

Tatlong Gulong ng Buhay: The Tricycle Drivers and their Lived Experiences During the Pandemic

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Abstract

"Basta driver, sweet lover." A short cheesy line makes them known as the roads' casanova, the nicest sweet talker, generous people, and someone who will ensure the passengers' safety. However, behind the most adorable smile on their lips is the underlying reason for their every sweat and hard work, and because of the recent events, everything changed. Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) has been the world's biggest problem encountered during the 21st Century. Thus, the study utilizes Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) with 10 participants in the study. Furthermore, it aims to explore the lived experiences of tricycle drivers during the pandemic, specifically: (1) to describe the lived experiences of the respondents, (2) to describe the challenges faced of the respondents, and (3) to describe the ways and means on how they cope up with the situation. Moreover, based on the study, the findings are the following: tricycle drivers experienced the pandemic's positive and negative effects that teach them things that they must do if it happens again. The respondents faced challenges and difficulties brought by the pandemic and created their ways to deal with it. They also learn different coping mechanisms during the pandemic that helped them adjust and face the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: *Tricycle drivers, COVID-19, Lived experiences, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis*

1. INTRODUCTION

"Basta driver, sweet lover." A short cheesy line makes them known as the roads' casanova, the nicest sweet talker, generous people, and someone who will ensure the passengers' safety. However, behind the most adorable smile on their lips is the underlying reason for their every sweat and hard work, and because of the recent events, everything changed. Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) has been the world's biggest problem encountered during the 21st Century. Sagar (2020) said that in just a matter of weeks, everything has changed. Millions of lives are infected, economies of different countries went down, and many people give their lives to save others – that no one is safe until everyone is safe.

According to Zahar (2020), it all started when China's health authorities publicized the cause of the growing pneumonia outbreak in Wuhan, China. This type of virus never exists in humans until then. The World Health Organization (WHO), 2020 has considered COVID-19 as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (2020) after twenty-three days. In the Philippines, first confirmed the Department of Health announces local transmission of COVID-19 on March 7, 2020, and a day after, the President acknowledged it as a threat to National Security. COVID-19 pandemic situation laid a deep bare fracture towards every Filipino's life and to Philippine socio-economic society. All Filipinos, no matter the socio-economic classes, have been affected by the pandemic and the sudden lockdown. Many do receive an emergency subsidy, but it's not enough for the entire epidemic period. For those who receive the aid, there's a scarce in covering individual and family's needs. Many workers are from the informal sector who are not secured by labor laws, and their jobs are cannot be done at home. The tricycle drivers paid just by giving service, and their operations are not on the government's radar. Some are not covered and registered in social services like Social Security System or SSS and Philhealth. (Lorenzo, 2020). Many have been struggling to put food on the table, but it is the poorest who suffered the most. (Waxman, 2020)

Many public utility vehicles in Bacolod City cried for help, saying they have no more food to feed their families. Some people stopped working due to fear that they might get the disease, but some continue to use it because they have a family to feed. They're saying, "We're not afraid of the virus. We are afraid because we have no

money to feed our families. We are all hungry." Danny Tingson, a resident of barangay Mandalagan and a tricycle driver for the past 20 years, has already felt the pandemic's impact. He said that he used to earn 400 a day, but it is now down to 150. He also said that the money he makes is not enough to feed his family and said, "It can only buy rice." And lastly, he said that "It is tough for us drivers. The virus may not kill us, but hunger and poverty will." (Rappler, 2020) Thus, the researchers conducted the study during the pandemic. The study's objective is to know the tricycle drivers' lived experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.1 Research Questions

This study's primary goal is to explore the lived experiences of tricycle drivers during the pandemic. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the experiences of tricycle drivers during the pandemic?
2. What are the challenges of tricycle drivers during the pandemic?
3. How do tricycle drivers cope up with the situation during the pandemic?

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Experiences of Tricycle Drivers

Regardless of social standing, the Coronavirus and today's pandemic affects everyone is not false. Significant to what's being discussed, assume that everyone should strictly obey government rules that manage it is inconsiderate and lack thoughtful considerations. Government responses that weaken the impact of health crises create a change in each other's lives, yet still, they affect people in different ways negatively than the others. Implementation of quarantine nationwide is a big help in flattening the curve, but these rules only favor those who have more stable jobs and incomes. Poor ones, it's difficult for them to survive through that. Tricycle drivers, who are most household heads in communities, as the guidelines got stricter and forced implementation of curfews, tricycle drivers continued services, risked their lives, and got caught to feed their families. And to make the situation even worse, those who saw need to pay fees, fees that they can use for their food and other needs of themselves and their families. Another problem is some communities, especially places where corruption is high, still haven't received their relief goods and subsidies that are a big help for them from the local government. (Bahjin-Imlan, 2020)

Whether it's because of the unemployment, out of hand unpredicted emergency situations, the growing pandemic will continue to affect personal and family expenses that at this time is not long from upcoming more days and years. However with this kind of unusual time, a chance to change and adjust your short term and long term financial goals to guarantee your soon to be financial stability. COVID-19 may have thrown you for a primary loop in the financial department. Still, there are many ways to reduce the economic impact and slowly but surely get to economic stability. (Black, 2020)

