

## LIFE NARRATIVES OF FILIPINO TRICYCLE DRIVERS: CONTENTMENT, REGRETS AND REALIZATIONS IN THE PANDEMIC

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### ABSTRACT

Tricycle drivers are individuals who drive tricycles for a living. In this study, it explored the life narratives of ten (10) Filipino tricycle drivers in Silang, Cavite about their experiences before and during the epidemic, focusing on their contentment and regrets in their personal and professional lives. It also examined how their viewpoints changed and the realizations they have had as a result of their particular experiences brought on by the epidemic. Four themes were generated from their life experiences before and during pandemic which were: *An Early Riser and Late Sleeper*, *Challenged Livelihood*, *The Need to be Contented* and *Principle-Oriented*. Despite being common to see on roads, studies about their life experiences are seldom rare. This study advocates for increased awareness among community commuters, governmental respect, and the implementation of intervention programs to support tricycle drivers, challenging societal perceptions and affirming the respectability of their profession.

**Keywords:** *tricycle drivers, contentment, regrets, life narratives, Filipino*

### INTRODUCTION

Contentment and regrets vary per individual. It could be influenced by personal aspirations, family relationships or sense of purpose (Strayer University, 2016). Contentment is about how meaningful and successful life is to an individual (Blace, 2012); while regret is about feelings of disappointment from a decision that was made or not done (Greenberg, 2012). From the past two years when COVID-19 pandemic spread in the Philippines, it cannot be denied how livelihoods declined and restrictions on going out arose. Some experienced loss of income due to closing of establishments and the economy went down (Fallesen, 2021). It impacted different vulnerable groups in the Philippines and one of them were the tricycle drivers. Therefore, in the life narratives of Filipino tricycle drivers before and during pandemic, what are their life realizations in relation to their experiences of their job?

Tricycle drivers are individuals who drive tricycles for a living. A tricycle is a three-wheeled vehicle that was classified as an indigenous public transportation (Guillen, 2009) and one of the most popular vehicles alongside jeepney in the Philippines. Approximately, as of 2021, there are about four million registered motorcycles and tricycles in the Philippines (Statista, 2022). They are part of the blue-collar workers that were described as jobs who were involved in manual labor

(Parietti, 2021). Fares vary but mostly ranges from PHP 10 to PHP 200 depending on how far and limited a tricycle is in an area (How Much For A Tricycle Fare in The Philippines?, n.d.). From the top search results of studies related to tricycle drivers in the Philippines with years ranging from 2012-2022 from the Google Scholar, studies were about ergonomics (Gumasing, 2012; David & Caballero, 2015;), traffic education and rules and regulation (Patlunag et al., 2019; Aydinan, 2020) , street and health hazards (Bambalan, 2019; Pagaddu et al., 2021; Uriarte & Fraile, 2021, development of e-trikes (Cowlin, 2012; Gumasing, Araga & Baez, 2019; Luansing, Pesigan & Rustico Jr., 2015; Balaria et al., 2017), and tricycle stickers and their personality (Joyce & Miguel, 2015) however, there are only little studies about their life experiences (Bitancor et al., 2021; Espiritu et al., 2021).

A recent study from Agusan del Norte about the impact of COVID-19 to the tricycle drivers, it revealed that it brought a significant impact to their earnings due to limited passengers leading to lower income (Bitancor et al., 2021; Espiritu et al., 2021; Reyes & Gascon, 2022). Not only that, at the present, there is a fuel surge influenced by the Ukraine-Russia war leading to rise of global oil prices. In the Philippines, gasoline reached a topped up of 10 pesos per liter while diesel topped up six pesos per liter (Beltran, 2022). Due to rising gasoline rates, transportation drivers proposed an additional fare, however the government has not yet released a statement from the said matter (Amazona, 2022). From these situations, despite being always seen on the roads, not enough studies are published to understand how they lived and what circumstances heavily influenced their job.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

From the past two years when COVID-19 (Coronavirus disease 19) pandemic spread in the Philippines from a suspected case last January 20, 2022 (Edrada et al, 2020), it cannot be denied how the livelihoods declined and restrictions on going out arose. The virus originated from Wuhan, China and further studies revealed that it could be transmitted through droplets, air, surfaces and through feces (WHO, 2020). In an updated report of World Health Organization on their website last June 14, 2022, there are about 3,693,608 confirmed cases with 60,461 deaths and they have already administered 150,995,394 vaccine shots in the Philippines. Surely, the reported number of deaths is already alarming and despite having implemented vaccine shots, possibilities of being infected is still high if the protocols are not properly followed.

