



Assessing the Psychological Distress, Resiliency and Coping of Victims of Flood

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Abstract

Floods caused widespread devastation, affecting both individuals and the environment, resulting in fatalities, property damage, and mental health issues. Using a mixed-methods research approach, the study aimed to assess the psychological distress, resilience, and coping of victims of flood in San Pablo, Isabela. Quantitative techniques measured psychological distress, resilience, and coping levels, whereas qualitative methods investigated respondents' lived experiences and coping mechanisms following flooding. The study included 298 flood victims aged 35 and above from San Pablo, Isabela, and collected data through survey questionnaires and focus group interviews. Descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and Pearson correlation analysis were used to investigate the link between psychological distress, resilience, and coping. The study showed a high level of psychological distress among the respondents. The uncertainty of experiencing floods, such as displacement, lack of necessities, and disrupted routines, can significantly impact mental well-being. Despite that, the respondents displayed a high resilience in terms of stressful events that happened in their lives, particularly during calamities. Respondents experience fatigue, stress and fear during and after floods. Their ways of coping to flood includes praying, being optimistic and courageous as well as having a strong support system. These findings contribute to understanding community resilience and coping amidst and post-floods, offering insights for intervention and support systems.

Keywords: psychological distress, resiliency, coping, flood, lived experiences

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Introduction

Globally, the drastic change in climate patterns has resulted in a rapid increase in the severity of floods, which are the principal reason for unfortunate losses and damages in people's lives.

Located along the Pacific Typhoon Belt, The Philippines experiences an average of 20 typhoons per year. In such an extreme event, heavy precipitation, intense wind, storm surge and landslides result in devastating damages and loss of lives (Asian Disaster Reduction Center). According to Pastrana (2022), Filipinos must be more mentally prepared for disasters like floods and typhoons, which pose significant economic, health, and safety risks (William, L. 2020). Flood survivors often experience injuries, infections, and healthcare disruptions. Despite all these tragedies, Filipinos find humor in disasters and tragedies, making them enjoyable through humor and laughter. Thus, they accept that horrible events occur, questioning why they happen (Barok & Takya, 2020). Filipinos help others, clean up, and aid others with smiles (Letran, 2019). They continue to practice traditional practices like "Bayanihan," providing emotional support and community rituals as well as offer assistance during typhoons.

Coping is crucial in mitigating flood-related consequences. It involves individuals' proactive actions and behaviors. It incorporates community knowledge and coping mechanisms, such as proactive preparation, self-care, and support systems. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2023) highlights the importance of understanding individual perceptions and experiences and adopting constructive emotional responses to manage flood-related threats effectively.

The Municipality of San Pablo, Isabela, is frequently affected by severe and intense flooding due to heavy rainfalls. In some areas, water is knee-deep, reaching the second floor of some houses. It can lead to devastating consequences like property damage, health problems, and economic disruption. The research can also propose ways to enhance the communities' climate change awareness and education and promote low-carbon and climate-resilient development.

This study sought to determine the level of psychological distress, resilience, and coping of the respondents in San Pablo, Isabela. Furthermore, it delved into the lived experiences and ways of coping of the flood victims in the community.

Statement of the Problem

Psychological distress, resiliency, and coping were examined when floods occur promptly. Specifically, it answers the following questions:



1. What is the level of psychological distress, resiliency, and coping of the respondents after being exposed to floods?
2. What are the lived experiences of the respondents during and after floods?
3. What are the coping mechanisms of the respondents after floods?

Literature Cited

Flooding can pose substantial social and mental health problems that may continue over extended periods of time. Flooding can challenge the psychosocial resilience of the hardest of people who are affected. Accounts of the psychosocial impacts of flood events suggest that they can have significant effects on people's wellbeing, relationships and mental health. Flooding can pose substantial social and welfare problems that may continue over extended periods of time because of not only being flooded (the primary stressor), but also because of the secondary stressors (those stressors that are indirectly related to the initial extreme event, i.e., economic stress associated with re-building) that arise as people try to recover their lives, property and relationships.