In the early weeks of 2020, many of us were experiencing lockdown. Most of our priorities from 2020 has most likely shifted, and the new normal has forced us all to learn new ways of doing things, and although some people have more time in the day because of their work from home, it can still be challenging to stay focused. We can all have the opportunities in times of difficulties and adjustments from having a growth mindset. (Bosworth, 2020)

There are 1.7 million "registered" tricycle units in the country, with possibly hundreds of thousands more operating without franchises, as stated by the National Confederation of Tricycles and Transport Operators and Drivers Associations of the Philippines. About 300,000 registered tricycle units in Manila alone. Anticipating the severe consequences of the mass transportation shut down in Luzon due to the coronavirus disease that affects millions of drivers who are not allowed to ferry their families who depend on their daily trips for their everyday expenses. (Cabrera, 2020)

The transportation system is seriously affected, and it dropped because of companies' temporary closing and limitations of people's ability to move freely. Pandemic makes a significant impact on our Tricycle drivers. A plague turns to lower their daily basis of income. Schools are closed and no more pupils ferry. No visitors dare to visit and do to leave. Attempt hailing is lessening due to the significant decrease in workers on the street. Seniors citizens and ages 18 and below are not allowed to go outside of their homes. By order of law, drivers can accommodate only one commuter per ride. Some woke up earlier than usual and did service until night-time. And because food has the most significant charge in everyday life, a deduction for some goods will be the best option.

Those wives also need to work to help increase the family's resources. Personally, tricycle drivers are the most in trouble on how they will go to support their financial needs and other expenses. (Canares, 2020)

According to Galang (2020), affected public transport members (trike drivers and jeepney drivers) in Nueva Ecija, who received food packs from SM Inc. and SM Cabanatuan, stated that the pandemic made everyone in a critical condition. It's too hard for tricycle drivers to earn money to spend for daily individual and family expenses during this kind of pandemic. Trike drivers' still plying even there's a minority of passengers these days, considering that the average revenue since June is PHP 200. And according to senior citizen jeepney driver Alfredo Padilla, one who also benefited from the given food packs, jeepney drivers used to earn Php1 300 a day before compared to Php 400 every couple of days.

According to International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives South East Asia Secretariat (2020), Jakarta formed a Special "COVID-19 response" for security monitoring and prohibiting the spread of the virus on public transport. And by choice, Indonesia strengthens its hygienic excellence instead of dropping all systems of public transportation. In the Philippines, to disappoint them to go outside during the implementation of Enhanced Community Quarantine, the national government suspends all public transport shapes in Luzon, particularly trains, buses, tricycles, jeepneys taxis. The government suspended Lao PDR comparably to the Philippines, access to transportation services, and shared mobility. Consequently, only private conveyances are authorized to travel with the regulations of lockdown.

One of the primary victims of COVID-19 is the transport system. All have been affected economically, from road-based to airlines. Sudden lockdown in every country results in harmful effects in terms of the demands of transport passengers. Even though governments implemented various laws for general guidance, every passenger, individuals practicing social distancing restrictions, or even the situation become normalize; people could change different preferences toward the means of transport. That can lead to people avoiding use transportation that accommodates plenty of crowds. In China, self-government vehicles preferred touchless goods to decrease and prevent virus spread. And in India, they ramped up delivery services for necessary products. (Harikumar, 2020)

Due to distancing rules violations and overcharging protests by passengers, some were plying even without a license, sixteen tricycle drivers of Manila ordered impounded. Mayor of Manila Isko Moreno declares the continuous operation of tricycles, and on June 1, the City of Manila will be at its General Community Quarantine (GCQ). The tricycle drivers are authorized due to pitiful life conditions and reminding every driver to follow every firm's measures. It includes the allowed number of passengers and not being an opportunist in charging a high fare because commuters of tricycles are also incapable and in need. And that be grateful because at least now trike drivers have something. (Lalu, 2020)

According to Sidel (2020), after the advent of the COVID-19 crisis in the Philippines, these public transportation surface modifications have moved to high gear, creating an equally consistent and convincing blueprint for the restructuring of Metro Manila's transport system. In light of the crisis, the short-term imperative of protecting public health by 'social distance' is consistent with the longer-term imperative. The newly established #MoveAsOne Alliance introduced this blueprint to senior Department of Transportation (DOTr) leaders, key legislatures in both Houses of Congress, and other key policymakers and the general public.

The slowdown in economic growth for transport modes has been one of the critical consequences due to the confluence of government locks and fears regarding procurement and dissemination of the virus using mass transportation networks. The diminished freight transport drivers, the drivers of cargo operation, are problematic, influenced by supply and demand factors throughout the present situation and the need to sustain essential services. The crisis has impacted all kinds of mobility: nationally and globally, from cars and public transport to buses, trains, and aircraft. International road transport operation was almost 50 percent below the 2019 level by the end of March 2020, and commercial airline activity was nearly 75 percent below 2019 by mid-April 2020. During and immediately after a crisis, people sometimes follow new transport methods, often becoming constant, depending on many factors. The pandemic age may have caused many passengers to turn on active transportation, persuaded by advantages such as mass transit cost and time savings or improved health. COVID-19 increased dramatically in New York and Philadelphia, made more desirable by exceptionally deserted streets and enhanced air quality. Before the COVID-19 crisis, privately owned vehicles were more prevalent in many cities, and past situations have suggested that car use could surge after the problem. In one customer opinion study, 20 % of people who use buses, underground, or trains frequently said they would no longer use their vehicles, while 17% said they would use their vehicle more because of COVID-19. The concerns of COVID-19 led in March and April 2020 to rising car sales in Korea above 2019 levels, while peak-hour traffic was recently above the regular class in Beijing, with shuttles taking the risk of mass transit (Sung & Monschaeur, 2020).

