What are the effects in people’s lives after Typhoon Soudelor?

Rayburn Espangel

Northern Marianas College

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Table of Contents

1. Abstract………………………………………………………………………………………………………………3
2. Introduction……………………………………………………………………………………………………….4
3. Background………………………………………………………………………………………………………..5
4. Literature Review……………………………………………………………………………………………….7
5. Research Questions……………………………………………………………………………………………8
6. Methodology……………………………………………………………………………………………………..9
7. Findings………………………………………………………………………………………………………………10
8. Discussion…………………………………………………………………………………………………………..11
9. References………………………………………………………………………………………………………….13
10. Appendices…………………………………………………………………………………………………………14

Abstract

This research paper, by student researcher Rayburn Espangel, an English Composition II student of Dr. Kimberly Bunts-Anderson, prepared this research paper to know the stress(es) that was gained right after Typhoon Soudelor. Post Typhoon Soudelor, the island of Saipan, CNMI had no running water, electricity, and most stores were closed. Furthermore, numerous resident buildings, institutions, and businesses were heavily damaged as well. This research paper explains the hardships that the people of Saipan, CNMI had to endure just to get the necessities such as gas, food, water, etc.

Introduction

Typhoon Haiyan was one of the most deadly typhoons the world has ever seen. In Tacloban Philippines, Typhoon Haiyan killed over 6,800 people. The day after the typhoon a couple, were hunting for food in the middle of debris and bloated bodies and it was like that for several days more after that. On August 4th 2015, a female elderly citizen in Chalan Kanoa, Saipan, was overwhelmed with how badly damaged her house was. The roof of her whole house flew off leaving the contents of her house hold scattered or missing. The elderly citizen, who lives alone, has to struggle to rebuild her life all by herself now that her husband is gone, and all her children living far away. She is retired and a stay-home lady who does nothing but tends to her garden every day. But now with this situation, the elderly citizen has to find some people to help her clean her house and rebuild it.

The life that we have lived right after the typhoon has caused more stress to everyone in the island of Saipan. There was no electricity, no running water, and most stores were closed so it was hard for everyone to purchase things. And if the store was open, it was usually out of the things that were crucially needed such as batteries, canned goods, drinking water, petrol for our automobiles and generators if you had one.

Even after the typhoon, the hospital was overflowing with patients with breathing complications as well as skin irritations. Researcher’s nephew, with initials S.N., started becoming itchy right after the typhoon. As per the doctors in CHC, they declared some kind fungal disease that was created due to a lot of molds created from wet contents of a house hold. The researcher’s nephew is currently taking medications that are helping in curing the fungal disease. Another patient had breathing complications right after the typhoon due to the aeroallergens in the air so the patient was constantly taking the nebulizing treatment as well as being in an air conditioning automobile at all times. Student researcher proposes to do a research on the effects of Typhoon Soudelor on people’s lives.

Background

Over the past five years, typhoons have made devastating impacts across the world, such as the typhoon in Haiti, Haiyan in the Philippines, as well as Soudelor in Saipan. These mentioned typhoons had caused a heavy impact to the country as well as the people’s lives, in which some are still rebuilding trying to get back their lives. The devastation was so heavy that it’s taking a longer time for some countries to rebuild. One year after Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines, residents living in the coastal areas are still living in tents. This essay will be comparing and contrasting Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines and Typhoon Soudelor in Saipan and their impacts.

The strength of both typhoons was both strong; however, Typhoon Haiyan that hit the Philippines was estimated to be about 190-200 miles per hour (www.dw.com, 2015). As for Typhoon Soudelor, the strength of the wind was estimated to be about 90-100 miles per hour (pacific news center, 2015). It is obvious that Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines was much stronger therefore it had more impact. Typhoon Soudelor was measured by through the Guam National Weather Service.

The Philippines and Saipan received a lot of assistance in the aftermath. Philippines however, received a lot more assistance due to the face that Philippines are bigger/larger in terms of land mass, population, and damages. Philippines received assistance from the Red Cross, as well as receiving about 1.6 million dollars from the U.S. Aid. There were more aids from the national government, as well as donations from around the world. In Saipan, most of the aids were from Red Cross and FEMA and other federal assistance like Nutrition Assistance Program. Saipan did receive donations as well, even to manpower from our neighboring Micronesian islands.

Finally, the residents from each country suffered dramatically. In Saipan, the residents were emotionally and psychologically stressed. Saipan residents stressed mostly on how to rebuild their lives as well as their homes. Furthermore, not a lot of Saipan’s residents were injured. The major issues of health were mostly respiratory and fungal issues that caused skin rashes. Saipan did not have any recorded deaths due to Typhoon Soudelor. In the Philippines however, residents were emotionally and psychologically stressed as well. There were more injured people and the hospitals were crowded. About 60,000 people of the Philippines were either dead or missing (www.dw.com, 2015). The Philippines residents were more emotionally frustrated due to missing not only their homes, but family members as well.