In the early weeks of COVID-19 spread, due to fear of being infected, many establishments closed leading to people losing sources of income and the economy went down (Fallesen, 2021). In the same report, a community survey done in August 2020 in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) revealed that 56% in the construction sector, 52% in the public transportation sector, 70% in formal agriculture and 61% in small-scale farming lose jobs. These circumstances deeply impacted the vulnerable sectors who are dependent on daily and weekly wages and one of them were the tricycle drivers.

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of the most popular vehicles alongside jeepney in the Philippines. As of 2021, there are approximately four million registered motorcycles and tricycles in the Philippines (Statista, 2022). They are part of the blue-collar work that were described as jobs who were involved in manual labor (Parietti, 2021). The fares vary but mostly ranges from PHP 10 to PHP 200 depending on how far and limited a tricycle is in an area (How Much For A Tricycle Fare in The Philippines?, n.d.)

Tricycle drivers are mostly male with set in the stage of early adulthood to middle adulthood, married, and mostly were high school graduates. Reasons for being a tricycle driver include limited education and job opportunities (Balaria, 2016). Owning a tricycle varies on the kind of motorcycle chosen (The Cost of a Tricycle, n.d.) combined with a sidecar. Motorcycles could cost 40,000 pesos as the cheapest (Mendoza, 2022). A person could pay it monthly ranging from the amount of 1,500 pesos or higher depending on how long is the vehicle to be paid (Motortrade Motorcycle Loan Calculator, n.d.). In terms of their earnings, a tricycle driver could earn a range of 700 pesos and more a day (Villanueva, 2021; Reyes & Gascon, 2022) however when the pandemic came, some of them earned 100 pesos throughout the day which are not enough for everyday expenses (Villanueve, 2021).

Despite these experiences, whether positive or negative, these experiences lead them to exert more effort to survive in society (Valdez et al., 2013). The question now is, what are their realizations from these experiences in life? In the survey done by Palanca-Tan (2021), she measured the Happiness-Income Relationship of the people in Koronadal City. Results revealed that the average happiness score of the respondents belonging to the lowest income group— having less than PHP 10,000 as their monthly income household was 6.31 which is higher than the neutral score of 5 from a scale of 1-10. This shows that despite being a low-income city in the Philippines, people in the lowest income group of Koronadal City could still be content no matter how much income they make.

### ***Contentment and Regrets of Filipinos***

Contentment was defined by Blace (2012) as how life is meaningful and satisfying. Filipinos have different views about how they define contentment. Some defines it as being healthy, high academic achievements, having good family relationships, being able to bring service and happiness to people, financial stability before retirement, successful career, and successful family members (Blace, 2012; Valdez et al., 2013; Samaco-Zamora & Fernandez, 2016; Garcia, 2018; Bolivia et al., 2020; Alabado et al., 2020; Castillo-Carandang et.al., 2020).

On the other hand, regrets are about life's disappointments and failures. Some of the regrets that Filipinos faced were failure to find their purpose in life, meeting and marrying the wrong person, work in a career they do not like, does not have true friends, poor taking care of one's health, took studying for granted and not being able to forgive before they die (Jimenez, 2021).

Assessing the life stories of individuals who were recognized and respected in their various fields, five themes were discovered by Garcia (2018) which in summary explained how early experiences of misfortunes in life, lack of guidance as the individual move from adolescent to adult, being an adult, surviving as an adult and how can life become meaningful and leaving a

legacy was discussed. In able to leave a legacy, one must be able to reach their personal goals, value and establish family and relationships with others and have a sense of purpose (Samaco-Zamora & Fernandez, 2016; Strayer University, 2016; Bolivia, et al., 2020; Castillo-Carandang, et al., 2020).