2.2 Challenges of Tricycle Drivers

Running of public transport in Manila are shut out, and only trike drivers have a permit to continue due to the demand for Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine (MECQ). Drivers doubled their eagerness to work because of meager income, and only a few dare to go outside. Fare is around PHP25 to PHP50, depending on how far the route is. And as for safety, there's a prepared plastic divider following firm measures. According to 61-year-old trike driver Alfredo Perez, they used to have earnings of PHP800 a day before the pandemic, and now only PHP 200 is the total amount they gain for everyday ferry since July. It's needed to double their work and have at least 17-18 hours of plying to get the amount required to support the family's daily expenses. (Aquino, 2020)

According to the Department of Transportation (DOTr) (2020), passengers' capacity and load factors are needed for each transport mode to follow physical distances strictly. Passenger load for public utility busses (PUBs) and public utility jeeps (PUJs) does not exceed 50% or half of the vehicle's capacity, except for the driver and the conductor. In UV Express and taxis, the passenger load should not exceed two passengers per row, except for the driver's row, where only one passenger is allowed. On the other hand, Tricycles must not exceed one rider in a sidecar though back-riding is not permitted.

According to Foss (2020), while there is life, there's hope. Despite your anxious brain's effort to focus on the worst situations, and despite the feeling of anxiousness sucking any sense of positivity from the day, you can still find hope during the pandemic. With some intentional effort, you can learn several skills that will manage your sense of confidence despite the crisis and help you build emotional stability to handle instability.

According to Gallarde (2020), Mayor Felipe Antonio Remollo of Dumaguete City said that the city is not going against the national government's legislation that prescribes bans on public transport, in particular tricycles. Still, it merely innovates it, describing it as "substantial enforcement" to prevent operators and drivers' disempowerment. One essential requirement is to create a plastic barrier between the two passengers approaching each other within the sidecar and the other between them and the driver.

Martin Delgra III, the board chairman of Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory (LTFRB), stated in a press statement that PUV modes with higher passenger capacity, such as buses, will be prioritized in compliance with Departmental Order No. 2017-01. In areas where buses are not adequate to satisfy the actual demand for passengers or where road characteristics do not permit their operation, PUVMP complies with the requirements of PUVMP. PUJs and UV Express can operate in areas with unavailable buses and modern PUVs. In areas where no other public transport mode is available, tricycles may be allowed to use as determined by the LTFRB in coordination with the corresponding LGU. But the drivers and operators must maintain the safety and social distancing of every passenger. They have to take half of their passengers than the usual, and they have to make sure that their vehicles' interiors are always clean and disinfected. (Gamboja, 2020)

The Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases may consider Jeepneys to operate if they modify their seating arrangements to ensure physical distancing among the passengers. And because of the absence of public utility vehicles, Sen. Harry Roque urged the employers to maintain a 50-50 work scheme or schedule rotation (Geducos & San Juan, 2020).

According to Gonzales (2020), Public transportation in Metro Manila needs to be pause due to the spreading of the COVID-19. They need to shut down public transport vehicles and limit private vehicles to local areas. As General Community Quarantine's transition has begun, public transportation is allowed to operate, but they need to reduce their capacity to less than 50%. By following the health and safety protocols, the Filipino transport sector faces new dilemmas like lowering its capability and making the commuters stranded.

COVID pandemic situation made everyone suffer no matter what their social standing is in Philippine society. All Filipinos in different social cases have been affected by the pandemic and the sudden implementation of enhanced community quarantine or lockdown. Still, it is the poorest who suffered the most. Many were already struggling to put food on the table in ordinary times, but today's situation makes it even worse. But what's tremendous was that not all families or individuals received aid from the government that was supposed to help them cover their family's needs during this entire time of the pandemic. Many workers in our country are from the underground economy (e.g., street vendors, trash collectors, jeepneys, and tricycle drivers). They are not like the typical income sources, and their jobs are based on the home per-output basis, per given service. As their operations are not in the government's hands and labor laws can't cover them and are most likely not given a chance to register in essential social services like SSS and Phil health. (Lorenzo, 2020)

According to Naik (2020), Since the COVID-19 outbreak, the whole globe is dealing with new challenges. It affects the usage of public transportation. In India, most public transport and rental service companies suspended their operation, and some people are willing to buy their vehicles in the future. Different types of public transport used in India are auto-rickshaws, taxis, railways, and buses. But the biggest challenge in this is how they will maintain social distancing because the transportation modes are always crowded and infrequent in India.

Jeepney and tricycle drivers of Bacolod City cried for help, saying they have no more food on the table to feed for their families. After a week, their city government implements an enhanced community quarantine that may decrease the spreading of the novel coronavirus disease. According to Diego Malacad, the United Negros Drivers Operators Center (UNIDOC) secretary-general asked the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) to allocate financial assistance to the affected drivers. It's the hunger and poverty that may kill us, not the Coronavirus, and that they're not afraid of the virus. Still, they're scared because they have no enough money to feed their families. And he also said that he would continue to ferry because he needs to support his family's needs. (Rappler, 2020)

It's a frightening time. We're amid a worldwide pandemic, with many places at least partially shut down, others struggling to reopen safely. Some of us are in areas where the coronavirus infection rates are getting worse. Others are bracing for what may come next. Uncertainty is a challenging thing to handle. People have no clue how long it will harm us and how it will last longer, and how bad things it might get because there's a lot of misinformation that leads to fear. But even in the face of this unique crisis, there are many ways to manage your anxiety and fears, like focusing on the things you can control, like taking steps to reduce your risks by frequently washing your hands. (Robinson & Smith, 2020).