Literature Review

Based on Kate Hodal’s article, she interviewed Urwin Coquilla and his wife, Ethel, after Typhoon Haiyan. Urwin explains that right after the typhoon, they started hunting for food and their two small children by walking through the rubble of the city, among the dead and the living. They waded through oily waters where their house once stood, before the ship hit their village from the strong waves of the typhoon. The family hadn’t evacuated their home in Tacloban- Ethel believed they would weather the storm, as they had every other- so when the tidal wave shattered the floor from the underneath their feet, and the ships came rolling across the land, they were swept out into the swirling black water (Hodal, 2014). Furthermore, Hodal asked in her interview with Urwin on how his children got lost, he then explained that their children were torn away from his arms by the strong wind. After how many weeks, the couple finally decided to accept the fact that their children were gone and continue to move on. Urwin then asks Hodal, how does a person, a city, a whole country even, recover from such a horrendous event (Hodal, 2014)? The couple had to rebuild their lives starting from nothing and without their kids. How painful and devastating is that? Rebuilding their home may take just a few months, but rebuilding their lives may take a lifetime.

In Saipan, CNMI, when the Typhoon Soudelor hit, it was obvious that it was hit hard. Though it is not comparable to Typhoon Haiyan, Saipan still had a lot of people displaced and many buildings ruined. So from this, I came up with the following research questions:

Research Questions

What are the effects of people’s lifestyles post Typhoon Soudelor?

Sub questions are as follows:

1. After the typhoon, how easy or how hard was it for you to obtain water, gasoline, battery , food, etc.?
2. Do you have an automobile to help you get water, gas, food, and other necessary item?
3. Regarding health, did you or anyone in your household suffer any mental or physical issues from living in Saipan during and after the typhoon?
4. After Typhoon Soudelor, was your house totally damaged? If so, did you need to hire or ask more than your family’s help to clean up? How long did it take?
5. On a scale from 1-10, with 10 being really stressed, rate how stressed after the typhoon.
6. Regarding finance did you or anyone you know suffer any debt or have unexpected budgetary stress due to living costs from living in Saipan during and after the Typhoon?

All of the questions stated above are able to be answered through observations, interviews, questionnaires and surveys of different age groups specifically in the village of Chalan Kanoa.

Methodology

The survey was piloted in our English Composition II class a test run. The student researcher then went to the village of Chalan Kanoa and surveyed a total of 15 respondents. The student researcher purposely surveyed five respondents from three different age groups starting from 18-30 as be labeled as Group 1, followed by Group 2 from the ages 31-45, and the third group was ages 46-70 and labeled Group 3.

Another way the student collected data was through interviews. The student researcher prepared a set of questions that are the same questions stated above to ask the interviewee to a minimum of 3 people from three different similar to the age groups of the survey respondents, which was a total of nine interviewees. Student researcher will record the interviews with the permission of the interviewee to get the most possible and accurate responses.

Lastly, the student researcher will collect data through observations. Starting from October 26, 2015, student drove around Chalan Kanoa just to observe the progression of the residents and how they are putting their life back and document it. Below is a schedule, with the changes and dates corrected, of the student researcher.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Task | Scheduled Date | Actual Date |
| Observation 1  Work on Interview Questions and Survey Questions | October 26, 2015 | October 27, 2015  November 15, 2015 |
| Observation 2 | November 18, 2015 | November 20, 2015 |
| Interview 3 people | November 21, 2015 | November 21, 2015 |
| Survey 4 respondents | November 27, 2015 | November 27, 2015 |
| Observation 3 | November 29, 2015 | December 01, 2015 |
| Finish with all interviews | December 5, 2015 | December 04, 2015 |
| Finish surveys | December 05, 2015 | December 12, 2015 |
| Collecting Data and Analyzing | December 19, 2015 | December 19, 2015 |
| Completing Research | December 19, 2015 | December 19, 2015 |

Findings

Observations

The student researcher completed three observations throughout the entire research study. The first observation was implemented on the month of October, the second in November, and the third in December 2015. The first observation, which was on October 27, 2015, showed that there still debris on the sides of the roads and residences. By the second observation, which was on November 20, 2015, the roads have cleared up but some residences still had debris on their yard. The last observation, which was on the first of December, 2015, most residences, had removed debris from the typhoon and most houses have completed rebuilding their homes.

Interviews

The student researcher was able to interview nine Chalan Kanoa residents but from three different age groups and their names are Age Group 1 (ages 18-30), Age Group 2 (ages 31-45), and Age Group 3 (ages 46-75). Overall, there wasn’t that much difference regarding their opinions and statements of Typhoon Soudelor. Although from Age Group 1, most of their responses were somehow connected to electricity and they couldn’t stand the heat and sleeping in cars due to mosquitoes. They also stated that most of their concerns had to clean up the house and the yard from Typhoon Soudelor, and claimed that it was hard work. Age Group 2 was like a mixture of the responses from Age Group 1 and Age Group 3. Their concerns were mostly their financial budget, where to get assistance, and rebuilding their homes. Age Group 3 mostly stressed on expenses, like where will they get money to rebuild back their homes and go back to their lives like the way it used to be. Age Group 3 were showed more stress and emotions of defeat or depressed or lost. Another interviewee actually cried during the interview and said, “ I am in my sixties now, I worked hard all my life to get where I am today, a person who owns a home, all my cars are paid off, my children all grown and have moved. Now this tragedy comes and destroys my home completely. What am I gonna do? I am just by myself,” (Espangel, 2015).

