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Pintakasi: When a Poor Community Empowers Itself to Deal with Peace and Security Issues, Implications for the Practice of Psychology

Author: Rhodius T. Noguera, Ph.D.
AMA International University Bahrain
Tribong Pintakasi Organization
Email: rhodiusn@yahoo.com

PINTAKASI: WHEN A POOR COMMUNITY EMPOWERS ITSELF TO DEAL WITH PEACE AND SECURITY ISSUES, IMPLICATIONS FOR THE PRACTICE OF PSYCHOLOGY

Abstract

This is an applied qualitative exploratory and participatory field research of a community phenomenon called *pintakasi*. After two years of immersion in an armed conflicted community, this study found out that *pintakasi* is a century- old indigenous community activity wherein the people, in a positive relationship, help each other to respond to a community need with no money involved and personal interest to equally benefit all. *Pintakasi* was used in farming and building bridges, classrooms, multi-purpose halls, seawalls, roads, and churches. Going beyond the traditional use, this study tried to extend the benefits of *pintakasi* by responding to peace and security issues which beset the community. This study also describes how psychologists and researchers might work in solidarity with poor people so as to explore an indigenous empowering process that would serve the best interests of the community.

1. Introduction

This study started with an invitation from a community based organization to help organize the group and the communities which it serves. This organization calls itself the “Tri-People” because they are composed of men and women, farmers and fishers, who are Muslims, Christians, and Manobos (indigenous people). The Tri-People, in their capacity, respond to the

needs of the community related to peace, security, and socio-economic development. The invitation has provided an opportunity to discover a process in the community. After two months, as the researcher lived in the community and dealt with the concerns of the organization, he discovered a community process which the people call *pintakasi*. Since then, the researcher focused his research in exploring *pintakasi* and how this phenomenon works in the lives of this specific population.

It should also be noted that this study subscribes to the perspective of Prilleltensky (2005), Decenteceo (1997), Baro (1994), and Freire (1984) that a psychologist or a community worker in a poor country should prefer working with the poor community in its struggle for social justice and human liberation. Hence, to work with the poor entails partnership and collaboration (Prilleltensky, 2005; Decenteceo, 1997; Noguera, 1996; Levine, 1997; Baro, 1994; & Freire, 1984).

Baro (1996) and Prilleltensky (2006) also stress that the role of psychology is to discover, rediscover, and retrieve indigenous experiences and apply them to the present struggle of the people. Baro (1996) says that a psychologist should search for experiences in the community that liberate and transform the lives of the people. Note that these authors recommend that psychologists, and/or social scientists, look into the experiences of a community for processes, concepts, or structures that the people themselves can utilize. They do not recommend that a psychologist bring into a community his/her expertise and use this expertise to design programs for the people (the role of “expert”). (This is the model on which the researcher was mostly trained.)

With those perspectives, the researcher, who has at least twenty years in community organizing, attempted to discover an empowering community process that would benefit the poor community. Empowering community process means an aspect of people’s culture, lifestyle, behavior, relationship, roles, or responsibility which they develop themselves to respond to the needs of the community.

Necessarily, this study was also an exploration of a new role of the psychologist in the community. Traditionally, the psychologist brings his/her expertise to the community to identify problems and generate solutions to problems that he/she saw in the community. In contrast, this study explores the role of the “empowering psychologist,” who, by living and working in the community, helps the community to see their traditional ways in a new light as defined by the community. This new version of the psychologist helps the community to recognize their resources, strengths, and solidarity in traditional practices (in this case, *pintakasi*) and utilize these to address and confront their present situation.

By implication, this new psychologist will focus his/her work on the poor. He earnestly hopes to share his experiences of working with the poor with other psychologists who would also like to work with the poor. In his case, he happened to be in a community where the poor are in the majority. And he intends to spend the next twenty years to work with the poor. It is something that needs to be done in the Philippines where the majority of people are poor.

2. The Kalamansig Situation

To get in touch with their life conditions, the researcher consulted with members of each of the 30 communities. These included Christian, Manobo (Indigenous People) and Muslim communities. He asked members of each of 30 communities, “*Kumusta ang inyong kahintang* (how is your situation)?” He had two goals: to know the people so that he would know what they needed and to find a research topic.

After the consultation, he realized that underneath the physical splendor of Kalamansig simmered enormous human problems. The main concerns of the people were violence, security, socio-economic conditions, health, politics, education, ecology, and socio-cultural conflicts.

In all these complexities, one thing remains vivid: solutions need to be found. Whatever these may be, it has to bring positive changes to the lives of the people. The difficulties of the people present a challenge that this research has to embrace, a challenge that calls for a commitment to join the poor in their struggles for a better life.

The problems that the people of Kalamansig face are overwhelming and disheartening. When the researcher thinks of their problems, he is weighted down in mind, heart, and in the spirit. “*Mahirap dalhin*” (it is difficult to carry). As a psychologist who wanted to be relevant to the people’s difficulty, he was confronted with a basic question: “What can I do to help them?”

He knew he had to find a way to understand his role as a psychologist in a poor community. Living and working with the people, he had a strong feeling that what he learned about psychological intervention and the role of the psychologist was at best inadequate and at worst wrong. He knew that what he had learned of psychology had been mostly derived from another culture. He also knew that his role was not merely to help the people survive or cope with their difficulties. He had to help them change their miserable conditions in ways that they wanted, toward goals that were meaningful to them.

Likewise, this study is also an attempt to discover a solution that could be empowering for the people of Kalamansig, especially the poor, so that they themselves can respond to their problems. The poor have been surviving and fighting their own battles. They know what will work and what will not, as well as what they are willing to do. Outsiders like the researchers and psychologists should trust these people to define what their roles in the community should be.