According to the Black Dog Institute (2021) in its report *Mental Health Impacts of Floods*, several risk factors contribute to psychological distress among individuals and communities affected by flooding. A high level of exposure to the disaster, such as significant property damage, threat to personal safety, financial loss, and disruption of employment or daily routines, increases the likelihood of developing mental health problems. Similarly, communities that experience limited forewarning or sudden flash floods are more prone to emotional distress due to the lack of preparedness and heightened sense of shock. The report also highlights that individuals with pre-existing mental or physical health conditions are more vulnerable to post-disaster psychological difficulties. Furthermore, low social support is associated with a greater risk of mental health issues, as those who lack emotional or practical assistance from family, friends, or the community find it harder to cope with the aftermath of flooding. Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of early support and strong social networks in reducing mental health risks after natural disasters.

Floods are among the most dangerous natural disasters that can occur in people's lives. Since they can cause psychological distress and create a big problem, particularly for people exposed to floods, they use effective coping to cope with the situation, minimizing the damage not only to their mental health but also to their lives, which will measure their resiliency.

Resilience is an important factor for those who have experienced traumatic events such as natural disasters. Resilience is the ability of an individual or community to cope positively with significant and protracted sources of stress. Moreover, resilience is said to be a function of an individual's acceptance of reality, a strong belief that life is meaningful, and the ability to improvise. Resilient individuals as having healthy self-esteem, high self-efficacy, and



internal locus of control. They are also resourceful and have problem-solving and adaptive coping skills.

Maintaining a connection to others in the aftermath of disaster can be healing for individuals and the community. Avoiding isolation and increasing social support is an important factor in building resilience. In addition, although it may be difficult or may evoke feelings of guilt in some, taking time for self-care, such as regular eating, sleep, and exercise, can be key to promoting health and well-being through challenging times (Vujanovic and Gallagher, 2017). In moments of acute stress or anxiety, deep breathing exercises, journaling, walks, and conversations with supportive others can make a significant difference.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed quantitative and qualitative techniques to conduct mixed-methods research to ascertain flood victims' psychological distress, resiliency, and coping in San Pablo, Isabela. The quantitative part measured the psychological distress, resilience, and coping level. On the other hand, the qualitative part explored the respondents' lived experiences and coping after being exposed to floods.

Locale of the Study

The research study was conducted in San Pablo, Isabela. All participants are victims of flood in their community. The study was conducted in 2024.

Participants

Two hundred ninety-eight respondents took part in the study. The respondents all came from the different barangays in San Pablo, Isabela. Majority of the respondents have low socio-economic status.

Data Gathering

A set of stages were used to carry out the data collection process. The respondents were first required to fill out a background information form. In this form, respondents were required to state some basic information about themselves. All victims exposed after the flood comprised the sample. In the following stage, the respondents were given a set of adapted questionnaires from the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10), the Brief Resilience Scale (BRS), and the Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced Inventory (Brief-COPE), which were used to assess the level of psychological distress, resiliency, and



copied of the victims of the flood in San Pablo, Isabela. A focused group discussion was administered, and the respondents' lived experiences and coping methods after being exposed to floods were assessed.

Ethical Considerations

This study employed maximum honesty and transparency. The researchers sought the approval of the concerned school authorities, municipality, and barangay captains to conduct this study. In addition, participants were aware of the study objectives. The researchers ensured that the privacy of the collected data or personal information was guaranteed and intended to give informed consent so that the respondents could freely or voluntarily participate in the study with complete information about what it means for them to take part and that they consented before participating.

Results and Discussion

The results provide a thorough overview of the data analysis that followed the survey used to identify and assess flood victims' psychological distress, resiliency, and coping in San Pablo, Isabela.

Table 1.1. Level of Psychological Distress of the Respondents

| Psychological Distress | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Level of Psychological Distress |
|---|-----------|------------|------|---------------------------------|
| 1. How often did you feel tired out for no good reason in the past four weeks? | 298 | 100.00 | 4.17 | High |
| 2. How often did you feel nervous in the past four weeks? | 298 | 100.00 | 4.09 | High |
| 3. In the past 4 weeks, how often did you feel so nervous that nothing could calm you down? | 298 | 100.00 | 4.17 | High |
| 4. In the past four weeks, how often did you feel hopeless | 298 | 100.00 | 4.01 | High |
| 5. How often did you feel restless or fidgety in the past four weeks? | 298 | 100.00 | 4.15 | High |
| 6. How often did you feel so restless that you could | 298 | 100.00 | 4.17 | High |



not sit still in the past four weeks?

