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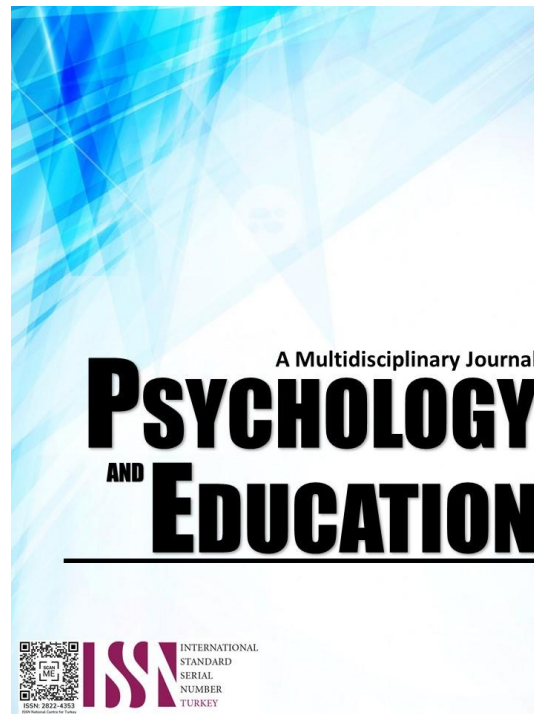
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Gulong Ng Palad: The Quality of Life, Experiences and Challenges Faced by Female Tricycle Driver

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Abstract

Tricycles are one of the most popular, most accessible, and least expensive forms of public transit in the Philippines. In addition to being common modes of transportation, motorcycles, and tricycles also contribute significantly to the livelihoods of millions of Filipinos who rely on them for a living. Hence, this study explores the lived experiences and challenges faced by female tricycle drivers. Employing the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, the findings of this study were: The participants strive to assist their husbands in providing for their families. Their motivation comes primarily from their families. They each make every effort to provide a better life for their children. Thus, have faced challenges related to their ability to make ends meet, find time to balance job and family obligations, and encounter discrimination and stereotypes in others, and day-to-day life. Moreover, they evade and disregard the problem and discrimination as a coping mechanism. They feel that if they ignore their problem and focus on achieving their goal of providing for their family, it would eventually disappear.

Keywords: *Philippines, quality of life, challenges, lived experiences, female tricycle drivers*

Introduction

"Babae kasi," any Filipino would know that this common saying, which translates to "because she's a woman," is always used to disparage a female driver's driving abilities or, more often than not, their seeming lack thereof. Villaganas (2016) article uttered, "How does operating a trisikad feel?" they respond, "It's a lot of fun, a challenging experience, and a fulfilling lifestyle." These comments respect the fact that, despite their challenging lives, they are unselfish enough to dedicate their lives. Based on direct observation, they enjoy great joy while driving their trisikad under the scorching heat, they are satisfied with their current state. According to Jensen (2017), there has been a global shift in the conventional norms that give women the main responsibility for home care and child rearing, but not as economic contributors. Rojas (2021), said that men may continue to dominate the tricycle-driving industry in the Philippines, but women are holding their own in what is widely viewed as a male-dominated occupation. In the majority of developing countries, motorcycles are an essential component of the primary mode of transportation. In the Philippines, tricycles and "habal-habal" or "motorcycle taxis" serve as local public transportation. Tricycles are one of the most popular, most accessible, and least expensive forms of public transit in the Philippines. In addition to being common modes of transportation, motorcycles, and tricycles also contribute significantly to the livelihoods of millions of Filipinos who rely on them for a living. Tricycles

are more frequently utilized in cities and in the vicinity of town centers, while outside of the city, motorbike taxis are used. However, these days, there are now women who drive tricycles to support their families.

As stated by Villaganas (2016), patriarchal cultures restricted women inside the house, which is the most strategic but also the most isolating position. As a result of men's long-held belief that women should be protected from the harsh realities of the workplace, women are destined to be housewives, mothers, or labeled as "the emblem of the family". Domestic industries such as embroidery, weaving, and stitching are related to them. According to Nora (2021), in the driving sector, women also confront discrimination and gender stereotypes. Through their body language and harassing comments such as "please take me to your house" or "do you provide more services outside the journey", the female drivers in the research conveyed their impression of being regarded as sexual objects by some male customers. Some women also encountered hostility from their coworkers when they heard statements such as "This is predominantly a male occupation". As female contractors, drivers are exposed to sexual assault and harassment from customers and coworkers. In addition, according to Rojas (2021), in a profession that is largely seen as a man's career, women are doing just well. Women can drive equally as well as men, and driving no longer requires strength. However, According to Al-Garawi (2021), road traffic crashes are still among the leading causes of death and injury worldwide. An estimated 1.35 million global annual deaths occur due to RTC's.