3. Method

This applied qualitative exploratory and participatory field research has two goals: (1) discover a community process; and (2) discover how this community process could be used to respond to the needs of the community who owns the community process. This is an open-ended exploratory study because the researcher is dependent on the information that he will get from the community. The study is also dependent on how the community will respond to the researcher’s discovery. However, the locus of the research offers a unique situation by which the researcher has to be sensitive and observant to the needs of the community. Kalamansig, which

is located in one of the secluded municipalities of Sultan Kudarat, is an armed conflict area. Hence, the researcher has to take an amount of risk in getting involved with communities that encounter problems in peace and security.

To immerse in the community and listen and learn from the people are the basic methods of this research. The researcher has stayed for two years in Kalamansig to discover and understand a community phenomenon called *pintakasi*. The qualitative procedures utilized were the following:

- (a) **Collaboration with the community based organization.** The point of entry to the community was through the Tri-People organization. The researcher got acquainted with the communities through this organization. The organization likewise collaborates on community members who will host his stay. The researcher took responsibility of the personal logistics such as the food, fare, toiletries and materials needed for the research. The organization was aware that the researcher was in their community to help them organize the group and the community. All of the researcher's activities and decisions that were related to the organization and the community had to be collaborated with the organization.
- (b) **Collaboration with the local leaders.** Through the Tri-People, the researcher tried to reach out to the local leaders such as the Mayor, Barangay Captains, Imams, Pastors, Priests and respected community leaders (non-political).
- (c) **Immersion in the community.** For two years, the researcher tried to immerse in the daily routines of the people. There were times that he had to join the farming and fishing, community meetings, festivities, drinking sessions of men, and children at play. Often, the researcher stayed overnight in the community and sleep at the house of a community leader. He talked to the people in the streets, in the stores, or in their houses. In short, he became part of the community for two years. Aside from attempting to be an insider, the researcher was also an outsider: he had to observe people's behavior, practices, and lifestyle.
- (d) **Interview individuals and groups.** As the researcher lived with the community, without making his role as a researcher salient, he tried to listen to the stories of the people. To make the encounter more natural, he did not bring a notebook with him during the conversations. He took notes in his private time. Aside from deepening his knowledge about *pintakasi*, the researcher took interest in the lives of the people. He interviewed both adults and children. Many of the adults were farmers and fishermen. He focused in inquiring about *pintakasi* by asking the following questions in a local dialect that is known to all-Cebuano.
 1. Are you familiar with *pintakasi*? This question was asked to understand the people's awareness about the phenomenon and how it evolved.
 2. What is your experience with *pintakasi*? This question was asked to understand their thoughts and feelings about the phenomenon.

3. What are the rules in *pintakasi*? This question was asked to understand the structure of *pintakasi*.
4. Why does *pintakasi* continue to exist? This question was asked to understand the thoughts of the people on why they continue to practice *pintakasi*.

The data were anecdotal and drawn from the narratives of the participants. This means that the researcher had listened to the stories of participants with regards to the practice of *pintakasi* and observed how it was used. It also includes the actual participation and observation of the researcher on the use of *pintakasi*. The data also describe how a researcher and psychologist grapple with ideas and methods. More importantly, this research presents how the researcher struggled with the life of a threatened community.

- (e) **Observe the phenomenon.** The researcher found it appropriate to listen to the stories about *pintakasi* and to observe how the people use *pintakasi*. To this end, the researcher observed and conducted informal observations and interviews. He wanted to explore further the relevance of *pintakasi* in the lives of the people. As a researcher, he wanted to have some ideas about the nature and range of data that he could find. Research strategies, methods, questions, and issues would emerge later.
- (f) **People participate in the validation of concepts.** The researcher tried to bring back the concepts that he found about *pintakasi* to the organization and the community. The perspective is that the community who owns *pintakasi* is in the best position to approve or disapprove the researcher's perception about *pintakasi* based on his findings. *Pintakasi* belongs to the people. It is embedded in the consciousness of the communities of Kalamansig and it has served the practical needs of the people.
- (g) **Apply *pintakasi* in collaboration with the organization and community.** The study also attempted to use *pintakasi* to address problems proposed by the organization and the community. The researcher also explored the implication of the use of *pintakasi* in the practice of clinical and community psychology particularly in a poor threatened community to deal with the problems of peace and security. Note that the only intention of the researcher was to use *pintakasi* to organize the Tri-People. But along the way, the situation changed the course of the research. The Muslim armed group threatened the lives of the community. Hence, *pintakasi* was applied to a concern related to peace and security. Perhaps this shows another aspect of the role of an empowering psychologist and researcher: the willingness to discard existing plans in order to respond to ongoing events in the community. The security of the community with the attack of the Muslim armed group forced a change in the research plans. The study gave an opportunity to explore the role of a psychologist in a poor, threatened community.
- (h) **Return the result of the research to the organization and community.** The researcher returned the discovery to the people for their use. The researcher attempted to articulate the discovery with the people. He wanted to bring the ideas he had gathered to their attention so as to generate more understanding and awareness, both on the researcher's part and on theirs. He discussed the ideas with them to see whether the researcher's

perceptions coincided with their awareness. The researcher has the responsibility to honor, respect, and nurture the ideas and experiences which he had taken from the people. Hence, researcher should not abandon the people after he has served the purpose of research.

- (i) **Collaboration with research adviser.** Throughout the exploration, the researcher collaborated with his graduate advisor (Edwin T. Decenteceo, Ph.D.). He would call him by phone or he would go to Manila to update on the progress of the research and clarify the methodology. His adviser visited Kalamansig once and stayed for five days to have an actual experience of *pintakasi* and the community.

