



## Typhoon and Flooding Disasters' Lived Experiences of Loboc Residents in Bohol, Philippines

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### ABSTRACT

This study described the meaning of lived experiences of the municipal leaders of Loboc, Bohol, Philippines, prior, during, and after typhoon “Seniang” in 2014. It investigated the initiatives and practices of the local government unit (LGU) and captured the household experiences through a qualitative research approach following the Husserlian descriptive phenomenology utilizing Colaizzi’s method of data analysis. Purposive sampling was employed through face-to-face interviews with 12 key informants after reaching saturation point. All narrative accounts were transcribed and served as the primary source of qualitative data. The extracted accounts were organized through thematic categorization yielding 77 significant statements, 28 formulated meanings, 15 clusters, and 4 emergent themes. These emergent themes include awareness of disaster, experiences during the disaster, good local governance practices, and experienced challenges. Grounded on these findings, it is concluded that effective disaster response and quick and successful recovery fundamentally depend on authentic and effective governance by Loboc local leaders concretized through collaborative, concrete observance, implementation of responsive policy processes and the harmonious team works among community members. Altogether, proactive involvement makes a community more resilient. The researchers recommend that Loboc local leaders, employees, and residents, altogether put a premium on active participation, profess a positive outlook with enduring commitment to immediately rebound from any experienced disaster.

### INTRODUCTION

In December 2014, the Loboc municipality in Bohol, Philippines was hit by typhoon “Seniang” (International name: Jangmi) bringing with it a heavy downpour of continuous rains for days. Local residents were non-expectant of the catastrophic rains and floods since they never experienced two-meter-high flooding in the past. The flooding left traumatic experiences to local leaders and residents as they battled sleepless, cold nights and days amidst the disaster trying to save and recover personal belongings and properties. About 20,000 Loboc residents and 3,500 houses were submerged in water during the occurrence of the flood (National Disaster Risk Reduction and Mitigation Council [NDRRMC], 2014).

At the onset of typhoon “Seniang”, local leaders mobilized themselves to assist their constituents’ needs. The mobilization invoked strong, functional, and efficient public governance among local government officials and employees. The entire Loboc residents joined forces to bravely face the disasters by helping one another. Loboc local leaders quickly responded to the challenge of protecting their constituents from further danger without any political vested interest. Collectively, the Loboc residents showed strong will and commitment for survival, perseverance, and resiliency.

Immediately after the flooding, the Loboc local government officials effectively and concretely led their constituents towards rebuilding their community from the damage brought by the

typhoon and flood disasters. Joining forces among themselves and the local residents, the Loboc community proactively engaged in concrete solidarity networks to bring about repairs and reconstructions of their municipality yielding grass-root level initiatives and restorations. True enough, the Loboc residents speedily recovered and buoyed by commendable solidarity, they moved forward with the renewed vigor of community resilience (Plough et al., 2013).

From this perspective, it became imperative to uncover and explore the significance of the lived experiences by local leaders and residents to fill the very limited existing literature. Most of the available studies (Bosher, et al. 2009; UNISDR, 2005; UNISDR, 2009; Persson et al., 2015) emphasize the documentation and analysis of disaster risk reduction and mitigation practices. The lived experiences of Loboc local government officials, leaders and residents are avenues to derive and design a better framework on disaster management. The meaning of their lived experiences before, during, and after the typhoon and flooding catastrophes have to be captured and qualitatively explained to shed light on relevant information on initiatives about disaster response and recovery practices supportive to attaining collective community resiliency.

Given this backdrop, the authors contend that authentic governance before, during and after emergency disasters are best implemented through sound policies, effective strategies, and practices by local leadership untainted with any political vested interests and prejudices. This study elucidated the lived experiences of Loboc, Bohol local leaders, and residents as they responded to the typhoon and flooding disasters. The Loboc municipal officials concretely demonstrated best practices in public governance, particularly in responding to flood disasters. The researchers endeavored to impartially uncover how the flood victims, who were Loboc local government officials, employees, and residents themselves, lived through the disasters' experiences.