In a meta-analysis study of regrets done by Roese (2005) results influencing life regrets were related to education, choice of career, choosing a partner, failed parenting styles, failed self-worth and not meeting the expectations. These points lead people to reflect on their lives about their missed and failed opportunities. Their “what ifs and I should have...” that might have brought breakthroughs in their lives.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Research Design***

The study used a qualitative design through the form of narrative research. Narrative research was defined as a way of exploration and construction of life’s meaning through the life experiences of people presented in textual form (Salkind, 2012). The stories could be collected in different forms such as interviews, observations, documents, photos or letters that were connected and integrated by the researchers into themes wherein they find connections with each other. The narratives are not an exact representation of their exact experiences but how experiences of their life were shared through their own context (Butina, 2015).

### ***Sampling and Participants***

This study aimed to interview 10 tricycle drivers—targeting two drivers each from the five tricycle terminals of Silang Public Market with age starting from 18 and above. A Filipino citizen, male or female, was able to understand English or Filipino and personally owned a tricycle.

### ***Methods of Validation***

For the interview questions, expert validations were obtained by the researcher. A copy of the validation letter and forms were sent to the validators and revised according to comments and suggestions. This ensured the materials to be understandable, organized, aligned to the research topic, and could capture what the study needed. It was also necessary that the questions did not offend the respondents.

### ***Data Gathering Procedure***

Before the actual collection of data, target participants fill-up the consent form to confirm their participation in the study. The consent form given both has English and Filipino translations providing information about the researcher, the purpose of the study, benefits, and the risks and confidentiality of the said study.

The study used semi-structured interview questions to gather data. Questions are divided into their personal details, life experiences as a tricycle driver before and during pandemic and what are their realizations in life as a tricycle driver. Interviews were audio-recorded and were subject for transcription and thematic analysis.

For the analysis, thematic analysis was applied. Thematic analysis is a method used to describe the collected data through the encoded codes. This aimed to understand certain behaviors, thoughts and the participant's shared experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Narratives were obtained by interviewing people around topic of interest (Kiger & Varpio, 2020), and contents were contextually analyzed (McTavish & Pirro, 1990 cited from Chawla et al., 2021) to provide interpretations of the said experiences (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007 cited from Chawla et al., 2021).

## RESULTS

### *Life Experiences of Tricycle Drivers Before and During Pandemic*

Table 1 shows the four themes that emerged from the life experiences of the tricycle drivers before and during the pandemic. They were identified as: *An Early Riser and Late Sleeper* (that pertains to the work routine of the drivers starting as early as 4AM and as late as 12MN); *Challenged Livelihood* (that includes the adjustments faced by the drivers in the changing norm—providing plastic barriers, investment in health-aid kits such as alcohol and facemasks, rising prices of goods and gasoline and low income due to decrease in passengers and disrespectful passengers); *The Need to be Contented* (that refers to their ability to still look for reasons to be contented no matter how much they earn) and; *Principle-Oriented* (that implies to the different principles they act upon on to survive—perseverance, hardwork, respect and love).

**Table 1.**

### *Life Experiences of Tricycle Drivers Before and During Pandemic*

Generated Themes	Theme Definition
An Early Riser and Late Sleeper	This pertains to the work routine of the drivers going to work as early as 4AM and as late as 12MN.
Challenged Livelihood	This includes the adjustments done from the pre-pandemic to post-pandemic era like the community quarantines, plastic-barriers in their tricycles, investment in health-kits (alcohol and facemasks), rising prices of goods and gasoline, and low income due to decrease in passengers' count and disrespectful passengers.
The Need to be Contented	This refers to their ability to be content despite how much they earn in a day.

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Principle-Oriented	This implies to the different principles they believe to possess to survive before and during pandemic (Perseverance, Hardwork, Respect and Love)
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Based on the working hours of the tricycle drivers, one can't deny how hardworking they were before and during the pandemic. Starting off the day as early as four in the morning and going home as late as 12 midnight and the routine goes on. However, despite their long working hours, they are complaining how the pandemic restricts them from earning more than before. Before, they are already satisfied earning PHP 700-800 however as the pandemic hits the country, earnings are divided into gasoline and expensive goods. Just like the study conducted at Agusan del Norte tricycle drivers where it revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic brought a significant impact to their earnings due to limited passengers leading to lower income (Bitancor et al., 2021; Espiritu et al., 2021; Reyes & Gascon, 2022).

