Filipino psychology (Sikolohiyang Pilipino in Filipino) is the scientific study of psychology derived from the experience, ideas, and cultural orientation of the Filipinos. Virgilio G. Enriquez, considered to be the father of Sikolohiyang Pilipino, identified the following as the subject matter of this formal indigenous psychology (Enriquez, 1974): kamalayan or consciousness which includes both emotive and cognitive experience; ulirat or awareness of one’s immediate surrounding; isip which refers to knowledge and understanding; diwa which includes habits and behavior; kalooban or emotions or feelings; and kaluluwa or psyche which translates to soul of a people.

With the aim to address the colonial background of psychology in the Philippines, sikolohiyang Pilipino started as a movement within psychology and other related disciplines in the 1970s that focuses on the following themes: (a) identity and national consciousness; (b) social awareness and involvement; (c) national and ethnic cultures and languages, including the study of traditional psychology; and (d) bases and application of indigenous psychology in health practices, agriculture, art, mass media, religion but also including the psychology of behavior and human abilities as originated in Western psychology but was found applicable to the local setting (Enriquez, 1993).
This movement has three primary areas of protest. First, as a *sikolohiya ng pagbabagong-isip* (psychology of re-awakening), the movement is against a psychology that perpetuates colonial mentality and promotes the decolonization of the Filipino mind as a stage in the development of national consciousness. Second, as *sikolohiyang malaya* (liberated psychology), it is against the importation and imposition of a psychology that has been developed in, and is more appropriate to, industrialized countries. Last, as a *sikolohiyang mapagpalaya* (liberating psychology), the movement is against a psychology used for the exploitation of the masses.

As part of the indigenous psychology tradition, sikolohiyang Pilipino is built on psychological knowledge that: (a) arose from within the culture; (b) reflects local behaviors; (c) can be interpreted within a local frame of reference; and (d) yields results that are locally relevant (Sinha, 1997). However, Enriquez (1978) is quick to point out that sikolohiyang Pilipino does not advocate that foreign theories should altogether be abandoned. Uncritical rejection of anything foreign is as dangerous as uncritical acceptance of Western theories.

In fact, Enriquez (1978) proposed that sikolohiyang Pilipino knowledge can be borne out of two processes: *indigenization-from-without* and *indigenization-from-within*. Indigenization-from-without is the more common approach used in knowledge and technology transfer. This approach is based on the search of local equivalents for the assumed universal psychological concepts or the contextualization of imported methods and techniques, and tools and instruments. A similar concept is *cultural validation*, the practice of validating research through systematic replication in multiple cultures. On the other hand, indigenization-from-within formalizes Filipinos’ implicit psychological theories, knowledge, methods and practices developed with the local culture as basis (local culture as source). Enriquez also used the term *cultural revalidation* to refer to this process.

In order to frame the efforts in sikolohiyang Pilipino to formalize indigenize psychology in the Philippines, it is important to look into the attempts to: (1) develop indigenous concepts and frameworks; and (2) adapt, develop and use culturally-appropriate instruments and methods.
Indigenous concepts and theorizing

Some considerable progress has been noted in the identification and elaboration of indigenous concepts, particularly in the area of personality and values (Church & Katigbak, 1999). For example, Enriquez (1978) presented what is considered to be a core concept in Filipino psychology: *kapwa*. He defined *kapwa* as a recognition of shared identity or an inner self shared with others. He also clarified that the recognition starts with the self and not from others:

“A person starts having *kapwa* not so much because of a recognition of status given to him by others but more because of his awareness of shared identity. The *ako* (ego) and the *iba-sa-akin* (others) are one and the same in *kapwa* psychology: *Hindi ako iba sa aking kapwa* (I am no different from others). Once *ako* starts thinking of himself as separate from *kapwa*, the Filipino “self” gets to be individuated in the Western sense and, in effect denies the status of *kapwa* to the other. By the same token, the status of *kapwa* is also denied to the self.”