According to the Secretariat of the East African Community (EAC) (2020) report, passenger transport has decreased by approximately 50% as countries within the region use various restrictions to prevent citizens' movement. Truck drivers have never been more visible, highlighting their position as critical employees in difficult times like these. Africa depends heavily on the freight transport industry to keep supply chains running. With a substantial decline in the number of international and regional freight flights able to operate, it is increasingly relying on road transport operators. They implemented restrictions on the number of people in drivers' cabins, and in Uganda, truck drivers are not allowed in hotels and guest houses along their routes. Instead, they need to stay in their places at all times.

The government and its enforcement officers diverted their focus on implementing the guidelines and removed the commuters' pressure. NAN notes that buses from Cele-Express to Lawanson enforce the COVID-19 guidance protocol to ensure three passengers in a row of seats instead of the usual four. While tricycles are allowed to carry two passengers at the back to observe physical distancing. (Vanguard News, 2020)

According to Wong (2020), Public transport services are very exposed during the COVID-19 pandemic because they are the lifeblood of cities around, so they need to keep running as long as possible. In Wuhan, China, public transport is banned, and they only used buses to move medical staff. But in some areas in China, they lessen their use of public transportation, and they focus on hygiene and sanitation, just like wearing a facemask and gloves. In Australia, they disinfect their vehicles three times a day, and at night it will undergo a full interior clean overnight.

In Pakistan, the federal government is allowing inter-district public ground transport to operate. They must still follow the standard operating procedures (SOPs), including working in 50% capacity and reducing the passengers' fees. But some transport providers protests and refuses to resume their services due to the disagreement with the SOPs. They are also concerned that if public transport operates, it may cause possible further outbreaks of COVID-19. (World Aware Company, 2020)

2.3 Coping Mechanisms of Tricycle Drivers

According to Asian Development Bank (2020), Bayan Bayanihan uses the common Filipino Bayanihan concept of community spirit to help solve the health crisis of COVID-19 by providing essential food supplies to the vulnerable and oppressed in and around Metro Manila. The target beneficiaries are the weak and oppressed, including the disabled and the elderly, and the day-to-day wage earners in the irregular labor market. They hire e-tricycles and bicycle taxis to distribute the relief packs because of the narrow alleyways.

According to Bleakley (2020), people have a hard time over the past several months during the quarantine, and for parents, it's hard to make their children entertained. But parents say that it's been a great time to bond with their children and they found some ways to do it like playing games with their kids, watching movies with them, talking and listening to them and many more fun activities.

As an alternative livelihood for 80 tricycle drivers of Baliwag whose income was affected by the pandemic, as part of the new normal, their city government made a deal and collaborated with SM City Baliwag. The city government created the 3- Wheel on the Go program to buy goods without leaving their homes. As for every bulk order, tricycle drivers will benefit and gets PHP100 for every delivery service of transactions. (David, 2020)

According to Dela Cruz (2020), approved by ordinance No. 2768, this ordinance come up with an adequate compensation worth PHP20 million for over 25,000 franchise holder operators in Quezon City, under the lead of Manila Vice Mayor Joy Belmonte, wherein it first to happen in the Philippines and will provide complimentary insurance only for personal passenger and drivers.

According to Demayo 2020, Quezon City Tricycle Drivers register as food delivery riders under #PandaTODA, the Quezon City Collaboration Program with Foodpanda, on Tuesday center of the moratorium community. Foodpanda will hire 500 tricycle drivers in the initiative framework, issuing rider kits fees despite the high demand for online delivery services during the disease outbreak.

According to Fenol (2020), some 2,000 tricycle and motorcycle drivers in Manila, affected by the coronavirus lockdown, will become Grab's food and package delivery partners, the local authority said Wednesday. The drivers will work under the GrabFood and GrabExpress services, the Manila Public Information Office reported in a statement.

For the more significant reason, people are now feeling the pressure on their budgets as the corona virus threatens our lives and profitability. However, for many, now is the time to look for new opportunities to earn money to help with our daily bills and essential needs. Although social distancing and stay-at-home orders put a barrier on some earning options, there are many things you can do right from home to earn some extra cash. Like providing virtual tutoring or offering some virtual assistance. (MoneyTips, 2020)

According to Nutten (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic caused significant and severe changes to our daily lives, changes that rarely happened to every one of us. Adjustments to life come with a broad range of understanding and experiences—this kind of transition of settling to a new normal, possibly easy but also perhaps challenging. But there are things that we must remember by facing this new normal: First is this situation is uncertain and temporary, consider this time to reflect on who you want to be in this time, also focus on what's within your control. It's also okay to set boundaries even with family members and friends. Adjustment is a process that looks different for most people, but patience and flexibility are also necessary.