Lived experiences of flood victims ever-present different scenarios unique and distinct from each other (Ilagan, 2012) and stories of different coping strategies are derived to create better interventions suited to victims' present needs. Understanding the lived experiences of disaster

victims facilitates better and meaningful interventions for successful mainstreaming (Bosher et al., 2009). Sustainable disaster intervention must be geared towards establishing resilient communities, creating therein mutually beneficial collaborations (Pañares and Abocejo, 2019) beyond the disaster recovery phase (Drakaki and Tzionas 2017).

Disaster assistance is a common scenario in the Philippines, being a vulnerable country to risk and disaster (United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction [UNISDR], 2009). Statistics show that the Philippines ranks third among one hundred seventy-three countries of high disaster risk worldwide (Beck et al., 2012) with increasing magnitude wreaking livelihood and properties. The risk is aggravated when focal persons for post-disaster reductions and mitigation are also the victims themselves. During incidence of typhoon or flood disaster, some persons' daily stressors are shown in terms of their experienced conditions of sudden poverty, displacement, deprivation of privacy and autonomy, lack of social support, and access to basic goods and services (Miller and Rasco, 2004; Wessells and Monteiro, 2006, McEntire et al., 2002).

A Post-Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (PDRRMC) has been created in the Philippines as a policy framework to prevent displacement of people, rebuild communities, and assessment of gaps to craft policies and programs supportive to poverty eradication and mechanisms (Ginneti et al. 2013). At the onset, children who comprise the young segment of the community are also seen vulnerable during catastrophes (Fernandez and Abocejo, 2014) yet they contribute as resilience drivers in strengthening local networks when they help their kinsfolk during disaster recovery processes.

Drakaki and Tzionas (2017) stressed that collaboration and collective actions foster social capital partnership facilitating community resilience as offshoots of trust, self-organization, and mutually beneficial inter-community relationships. Their study presented rebuilding a community and making it a resilient one, can be realized through collaboration and effective coordination by all stakeholders. In like manner, Bosher et al. (2009) stressed that proactive disaster risk management (DRM) always needs to consider the people's

capacity to manage their natural, social and naturally endowed environments while taking advantage of them in a sustainable manner (Andaya and Abocejo, 2019), that is to safeguard their future for the next generations.

Coping strategies based on lived experiences of affected people were considered a vital factor in getting a community empowered and resilient (Burch et al., 2014). People's resilience is a vital multi-faceted principle that encompasses the physical, social, economic, and institutional dimensions (Bosher et al. 2009), where socio-institutional collective efforts become vital to the attainment of resilience. Community resilience is often viewed as social dynamics and community collaborations (Inabangan, Garcia, and Abocejo, 2019) wherein social capital enhances connectivity and reinforces collective actions (Cutter, 2016; Ricablanca and Abocejo, 2020). Developing resilient communities from disasters requires strategic mitigation programs based on their experiences (Almazan et al., 2018; Bosher et al., 2009).

Furthermore, Bosher et al. (2009) emphasized that involving all stakeholders in a locality reflects the complementary range of strategies that can accelerate re-building community resilience. As the experience of Loboc local leaders suggests, they were able to rebound, bring ahead and continue with life just a few weeks after the typhoon and flood disasters with a new vigor of resilience. Indeed, just a few months after the typhoon and flood disasters, achieving a quick rebound in the local economy, the Loboc local government received the "Model Local Government for Disaster Recovery Award" as evidenced by its effective post-disaster implementation mechanism (Ligalig, 2014).

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **Research Design**

The study was implemented following a descriptive survey research design through one-on-one in-depth interviews with the purposively identified key informants (KIs). It utilized the Husserlian descriptive phenomenology (Shosha, 2013) approach which qualitatively explored the lived experiences of local leaders and residential households who survived from the onset of the typhoon and the two-meter high flooding.