7. In the past four weeks, how often did you feel depressed? 298 100.00 4.22 Very High

8. How often did you feel that everything was an effort in the past four weeks? 298 100.00 4.18 High

9. In the past four weeks, how often did you feel so sad that nothing could cheer you up? 298 100.00 4.04 High

10. In the past four weeks, how often did you feel worthless 298 100.00 3.46 High

Overall Mean

4.1

High Psychological Distress

The table shows the psychological distress of the respondents. Where respondents have very high psychological distress, they often feel depressed, with a mean of 4.22. On the other hand, respondents experience high psychological distress, where they often feel that everything was an effort, with a mean of 4.18. Additionally, most respondents feel tired out for no good reason, restless in that they cannot sit still, and nervous that nothing can calm them down, with a mean of 4.17. Respondents also frequently feel sad that nothing could cheer them up, with a mean of 4.04.

Furthermore, they repeatedly feel hopeless, with a mean of 4.01, and feel worthless, with a mean of 3.46. Based on the results, there is a high psychological distress among the respondents. The uncertainty of experiencing floods, such as displacement, lack of necessities, and disrupted routines, can significantly impact mental well-being, similar to Adebayo et al. (2022), who investigated the prevalence of psychological distress and coping mechanisms among flood victims in Nigeria. His study also shows a high percentage of flood victims experienced psychological distress; another study conducted by Chen et al. (2019), which investigated the prevalence of psychological distress and resilience among flood victims in China, shows a high percentage of flood victims experienced psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, and PTSD.

Table 1.2. Level of Resiliency of the Respondents

| Resiliency | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Level of Resiliency |
|--|-----------|------------|------|---------------------|
| 1. I tend to bounce back quickly after hard times. | 298 | 100.00 | 4.56 | High Resilience |



| | | | | |
|--|-----|--------|-------------|------------------------|
| 2. I have a hard time making it through stressful events. | 298 | 100.00 | 4.24 | Normal Resilience |
| 3. It does not take me long to recover from a stressful event. | 298 | 100.00 | 4.54 | High Resilience |
| 4. It is hard to snap back when something wrong happens. | 298 | 100.00 | 4.07 | Normal Resilience |
| 5. I usually come through difficult times with little trouble. | 298 | 100.00 | 4.16 | Normal Resilience |
| 6. I take a long time to overcome setbacks in my life. | 298 | 100.00 | 4.26 | Normal Resilience |
| Overall Mean | | | 4.31 | High Resilience |

The table illustrates the extent of the resilience among victims of floods. They tend to bounce back quickly after hard times, with a mean of 4.56, and take little time to recover from natural disasters such as floods/typhoons, with a mean of 4.54. This shows beyond doubt that the majority of the respondents have high resilience. Subsequently, some respondents displayed normal resilience, where they experienced taking a long time recovering after being exposed to flood, with a mean of 4.26. Furthermore, some respondents have difficulty making it through stressful events such as floods, with a mean of 4.24. Additionally, they usually come through difficult times with little trouble, with a mean of 4.16, and it takes a long time for them to recuperate after difficult times, with a mean of 4.07, respectively.

Based on the responses, the respondents display high resilience to stressful events, particularly during calamities. It shows that even if they experience floods in their places, they can get through it without having a hard time. In a study by Brockie et al. (2017), the narratives of older adults revealed a strong theme of resilience linked to social capital (bonding, bridging, and linking) and previous disaster experiences. The results reflected the changing face of disaster management strategies and sources of social capital. Castillo et al. (2020) confirm that floods are a significant hazard in the Philippines and can devastate people's lives. However, many Filipinos show remarkable resilience in the face of flooding. This study explored the factors that contribute to resilience among Filipino flood survivors.