In partnership with its local government, the Office of the Vice President (OVP) will launch its Community Market program to help trike drivers and small scale vendors under the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ). This plan focuses on allowing those who don't have the means and resources and can't compete with others to become an additional income. Pasig's residents can use a mobile application called Community Mart to buy goods and be delivered by those authorized tricycle drivers. It will be Cash on a Delivery basis. (Pedrajas, 2020)

Lapu-Lapu City Drivers lost their source of living due to the issued Enhanced community quarantine after transportation officials canceled single motorcycles and tricycle services. They are "Village Marshals" for a month, and it will extend if their assistance is still needed. The city government gave 80 tricycle drivers a job to assist authorities in imposing anti-corona virus disease (COVID-19) protocols. They are under the Cash for work program of the City Social Welfare and Development Office. Also, trike drivers are reserved to promulgate information called "RekoridaKontra Virus a Dakbayan." It's one of the master plans they execute to guarantee that everyone is according to rules and regulations. And as payment, they're given worth PHP400 pesos as a daily salary that includes gas allowance worth PHP100 a day, so they have an amount to spend for day-to-day expenses. (Saavedra, 2020)

Tricycle drivers and operators from 16 barangays in Aklan already feel the pandemic's effect and appeals to raise the tricycle fare to compensate for their loss during the epidemic and provide their families with their basic needs. Johnny Damian, President of the Federation of Kalibo Tricycle Operators and Drivers Association Inc. (FOKTODAI), said that they consulted the leaders of transport groups for the provisional fare and before the Sangguniang Bayan approved it. Tricycle drivers must also comply with safety health protocols like wearing a facemask and regularly sanitizing their tricycle units. (Zabal, 2020)

3. METHODOLOGY

The researchers decided to conduct qualitative research to satisfy the dissertation's aim, especially with the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) approach. Qualitative research addresses obtaining data through informal communication.

However, this qualitative research's effectiveness, to the advantage of IPA, allows the researchers to understand the research participants' deep-seated lived experiences to fully express themselves and their lived experiences without holding backs or any misrepresentation. Thus, the IPA approach restates the fact that the main objective and nature are to dig and search the research participants' lived experiences and state the research findings through their lived experiences (Alase, 2017).

3.1 Participants

This research, with its IPA approach, manage information most appropriate for small samples. This study explores each participants' complex experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms or strategies to understand these giving elements will be emphasized and develop to more broad representations. This IPA is an essential methodology for examining concepts that are intricate (Smith & Osborn, 2014).

This study focuses on tricycle drivers as participants. The researchers defined tricycle drivers as those who are hardworking and who will ensure the passenger's safety. The sample consisted of tricycle drivers in their middle age, and some are already senior citizens. The researchers gathered a selection at SM Marilao's tricycle terminal in Bulacan, Philippines.

Research participants were contacted through direct visits and asked for their consent to be the study's subject. Researchers explained what the said study was for, and participants were informed about their rights and the confidentiality limits. Also, the researchers and participants had a brief initial conversation to be sympathetic to each other. A formal interview happens once it was all settled. All interviews were audio-recorded to assist the researchers in transcribing the messages thoroughly.

3.2 Instrument

The interview is the tool used to gather information. The research instructor carefully reviewed the guide questions before starting the research to ensure its suitability for the said study and its results. The researchers asked the respondents in Filipino language queries to be comfortable and freer to express their feelings and experiences in their every answer. After the process of interview, researchers begin to start the data collection.

3.3 Procedures

This study has gone through many steps and different processes. Before starting the interview, the researcher asked for consent and explained what it was for and the confidentiality limits. After explaining all the essential details, researchers and participants make a brief conversation to be more comfortable and willingly and freely express their experiences. The researcher interviews them one by one and ensures the guide questions' accuracy and suitability to the study and its results.

In the individual interviews, the researchers used research questions to determine respondents' points of view, feelings, and experiences regarding the study's subject. However, the interviewee also needs a necessary skill and offers some flexibility to carry an interview to its essential objectives. The researchers assure to transcribe the respondent's statements precisely. The researchers type the interview transcription precisely what is said and don't change the meaning. After finishing the interview and the data gathering, the researchers have now gathered the data about each tricycle driver's experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms during the pandemic.

Participants' privacy is the most important, and it should be free of coercion from the research team. Participants should know and understand that it's voluntary and anytime they can choose not to participate.

4. RESULTS

This part of the paper includes the presentation of the result of the respondents' responses. The respondents' demographic profile shown in Table 1 consists of the age and the years of the respondent's being a tricycle driver. Ten tricycle drivers living in the Bulacan participated as a respondent in the study.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency
Age	
21-30 years old	1
31-40 years old	0
41-50 years old	4
51-60 years old	2
61 years old and up	3
Years of Being a Tricycle Driver	
1-5 years	2
5-10 years	4
11 years and up	4

The following divisions discuss the outcome of the comprehensive interview conducted by the researchers. The result's variations are divided into three categories that tackle the three main themes of the research: lived experiences, challenges, and coping mechanisms of tricycle drivers. Each of the three categories is divided into subordinate groups according to the participants' responses supported by their raw and untampered statements. The subordinate group's tabulated frequency are arranged from the types of the main themes in descending pattern. There are responses from the views of the respondents to support the presentation of the result.