4. Participants of the Study

There were at least 15,000 persons who participated in the study. All the participants were residents of 30 communities of Kalamansig, Sultan Kudarat. These communities are composed of Christians, Muslims, and Manobos (Indigenous People). All of these communities had experienced *pintakasi* in non-traditional activities. A community-based organization in Kalamansig which is called the Tri-People gave the opportunity to explore different communities of Kalamansig. It is composed of the respected grassroots leaders of Kalamansig who are Muslims, Christians, and Indigenous People. The organization was the entry point to the community. The organization then became a partner later on in responding to the peace and security concern of the communities.

5. Results of the Study

(a) Pintakasi Discovered

As said earlier, when the researcher arrived in Kalamansig, he was still searching for a research topic. Amidst the disheartening brutal realities of this lovely place, he came upon a unique tradition. The interesting phenomenon is called *pintakasi*. The first time he heard and observed *pintakasi* was at a church activity. The leaders called for a *pintakasi* to prepare the church grounds for a festivity. The researcher asked the leaders about this and they said that *pintakasi* is about people coming together for a particular activity such as cleaning the church or doing carpentry work. This is usually done during big occasions. In a single day, the church grounds are cleaned and readied for the festivity.

Informally, the researcher inquired more of this by asking the church leaders, “*Diin nagsugod ang pintakasi* (how did *pintakasi* start)?” Note that Cebuano is the common language used by the people. Sometimes they would mix Cebuano and Tagalog. In this paper the researcher will quote in Cebuano to emphasize people’s ideas and experience about *pintakasi*. This is the only local dialect that the researcher knows.

All those that the researcher asked said that *pintakasi* is originally a farmers’ activity where they help each other with farm chores: “*Kalihokan sa mag-uuma* (a farmers’ activity).” Later on, the community adopted this activity to respond to other community concerns such as cleaning a church or mosque and building a bridge, road, and classrooms. The researcher also asked,

“*Nagpadayon pa gihapon ang pintakasi sa uma* (does *pintakasi* in the farm continue to be practiced)?” People said that *pintakasi* continues to be practiced by the farmers.

This feature of *pintakasi* of bringing the people to work together got the researcher’s attention. He decided to explore further the potential of *pintakasi* as an empowering activity, as an approach for bringing people together to work on a project that would benefit their community. *Pintakasi* also struck the researcher as a good way of bringing the people together to work on their problems. It appeared to the researcher, however, that the people had not fully utilized *pintakasi*. The church, also, is not very aware of *pintakasi* or its potential. This was the first time that they talked about *pintakasi*.

Lastly, the researcher was aware that he was attempting to discover the aspect of *pintakasi* that might be empowering to a poor threatened community to deal with the problem of survival. But at the same time, he also searched for the relevance of psychology in the life of the struggling poor communities in Kalamansig. Hence, he attempted to answer the following questions: Will *pintakasi* have its relevance in the field of psychology? Can *pintakasi* be used to empower a poor threatened community to deal with the problems of peace and security? What is the implications of the use *pintakasi* for the practice of clinical and community psychology in the field?

(b) *What is Pintakasi?*

Pintakasi is a century-old indigenous community activity which the people who have positive relationship help each other with no money involved and personal interest so as to benefit all the members of the community. *Pintakasi* came from the people. It was conceived and used by the people. Hence, the only way to understand *pintakasi* was through the community.

Origin of Pintakasi. The elderlies (70-93 year old interviewees who are Muslim, Christian, and Manobo), around 30 of them could not determine how *pintakasi* started or who initiated the practice of *pintakasi*. They would say, “*Mao nang naandan* (that was the practice).” “*Mao na sukad pa sa gamay pa kami* (it has been there since we were young).” But they affirmed that *pintakasi* was commonly used for farming.

Traditional Activities. People did not recall any experience where *pintakasi* was used to respond to their problems related to peace and order, socio-economic, violence, health, political and ecological. Hence, *pintakasi* was only used in traditional activities: farming, building roads, bridges, seawalls, classrooms, and multi-purpose halls.

Muslim Pintakasi. The Muslims also had their own version of *pintakasi*. They call it *magtabang* or *d’setatabangay*. The researcher visited two Muslim communities and he was able to inquire about *pintakasi*. They had similar report about *pintakasi*. They added that they also apply *pintakasi* to help during wedding or burial.

Manobo Pintakasi. The Manobos call their version *tanggawa-lawa*. The researcher visited four communities of Manobos. They also use this in farm endeavors. In fact, the researcher was able

to witness a *tanggawa-lawa* during their harvest of corns. They also use this during wedding, festivities, and building of houses.

(c) *Features of Pintakasi*

Randomly, the interviewees had identified and explained the different aspects of *pintakasi*. When people were asked about what comprised *pintakasi*, they would bring up the following elements:

- ❖ *pagtinabangay* (helping each other)
- ❖ *maayong relasyon* (positive relationship)
- ❖ *kaayohan sa tanan* (benefiting all)
- ❖ *katilingbanong panginahanglan* (responding to a community need)
- ❖ *walay bayad* (not expecting payment)
- ❖ *walay kaugalingon nga interes* (not thinking of personal interest).

Pagtinabangay (helping each other). This was about the community working together. Having felt the urgency of the need, a family member is sent to help in a community project. They had to help by giving their time, skills, and sometimes resources. The people also articulated community concepts related to *pagtinabangay* such as:

- *pag-inambitay* (sharing of resources)
- *pagtambayayong* (joining forces for a common end)
- *pakiglambigit* (involving in the concerns of the community)
- *panag-hiusa* (uniting for a common purpose)
- *pagsinabtanay* (dialoguing in order to understand).