### **Research Setting**

The research was conducted in the Loboc municipality, Bohol, the Philippines which severely experienced flooding brought about by typhoon "Seniang" in December 2014.

### **Key Informants (KIs) and Sampling**

An interview guide was used during the interviews. The questions were reviewed and validated by experts in the discipline to ensure content validity and reliability. The interview questions focused on deriving information pertinent to local governance of Loboc local officials, community leaders, and household heads before, during, and after the occurrence of typhoons and flood disasters.

The KIs were purposively selected once they qualify any of the fundamental considerations according to the following criteria: (1) municipal officials including the Mayor, Budget Officer, Municipal Social Welfare and Development (MSWD) Officer, Municipal Administrative Officer (MAO), MPDC, MDRRM Officer; (2) Village Chairmen; local Church leaders and household heads (HH) who were in Loboc immediately before, during and after the occurrence of typhoon and flooding disasters; and (3) declared disasters' victims. Those who qualified were purposively chosen as sample KIs as their lived experiences sufficiently provided substantive information to answer the stated study objectives. The addition of sample was terminated when data saturation was reached on the 12<sup>th</sup> KI, so that 12 KIs were involved in the study.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Before the conduct of actual field interviews, the researchers briefly engaged in non-formal casual conversation to establish a rapport and comfortable atmosphere with selected KIs. Approval from the Loboc local government heads was obtained. Appropriate protocols were followed. Informed consent was obtained together with the permission to record the interview conversation. Confidentiality of all answers and anonymity of KIs' identities was ensured. The mode of the interview was carried out in a casual and natural tone which derived naturalistic narrations of lived experiences by the KIs. All KIs were assured to be informed of the study results whereby their provided responses were solely used for the purpose of the study truthfully describing their lived experiences.

### **Research Instrument**

An interview guide was used as interview questions which were reviewed and validated by experts in the discipline to ensure content validity and reliability. The interview questions focused on deriving information pertinent to local governance of Loboc local officials, community leaders, and household heads before, during, and after the typhoon and flood disasters. The conduct of the study was approved by the local government of Loboc observing all the required ethical protocols in the conduct of face-to-face interviews. There were two sets of these 9-item guide questions with the first set intended for LGU officials, employees, and church leaders. The second set was designed for household leaders (HH).

### **Data Collection**

Answers from the interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. The interview transcripts served as the main source of qualitative primary data. Observations of expressions of feeling, gestures, verbal and non-verbal cues of the KIs were noted. In cases where vital information may seem overlooked (*vis-à-vis* lived experiences), the interviewer made follow-up questions in the open-ended form.

To substantiate the primary qualitative data, direct observations and field notes were also taken. The KIs were purposively chosen based on the study's needs of generating optimum information out of their lived experiences. This study focused on how local officials implemented local governance before, at the onset, and after the typhoon and flooding disaster. The local government official and employee KIs were asked about their lived experiences in leading their constituents before, amidst, and after the disasters. In like manner, representatives from the household KIs were primarily asked about their lived experiences on how local governance was implemented by the local government officials and employees before, at the

onset, and after typhoon and flood disasters. The addition of KIs was terminated when data saturation was reached on the 12th key informant.

### **Data Analysis**

Following the Colaizzi (as cited in Shosha, 2013) approach to data analysis, the researchers (1) transcribed the narratives of each KI every after an interview, (2) extracted significant statements from the transcripts, (3) generated formulated meanings from extracted significant statements, (4) categorized the meanings into clusters and themes, (5) described the themes into survivor's experiences, (6) polished research findings to eliminate description redundancy, and (7) validated with the KIs the generated data before integrating them into the final report.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The study findings include the narrative accounts of typhoons and flood victims organized through thematic categorizations about overall disaster management. The study extracted 77 significant statements, 28 formulated meanings, 15 theme clusters, and 4 emergent themes.