4.1 The Experiences of Tricycle Drivers

Participants shared how their lives have changed since the onset of this pandemic. They told us about the sudden adjustments they have been making because they need to do extra jobs just for them to be able to feed their families. The ways they have been coping because of the changes they are experiencing, like the rarely trips of tricycles and how they're dealing with the uncertainty involving financial problems. But on the other side, they also pointed out the things they have learned and realized, like the importance of having quality time and bonding with your loved ones. As illustrated in Table 2, five subordinate groups in the lived experiences came from the respondents' statements. The lived experiences that appeared from the data are the following: family bonding, personal growth, financial problems, an extra source of income, adjustments.

Table 2. Experiences Themes

Experiences	Frequency
Family Bonding	1
Personal Growth	2
Financial Problems	10
Fear	1
Adjustments to lifestyle changes	10
Worrying about uncertainty	1
Positivity in Life	6
Another source of income	1

Most participants stated that their families spend more time together than they usually do despite the growing pandemic. They got the time to invest in their personal growth. As shown in Table 3, there are several themes under positive experiences that emerged from the participants' responses. The festive themes identified from the data include family bonding, personal growth, and positive emotions.

4.1.1 Family bonding

According to Bleakley (2020), everyone has a hard time over the past several months during the quarantine, and for parents, it's hard to make their children entertained. But parents say that it's been a great time to bond with their children and they found some ways to do it like playing games with their kids, watching movies with them, talking and listening to them and many more fun activities.

One of the respondents stated that their families have positive benefits, including opportunities for strengthening relationships, finding new hobbies such as planting plants and vegetables necessary for everyday living.

"Hmmmmmm.... Parang wala kasi nabawasan ang income namin eh! Kaya lang meron din naman kasi nakasama mo yungpamilya mo sa bahay and then natuto kami magtanim ng mga gulay-gulay na mapapakinabangan. Yung mga plants na nasa paso, natuto yung mga anak ko ganon yung kagandahan."

4.1.2 Personal Growth

For the participants, this pandemic brought them to personal growth. The need to provide for their family made them more focused on vital things. It should be their everyday need comes to be their priority. According to tricycle driver 1:

"Kung sa ano wala! Pero sa ano may natutunan yung tao kung papaano mag ipon din kahit papaano."

Tricycle driver eight also said that he learned to save because nowadays it is difficult to earn money.

"Ako ano meron kaya natuto siguro akong ano... magtipid! Dati tagay po ako nang tagay pagka gabi eh! Ngayon madalang na! Kase medaling kumita kung dati, kung dati kumikita kami ng 700 to 800 ngayon swerte kung maka 500 maghapon ! "

Bosworth (2020) stated that, we can all have the opportunities in times of difficulties and adjustments from having a growth mindset.

4.1.3 Financial Problems

Participants had been through negative experiences such as financial problems and fear because of feeling overwhelmed by what could happen because of the pandemic.

Research participants stated that regardless of the effects of the COVID-19 on their family, the pandemic has affected and will continue to affect household finances for days to come. They said that it's tough to plan their everyday living due to the poor financial stability. According to tricycle driver 2:

"Ayyyy de! Di sapat yun sa pangkain namin, kase kung kumikita kalang ng limang daan isang araw kulang na kulang na yun sa pang araw-araw namin!"

Tricycle driver eight also shared the same experience. It's hard for him to budget their daily income for their expenses, mainly because they have children who need support for their education.

"Ehhhh (tumawa) wala po kasi syempre ano po sobrang hirap kumita ng pera eh. Ehhhhh yung mga bata naman di naman ahhhh di naman pwede mahinto ng pag- aaral eh. Kaya yung pumapasok na pera talagang halos kulang na kulang sa pang araw-araw."

He further explained that they experience a shortage in financial terms because there are many other fees to pay.

"Wala, kulang na kulang po yon kasi pagkain palang 300 plus na uubusin wala pa yung pambayad sa kuryente at tubig."

Another participant stated that they're in the middle of financial problems; besides his child being in college, he got to have a family of his own:

"Sakin pinagkakasya ko lang kasi iyonganak ko college nag-asawa pa! Kargo ko pa! Pat igatas!"

Another participant shared that if it's really in need, they will ask somebody for a debt whenever it's possible.

"Ehhhh budget budget nalang, minsan kapag ka talagang bitin humihiram nalang sa puwedeng mahiraman."

Whether it's unemployment or out of hand unpredicted emergencies, the growing pandemic will continue to affect personal and family expenses. This time is not long from upcoming more days and years; however, with this kind of unusual time, a chance to change and adjust your short term and long term financial goals to guarantee your soon to be financial stability (Becu, 2020).

4.1.4 Fear

Uncertainty is a challenging thing to handle. People have no clue how long it will harm us and how it will last long and how bad things it might get because there's a lot of misinformation that leads to fear (Robinson & Smith, 2020). Upon evaluating one respondent's statement, they feel fear and worry about everyone's health because, just like tricycle drivers, they are exposed to the virus since they need to continue their family services. According to the participant:

"So marami pong jobless ngayon so at bukod don, halimbawa may sakay na kaming isa yung ibang pasahero kapag magsakay ka na hindi na sasakay kase uniiwas din po sila sa pandemic ganon. Nakakatakot din po ganon."

4.2 The Challenges of Tricycle Drivers

Participants experience various challenges because of the growing virus we are experiencing now. Listed in table 3 are the subordinate themes found during the interview. Ten of 10 participants expressed their adjustments to lifestyle changes, and one out of ten respondents are worried about uncertainty.