Maayong relasyon (positive relationship). *Pintakasi* is based on positive relationship among members of the community. They know each other to a certain extent such as their important stories, personal problems, and sometimes aspirations. They also respect each other. They support each other in important occasions such as wedding, birthdays, community festivities, and burial. The people also help a community member who is terminally ill or in a burdensome situation. In short, members of the community relate with each other in a personal level.

Katilingbanong panginahanglan (addressing a community need). This is about the community being able to define a community need. A community need would mean a particular concern that negatively affects everybody in the community such as rough road, dilapidated classrooms, and rotten bridges. Eventually, the community would decide to address those concerns.

Kaayohan sa tanan (benefiting all). This is about the aspiration of the people. The aspiration had to benefit everybody in the community. In a similar way, the people also brought out new concepts when *kaayohan sa tanan* was defined. The concepts were:

- *paglaum* (hope for a better community)
- *paglambo* (growth of the community in all its aspects)
- *pagpakabana* (renew and change not only for the self but importantly for the good of the community).

Walay bayad (expecting no payment). This is about the community working together with no money involved. Since, this is not an institutional project, *pintakasi* involves no funds. People are aware that the time, effort, and skills that they render are for the benefit of everybody in the community. They do not expect monetary exchange or remuneration. It is all voluntary. But because they know that they would benefit from the project, all the members of the community would work eagerly.

Walay kaugalingon nga interes (not thinking of personal interest). This is about the community not welcoming individuals who have personal interest in the project. Individuals involved in *pintakasi* have to serve the interest of the community alone. The community had experiences of individuals who joined *pintakasi* because of political reasons such as getting votes for election.

The interviews affirmed that *pintakasi* did not involve planning and evaluation (Figure 1). Since *pintakasi* involved traditional activities, the activities were automatically understood by the community. They knew what they had to do. It included the understanding of expectations and rules. The focus was simply to finish the project so that it could serve the immediate need of the community. Thus, no planning or evaluation transpired. Note also that *pintakasi* was never tried in long-term projects except for farming. The people do farming three to four times a year.

Traditional *pintakasi*, which does not include planning and evaluation, is understandable. Traditional farming activities, learned from parents over several generations, do not need to be planned. At best, what the farmer needs to know are the signs as to when an activity should be started, for example, the start of the planting season or the harvest season. Nor does the farmer need to evaluate an activity except perhaps to know that all the seedlings are planted in the fields or that all the rice stalks have been cut down and gathered.

Traditional and Revised *Pintakasi*

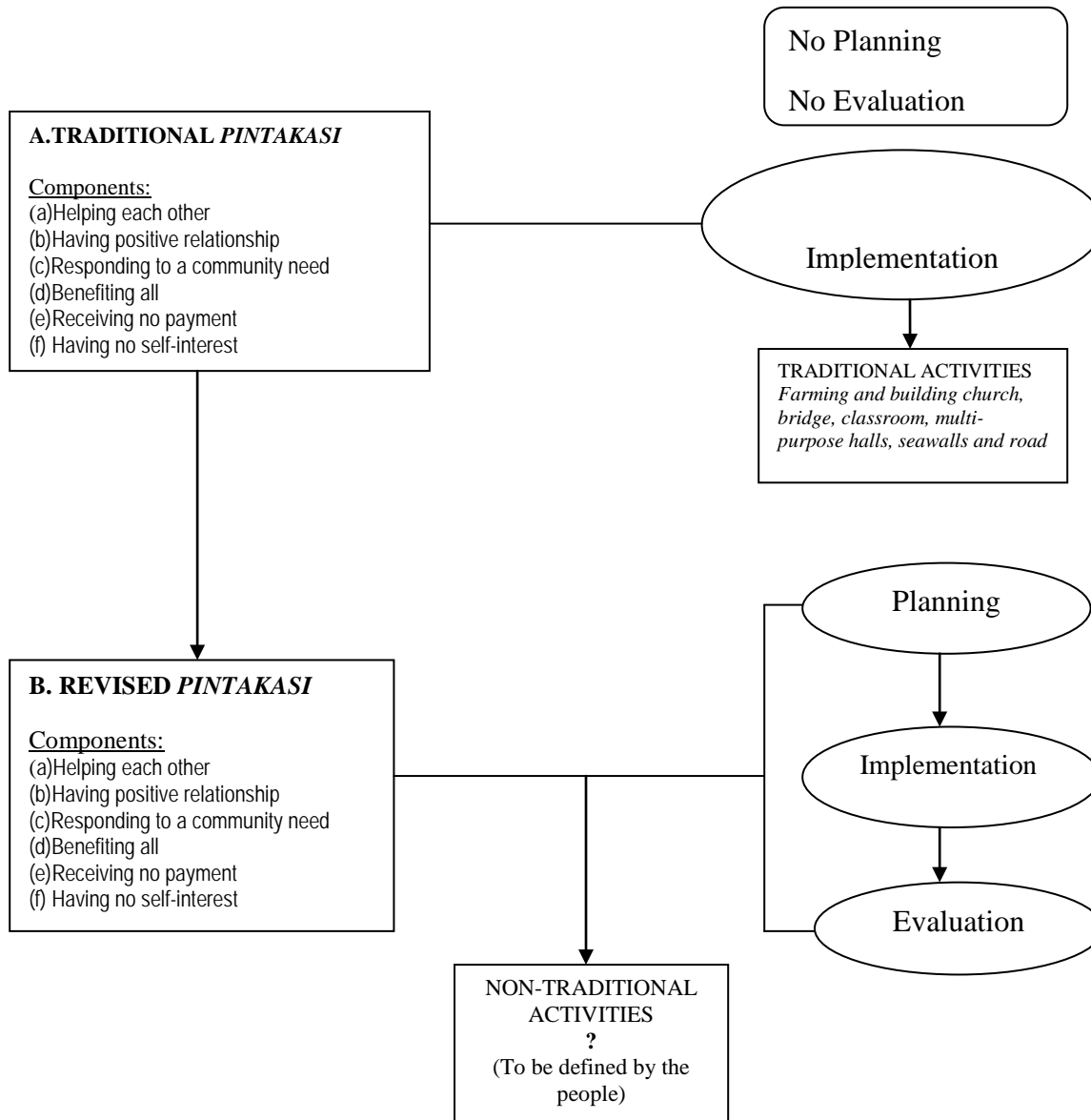


Figure 1. (a) *Traditional pintakasi*, and (b) *Revised pintakasi* used in the planning, implementation and evaluation of proposed community activities.