Table 1.3. Level of Coping of the Respondents

| Coping | Frequency | Percentage | Mean | Level of Coping |
|--------|-----------|------------|------|-----------------|
|--------|-----------|------------|------|-----------------|



| | | | | |
|--|-----|--------|------|-----------|
| 1. I've been turning to work or other activities to take my mind off things. | 298 | 100.00 | 3.46 | Very High |
| 2. I've been concentrating my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in." | 298 | 100.00 | 3.01 | High |
| 3. I've been saying to myself, "This isn't real." | 298 | 100.00 | 1.99 | Low |
| 4. I've been using alcohol or other drugs to make myself feel better | 298 | 100.00 | 2.15 | Low |
| 5. I've been getting emotional support from others. | 298 | 100.00 | 2.96 | High |
| 6. I've been giving up trying to deal with it. | 298 | 100.00 | 2.27 | Low |
| 7. I've been taking action to try to make the situation better. | 298 | 100.00 | 3.29 | Very High |
| 8. I've been refusing to believe that it has happened. | 298 | 100.00 | 2.16 | Low |
| 9. I've been saying things to let my unpleasant feelings escape. | 298 | 100.00 | 2.27 | Low |
| 10. I've been getting help and advice from other people. | 298 | 100.00 | 2.90 | High |
| 11. I've been using alcohol or other drugs to help me get through it. | 298 | 100.00 | 2.27 | Low |
| 12. I've been trying to see it in a different light to make it seem more positive. | 298 | 100.00 | 3.42 | Very High |
| 13. I've been criticizing myself. | 298 | 100.00 | 2.42 | Low |
| 14. I've been trying to devise a strategy about what to do. | 298 | 100.00 | 3.21 | High |
| 15. I've been getting comfort and understanding from someone. | 298 | 100.00 | 2.98 | High |
| 16. I've been giving up to attempt to cope. | 298 | 100.00 | 2.38 | Low |
| 17. I've been looking for something good in what is happening. | 298 | 100.00 | 3.34 | Very High |
| 18. I've been making jokes about it. | 298 | 100.00 | 2.49 | Low |
| 19. I've been doing something to think about it less, such as going to movies, watching TV, reading, daydreaming, sleeping, or shopping. | 298 | 100.00 | 3.22 | High |
| 20. I've been accepting the reality of the fact that it has happened. | 298 | 100.00 | 3.45 | Very High |
| 21. I've been expressing my negative feelings. | 298 | 100.00 | 3.04 | High |



| | | | | |
|---|-----|--------|-------------|--------------------|
| 22. I've been trying to find comfort in my religion or spiritual beliefs. | 298 | 100.00 | 3.63 | Very High |
| 23. I've been trying to get advice or help from others about what to do. | 298 | 100.00 | 3.20 | High |
| 24. I've been learning to live with it. | 298 | 100.00 | 3.57 | Very High |
| 25. I've been thinking hard about what steps to take. | 298 | 100.00 | 3.30 | Very High |
| 26. I've been blaming myself for things that happened. | 298 | 100.00 | 2.31 | Low |
| 27. I've been praying or meditating. | 298 | 100.00 | 3.48 | Very High |
| 28. I've been making fun of the situation. | 298 | 100.00 | 2.18 | Low |
| Overall Mean | | | 2.87 | High Coping |

The table highlights the coping of the respondents, where most of the coping used by the respondents where they have been trying to find comfort in religion or spiritual beliefs with a mean of 3.63, they have been learning to live with it 3.57, they have been praying or meditating. 3.48. On the other hand, at least coping used where they have been making fun of the situation with 2.18, they have been using alcohol or other drugs to make themselves feel better with 2.15, and they have been saying to themselves, "This isn't real" with 1.99, respectively. A study conducted by Mason, V. et al. (2023) found that the most frequently reported coping strategies were rational, detached, and avoidant, with the least frequent being emotional coping. Significant psychological distress was linked to poor health, prior experience with floods, and having to leave home after the flood. Based on the results, the respondents have moderately high to high coping, which suggests that an individual tends to use coping strategies more frequently when faced with stressors or challenging life events, specifically in floods. High Brief-COPE scores may reflect adaptive coping styles, such as seeking information about flood safety, collaborating with others, and maintaining control. Moreover, in the study of Danso et al. (2017), the findings showed that the most common ways for people in all of the communities to deal with stress as their coping mechanisms were taking short-term trips away from their homes, giving important properties to neighbors, and making flood steps. However, how residents dealt with their losses differed from community to community. Additionally, according to Bernardo et al. (2020), the psychological distress and coping mechanisms of flood victims in the Philippines. They found that flood victims' most common coping mechanisms were social support, religious coping, and positive reappraisal, similar to the study results.