According to MI-GDT, accident statistics from 2019, 730 females lost their lives in RTC's, whereas 4903 were injured. On the other hand, according to carmoola.co.uk.org (2022), women are known for their calm and cool driving and are less likely to yell, pass without seeing what's coming, and make frightening gestures to other drivers. Essentially, women are as cool as cucumbers while driving.

Moreover, the researchers discovered that prior studies lacked sufficient research regarding the quality of life of female tricycle drivers, as well as their lived experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms. In addition, the objective of the study is to understand a female tricycle driver's lived experiences and challenges. Additionally, the study may aid the Tricycle Operators and Drivers Association (TODA) in its efforts to eliminate discrimination against female tricycle drivers. This research will serve as a source of inspiration for future scholars conducting related research. Over and above that, Magna Carta for Women (Republic Act No. 9710) is a law that protects the rights of Filipino women. Hence, the study will strengthen and support existing laws by recognizing, protecting, fulfilling, and promoting the rights of Filipino women.

Research Questions

The study aims to explore the lived experiences and challenges faced by female tricycle drivers. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the lived experiences of a female tricycle driver?
2. What are the challenges faced by female tricycle drivers?
3. What are the coping mechanisms of female tricycle drivers?

Methodology

This study employed Heideggerian phenomenology to explore the participant's lived experiences.

Participants of the Study

This study was primarily focused on the lived experience of female tricycle drivers, as well as the challenges they faced and their coping mechanisms in those challenges. The researchers selected fifteen (15) female tricycle drivers with the following criteria:

- Female tricycle driver;
- 18 years old and above; and
- Work for at least one year as a tricycle driver.

Instrument of the Study

In order to find more relevant information, the researchers will conduct an interview supported by an interview guide. Based on George (2022) Interviews are a qualitative research method that rely on questioning to acquire data. Interviews consist of two or more individuals, one of whom is the question-asker. Also, Bird (2018) explains that an interview guide is merely a list of the high-level subjects you intend to cover in the interview, along with the high-level questions you intend to answer for each topic. The interview guide's questions have undertaken content validation to determine their reliability. By a professional who administered the validation. All responses were evaluated and validated in accordance with the research problem and study variables. After the tool was validated, revisions and modifications were made before interviewing the 15 respondents for the study.

Data Collection Process

To gather coherent data for the study's analysis, a methodical, step-by-step methodology was used in the research. Following the selection of fifteen (15) respondents who met the requirements for this study, they were immediately sent a consent form through a written letter asking for their permission to participate in the study as well as if they would permit the interviewer to record the entire interview session. The interview was conducted face-to-face, and the interviewer and interviewee dialogue was recorded using a gadget. In order to maintain their privacy and make the respondents feel comfortable and open during the interview, we spoke with each respondent individually.

A series of inquiries were made in line with the interview guide while the interview was being audio

recorded in order to understand the participants' perspectives and a meaningful justification for their real-life struggles and coping techniques. Through interviews, respondents were given the opportunity to communicate a phenomenon to the world in accordance with their values, attitudes, and self-awareness. The recorded interview process was turned to text, and the transcript was carefully examined to identify clear, significant themes that were proportionate to the participants' experiences. The researcher was able to get information from the interview about the difficulties that female tricycle drivers face as well as their coping techniques.

To prevent the leakage of the respondents' information, the interview sessions were held in a private setting. The participants received both a written and verbal orientation on the administration and method of the interview before it began and after the respondents approved the written consent. They will also be informed about their privacy and the terms of their non-compulsory participation, which were outlined in advance in the consent form they approved. This includes a preliminary viewing of the interview guide and the data collection approach. To preserve their privacy, the responders were given unique identification codes.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher guaranteed that participation in the study was fully voluntary and that participants might withdraw at any time. This ensures that volunteers are not pushed into participating in a study if doing so would negatively impact their physical or mental health or otherwise be burdensome. As required by Republic Act 10173, any personally identifiable information provided by participants will be held in strict confidence and used solely for the purposes for which it was obtained. Ensuring that the provided data cannot be used to identify anyone besides the researcher. After getting the essential information, they have given their consent to participate in the study. Each participant was given a consent letter that outlined the major aspects of the study and what was expected of both the subject and the researcher. Participants who consented to participate and understood the nature of their participation were asked to sign a consent form that was supplied with the letter.