The KIs, particularly the local government officials, affirmed that before the onset of flooding, disaster response plans were activated by mobilizing focal persons in the possible affected areas. Information on flood warnings was relayed by village leaders who forewarned local residents to evacuate to elevated areas. In spite of prior warnings about the disaster, most of Loboc residents opted to stay home to safeguard their belongings. The flood occurred around 9:00 in the evening. The KIs recounted that the water level rose fast and caught Loboc inhabitants by surprise. By past 11:00 in the evening, Loboc was covered by almost two-meter deep water. As extracted from the KIs interviews, significant statements are outlined (Table 1) with formulated meanings and theme clusters.

Table 1. Awareness of the disaster by Loboc local government unit

<b>KIs' Significant Statements</b>	<b>Formulated Meanings</b>	<b>Theme Cluster</b>
“The DRRMC convened upon initial information that typhoon is coming”. “Before typhoon “Seniang” arrived, we conducted a meeting”.	The local government conducted a meeting before the flooding.	Awareness and discussion on pre-disaster preparations headed by local government officials and employees
“The local government unit capacitated all of its employees”. “We instructed the different groups and we made clear to them about their respective responsibilities”.	The local government empowered the employees.	Putting the contingency plan in action with the active involvement of concerned personnel
“We disseminated information and typhoon warnings through villages especially in the flood-prone areas”. “I was informed by my nephew, who is a village official, to slowly packed and prepare our things”.	House-to-house information. Information dissemination through the village leaders.	Extensive awareness and dissemination of upcoming disaster and disaster-related plans
“We made preparations, getting ready for the equipment, relief goods and we identified evacuation centers”. “We already prepared our goods for distribution before the flooding”. “We already have disaster equipment like standby motorboats, raincoats, and ropes”.	Preparation of relief goods, rescue, and response operations. Standby equipment for disaster and tools for rescue operations.	Putting safe the evacuees, rescue equipment, ensuring availability of evacuation provisions prior to the typhoon.

Each of the Loboc municipal employees took specific responsibilities in carrying out their assigned tasks. Taking the significant statements of KIs from Table 1, pre-disaster management activities signaled the preparedness phase of Loboc local leadership in any disaster. The formulated meanings (Table 1) are derived from the lived experiences and corresponding theme clusters

describing the flooding caused by typhoon Seniang particularly in areas along the river banks of Loboc municipality. Consequently, local residents' awareness shaped the disaster response operations in Loboc, Bohol at the onset of flooding. Presented below are the experiences during the flooding (Table 2).

Table 2. Experiences during the disaster

<b>Significant Statements</b>	<b>Formulated Meanings</b>	<b>Theme Cluster</b>
“There was an old woman who didn't want to go out from her house, I instructed the local police to go and rescue her to avoid casualty”. “We rescued the people who wanted to evacuate in spite of the flood”.	Rescue operations for zero casualties. Ongoing rescue operation amidst the flood.	Engaging in the rescue operations
“We made the clearing operations first of the roads that were covered by thick mud”. “There was a faster clearing operation on the thick mud because of the local government fire truck”. “Fire-truck from Tagbilaran City and private grader from the former Loboc Mayor were used during the clearing operations”.	Clearing operations of roads from thick mud. Faster clearing of thick mud using the local government fire truck. Clearing up roads from mud using fire truck from Tagbilaran City and grader	Clearing affected roads and other areas

	from the former town mayor.	
<p>“People who are not affected are doing voluntary works”.</p> <p>“People of the non-affected villages volunteered and help clean the flooded area”.</p> <p>“Only some parts of Loboc town were flooded. Those who were not affected offered volunteer works like village councils, woman organization, and the youth”.</p>	<p>Unaffected people offered their assistance.</p> <p>Voluntary clean-up from unaffected villages.</p> <p>Voluntary clean-up from women and youth organizations, village councils from upland barangays.</p>	<p>Rendering voluntary works involving the community</p>

The success of the initiatives (Table 2) reflects the responsive governance of Loboc local officials and employees. The participation of youth and women also conveyed their empowerment and contribute proactively to the community and economic life. Women empowerment was evident among Loboc residents illustrating the successful

recognition of the integral participation of women among many empowered Filipino communities (Abocejo et al., 2012). In particular, immediate recovery from the flood disaster was clearly evidenced in the effective implementation of good governance (Table 3).