6. Exploration of *Pintakasi*

The researcher felt that to bring *pintakasi* up-to-date, that is, for the farmers or fishers to use *pintakasi* on activities other than traditional activities, the two components of planning and evaluation should be included in *pintakasi*. Planning allows the farmer to anticipate what is needed to conduct an activity that is somewhat new, that is, non-traditional. The evaluation activity allows the farmer to learn from having conducted an activity. The farmer no longer needs to depend entirely on the experience of an older generation. The farmer can learn from his own experiences.

In this study, revised *pintakasi* was applied to activities proposed by members of the community, which were planned and implemented in the community. In fact, *pintakasi* was utilized to help the community to deal with a totally unexpected event: the disruption of peace and security and the resulting evacuation of residents because of attacks by the Muslim armed group. The researcher tried to have the community evaluate the planning and the activity also using *pintakasi*. This was the first time that the community evaluated an activity involving *pintakasi* (while at the same time using *pintakasi* on the evaluation itself).

This was the first time that the participants used *pintakasi* to address the peace and security problem of Kalamansig. Since this was an unfamiliar and difficult situation, both for the people and the researcher, he felt the need to introduce planning and evaluation (Figure 2).

In the attempt of the researcher to expand the potential and understanding of *pintakasi*, two aspects were considered:

- to use *pintakasi* in non-traditional activities
- to use *pintakasi* with planning and evaluation.

To revise *pintakasi* is a process that articulates the recognition of a positive community force. In this case, as a psychologist, the researcher saw *pintakasi*'s potential in responding to the concerns of the communities. But prior to this discovery, the researcher immersed himself in the difficulties of the people. He took some risks. He came out in the open to inquire on few community systems that violate the rights of the people. For example, the researcher stood at the side of the victims to claim justice for their relatives who were killed. In short, the revision of *pintakasi* was drawn in the context of the poor people's struggles. Thus, he saw *pintakasi* as a tool where the people could work together to address community needs. Levine and Perkins (1997) said that if a psychologist has a poor grasp of community problems, he/she will have difficulty in responding to the concerns of the people.

By adding planning and evaluation, the people and the researcher will be able to create an awareness on the following: (a) the use of *pintakasi* to respond to the peace and security problems; (b) the concrete activities where *pintakasi* could be used to respond to peace and security concerns; (c) the community resources and values which could be used to respond to peace and order problems; and (d) the efficacy and relevance of *pintakasi*, concrete activities, and community resources and values in responding to peace and order concerns (Figure 2).

The framework also shows that the community will determine (a) the use of *pintakasi*, (b) the activities where *pintakasi* will be used, (c) the resources and values they will put in, and (d) efficacy and relevance of *pintakasi*, concrete activities, and community resources and values in responding to peace and order concerns.

At another level, this study is an attempt to create conditions that will be *empowering* to a community. It starts by pointing out to a community that it has a traditional process, *pintakasi*, which it can use to help itself. In other words, *pintakasi* is their own creation and therefore, it belongs to them. By adding the components of planning, implementation, and evaluation, perhaps the community can see that they can work together (*pintakasi*) to see their own needs and problems, look for possible responses, and discover their own resources to design their own program (planning). They can then work together to implement their plan (*pintakasi*). They can also work together (*pintakasi*) to see how well they have done and how they can improve on what they have done in the future (evaluation).