The respondents shared how they first complained to the protocols released about putting plastic barriers and having alcohols and facemasks (DOTr, 2021). They mentioned they could save the amount being bought for the goods needed but afterwards eventually accepted the policy because it's what the government thinks is better.

In relation to their present income, the respondents shared that they are looking for ways to be content in their earnings (see the Views of Contentment and Regrets in their Profession and Family Life). Giving up is not an option and they must persevere, respect the passengers, work hard and to love what they are doing.

### ***Views of Contentment and Regrets in their Profession and Family Life***

Contentment was defined as how life is meaningful and satisfying (Blace, 2012) while regrets were life's disappointments and failures. In the life narratives of the tricycle drivers, stated in Table 2 are their contentment and regrets in their profession and family life.

**Table 2.**

#### ***Contentment and Regrets of Tricycle Drivers in their Profession and Family Life***

General Themes	Sub Themes	Theme Definition
<b>Contentment in Profession and Family Life</b>		
<b>Significant Relationship with Self, Family, and Colleagues</b>	Co-Drivers Bond and Friendship	This implies the developed bond between their colleagues leading to significant friendships.
	Love for Self and Others	This implies the ability of the participants to be capable of loving themselves and others in the influence of pandemic.
	Unconditional Support from Family Members	This implies the endless support provided by the participants about their profession.

<b>Being in Control</b>	I am my Employer	This implies the circumstance of the participants to be in-control of their livelihood and profession
<b>Go Back to Normal</b>		This pertains to the hope of the participants for the pandemic to end and go back to normal days.
<b>Ability to Financially Provide</b>		This pertains to the ability of the participants to provide for their families in their challenged livelihood caused by the pandemic.
<b>Regrets in Profession and Family Life</b>		
<b>Choices in Life</b>	Unfulfilled Academic Responsibilities	This pertains to the regret feelings of the participants in relation to their schooling.
	Laziness to Work	This pertains to the personal choice of the participants to not drive for work due to perceived higher cost than earning.
<b>Uncontrolled Circumstances</b>	Fewer Passengers	This pertains to the participants' view of changes in their passenger count due to owning vehicles.
	Challenged Income	This implies the challenged income of the participants due to the high cost of gasoline over actual earnings.
<b>No Regrets</b>		This pertains to the perceived personal thoughts of the participants about being completely satisfied in their lives because they are grateful from what they have.

### Contentment in Profession and Family Life

For this part, there are four general themes generated from Contentment in Profession which are: *Significant Relationship with Self, Family, and Colleagues, Being in Control, Go Back to Normal, and Ability to Financially Provide*. Under the first general theme, it has three sub themes namely: *Co-Drivers Bond and Friendship, Love for Self and Others, and Unconditional Support from Family Members*.

#### *Significant Relationship with Self, Family, and Colleagues*

This theme implies the developed significant relationships of the participants toward their self, family and friends. Verbatim responses can be shown below to capture the narratives shared by the participants.

#### *Co-Drivers Bond and Friendship*

There is contentment from the shared bond and friendship by the tricycle drivers. These are their responses:

*“Oo kuntento ako. Sa ngayon kasi nakikita ko naman ang miyembro ko kahit pa*

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*sabihin na mahirap ang buhay, nakikita ko dyan minsan na masaya kame. Kuntento kami sa kinikita namin kasi kahit pa sabihin na maliit man yan o malaki... sa ngayon kasi hindi mo na rin iisipin yung kita. Ang iisipin mo nalang yung nag bonding kami araw-araw, nagkikita kami araw-araw. Yung pagiging magkaibigan namin hindi nawawala. Nandon parin yung bayanihan. (Sonny, 48)”*

(Yes, I am content. Based on what I observed, even though life is hard, I can see that we are happy. We are content from what we earn whether they are big or small... for now, you will not mind how much you will earn. You will just think that our bond is more important, we see each other everyday. Our friendship is not lost. There is communal unity and cooperation.)

*“Yung magiging masaya kaming magtotropa. Oh, tignan mo yan... masaya kami dito. (Ren, 57)”* (The ability of our group to be happy. Look at that... we are happy [here].)

*“Yaan, pagkakwan, sama-samang uuwi, pagdating sa bahay gay-an, ganyan lang. (Zoren, 54)”* (That... like... we go home together, just like that.)