Data Analysis Procedure

Qualitative data can be gathered using a variety of methods. Interviews that are recorded and transcribed are one of the finest strategies to prevent content inconsistencies. Making sense of data collected from the experiences and obstacles of pet parents. Each participant's exact comments will be included verbatim in the interview transcripts, which will be reviewed thoroughly.

This study employed interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), which is based on a modified Van Kaam technique popularized by Moustakas. The seven essential steps are horizontalizing, reducing experiences to their invariant components, thematic clustering to create core themes, comparison of different data sources to validate the invariant components, crafting of individual textural descriptions, construction of composite structural descriptions, and synthesis of texture and structure into an expression.

Results and Discussion

The following themes were identified in this study by analyzing the obtained data: In particular, (1) Family-Centered, and (2) Empowered. Similarly, the subsequent subthemes were discovered during data collection and are based on the respondents' perspectives.

Family-Centered

It takes a lot of time and energy to raise a child while working as a tricycle driver. If it's for the family, though, everyone is willing to risk it all. Calculating their time to complete tasks is essential for success. A mother will do whatever it takes to provide a good life for her children. According to Bustamante (2021), being a working mother is difficult. Being a mother is difficult. Being a working mother comes with its own set of difficulties, and there are days that are downright difficult. You are the parent, the chef-on-call, the housekeeper, the family accountant, the calendar keeper, the on-call taxi service, and you are also expected to physically and figuratively show up for work.

Family First

According to Takševa (2020), motherly love is defined by the dominant cultural ideas of motherhood. Recent developments in motherhood studies, as well as the work of a small number of feminist philosophers and motherhood scholars, have challenged these ideologies' tenets by daring to speak the "unspeakable": that mother love is frequently and for all mothers permeated by strong negative and conflicting emotions known as maternal ambivalence.

According to participants 3,

"Ayon nga sabi ko kanina, bilang isang nanay syempre mahirap. Kailangan mo muna asikasuhin ang pamilya mo bago ka makalabas at makapag byahe" (As I said earlier, being a mother is, of course, difficult. You have to take care of your family first before you can go out and work)

Everything for my child

According to Rhemivel Baello, one of the ten female drivers in her association, women make up one-fourth of each TODA (Tricycle Operators and Drivers Association) here. Her father taught Baello, who comes from a line of tricycle drivers, how to drive. This 11-year-old tricycle driver asserts, "It's the sensible thing to do." "It's preferable to staying at home." At least you are able to assist your family," Rojas (2021)

Participant 5 mentioned that,

"kasi nasa bahay lang ako wala ako ginagawa, single mother ako at bilang isang magulang gagawin mo lahat para sa anak mo." (Because I'm only at home and I'm doing nothing, I'm a single mother, and as a parent, you will do everything for your child.)

Sharing responsibilities with my better half

The analysis of Current Population Survey data from 2000 to 2013 indicates that dual-earner couples have greater family incomes than single-earner married couples or single women, with or without children. Married couples in whom the husband is the main earner (the husband earns 60 percent or more of total family earnings) had the highest median family income in 2013 (\$101,000), followed by married couples in which both spouses earned the same amount. (\$98,000). Single women with children, in comparison, had the lowest median family income

(\$30,000). In addition, from 2000 to 2013, the family income of dual-earner couples climbed mostly due to an increase in these wives' salaries, but the family income of single-earner married couples and single-women families decreased, contributing to an increase in inequality. In 2013, wives in husband-earner couples regularly contributed 24% of family income, while wives in Primary-earner families provided 67% of family income. Smith (2015)

Participant 13 said that,

Maganda rin kase maging tricycle driver maihahatid anak mo di kana mag papaservice. Yung namamasada ka naman kahit papaano nagkakaroon ka ng sariling pera bukod sa pera na binibigay ng asawa. Kase minsan di kasya yung kinikita ng asawa ko kaya nag tricycle ako para matulungan ko ang pamilya ko in terms of financial needs. (It's nice to be a tricycle driver because you can take your child to school; you don't even need to hire a service for them. In terms of working I somehow earn some money apart from the money that my husband gave to me. Because sometimes my husband's salary is not enough for the family, I decided to become a tricycle driver to help meet our financial needs.)