Table 3. Good local governance practices

Representative Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster
<p>“There were private entities, DPWH, and neighboring local governments which helped including Taiwan Tsu-Chi Foundation and Alturas Mall”.</p> <p>“The relief goods came from DSWD, ABS-CBN, DYTR, and others”.</p>	<p>Help from both public and private institutions.</p> <p>Public and private institutions provided relief goods.</p>	<p>Collaboration among public and private entities in the provisions of flood assistance</p>
<p>“Because many helped, we experienced excess supply of relief goods”.</p> <p>“People were not starving because there was a sufficient supply of food”.</p> <p>“There were lots of relief goods given to the people”.</p> <p>“For me it is effective, the local government unit responded immediately especially to the residents near the river. They performed channeling to the village officials”.</p>	<p>Relief goods were too many because many had helped.</p> <p>No one was hungry because there was enough food supply.</p> <p>People received lots of relief goods.</p> <p>The local government was effective in responding to flood victims</p>	<p>Felt effectiveness of provided assistance</p>
<p>“There is no politicking here in Loboc, if others bring assistance; we encourage them to course through the municipality”.</p> <p>“I am satisfied with what the local government is doing, they set aside politics.”</p>	<p>Politicking is absent in giving assistance.</p> <p>Politics is set aside in the assistance efforts after flooding.</p>	<p>Experience absence of political motives among assisting agencies</p>
<p>“Of the 5 percent local government general income, 30 percent of it is allocated for the quick response to purchase relief goods while the 70 percent is for preparedness”.</p> <p>“We prioritized the 70 percent into rescue boats and accessories”.</p>	<p>The budget is divided for the quick response and for preparedness.</p> <p>Budget prioritized buying of rescue boat and accessories.</p>	<p>Full allocation and disbursement of intended budget for the calamity</p>

The flood experiences of Loboc residents caused by typhoon “Seniang” left untold stories of

survival, coping mechanisms and reinforced local leaders to mainstream their constituents to best

practices on post-disaster recovery mechanisms. Every person has a story to tell about their triumphs in life's adversities and challenges. Their disaster experiences, when lived positively, make them understand better and become more resilient when future disasters and challenges come. On the other

hand, the implementation of disaster recovery services delivery can encounter challenges that require particular attention. The following challenges (Table 4) and experienced during the flooding provided a wider perspective in anticipating future flooding.

Table 4. Experienced challenges

Significant Statements	Formulated Meanings	Theme Cluster
“Though we have two motorboats, still it is not enough”. “We lack rescue equipment for use during calamity”.	Lack of equipment was experienced by the rescuers	Lack of rescue equipment
“We are more experienced...We lived here for a long time, that mentality must be changed and that people should understand”. “We never expected that flood water will increase abruptly. It is only when the flood water reached our lawn, we realized to pack up”.	The Loboc residents were left unprepared because they did not expect the sudden increase of water level.	Passive reaction to flood warnings
“One of the triggering factors for the faster increase of floodwater is the water release of Sevilla dam”. “We have heard that water from the dam was released that’s why the Tigbao bridge was damaged. If it rains continuously, they must have a gradual release, not abrupt. If I could remember, they were blamed because it is impossible that floodwater increased abruptly”.	The local people feel that the sudden increase of water level is due to the untimely release of water in Sevilla Dam.	Undesirable flood prevention practices
“What happen is that we failed a bit because the relief goods were flooded”. “We purchased goods and we had a stockpile but unfortunately it was damaged because we underestimated the level of floodwater”.	The command and relief center location was flooded damaging the stockpile of relief goods.	Command and relief center not ideally located