In Filipino Psychology, Filipinos have the concept of pakikisama. Pakikisama is a Filipino trait which refers to the formation of interpersonal relationships to develop friendly and deep bonds with others (Saito, 2010). From the shared responses, they value the bond and friendship formed with one another resulting in helping one another when a member is in-need (see Self-Capacity to Help).

### ***Love for Self and Others***

There is contentment in learning how to love the self and others. These are their responses:

*“Ang love... Aba'y yun ang aking inspirasyon eh, para makuntento ka sa iyong buhay. Kailangan mayroon kang love, diba? Oo, kung marunong kang magmahal sa iyong sarili, sa iyong kapwa eh masaya na... (Cris, 49)”* (Love. That is my inspiration to be content in life. You need love, right? Yes. If you know how to love yourself and others, then it is good.)

In the midst of confusion and hard times caused by the pandemic, it is amazing to see how Filipinos are still capable of loving themselves and others. In relation to pakikisama mentioned a while ago, the ability of the Filipinos to share bond with others (Saito, 2010) and loving themselves are believed factors to achieve contentment in life.

### ***Unconditional Support from the Family Members***

There is contentment from having their family as their support system by the tricycle drivers. These are their responses:

*“Sinusuportahan ako ni wifey. Tas ‘yung mga anak ko, ayon. Pag coding, ayun, nagsasama-sama pa rin kami kahit coding. Di ko winawala ‘yon [bonding]. (Jay, 28)”* (My wife and my children support me. On the rest day, we bond. I don’t skip [bond].)

Among the participants' answers, everyone shared how the support from their family members is essential in their profession.

### ***Being in Control***

#### ***I am my employer***

There is contentment in having the ability to control their own work. These are their responses:

*“Kakuntentuhan? Edi yung, wala akong amo. Sarili ko lang, kontrolado ko lang ang pag ta-tricycle driver. (Del, 60)”* (Contentment? Like I don’t have an employer, only myself. I control being a tricycle driver.)

*“Paano ako naging tricycle [driver]... Kasi po... gawa ng tatay ko. Tricycle driver rin po kasi ‘yung tatay ko kaya, siguro... (hesitant) siguro, at saka parang nagsawa na ako sa ano e, pabrika... Oo, pabrika ako dati. Matagal din ako sa pabrika. Nagtrabaho ako ng Maynilad. Construction. Hanggang eto e, sabi ko ayoko na mangamuhan, kaya nagtricycle ako... (Jay, 28)”* (How did I become a tricycle driver? Because of my father. He was also a tricycle driver and somehow, I became tired working in a factory... Yes, I was a factory worker and it has been long. I also worked in Maynilad. I was also a construction worker until I didn't want to have an employer anymore so I became a tricycle driver...)

In an article published by Inquirer.net (2020), *“More Filipinos become their own bosses as pandemic saws off jobs”*. From 11.5 million self-employed Filipinos in 2019, it raised to 12.1 million last July 2020 as stated by Claire Dennis S. Mapa, a statistician. Shared responses revealed how their decision to become their own employer is influenced by the desire to have control on their work and don’t want to be an employee anymore.

### ***Going Back to Normal***

Based on their responses, there is contentment if they can earn again like before. These are the responses.

*“Sa ngayon makokontento siguro kami kung babalik sa normal yung sitwasyon natin ngayon diba wala ng pandemic, ‘yun pag bumalik siguro kuntento na kami. Dito eh kasi kumikita naman kami pag normal na eh ‘yun. (Ben, 35)”* (For now, we will be content if everything gets back to normal. Look at the situation today,

there is a pandemic. We earned better before.)

It is true that before the pandemic, earning is better (Bitancor et al., 2021). The hope of the participants to go back from the normal days reflect how the pandemic brought changes and difficulties in their life.

### ***Ability to Financially Provide***

There is contentment from the ability to financially provide by the tricycle drivers. These are their responses:

*“Syempre ‘yung mga ano, ‘yung ano namin kita. ‘Yun ‘yung pinaka-ano namin dito para masuportahan yung pangangailangan ng pamilya ko... (Jay, 28)” (It’s the... Of course, our earnings. That’s our main [priority] to support our family.)*

*“Oo sa mga, sa asawa namin gano’n. Makapagbigay kami kahit kaunti. ‘Yun lang ang aming kuntento dito sa araw-araw naming paghahanap-buhay. (Ado, 51)” (Yes, to our wives. To provide for our expenses even though it’s little. That’s our reason to be content with our work.)*

Despite the challenged livelihood caused by the pandemic, one of the sources of the participants’ contentment was being able to financially provide for their families.