The Dynamics of Revised *Pintakasi*

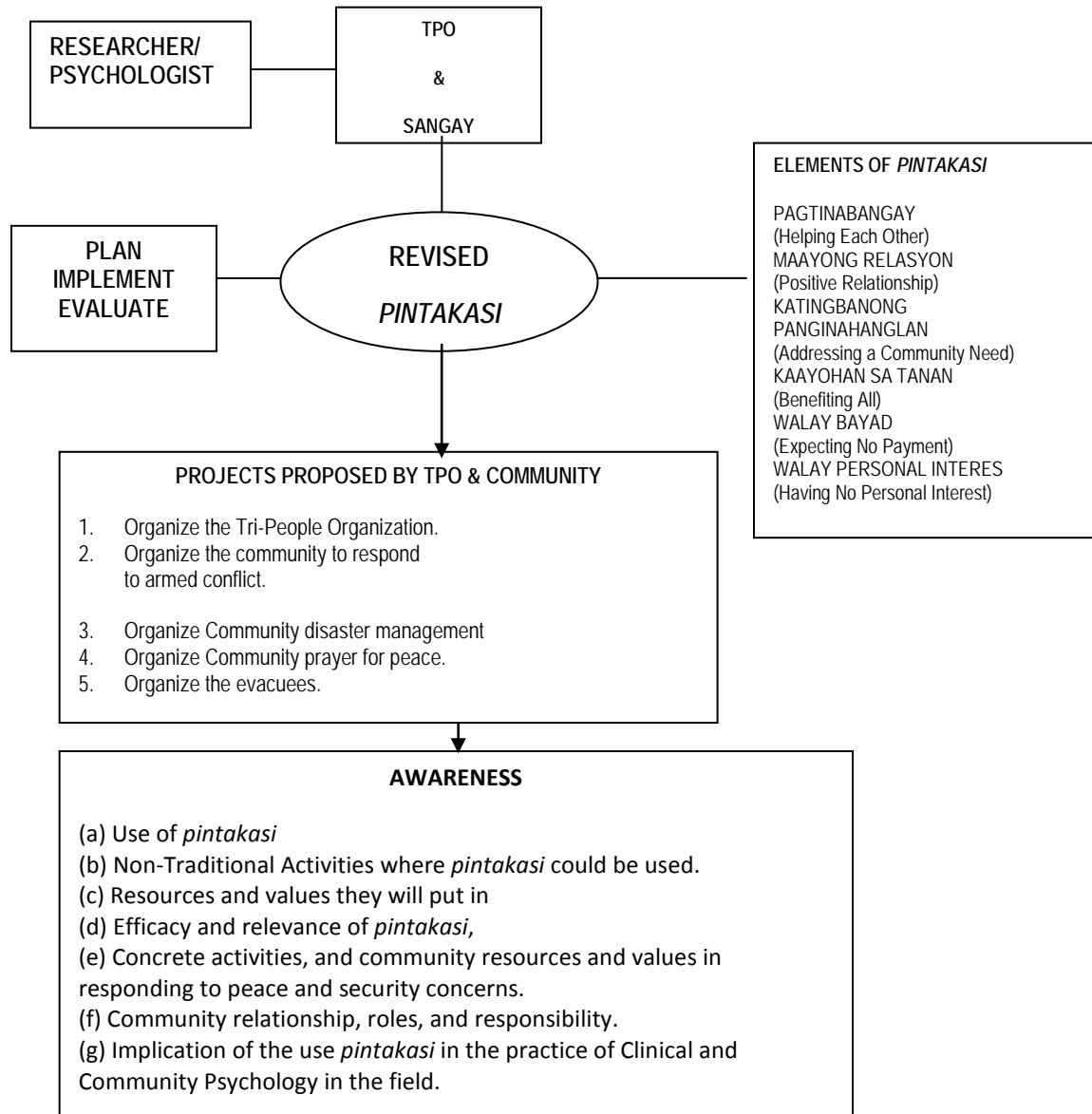


Figure 2. The use of revised *pintakasi* in non-traditional activities.

7. New and Revised *Pintakasi* Utilized

The researcher explored *pintakasi* when Kalamansig was in a critical period. After eighteen months, he had learned about the problems in Kalamansig, which were related to poverty, violence, security, peace and order, cultural, education, ecology, and health. After five months, problems in violence and peace and order surfaced. For more than a year, he witnessed different kinds of hostilities. He saw how the armed conflicts damaged the lives of the poor people. This included the loss of homes, livelihood, loved ones, dignity, sense of self and sense of future. He concretely witnessed at least four occasions of armed conflict.

As the researcher started to work with the Tri-People, the armed conflict became severe. The people affected, particularly the Sangay and Paril communities, sought the assistance of the researcher and the Tri-People organization. The researcher opted to help. The difficult events in the lives of the people gave the researcher an opportunity to facilitate their activity using an experience known to the people—*pintakasi*.

Apparently, in the course of this research, mainly responding to peace and security issues, the researcher helped the Tri-People organization and Kalamansig communities to respond to the following activities which they proposed: (a) organize the Tri-People Organization, (b) organize the community to respond to armed conflict, (c) organize community disaster management, (d) organize community prayer for peace, and (e) organize the evacuees.

(a) Organize the Tri-People Organization.

The organization felt the need to be organized so that they could positively respond to the needs of the communities they serve. The members of this organization articulated their inadequacy in view of leadership, managing the organization, and facilitating the development of communities. In short, as an organization, they would like to deepen the understanding of their roles, relationship, and responsibilities.

(b) Organize the Community to Respond to Armed Conflict.

Through the consultations, the researcher found out the desire of the 30 communities of Kalamansig to organize themselves to respond not only on the peace and security concerns but as well as to socio-economic issues which burden them.

(c) Organize Community Disaster Management.

Two communities (Sangay and Paril) became the target of armed Muslim rebel group. These communities sought help so that they would know what to do in this human-made disaster. The local government had no plan to go to the community because of the danger which the situation presented. The researcher and the Tri-People organization took the risk to help the community. They stayed in the community for a week.

(d) *Organize Community Prayer for Peace.*

The prayer for peace was part of the activities which surfaced during the disaster management planning in Sangay and Paril communities. The Muslim, Christian, and Manobo members of these two communities had thought that this activity will strengthen their relationship amidst the fear of the attack of armed Muslim rebel group. On the other hand, they were hoping that this activity will deliver the message to the armed rebel group to dialogue for peace. The people were aware that there were already few Muslim rebels who arrived in the community.

(e) *Organize the Evacuees.*

Two weeks after the prayer for peace, the armed Muslim rebel group attacked two communities. The communities of Sangay and Paril had no other choice but to implement what they planned during the disaster management planning. Part of this was to take the painstaking journey towards the evacuation center.

In the evacuation center, the evacuees decided to organize themselves. The Tri-People organization and the unaffected 28 communities of Kalamansig also decided to help the victims of armed conflict.

Note that even if the researcher introduced planning and evaluation on the said activities, he utilized the components of *pintakasi* to plan, implement and evaluate. Hence, the following questions were asked to plan, implement, and evaluate the community proposed project.