Empowered

Many female tricycle drivers feel empowered when driving because they believe they are capable of performing jobs for men as well. Additionally, others were amazed to see a woman riding a tricycle. For them, work is genderless. In accord with Wright (2016) Interestingly, in my study, which consisted of interviews with 38 women working in a variety of manual and professional roles in construction and transportation, it was the women in non-professional jobs, such as bus driving or manual crafts, who expressed a desire for "masculine earnings." Women in professional or managerial jobs didn't mention salary as a reason for choosing their jobs. Instead, they talked about hobbies, skills, or family support as reasons for choosing non-traditional jobs.

I am a confident driver with a heart

According to Baig (2019), women are typically more cautious than their macho male counterparts, who appear to like taking bold chances. Driving no longer

demands physical strength, and both men and women are equally proficient.

In line with participant 1,

"Kung ire-rate ko, hindi naman sa pagmamayabang pero mataas, kasi nga maingat ako at di naman ako kaskasero"(If I'll rate it, it's not to brag but high, I am confident because I'm careful and I'm not reckless driver.)

Proud to be a woman

According to Villaganas (2016), "a superwoman who finds her way out at the end of the tunnel," who was empowered and took control over scarce resources, "a lily blooming in 49-degree heat during a tropical summer," was "fighting against poverty," and "a mother hen protecting her chicks from a soaring skyline hawk," was "providing an income for their children's survival."

Participants 3 said that,

"Bilang isang babae, ang sarap sa pakiramdam na kaya ko gawin yung mga kayang gawin ng lalaki." (As a woman, it feels good to be able to do what men can do.)

Accept and Let go

This slogan is intended to instill a sense of quality customer service. It can also be used as a training motto to get employees to make decisions that are good for the customer and build trust and loyalty. I've discovered, however, that this customer-centric philosophy is now obsolete and irrelevant. In fact, it may very well be preventing the achievement of truly great customer service. I agree that this comment appears a bit weird. However, there are compelling reasons to abandon this business principle. Arora (2019)

Participant 13 mentioned that,

okay lang tanggapin mo namimili ang customer kase customer is always right kung ayaw nya sayo de ibigay mo sa gusto nyang tricycle driver. Mahirap naman yung pipilitin mo yung pasahero mong ayaw naman sayo. Kung halimbawa may kaldag iisipin sinasadya mo. Kung sino ang gusto yun ang sakyan nya. (It is okay, because customers always choose." Besides, the customer is always right. If they don't like it, just give it to the next one. It is hard to force someone to like you. For example, if there is an inconvenience, they will think that you are doing it on purpose.)

Escaping Reality

In accordance to Scott (2022) People utilize avoidance coping rather than confronting stress head-on for a variety of reasons. Anxious individuals may be susceptible to avoidance coping because, at first glance, it appears to be a method for avoiding anxiety-provoking thoughts and circumstances. Avoidance coping, also known as avoidant coping, avoidance behaviors, and escape coping, is a maladaptive coping strategy in which a person modifies their behavior to avoid thinking about, experiencing, or doing challenging things.

According to Participant 2,

Ayoko na mistress, iniwasan ko. Nakikipagkwentuhan o uuwi sa bahay. Nililibang ko sarili ko."(I don't want to stress myself, I avoid it. Chatting or going home. I just entertain myself.)

Conclusion

The goal of the current study is to investigate and comprehend one of the important aspects of female tricycle drivers' lives that are infrequently seen in the Philippine context. In order to comprehend the lived experiences of female tricycle drivers, a lot of data regarding the various facets of their lives as drivers were acquired and examined. Several observations were made after speaking with fifteen female drivers about their life experiences, difficulties, financial difficulties, psychological effects, and coping mechanisms.

- Female tricycle drivers strive to assist their husbands in providing for their families. Their motivation comes primarily from their families. They each make every effort to provide a better life for their children.
- Female tricycle drivers have faced challenges related to their ability to make ends meet, finding time to balance job and family obligations, encountering discrimination and stereotypes in others, and day-to-day life.
- Female tricycle drivers evade and disregard the problem and discrimination as a coping mechanism. They feel that if they ignore their problem and focus on achieving their goal of providing for their family, it would eventually disappear.
- This study comes to the conclusion that they chose this job since they can perform both duties. They are able to provide for their family's financial situation and children while also caring for them. And also enduring

discrimination and problems in their workplace.

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