Table 3. Challenges Themes

Challenges	Frequency
Adjustments to lifestyle changes	10
Worrying about uncertainty	1

4.2.1 Adjustments to lifestyle changes

Adjusting to change is very challenging because change is inevitable. The way everyone lives is different and now settling into what seems to be the new normal. Participants described the interruption of the work routine caused by the pandemic outbreak could result in various adjustments. According to tricycle driver 1:

"Ehhh ano halos bumaba talaga ang kita namin. Halos kalahati nalang kinikita naming sa per day na dati naming kinikita."

He further explained the big difference between his work experiences before to his work he's encountering now.

"Ehhhh anoooo ehhhhh, kapagwalang customer talagang mahirap. Kasi samin naman kasi kahit mainit kaya namin, kahit mainit ang biyahe basta palaging may pasahero! Ang mahirap lang kasi yung mabibilad ka sa init tapos wala pang ganong pasahero. "

Tricycle driver four also shared her thoughts about their rare trips and the rules that each tricycle drivers are obeying :

"Mahirap kasi ano hindi kagaya dati. Ano magsasawa ka sa pasahero... Pagkikita kang malaki nasa isang libo ngayon halos wala ka nang kikitain... Ano ang tumal-tumal pa kasi may coding kami ano odd-even ang biyahe ganun. Hindi kagaya dati napakalakas ng biyahe talaga ngayon sobra talagang idadaing mo kulang sa budget."

Tricycle driver 5 described how they are obeying the community protocols for the safety of everyone in settling to new normal:

"Yun! Tapos ang sakay namin as in isa lang hindi pwedeng magsakay ng dalawa as in isa lang talaga! Ganun lang. Tapos syempre kelangan nakasunod ka sa protocol ng mga ano kailangang naka facemask, faceshield may alcohol ganon. Social distancing atsaka ito yung mga plastic barriers na nakalagay sa pagitan ng driver saka passenger so yun po. Tiis-tiis lang."

Tricycle driver three bravely shared that being a tricycle driver is not his full-time job:

"Ahhhhhhh.... Nung nawalan ako ng trabaho sa pinapasukan ko ahhhhh..... Nag ano ako, nag-shift ako kung ano yung paraan para mabuhay ko yung pamilya ko. Naisipan kong magpasada nakilabas kahit ano..... "

Tricycle driver, who is a mother, proudly said that she's doing this to help his husband who is abroad:

"Kaya naring itaguyod (tumawa) kung tutuusin hindi pero kase ang husband ko nasa Riyadh so nakakatulong! Pantulong ko lang naman yung pamamasada perosa ibang miyembro naming hirap na hirap sila lalo na yung mga nangungupahan, pambayad nilang mga bills, ilaw, tubig nila so mahirap yon!"

According to staff therapist, Nutten (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic caused severe and significant changes to our daily lives, changes that rarely happened to every one of us. Adjustments to life come with a broad range of understanding and experiences—this kind of transition of settling to a new normal, possibly easy but also may be challenging.

4.2.2 Worrying about uncertainty

Uncertainty is a challenging thing to handle. People have no clue how long it will harm us and how it will last long and how bad things it might get because there's a lot of misinformation that leads to fear (Robinson & Smith, 2020). Especially at a time like this, life is full of uncertainty. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, one out of ten respondents experiences tension regarding their own and families' health and environment. According to respondent:

"Ahhhh... Mahirap oo! Kase unang-una medyo aware ka! Magiging aware ka sa mga pasahero mo. Hindi ka basta pasakay nang pasakay kase syempre kahit paaano iingatan mo rin yung katawan mo! Baka magkaroon ka ng sakit eh! Pag uw imo mahahawahan mo rin sila diba? Ahhh... Kaya ganun nalang yung pag- iinga tnamin kaya kapag namamasada kami kumita kami ng bahagya uuwi na kami. Kase mahirap ilaban ang sapalaran eh. Di bale ng kumintang konte wag kalang magkakasakit kase pag nagkasakit ka mas malaki magagastos. Mas maraming mawawala."

4.3 The Coping Mechanisms of Tricycle Drivers

This superordinate theme discusses how the respondents cope with the difficulties they had been facing since the pandemic outbreak. Listed in table 4 are the subordinate themes that emerged within the interviews. Six out of ten participants had another income source that will meet their family's everyday expenses and surely handle unexpected bills. One out of ten participants shared that being positive is a must, especially with this kind of difficulty.

Table 4. Coping Mechanisms

Coping Mechanisms	Frequency
Another Source of Income	6
Positivity in Life	1

4.3.1 Positivity in Life

Positive thinking helps with stress management that opens us to new possibilities and leads to more productivity. One of the participants described how they need to think positively in their everyday lives to fight regardless of the difficulties. Tricycle driver 5 shared:

"Hmm... yung tiyaga lang sa pamamasada kase kung di ka magtityaga katulad na minsan traffic pa or ano wala ka tiyaga lang po ma'am at pray lang."

According to Foss (2020), while there is life, there's hope. Despite your anxious brain's effort to focus on the worst situations, and despite the feeling of anxiousness sucking any sense of positivity from the day, you can still find hope amid the pandemic. With some intentional effort, you can learn several skills that will manage your sense of confidence despite the crisis, helping you be more flexible.