- Helping each other: How do we help each other? What thoughts and behaviors are helpful and why?
- Having positive relationship: How do we create positive relationship? What thoughts and behaviors could create positive relationship?
- Responding to a community need: What is the specific need of the community that we have to respond to?
- Benefiting all: How will the community equally benefit from this project?
- Receiving no payment: What will I concretely contribute for this project? What thoughts and behaviors will concretely contribute for this project?
- Having no self-interest: To whose interest do we work for? What thoughts and behaviors manifest having self-interest?

Note again that the researcher formulated these questions with the community. The researcher facilitated the process of formulating the question by asking the participants, “What questions could we ask pertaining to the different elements of *pintakasi*?”

8. The Awareness of the Participants and Researcher about the Use of Revised *Pintakasi*

The participants and the researcher had a change of awareness on the dynamics and the use of *pintakasi* as utilized in the activities which were proposed by the participants. The following data describe specifically the awareness generated by the proposed activities.

(a) *Organize the Tri-People Organization.*

- *Pintakasi* could be used to organize their organization.
- The Tri-People were able to define their roles, relationship, and responsibility. They realized that the elements of *pintakasi* are concrete guide to understand roles, relationship, and responsibility in the organization.
- *Pintakasi* could be used to define their goals using the six elements of *pintakasi*.
- The Tri-People recognized their role, relationship, and responsibility not only to their organization but as well as in responding to the needs of the community.
- As the Tri-People leaders had helped facilitate the planning, implementation, and evaluation of activity using *pintakasi*, the leaders and the community were able to generate more awareness on how they could strengthen relationship and respond to peace and security concerns.

(b) *Organize the community to respond to armed conflict.*

- The 30 communities who were affected by peace and security concerns became aware that they have *pintakasi*.
- The communities defined their roles, relationship, and responsibility in the middle of peace and security concerns.
- The communities defined their need.
- The communities described concrete activities such as community forum for peace and formulation of peace manifesto to contain the immerging conflict. The Tri-People organization had reproduced two thousand copies of the peace manifesto and had distributed them to 30 communities of Kalamansig.
- The communities recognized their resource as a community such as *pintakasi*, agricultural products, and natural resources.
- The Tri-People leaders recognized that they could use *pintakasi* to organize a community.

(c) *Organize community disaster management.*

- The community recognized the need to organize to respond to armed conflict.
- The community became aware on how they could help each other.
- The community recognized their experiences in the past armed conflicts.
- The community articulated concrete plans to prepare for an armed conflict such as security measures, the communication process, things to prepare, transportation, and evacuation place.
- The community recognized attitudes, values, resource, support system, relationship, roles, and responsibility necessary to respond to a disaster.
- The Christians, Muslims, and Manobos became aware that they could work together to save the community.
- The community decided to have a community prayer for peace.

(d) *Community prayer for peace.*

- The community recognized the time to get together regardless of beliefs to work together for peace.
- The community recognized that gathering the community to pray for peace could help in sending the message of peace to Muslim armed group.
- Using *pintakasi*, the community planned, implemented, and evaluated the community prayer for peace.
- Through the use of *pintakasi*, the Christians, Muslims, and Manobos became aware that they could work together to achieve peace in the community.

(e) *Organize the evacuees.*

- The evacuees, through *pintakasi*, defined their roles, relationship, and responsibility in the evacuation center.
- The evacuees realized that they could work together.
- The evacuees, by using *pintakasi*, planned, implemented, and evaluated their activities in the evacuation center.
- The evacuees recognized the use of *pintakasi* in the evacuation center.
- The Christians, Muslims, and Manobos became aware that they could work together productively to attend to their needs in the evacuation center.
- The 28 unaffected communities of Kalamansig realized that they could work together to help the victims in the evacuation center. The communities contributed money, food, clothes, and moral support. They also realized that the Muslims, Christians, and Manobos could work together concretely to respond to the needs of the evacuees. It took a month before the limited relief goods from the government arrived.

9. Discussion

This research has opened up an important discovery in dealing with the concern of a poor community in view of research process, in view of the role of a psychologist, and more importantly, in view of recognizing a community resource.

(a) *Doing a Research with a Poor Community.*

This research presents a research methodology that considers and prioritizes the welfare of the community more than the data it could gather for scientific or academic endeavor. It also highlights the role of the community in being able to participate in the entire process of research such as the discovery of *pintakasi*, validation of *pintakasi* concepts, and application of *pintakasi*. At the end of the study, the researcher did not abandon the community. But rather, the researcher, with the community, explored how *pintakasi* could be utilized beyond this research—which is to bring positive change in people’s lives. Hence, it emphasizes an important role of a researcher which is to unearth a community resource and become community’s partner in discovering strengths in responding to life-threatening concerns.

(b) Discovering the Role of a Psychologist in a Community.

The use of *pintakasi* captures the huge concern of psychology as it relates to such issues as culture, organization, war, violence, poverty, community development, ethnicity, spirituality, and survival. Attached to these activities were the observable behaviors, cognitive process, and emotional loads. The elements of *pintakasi* would describe that the people do not need western concepts to make life meaningful. The communities have their resources, tools, and concepts that could be used to respond to their concerns. They only had to deepen their awareness. For instance, nobody in Kalamansig had experienced psychotherapy or counseling from a psychologist. Up to this point, the people do not know anything about psychological process (western perspective). But the people had been using an effective century old community tool (*pintakasi*) to respond to a community need. Hence, the psychologist does not need to teach the people how to support each other. Whether the psychologist is present in a community or not, the people will continue to help each other to address the problems that beset the community. The people had survived their lives without a psychologist. And *pintakasi* is one of their tools for survival. Apparently, the study found out that *pintakasi* could be used beyond survival.

The only way for a psychologist to be of help to the community is to be part of the community. The researcher must therefore become involved in the lives, concerns, and dreams of the community. Since the researcher/psychologist was part of the community, he dealt with the people as partners and not as a clientele or recipient of help. In this consideration, he allowed the people to teach him about community processes. The following bullet points describe essential attributes for establishing relationship with the community.

