlight the lived experiences of residents who rely on informal modes of transportation in flood-prone areas.

In addition, the study's findings may also give knowledge on political and public discourse in terms of the implementation of local transportation guidelines and how resilient the locally available transport modes are against impending climate-inflicted risks such as flooding. This will be useful, particularly to municipalities with a similar plight to that of Hagonoy's residents. While the study was conducted in the specific context of Hagonoy, its findings may still serve as a reference point for communities or areas with comparable environmental and social conditions. Initiatives may be based on this study's uncovered scholarly, yet also indigenous results, which can help bridge the gap between commuters, the transport providers, and the transport system regulators in terms of mobility struggles whenever the streets are flooded.

As part of the implemented contributions of the study, the researchers underscore the recommendation of a drafted Educational Drive (ED) Program, which may be adapted by LGUs, local barangay councils, and even at the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) level. Community-based organizations are also greatly encouraged to partake. This said ED draft may serve as a learning support material that focuses on sharing the often overlooked plights of Tikling commuters within their communities, while also encouraging people to also share their personal reflections concerning the risk awareness, collective responsibility, and the adaptive practices among commuters from varying environmental contexts.

For future researchers, they may broaden their study's cope in including Tikling drivers, government officials, and even commuters from other municipalities in order to further enrich the course of this research. In doing so, future researchers may be able to provide yet another comprehensive perspective on topics concerning mobility and transportation in flood-prone environments. Comparative studies across different locations geographically, as well as other modifications of transport modes, may also become supplemental in understanding how resilience changes depending on the context and how people perceive risks, as in contrast to the current study.

Future studies may also take into account the incorporation of varying methodological approaches or even data sources to further balance the interpretive nature of IPA, and in turn, reduce potential research biases. For example, applying triangulation or inter-coder reliability checks may reduce biases in future researchers' interpretation and data analysis. Apart from this, allotting sufficient time, research support, and analytical tools will be beneficial to address the intensive demands of the data analysis period, to reduce the risk of research fatigue, which is a notable experience for the current researchers of this study.

Dedication

This study is first and foremost dedicated to the Almighty God, whose blessings and guidance have carried the researchers through in this scholarly feat. His wisdom continues to give light for the researchers to remain grounded and steady with our aims, moreso, to wield our knowledge with empathy.

We also offer this study to the field of Sikolohiyang Pilipino, with the hope that this could contribute to the continuous development of psychology that is rooted in the realities, the values, and the experiences of Filipinos.

Consequently, we dedicate this to the Filipinos whose voices are often unheard, struggles either belittled or overlooked, and whose stories deserve to be told and uncovered with immense dignity, depth, and comprehension.

On the more particular aspect, this study is dedicated to our participants and the people of Hagonoy, as well as to those who live in a similar context: communities submerged by varying challenges, yet remains strong and unwavering amidst it all. May their realities be recognized, understood, and acted upon with relevant solutions.

And finally, this study is dedicated for the future students who are learning this field, for those who look beyond theories and frameworks; those who continue to seek and understand their fellow humans, with empathy, critical reflection, and meaningful commitment to transform the society.

May this study not only become a notable contribution to the existing body of knowledge, but also to inspire people to perform their roles with compassion, awareness, and worthwhile actions in the service of the Filipino people.

As psychology of today must and always be free, freeing, and empathetic.

For all of these, this study exists.

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