Surveys

The Surveys, like the interviews, were similar in implementing it. However, the student researcher surveyed 15 respondents from the village of Chalan Kanoa, to three different age groups like the age groups of the interviews. The survey included questions like; rate how hard it was to obtain gas, water, food, etc. One survey respondent stated that because of lack of water, they had to hand wash their clothes with ocean water, because they prefer to do that than to wait in long lines at the laundry. Five respondents of the survey stated that they could not stand the heat and the mosquitoes so they slept in the car, but then wake up early in the morning to line up at the gas station and refill.

Another survey respondent stated that because of the typhoon, the air became polluted somehow with some kind fungus; moreover, fungus and mold grew on carpets, which cause rashes on the respondent.

Discussion

So overall, everyone had some kind of stress they encountered after Typhoon Soudelor that had an effect in the way people live daily. Electricity and Water being mostly the cause of everyone’s stress, from washing laundries for 8-10 hours, to washing their clothes with salt water, to waiting in long lines to get services like gas, FEMA, Red Cross, etc. Cleaning and rebuilding was another part of the stress of the residents of Chalan Kanoa. Federal programs approved some residents, others weren’t and so until now they are slowly recovering. On the whole, it is now December and mostly everything is back to normal. People are recovering slowly and now it seems like Soudelor was a century ago. As one interviewee said, “We are fine, God just wanted us to learn a lesson, and that lesson is, appreciate what you have,” (Espangel, 2015).

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Appendices

Appendices A

Survey Questions

1. After the typhoon, how easy or how hard was it for you to obtain water, gasoline, battery , food, etc.? Rate by 1 being really easy to 5 being really hard

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Gas |  |
| Water |  |
| Food |  |
| Batteries |  |
| Mosquito Coils |  |
| Other |  |

1. Do you have an automobile to help you get water, gas, food, and other necessary item?
2. Regarding health, did you or anyone in your household suffer any mental or physical issues from living in Saipan during and after the typhoon? If so, what are/were they?
3. After Typhoon Soudelor, was your house totally damaged? If so, did you need to hire or ask more than your family’s help to clean up? How long did it take?
4. On a scale from 1-10, with 10 being really stressed, rate how stressed you were after the typhoon.
5. Regarding finance did you or anyone you know suffered any debt or have unexpected budgetary stress due to living costs from living in Saipan during and after the Typhoon?
6. What are other things that you or your family has suffered from?
7. How did you do your laundry? If you went to a laundry, explain your experience
8. Please state any other troubles that you encountered post Typhoon Soudelor.
9. On a scale from 1-10, with one being stress free and 10 being most stressed, can you rate how stressed you were during the months of July to October?

Appendices B

1. After the typhoon, how easy or how hard was it for you to obtain water, gasoline, battery, food, etc.? Rate by 1 being really easy to 5 being really hard

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Gas | 16=4, 4=3,5=4 |
| Water | 22=5,1=4,1=3 |
| Food | 15-4, 6-3,4-4 |
| Batteries | 15-4, 6-3,4-4 |
| Mosquito Coils | 16=4, 4=3,5=4 |
| Other | 0 |

1. Do you have an automobile to help you get water, gas, food, and other necessary item?

20-yes, 5-no

1. Regarding health, did you or anyone in your household suffer any mental or physical issues from living in Saipan during and after the typhoon? If so, what are/were they?

2-yes, 23-no

1. After Typhoon Soudelor, was your house totally damaged? If so, did you need to hire or ask more than your family’s help to clean up? How long did it take?

21 yes,4-no

1. On a scale from 1-10, with 10 being really stressed, rate how stressed you were after the typhoon.
2. Regarding finance did you or anyone you know suffered any debt or have unexpected budgetary stress due to living costs from living in Saipan during and after the Typhoon?

All said yes

1. What are other things that you or your family has suffered from?

Answers vary

1. How did you do your laundry? If you went to a laundry, explain your experience.

Answers: long lines, hot, arguments arose,etc.

1. Please state any other troubles that you encountered post Typhoon Soudelor.

On a scale from 1-10, with one being stress free and 10 being most stressed, can you rate how stressed you were during the months of July to October?

Appendices C

Reading Notes

Article Title: Tacloban A year after typhoon Haiyan

-Hunting for food and their two small children. They walked through the rubbles of their cit, among the dead and the living, like zombies, asking neighbors and scanning ad hoc burial sites. They even waded into the oily waters where their house once stood-before the ships pummeled their waterfront neighborhood, leaving a mess of bloated bodies, twisted metal and broken concrete.

-After how many weeks, we decided to accept the fact that our children were gone. We had to move on and continue living. Their home their family, their livelihoods-he shrugs at the question. How does a person, a city, a whole country even recover from such a horrendous event?