The presented challenges in table 4 can be bases for future calamity response programs as learning experiences vital for improved disaster management. The Loboc local leaders, who were KIs themselves, confessed to have experienced these perennial challenges on forecasted arrivals of typhoons, accompanied by heavy downpours, which are just left in the news by local residents. The local government leaders experienced difficulty in

convincing their constituents to cooperate and take action based on the forecasted warnings. Nonetheless, typhoon Seniang experiences brought notable changes among the local residents’ attitudes which have become more vigilant to typhoons and flood warnings and became more responsive, proactive, and cooperative. Out of the clustered themes, a broader thematic analysis was done reducing them into four emergent themes (Table 5).

Table 5. Theme clusters and emergent themes

<b>Theme 1. Awareness of the disaster</b>	<b>Theme 2. Experiences during the disaster response</b>
Awareness and discussion on pre-disaster preparations headed by local government Putting the contingency in plan in action with the active involvement of concerned personnel Extensive awareness and dissemination of upcoming disaster and disaster-related plans	Engaging in the rescue operations (during) Clearing affected roads and other areas (after) Rendering voluntary works involving the community (after)

Putting the evacuees, rescue equipment, evacuation provisions available and functional prior to the typhoon.	
<b>Theme 3. Good Local Governance Practices</b>	<b>Theme 4. Experienced Challenges</b>
<p>Collaboration among public and private entities in the provisions of flood assistance</p> <p>Felt effectiveness of provided assistance</p> <p>Experience absence of political motives among assisting agencies</p> <p>Full allocation and disbursement of intended budget for the calamity</p>	<p>Lack of rescue equipment</p> <p>Passive reaction to flood warnings by local residents</p> <p>Undesirable flood prevention practices</p> <p>Command and relief center not ideally located</p>

**Theme One: Awareness of the Disaster**

Before the disaster, the KIs witnessed and confirmed that local government officials and employees were mobilized in the planning, staffing, information dissemination, and rescue preparations. Likewise, interviewed local government officials affirmed that:

*“Before Typhoon Seniang arrived, we had conducted a meeting”.*

*“We instructed the different groups and we already made clear to them of their respective responsibilities”.*

The KIs also affirmed that the local government, in spite of limited time, did its best to inform all Loboc people. There were also concrete collaborative efforts among all Loboc officials, the NGOs, and other organizations in the preparations for the eventual arrival of the typhoon.

*“We disseminated information and typhoon warnings through all villages especially on the flood-prone areas”.*

Collectively, the Loboc local leadership was seen as very active in delivering its duties and responsibilities. The scenario proved that local leaders and constituents can join forces to face typhoons and flood disasters. This observation confirmed the findings of Othman et al. (2014) which described preparedness as an interplay of responsibilities among focal persons.

A house-to-house visit by Loboc village officials became unique and relatively effective. Functional rescue operations through the evacuation of individuals from highly vulnerable areas resulted in zero casualties during the flood. An appropriate approach to disaster education reduces people’s vulnerability against natural calamities and inevitable disasters (Muttarak and Lutz, 2014).

While common disaster management was controlled at the upper level of management, empowerment of local government employees was innovative to disaster risk reduction efforts. Their experiences developed (in them) a sense of responsibility to carry out tasks effectively (Seebauer and Babicky, 2017). Notably, such innovation was carried with multiple tasks of disaster management approaches during the flooding.

Successful disaster response plans were carried out. As one KIs confessed:

*“We already have disaster equipment like standby motorboats, raincoats, and ropes”.*

The deployment of local government employees offered remarkable experiences during emergency response operations making first-hand encounters by rescue forerunners in carrying out disaster management plan in the affected areas.