Lived experiences of respondents



This part enumerates the different personal experiences during and after the flood, which were taken from the question, “Could you share your personal experiences during and after floods, highlighting any significant events or emotions you encountered?”

| Theme | Responses |
|---------|---|
| Fatigue | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Nakakapagod po ma'am, kasi bago mag umpisa yung baha aayusin mo po yung mga gamit ilalagay mo ito sa mataas an parte ng bahay.</i> • <i>Kapag sobrang taas na po ng baha hindi talaga maiiwasan na pati ang mga gamit namin ay makukuha ng tubig kaya kailangan po naming labhan yung mga damit na nadumihan at yung bahay namin na puno ng putik po."</i> • <i>"Sobrang nakakapagod po kakalinis ng bahay dahil sa makakapal na putik na pumasok. Kailangan po kasi habang basa pa yung sahig nililinis mo na kasi mas mahirap linisin kapag natuyo na, kaya kailangan bilisan mo yung pagwawalis ng putik."</i> |
| Stress | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Yung mga ganitong pangyayare ma'am ay talagang magbibigay sa'yo ng stress, at normal naman po ata makaramdam nito ma'am."</i> • <i>"nakaka stress po kung saan mo ilalagay yung mga gamit minsan sa sobrang taranta hindi mo na alam kung ano uunahin mo minsan dumarating sa puntong matutulala ka nalang kahit malapit na tubig baha."</i> • <i>"Nababalisa po at problemado kung anong gagawin dahil madaming gamit ang nasira, nadumihan lahat ng damit, lumubog ang mga paninda."</i> |
| Fear | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Yung takot naroon pa rin kahit sabihin naming sanay na kaming mabaha kasi minsan hindi naming alam kung hanggang saan aabot yung tubig, mga alaga namin namamatay at ganun na rin ang mga gamit at kalusugan ng pamilya naming."</i> • <i>"Natatakot at nababahala dahil ang aming bahay ay maliit lamang at sa bubong lang kami natutulog noong kasagsagan ng baha."</i> • <i>"Natatakot ako para sa mga bata habang tumataas yung tubig baha, dahil kung ako lang naman kaya ko kasi lalake ako at marunong naman ako lumangoy. Pero yung mga bata wala pa silang kamuwang muwang sa nangyayari."</i> |

Flooding had greatly affected the respondent's well-being just by thinking where they can evacuate and move their things. This was evidenced by the statement of one middle-age woman when she said that *"Nakakapagod po ma'am, kasi bago mag umpisa yung baha aayusin mo po yung mga gamit ilalagay mo ito sa mataas ang parte ng bahay o kaya naman."* A 45-year-old male added that, *"Kapag sobrang taas ng baha hindi talaga maiiwasan na pati ang mga gamit namin ay makukuha ng tubig kaya kailangan po naming labhan yung mga damit na nadumihan at yung bahay namin na puno ng putik po."* Also, respondents believed that stressful events are normal to experience *"Yung mga ganitong pangyayare ma'am ay talagang magbibigay sa'yo ng stress, at normal naman po ata makaramdam nito ma'am.* On the other hand, the respondents also noted that even if they are used to flood, the dread is unavoidable, *"Nababalisa po at problemado kung anong*



gagawin dahil madaming gamit ang nasira, nadumihan lahat ng damit, lumubog ang mga paninda.”

Experiencing fear due to floods is a common response, and it arises from various factors. This was evident to a 35-year-old female who shared her fears during a typhoon, *“natatakot at nababahala dahil ang aming bahay ay maliit lamang at sa bubong lang kami natutulog noong kasagsagan ng baha.”* The unpredictability of floods can be distressing. People face uncertainty about their safety, the extent of damage, and the duration of the flood. This is supported by a 45-year-old father who stated that, *“Natatakot ako para sa mga bata habang tumataas yung baha, dahil kung ako lang naman kaya ko kasi lalake ako at marunong naman ako lumangoy. Pero yung mga bata wala pa silang kamuwang muwang.”* The fear associated with floods stems from a combination of physical risks, property damage, financial strain, and emotional upheaval. Understanding these factors can help communities better prepare for and respond to flood events.