### **Regrets in Profession and Family Life**

For this part, there are three general themes generated from Regrets in Profession and Family Life which are: *Choices in Life*, *Uncontrolled Circumstances*, and *No Regrets*. Under the first general theme, it has two sub themes which are: *Unfulfilled Academic Responsibilities* and *Laziness to Work*. Meanwhile under the second general theme: *Fewer Passengers* and *Challenged Income*.

#### ***Choices in Life***

This theme describes the choices in life leading to the participants’ regrets. These are their responses:

#### ***Unfulfilled Academic Responsibilities***

There are regrets from the unfulfilled academic responsibilities by the tricycle drivers. These are their responses:

*“Noong ako’y hindi nakatapos. Kaya ito... matagal na eh, mga ano... Highschool lang. (Del, 60)” (When I was not able to graduate. That’s why... I reached high school level.”*

*“Kasi ang pag ta-tricycle, tignan mo ha, unang-una highschool graduate lang ako. Paano ako makakapasok sa mga magagandang trabaho? Ang babagsakan mo lang kalimitan tricycle driver... (Ren, 57)”* (Being a tricycle driver, look, I’m a high school graduate. How can I land on a good job? You’ll end up as a tricycle driver...)

*“Dapat ano pala, napagtanto ko na dapat nag-aral pala ako ng mabuti para... Di ko naman sinasabi na 'di marangal ang pagtatricycle... Napagtanto ko na dapat pala nag-aral ako ng mabuti para hindi ako nasa lansangan... (Jay, 28).”* (I realized that I should have studied well before... I am not saying that I’m not proud as a tricycle driver... I just thought that if I studied well, this is not my job...)

In a meta-analysis study of regrets done by Roesse (2005), one of the regrets by Filipinos is related to education which is evident from the participants of the study. In order to be contented, one must be able to reach their personal goals (Samaco-Zamora & Fernandez, 2016) though some of the participants already started to accept their situation, there are still lingering thoughts about being able to finish their studies.

### ***Laziness to Work***

There are regrets from being lazy to work by the tricycle drivers. These are their responses:

*“Ang pinanghihinayangan minsan yung katamaran bumyahe. (Laughs) Yun. Sayang ang kita. Manghihinayang kasi nabawasan ang kita mo. (Cris, 49)”* (You will be disappointed if you feel lazy to work (laughs) It’s a shame to not be able to earn. There will be no income.)

*“Aba’y kwan, bali anlaki na nung, anlaki ng nawawala kasi ang pasahero nga namin eh nawala na nang nawala eh... Anlaki, anlaking nawala e. Ngayon pa tumaas ang gas. 88 na. Ay isang litro’y, isang ganun mo la-ang, Bago ga-gas ka na naman. Anlaki, anlaki ng aming, anlaki ang nawala sa amin. (Ado, 51)”* (It’s like... we can’t earn well because our passengers have decreased. We can’t earn well. Then you see, the gasoline prices are rising, PHP 88 per liter. Then after you drive for a passenger, you’ll gas again, we spend more than we earn.”

In relation to the former theme, instances of being lazy to work contributes to why they earn less too. With the condition of having fewer passengers, rising gasoline prices, sometimes the drivers do not like to work because they spend more than their actual earnings.

### ***Uncontrolled Circumstances***

### ***Fewer Passengers***

There are regrets from the decreased size of the passengers counted by the tricycle drivers. These are their responses:

*“Yun nga yung mga pasahero kasi nagkaroon ng sariling service medyo nabawasan nga yung kita naming dito. (Ben, 35)”* (Our passengers started to have their own vehicles so our earnings were affected too.)

*“Tulad netong pandemic, syempre nanghihinayang kami sa pasahero na hindi na masyadong sumasakay... (Jay, 28)”* (Because of this pandemic, of course we feel disappointed because of our passengers who don’t ride anymore.)