4.3.2 Another Source of Income

Many things remain outside of control, most especially when it comes to financial needs. Most of the participants described how they've struggling to put food on the table; that's why they've done multiple jobs to support their daily life as well as meet their needs. They work to survive and to satisfy their daily demands. According to tricycle driver 8:

"Ahhh.. Yun maganda yung tanong mo kasi nga nagdadrive ako ng rent-a-van! Ahhh... yung mga ano semi mekaniko marunong din ako niyan! Tapos nag-aayos din ako ng mga lisensya saka mga rehistro marami akong raket eh!"

Tricycle driver who is also a wife of a tricycle driver proudly shared that sometimes she works as the caller of tricycle terminal and also selling different sweet foods:

"Yun nga kailangan may diskarte ka! Kapag yan kagaya nito kapag yung ano nagca caller ako! Kapag yung ano naman nagtitinda-tinda ako ng kakanin para madoble yung kikitain naming kase kung yun lang ang inasahan namin ang biyahe ngayon talagang hindi kakasya."

Tricycle driver 2 also shared that they've done selling some used items:

"Ehhhhh nung nakaraan kasi syempre nagbeta ng gamit ganon! Kung wala, wala naman kasi kaming biyahe non."

For a more significant reason, people are now feeling the pressure on their budgets as the corona virus threatens our lives and profitability. However, for many, now is the time to look for new opportunities to earn money to help with our daily bills and essential needs (MoneyTips, 2020). According to Fenol (2020), some 2,000 tricycle and motorcycle drivers in Manila, affected by the coronavirus lockdown, will become Grab's food and package delivery partners, the local authority said Wednesday. The drivers will work under the GrabFood and GrabExpress services, the Manila Public Information Office reported in a statement.

5. DISCUSSION

This study aims to answer the general questions about tricycle drivers' lived experiences amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. To elaborate on the matter, it was sorted into three themes: tricycle drivers' experiences, the challenges faced by the tricycle drivers, and the coping mechanisms used by tricycle drivers despite facing difficulties. Moreover, the findings of this study were fulfilled by conducting a personal and conversational interview. The responses from the participants expanded these three significant themes into corresponding subthemes. The results from the previous chapter will be analyzed and discussed further in this section.

In the results chapter, various experiences, positive and negative, were reported. Most participants shared how they have been facing difficulties and still have the courage to continue doing their services despite the uncontrollable pandemic growth to ensure their child's well-being—bravely risking their lives for their family. Their significant reason is that they are afraid of the virus but cause they are more fearful of having no food to eat on the table. These instances were familiar to them. The previous life of being a tricycle driver is hard, but in today's world with this called new normal makes things even worse than before. Tricycle drivers experienced low income due to rarely trips because many people don't want to risk their lives to go outside because of the fear that they might get the virus. Having low income will not be enough to support their essential daily needs and other expenses.

Moreover, given that there's a pandemic as observed by some participants' answers wherein all individuals don't require to go outside of their houses, families had the opportunity to have some quality time with each other, which they could not have done before. Also had a chance, an opportunity wherein this kind of situation helps them grow better as a person. Participants had been through many struggles. This pandemic teaches them differently. However, no matter how difficult the situation, participants still choose to fight and grow for their lives.

In terms of challenges the respondents were facing during the pandemic, it's the adjustments to lifestyle changes and positivity in life. Adjustments are due to the sudden transition from our everyday daily living to a so-

called new normal. They are practicing social distancing, wearing proper facemasks and face shields, and tricycle drivers are required to use plastic barriers and provide alcohol for themselves and their respective passengers. According to them, it is their daily income and daily work routine before that has a massive difference from now. Furthermore, as from the observations from the participants, pandemic challenges their positivity in life. Participants shared that because of the crisis, they became more flexible.

Amidst the pandemic, to deal with the difficulties, participants had the coping mechanisms that help them deal with their battling struggles. Respondents had another source of income to support their daily needs and other expenses. They take the responsibility to provide the essentials needed for their family.

Each subtheme of this study collectively served as a glimpse of tricycle drivers' lived experiences during the pandemic. Out of control growth of pandemic makes the world at ease. The rage of Coronavirus has stopped the world. The onset of the pandemic was enormous, but life went on.

6. CONCLUSION

According to the research findings, tricycle drivers experienced the pandemic's positive and negative effects that teach them things that they must do if it happens again. They also faced challenges and difficulties brought by the pandemic and created their ways to deal with it. They also learn different coping mechanisms during the pandemic that helped them adjust and face the COVID-19 pandemic properly. Moreover, by that, they survive and sustain their lives even there is a pandemic.

Furthermore, the study recommends that the national government and local government units join force and acknowledge tricycle drivers' needs, usually in this situation. They should provide assistance or programs that may help our tricycle drivers to cope up in their lives. Create plans that will help them become creative and resourceful that will give them an extra income. The tricycle drivers do not only depend on the government. Take action and find ways like finding a different job or additional income source like online selling that is very popular nowadays. They may also put some creativity and gimmicks on their tricycle, like putting snacks inside and selling them to the passengers do not get bored. Sometimes in life, we need some creativity and passion so that we can have a better life. We should also be the one who controls our life and does not let the problems and circumstances prevent us. Thus, this research's findings and results serve as the baseline for future studies regarding tricycle drivers' lives during the pandemic. Future studies may also dig deeper into the situations and lives of our tricycle drivers.

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