Coping mechanism of the respondents after being exposed to floods

This section summarized their responses to the question, **“How did you cope with the situation?”**

| Theme | Responses |
|------------------------|--|
| Prayer or trust in God | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Sa ganitong sitwasyon sa Diyos nalang talaga kami lumalapit, nagdarasal na tulungan niya kaming malampasan lahat ng ito”.</i> <i>“Ang dasal ang aming pangunahing ginagawa dahil naniniwala kami na sa pamamagitan nito ay mas kinakaya at nagiging malakas ang aming loob na lagpasan ang calamidad na ito.”</i> <i>“Sa pamamagitan ng dasal at tiwala sa Panginoon, mas nagiging mapanatag at positibo kami na kaya niya kaming ilagtas sa ganitong uri ng pagbaha.”</i> |
| Being Optimistic | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Naniniwala ako ma’am na lahat ng bagay na nangyayari ay may dahilan, lilipas din po ito, hindi porket nangyayari na ito ay hanggang ddon nalang yun, laban lang po sa buhay.”</i> <i>“Ginamit ko ang pagiging positibo ko bilang isang sandata laban sa kahirapan ng sitwasyon. Sa bawat araw, inuusisa ko ang mga bagay na pwede pa ring gawin at pinipili kong maging inspirasyon sa iba.</i> <i>“Sa gitna ng pagsubok, alam kong mahalaga ang magkaroon ng positibong pananaw. Kaya kahit mahirap, hinahanap ko pa rin ang mga bagay na dapat ipagpasalamat at inuunawa ko na may magagawa pa rin kahit sa maliit na paraan.”</i> |
| Having Courage | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Isa sa mga dapat mong taglayin ay ang ipagkakaroon ng lakas ng loob lalo na kapag ganito ang sitwasyon na nararanasan mo. Isa ito sa magbibigay sa’yo ng rason para hindi bumitaw at mas lalong magpatuloy sa laban ng buhay.”</i> <i>“Sa bawat pagtaas ng baha, nadarama ko ang takot at pangamba. Pero sa bawat sandali, pinipili kong lumaban at manatiling matatag. Dahil sa pagkakaroon ng lakas ng loob, nakakayang harapin ang anumang hamon na dala ng pagbaha.”</i> |



| | |
|-----------------------|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Hindi madali ang mawalan ng lahat dahil sa pagbaha. Ngunit sa kabila ng pinsala at pagsubok, natutunan kong mahalín ang sarili kong lakas at tapang. Ito ang nagtulak sa akin na bumangon at magpatuloy sa buhay, dala ang lakas ng loob na hindi susuko."</i> • <i>"Tuwing nababaha ang aming lugar naging mahirap ang aming kalagayan. Ngunit sa gitna ng kagipitan, ipinakita ng bawat isa sa amin ang tapang at determinasyon. Ang pagkakaroon ng lakas ng loob ang nagbigay sa amin ng pag-asa at lakas upang magpatuloy."</i> |
| Social Support System | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Isa din po itong nagsisilbing kalakasan upang malampasan ang pagsubok dulot ng pagbaha, may mga karamay at katulong ka, may pinagsasabihan ka kapag sa tingin mo wala ng pagasang bumangon at nakaagapay sayo sa oras ng sakuna."</i> • <i>"Napakalaking tulong ang aming social support system pagkatapos ng pagbaha. Dahil sa suporta ng mga kapitbahay, pamilya, at kaibigan, hindi kami nag-iisa sa pagbangon mula sa pinsala. Ang kanilang pagmamalasakit at tulong ang nagbigay sa amin ng lakas ng loob upang harapin ang mga hamon na dala ng kalamidad."</i> • <i>"Pagkatapos ng pagbaha, mas naramdaman namin ang halaga ng aming komunidad. Ang pagtutulongan at pagmamalasakit ng bawat isa ay nagbigay sa amin ng pag-asa at lakas. Hindi lang kami nagtutulongan sa paglilinis at pagbangon, kundi pati na rin sa pagbibigay ng emosyonal na suporta sa isa't isa."</i> • <i>"Sa mga oras ng pagsubok, lubos kaming nagpasalamat sa aming social support system. Ang kanilang pagtulong at pagmamalasakit ay hindi lang basta suporta, kundi nagbigay din sa amin ng inspirasyon at lakas ng loob upang patuloy na harapin ang buhay kahit saan man kami dalhin ng mga pangyayari."</i> |