One of the concerns by the tricycle drivers is the decrease of their passengers. Some of them get themselves a vehicle of their own leaving them to worry about their earnings. Since the number of passengers decreased, how can they earn money?

### ***Challenged Income***

There are regrets from the challenged income by the tricycle drivers. These are their responses:

*“Talagang naapektuhan. Dahil hindi nga makabyahe, ako lang din ang naano... ‘yung mga kapatid ko may trabaho hindi makaano... nasa bahay lang din. Kaya napaka-ano rin, napaka-ano rin ng epekto ng Pandemic. Ngayon kagaya ngayon, hindi... hindi regular ang aming byahe pa. Hindi kami pwede magtaas ng singil lalo’t eskuwela, mababa pa rin kami kahit mataas ang gas e wala naman kaming magawa. ‘Yun ang epekto talaga sa amin talaga. Hindi naman pwede, hindi kame pwedeng mag taas at nakakaawa rin naman ang mga tao, walang hanap buhay din yung iba. Kaya kame apektado rin... (Cris, 49)”* (We are really affected. Because we can’t work, it’s me... my siblings can’t [work]... they are also in our house. That’s why... this pandemic. Now, our working days are not yet regular. We can’t raise fares especially coming back to school, the fare is still low in spite of high gasoline prices, and we can do nothing. That is the effect on us. We can’t raise fares because some of our passengers also have no work yet. That’s why we are also affected.”

### ***No Regrets***

Above the regrets shared by the participants, there are some participants who claimed they don’t have regrets because it is their personal choice to have this profession.

*“Sa akin, sa ngayon sa sarili ko, hindi naman ako nagsisisi na naging tricycle driver ako. Kasi nga ako naman eh bago naman ako naging tricycle driver marami rin akong napagdaanang trabaho, naging waiter din ako. Tapos naging operator ako sa pabrika. Tapos netong nag ta-tricycle ako nag side line din ako ng pagiging guwardya... oo, nag guwardya rin ako noon kahit may tricycle na*

*ako. Lahat sinubukan ko rin yan. (Sonny, 48)” (For me, I don’t regret being a tricycle driver. Because before becoming a tricycle driver, I’ve been into different jobs. I became a waiter, factory operator, then along with this job, I do sidelines which is being a guard. Yes, I also applied to be a guard even though I already have a tricycle on my own. I tried them.)*

### ***Perspectives of Tricycle Drivers in their Changed Views and Realizations Caused by the Pandemic***

Stated on Table 3 below are the perspectives of the tricycle drivers in their changed views and realizations caused by the pandemic. The themes are: *Family as Source of Strength* (that pertains to the reason to whom the tricycle drivers are working for, which is to provide for the family); *Fulfilling their Sense of Duty in the Community* (that implies on serving the community members no matter what); *Self-Capacity to Help* (that refers to the ability of the tricycle drivers to act unselfishly to still help one another no matter how much they have at the moment) and *Lack of Government Interventions* (that includes how the government lacks intervention programs to support the needs of the tricycle drivers in the said municipality).

**Table 3.**  
***Perspectives of Tricycle Drivers In their Changed Views and Realizations Caused by the Pandemic***

<b>Generated Themes</b>	<b>Theme Definition</b>
Family as Source of Strength	This pertains to the reason to whom they are working—to provide for the family.
Fulfilling their Sense of Duty in the Community	This implies to act on their sworn profession to serve their community members no matter the given circumstances that the country had.
Self-Capacity to Help	This refers to their ability to still help one another no matter how much they earn.
Lack of Government Interventions	This includes the realization that the government lacks intervention programs for their said profession.

Filipinos are known to be family-oriented individuals, it’s not surprising to know how every Filipino values their families in everything (Goyala, 2019). From the shared responses, the tricycle drivers consider their families as a source of their strength on why they are still working in life (see Contentment in Profession and Family Life).

*“Sinusuportahan ako ni wifey. Tas ‘yung mga anak ko, ayon. Pag coding, ayun, nagsasama-sama pa rin kami kahit coding. Di ko winawala ‘yon [bonding]. (Jay, 28)” (My wife and my children support me. On my rest day, we bond. I don’t skip [bond].)*

About fulfilling their sense of duty in the community, it is good to know how the respondents highlight how important is their role on the roads. One respondent shared that if they

had seen problems on the roads, they should report it right away. Acknowledging where everyone is having a hard time because of the pandemic, despite the rising gasoline prices, some chose to not raise fares for the sake of helping their community members.