- *Connect to leaders.* To learn more about the community, a psychologist has to connect to local respected leaders. The respected leaders are not the political elected leaders. As far the experience of the researcher is concerned, the respected leaders have a deep concern for the welfare of the community. They are even ready to die to serve the interest of the community. The Muslim and Manobo leaders said that if an outsider such as a psychologist would want to gain the trust and respect of the community, he has to merit first the respect and trust of the leaders.
- *Live with the community.* To understand a community resource, a psychologist has to live with the community for a longer period of time. In this research, the psychologist lived in the community for at least two years. He had to observe the lifestyle of the community. He had to adjust to their lifestyle, as close as he could (but he could not be completely poor).
- *Community defines the role of a psychologist.* To be empowering in this situation, the community defines the role of a psychologist who would like to serve. The community is the expert, not the psychologist. As mentioned in the study, the people had already survived different faces of poverty and injustices before the researcher and psychologist intruded on their lives. The role is: learn from the people, trust their capacity, and discover their potentials. They have so much to teach about how a researcher and a

psychologist should deal with their lives. The researcher wanted to be an expert on this kind of role. He realized that he had so much to learn from the community.

- *Listen to the community.* The researcher listened to the stories of the people. These were stories about their culture, families, and community practices. He also listened to their problems. His training in clinical interview and counseling was helpful. But it is only in the aspect of listening. He did not see the people as clients nor did he see himself as expert. The community also listened to him. He also had to tell them about his personal stories. He found this an important part of merging with the community.
- *Reflect with the community.* A psychologist has to reflect with the community by consulting the community about their concerns. He has to understand their problems better by allowing the community to clarify their own issues.
- *Discover with the community.* The community exposed to the psychologist its resources such as *pintakasi*, diverse culture, natural wonders (caves, falls, rivers, islets, and rain forest), indigenous skills (weaving, basketry, and sculpting) and many others. The community only had to discover how to nurture these resources so as to benefit its members.
- *Learn with the community.* A psychologist should listen to the community and trust its capacity. Lewis (1989) said that for a psychologist to bring about positive change in the community he/she has to discover and cultivate positive forces in the community. To this end, *pintakasi* is one of the community's positive forces.
- *Struggle with the community.* A psychologist had to take risks to find ways to be part of the community. He had to actively seek means to address the concerns of the people. He had to collaborate with the communities in the activities that had to address their concerns. The basic responsibility is to become a partner of the community. He had to work hand-in-hand with the people in responding to the concerns of the community.
- *Dream with the community.* A psychologist had to understand the goal and dreams of the community. Hence, a psychologist has to embrace and own the dreams of the community. This entails commitment not to leave them and to continue to find ways to improve their lives.
- *Partnership with the community.* A psychologist has to be conscious in not taking the "bida" (lead) role. Being a psychologist already imposes a "bida" syndrome. To avoid this, a psychologist tries to make sure that the people make the decisions and that they take an active role in implementing their decisions. It is not empowering if the people see the psychologist as their hero. A psychologist is empowering if the people get rid of "superior" roles. Empowering is about the community (of which I was part) struggling together to work for peace and address injustices.

- *Personal resources.* To deal with a community in a peril, counseling or debriefing is not enough. A psychologist had to exhaust other skills in working with the people such as community organizing, planning, project implementation, theater, and networking. A psychologist also had to understand and discover the resources of the community as well as his own personal resource.

10. Recognition of a Community Resource

Decenteceo (1997) said that different communities may give different values to different ways of burden bearing. In the study, the 30 communities of Kalamansig had upheld an important community value and relationship: *pintakasi*. They continue to utilize this tool in addressing a community concern. In the researcher's more than 20 years in community work, he realized that the communities in the Philippines have different ways of carrying their burdens. *Pintakasi* in Kalamansig is one way of *pagdadala* (community burden bearing). Hence, in the Philippines, there are different community burden bearing processes. The researcher found out that *pintakasi* was a century old community tool that remained useful to address a community concern. The psychologist had to discover those community processes.

11. Conclusion

In the light of the foregoing findings, the following conclusions are made:

1. The exploration of *pintakasi* led to the accomplishing of something important for the people of Kalamansig and for the researcher. In the attempt to unravel the essentials of *pintakasi*, the following aspects were brought out: (a) describe *pintakasi*, (b) revise *pintakasi*, and (c) utilize revised *pintakasi*.
2. The study affirmed that *Pintakasi* is a Kalamansig community indigenous approach in responding to community concerns. This is used by the tribes of the Muslims, Manobos, and Christians.
3. *Pintakasi* could be used in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of community-proposed activities.
4. *Pintakasi* could be used in non-traditional activities such as activities that would address issues of peace and order. It was used in the following activities that were proposed by the participants: (a) organize the Tri-People Organization, (b) organize the community to respond to armed conflict, (c) organize community disaster management, (d) organize community prayer for peace, and (e) organize the evacuees.
5. By adding planning and evaluation, the participants became more aware that they could work together (*pintakasi*) to see their own needs and problems, look for possible responses, discover their own resources, and design their own program.

6. The elements of *pintakasi* help to empower psychologists/researchers. Empowering is about living and working in solidarity with the poor people so as to explore their own indigenous practices that would serve the best interest of the community.
7. The study also opens up other possibilities for the exploration of *pintakasi* to address the concerns of the communities of Kalamansig.
8. The participants' perceptions of *pintakasi* changed. These participants include the researcher, the Tri-People organization, and the communities.

At present, the researcher continues to work with the Tri-People Organization as a consultant. This is his commitment to the organization and the communities of Kalamansig.

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