One of the most coping mechanisms used by the respondents is prayer or trust in God as evident in the response of a 53-year-old mother: *"Sa ganitong sitwasyon sa Diyos nalang talaga kami lumalapit, nagdarasal na tulungan niya kaming malampasan lahat ng ito."* This is in line with the statement of a 73-year-old grandmother: *"Ang dasal ang aming pangunahing ginagawa dahil naniniwala kami na sa pamamagitan nito ay mas kinakaya at nagiging malakas ang aming loob na lagpasan ang calamidad na ito."* A 35-year-old male added that *"Sa pamamagitan ng dasal at tiwala sa Panginoon, mas nagiging mapanatag at positibo kami na kaya niya kaming ilagtas sa ganitong uri ng pagbaha."* Moreover, being optimistic at times of flood was also seen as the respondent stated that *"Naniniwala ako ma'am na lahat ng bagay na nangyayari ay may dahilan, lilipas din po ito, hindi porket nangyayari na ito ay hanggang ddon nalang yun, laban lang po sa buhay."* A 37 married male added that *"Ginamit ko ang pagiging positibo ko bilang isang sandata laban sa kahirapan ng sitwasyon. Sa bawat araw, inuusisa ko ang mga bagay na pwede pa ring gawin at pinipili kong maging inspirasyon sa iba."* This is in line with what a 45-year married male *"Sa gitna ng pagsubok, alam kong mahalaga ang magkaroon ng positibong pananaw. Kaya kahit mahirap, hinahanap ko pa rin ang mga bagay na dapat ipagpasalamat at inuunawa ko na may magagawa pa rin kahit sa maliit na paraan."*



Additionally, experiencing this kind of calamities challenge our courage which involves selflessness, resilience, and the ability to think beyond oneself. This was evidenced by the statement of one 55-year-old mom when she said that, *“Isa sa mga dapat mong taglayin ay ang ipagkakaroon ng lakas ng loob lalo na kapag ganito ang sitwasyon na nararanasan mo. Isa ito sa magbibigay sa’yo ng rason para hindi bumitaw at mas lalong magpatuloy sa laban ng buhay.”* Despite overwhelming circumstances, a 42-year-old father said that, *“Sa bawat pagtaas ng baha, nadarama ko ang takot at pangamba. Pero sa bawat sandali, pinipili kong lumaban at manatiling matatag. Dahil sa pagkakaroon ng lakas ng loob, nakakayang harapin ang anumang hamon na dala ng pagbaha,”* resisting fear and took action.

Additionally, respondents believe that social support systems are also one factor that gives the strength to cope up in times of flood. It just shows how important support system is, which is supported by a 48-year-old mother: *“Pagkatapos ng pagbaha, mas naramdaman namin ang halaga ng aming komunidad. Ang pagtutulongan at pagmamalasakit ng bawat isa ay nagbigay sa amin ng pag-asa at lakas. Hindi lang kami nagtutulongan sa paglilinis at pagbangon, kundi pati na rin sa pagbibigay ng emosyonal na suporta sa isa’t isa.”* Respondents have been thankful despite what they are facing as long as they have their family, friends and the community to help and give support in times of disasters.

Conclusion

Witnessing or experiencing such devastation can trigger intense emotional reactions, including anxiety, fear, and sadness, which results in high psychological distress for the respondents. The uncertainty of experiencing floods, such as displacement, lack of necessities, and disrupted routines, can significantly impact mental well-being. Despite that, the respondents displayed a high resilience in terms of stressful events that happened in their lives, particularly during calamities. It shows that even if they experience floods in their places, they can get through it without having a hard time. The respondents present a high level of coping, which shows a positive mindset even when dealing with floods. They focus on solutions, stay optimistic, and actively address flood-related issues.

In light of the study's findings on assessing the psychological distress, resiliency, and coping of flood victims in San Pablo, Isabela, the following are recommended:

1. Community engagement emphasizes the value of social support networks in building resilience and emotional healing.
2. Psychological support: Promote the availability of psychological support services, such as therapy and counseling, to assist flood victims.
3. Resilience building activities like mindfulness exercises, distressed management techniques, and coping mechanisms should be used to assist flood victims in managing their emotions and adjusting to change.
4. Practice self-care to reduce distress and enhance well-being, including physical activity and relaxation techniques.



5. Attending church through their faith may bring hope and resilience throughout the situation.

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