*“Tayo ay isa sa mga mata ng gobyerno sabi ko sa kanila. May makita man kayo dyan na hindi kanais nais, pwede niyo ireport. Meron kami nyang mga number sa tricycle... Pero yung amin dating 60 pesos na special binawasan ko, ginawa ko na lang 45 pesos.” (Sonny, 48) (We are the eyes of the government, I tell them [members]. If you have seen an accident, you can report. We have contact numbers in the tricycle... From the price of PHP 60 for every special fare, I made it PHP 45.)*

In relation to the second theme, the self-capacity to help is beyond understanding. Expensive gasoline prices, decreased passenger count, early and late working hours, what give them contentment and joy is their ability to help one another, their word “bayanihan”. Bayanihan is a culture in the Philippines relating to community unity that aims to help one another (The Bayanihan Spirit, n.d.). It is great to know that these Filipino tricycle drivers possess this trait and may it be extended up until the next batches of tricycle drivers.

*“Oo kuntento ako. Sa ngayon kasi nakikita ko naman ang miyembro ko kahit pa sabihin na mahirap ang buhay, nakikita ko dyan minsan na masaya kame. Kuntento kami sa kinikita namin kasi kahit pa sabihin na maliit man yan o malaki... sa ngayon kasi hindi mo na rin iisipin yung kita. Ang iisipin mo nalang yung nag b-bonding kami araw-araw, nagkikita kami araw-araw. Yung pagiging magkaibigan namin hindi nawawala. Nandon parin yung bayanihan. (Sonny, 48)” (Yes, I am content. Based on what I observed, even though life is hard, I can see that we are happy. We are content from what we earn whether they are big or small... for now, you will not mind how much you will earn. You will just think that our bond is more important, we see each other everyday. Our friendship is not lost. There is communal unity and cooperation.)*

Lastly, the government lacks interventions for tricycle drivers. Most of the respondents mentioned that they received particular help from the government however some of them leave it no choice but to accept what was given for the reason that everyone is having a hard time but some declared that they are disappointed and wishes that there will be a specific program that could help them in these challenging times.

*“Nako bihira. Kulang. Dahil sasabihin na may subsidy, hindi naman napapapunta sa amin, tulad nalang sa fuel. Sabi bibigyan kami ng pang gas, wala namang nadating sa amin. (Mor, 55)” (Oh, it’s rare. It’s not enough. They said there will be a fuel subsidy, however we received nothing.)*

## SUMMARY

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The life experiences of tricycle drivers explained how their profession is important in one's daily life. The sacrifices they made to work as early as 4AM and going home late as 12MN just to provide for their family. Sometimes, they will encounter rude passengers and as the pandemic came, there has been a decreased in their passengers count leading them to earn less but despite of having lesser income, they are trying their best to look for ways to be contented and to continue life by following their principles namely perseverance, hard work, respect and love.

### **CONCLUSION**

Tricycle drivers are individuals who drive tricycles for a living. They are part of the blue-collar workers and despite being common to see on roads, studies about their life experiences are seldom to find. From the past two years, COVID-19 pandemic spread in the Philippines and every individual was affected including them. Comparing their experiences from the pre-pandemic and post-pandemic, respondents shared how life became more difficult as different adjustments were done to follow the given protocols. Earnings became lesser, prices of goods getting higher, working hours getting longer, and the need to be content in these situations are important. It is their contentment if their profession and family life are both working well.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

Community Commuters must learn to respect the tricycle drivers and refrain from belittling them because of their profession. Despite being the passengers who are their source of income, there should be respect from both parties.

Government Officials must start creating intervention programs that cover the tricycle drivers. They should consider asking what they need to establish programs that will help their profession to earn more and be respected.

Future Researchers may explore specific sides of the tricycle drivers such as focusing on what are their struggles or how their profession helped them to grow as a person.

Readers must be able to understand that it is not a profession, but a job and a way of earning a decent wage for the family. Tricycle driving is a dignified job that one should not be ashamed of.

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