**Theme Two: Experiences during Disaster Response**

Loboc local leaders, side by side with the local community members bravely responded to the disaster. Immediately, they worked together for the clearing operations of major areas, especially in clearing the roads for vehicles to pass through enabling the transport of relief goods, and facilitating other emergency response initiatives. Some KIs recounted that:

*“We made the clearing operations first of the roads that were covered by thick mud”.*

*“There was faster clearing operations on the thick mud because of the local government fire truck”.*

The clearing operations were very instrumental in the immediate recovery of the local economy. The Loboc municipality is famous for its tourist attraction of the river cruise with the floating



restaurants that sustainably contribute to local and entire Bohol province tourism. In fact, Bohol ranked second in terms of foreign tourist visitors and third most visited area by local tourists (Abocejo, 2015) in 2014. Evidently, the Loboc tourism industry provides not only employment to local residents but is also considered a strong driver of the island economy (Abocejo, 2015). Indeed, in building communities back to the normal state, all aspects of recovery had to be in place for business, civic and community health (Alvarez, Ong, and Abocejo, 2017), education (Abocejo and Padua, 2010), housing, employment, security and safety (Abocejo and Gubalane, 2013; Dela Serna, Ferrer, and Abocejo, 2017) and environmental conditions (Comerio, 2014).

Moreover, voluntarism from non-affected communities was a concrete example that brought about effective coordination of flood disaster recovery initiatives. There were KIs who were proud to confess that:

*“People who are not affected are doing voluntary works”.*

*“People of the non-affected villages volunteered and help clean the flooded area”.*

Full collaboration and coordination with the recovery team were evident (Linnell 2014) whereby professionalizing collaborative actions results in more effective recovery successes (Cranmer and Biddinger 2014). Accordingly, Drakaki and Tzionas (2017) noted that collective actions and team works gave rise to mutually beneficial partnerships among disaster’s affected and not-affected residents.

### **Theme Three: Good local Governance Practices**

In the Philippine context, good governance is characterized by the tenets of good financial housekeeping, disaster preparedness, business friendliness and competitiveness, peace and order, and environmental management (DILG, 2015). Using these parameters as lenses in assessing the flooding of Loboc, it is apparent that good governance truly contributed to the successful implementation of the disaster recovery programs. In the parlance of accountability and transparency (Andaya and Abocejo, 2019), the local government officials demonstrated effective leadership in the conduct of disaster preparedness with efficient use of the risk reduction management preparedness fund. As some KIs affirmed:

*“Of the 5 percent local government general income, 30 percent of it is allocated for the quick response and recovery to purchase relief goods while the 70 percent is for preparedness”.*  
*“We prioritized the 70 percent into rescue boats and accessories”.*

Similarly, the absence of politicking and the successful collaborations between public and private entities were evident during the disaster relief operations. The politically untainted public governance on relief distribution resonated with authentic local leadership among Loboc elected officials and local government employees. The clean and sound political leadership resulted in efficiency (Ricablanca and Abocejo, 2020) of providing assistance to the flood victims. These are among the concrete proofs of LGU governance disaster preparedness. Some KIs were prompt to affirm that:

*“There is no politicking here in Loboc. If others bring assistance, we encourage them to course through the municipality”.*

*“I am satisfied with what the local government is doing, they set aside politics.”*

The needs of the victims, after the wrath of the flooding, were appropriately addressed. The emphasis on aid effectiveness is particularly important because its absence may lead to economic losses and widespread poverty (Amin and Goldstein, 2008).

A year after the tragedy, Bohol province bested a genuine accomplishment by being awarded the local government disaster recovery model, duly recognized by the Philippine administration. As local leadership accomplished functional and good governance, the Loboc LGU was awarded the Seal of Good Local Governance in 2015 (DILG, 2015). This confirmed their relentless efforts to recover faster from the onslaught of the flooding on the social, economic, and environmental fronts. The Loboc local leaders’ adherence to environmental preservation resonated strong commitment for sustainable environmental protection and management (Vivar, Salvador, and Abocejo, 2015). Economic activities immediately flourished after the flooding, affirming that post-disaster implemented strategies (best practices) were effective in mitigating further damage to people’s lives, properties, and other infrastructures.

#### Theme Four: Experienced Challenges

Overall, the disaster response was effective. However, local officials and residents still experienced challenges brought about by some limitations of resources. Some KIs noted this as saying:

*“Though we have two motorboats, still it is not enough”.*

*“We lack rescue equipment for use during calamity”.*

For responsive disaster operations, McEntire (2004) emphasized that it is critical to incorporate equipment inventory lists before the onset of disasters, for their availability and usefulness during response operations. The unprecedented rise of the water level was not foreseen, thereby a limited number of rescue equipment was prepared. Some household KIs narrated that:

*“One of the triggering factors for the faster increase of floodwater is the water release of Sevilla dam”.*

*“We have heard that water from the dam was released that’s why the Tigbao bridge was damaged. If it rains continuously, they must have a gradual release, not abrupt”.*

One noted setback of the Loboc rescue operations was the refusal of local residents to be evacuated. The Loboc residents showed overconfidence based on their flooding experiences from previous typhoons. This attitude was aggravated by the lack of education on involved risks during catastrophic flooding. When many refused to be evacuated, rescue operations become more challenging. Positively, such resistant behavior on the part of local residents was viewed as an attribute of a resilient community to flooding (Dixit, 2009; Schwindt and Thielen, 2010) having lived such experiences many times over. This is a challenge that requires a change of mentality and society’s relaxed attitude towards disaster risks (Horney et al., 2010; Bouraoui and Lizarralde, 2013). One household key informant confessed that:

*“We never expected that flood water will increase abruptly. It is only when the flood water reached our lawn, we realized to pack up”.*

Clokel et al. (2017) noted two major challenges which include converting forecasting into effective warnings and providing effective leadership on flood control services. As confirmed

by some KIs, the inundation in Loboc, Bohol submerged its command and relief center affecting stocked relief goods thereby delaying relief operations. This resulted from a miscalculation of the water level that caused damage to physical structures and hampered relief operations. Based on their experiences, residents along flood-prone areas tend to exhibit low-risk estimates of flooding which may result in further damage on flood-prone areas requiring crucial consideration in view of flooding. To this end, Fincher et al. (2014) analyzed that adjustments to changing environmental landscape suggest impermanence of infrastructures while hinting at the urgent need for strategic infrastructural development that can withstand untoward occurrence of any disaster.

#### CONCLUSION

The number of key informants was only 12, but it included all the sectors represented by the local government, the church leader, and household heads of Loboc municipality in Bohol, Philippines. As a qualitative study following the phenomenological methods, generalization cannot be sufficiently articulated based on 12 key informants. However, the study findings provide a substantial and in-depth understanding of the Loboc people’s experiences before, during, and after the typhoon and flooding disasters.

In the light of the study findings, it is concluded that effective disaster response and quick recovery essentially rely on authentic governance shown in the successful disaster preparedness and solid commitment of local leaders strengthened by the tangible collaborations among affected and non-affected local residents. Collectively, the Loboc government officials and local residents’ concerted efforts paved way for harmonious implementation of disaster preparedness programs and policy processes. The harmonious teamwork between local government officials and employees gained their trust and confidence from their constituents. This achieved outcome was reinforced through proactive participation from all segments of the Loboc people.

Grounded on the findings and conclusion of the study, the authors suggest that local Loboc local leaders sustain their positive outlook in any experienced disaster which allows them to move forward as community frontrunners with renewed

commitments and resiliency. Considerably, the authors identified three essential areas of development requiring attention namely; infrastructure development, updating contingency plans, and flood preparedness training and management.

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