(Enriquez, 1978; p. 106)

Enriquez disavowed the English translation “others” as it connotes a separation of the self from the other; whereas *kapwa* denotes the exact opposite: a sharing of self and other. Thus, a sense of *kapwa* is not just simple other-orientedness. He also proposed that this recognition of sharedness with an other is a core value among Filipinos. To emphasize the core-ness of *kapwa*, Enriquez (1992) constructed a fairly elaborate system of values, all deriving from *kapwa*. This three-tiered value structure (core, surface and societal) is Enriquez’s attempt to demonstrate the relative importance of the values. However, Enriquez also placed much weight on *pakikiramdam* (shared inner perception) as the pivotal interpersonal value which is “necessarily tied to the operation of all the surface values (p.76).” This suggests that *pakikiramdam* may have a higher-order importance than the surface values. The surface values are expected to be the least important in comparison to both *kapwa* and *pakikiramdam*. 
Pakikiramdam is described as involving tentative, exploratory and improvisatory behavior intended to avoid offending or hurting other people (Mataragnon, 1987). Thus, “a person high in pakikiramdam is often described as thoughtful and caring while a person low in pakikiramdam could be accused of being thoughtless and uncaring” (p. 471). In a sense, pakikiramdam requires that a person actively senses or feels out the situation and the other person in a social interaction, and carefully come up with an appropriate behavior. In effect, people who have low pakikiramdam will exhibit behaviors that are inappropriate to the situation and would not sense, intentionally or otherwise, if they had offended or hurt the other person.

Meanwhile, Enriquez coined the term “surface values” to refer to a set of values that are easily obvious, especially to the notice of outsiders (non-Filipinos), but not necessarily the most important ones. The accessibility of the accommodative surface values (pakikisama, hiya and utang na loob) would lead foreigners to assume that Filipinos are other-oriented. However, non-Filipinos may also fail to note that confrontative surface values (bahala na, pakikibaka and lakas ng loob) are as equally important to Filipinos when situations call for asserting one’s individual rights. The over-emphasis on accommodative values, and the corresponding neglect of its counterpart, the confrontative ones, painted a distorted and incomplete view of the Filipino, which Enriquez (1990) termed as the pasukong Pilipino (the submissive Filipino). This image, when perpetuated, was suspiciously more beneficial to the colonial masters than to the Filipinos themselves.
Kagandahang-loob, the linking socio-personal value, predisposes a person to be attuned to the needs and purposes of the larger collective: the society. Thus, a person who values kagandahang-loob is also most likely to value karangalan (dignity), katarungan (justice) and kalayaan (freedom) in society.

Aside from the structure of Filipino values, levels and modes of social interaction have also been identified (Santiago & Enriquez, 1976):

- **Ibang Tao ("outsider") Category**
  - Pakikitungo: civility
  - Pakikisalamuha: act of mixing
  - Pakikilahok: act of joining
  - Pakikibagay: conformity
  - Pakikisama: being united with the group.

- **Hindi Ibang Tao ("one-of-us") Category**:  
  - Pakikipagpalagayang-loob: act of mutual trust
  - Pakikisangkot: act of joining others
  - Pakikipagkaisa: being one with others

These levels are not only interrelated modes but are arranged in *babaw* (surface) - *lalim* (depth) levels of engagement: “from the relatively uninvolved civility in pakikitungo to the total sense of identification in pakikiisa (Enriquez, 1976; p. 104).” Also, they are not just conceptually delineated but are marked by different sets of behaviors as well. Ethnoscientific participant observation of food sharing during a town fiesta (feast) revealed a progression of relationships that is evident in the quality of interactions expressed in the meals, with pakikitungo as the shallowest and pakikiisa as the deepest (Santiago, 1976). The visitor moves from being a guest towards becoming a host and then, finally, to being a servant at table when the deepest level of relationship has been achieved. All these suggest that behavioural interactions vary as a function of the relationships with the other (whether ibang tao or hindi ibang tao). However, Enriquez was quick to aver that interactions with the ibang tao and hindi ibang tao can still be subsumed under an umbrella term: pakikipagkapwa.
“...All these [interaction] levels – whether belonging to the ibang tao or hindi ibang tao categories – maybe grouped under the heading of pakikipagkapwa. Thus anyone looking for a core concept that would explain Filipino interpersonal behavior cannot help by being struck by the superordinate concept of kapwa. It is the only concept which embraces both categories of “outsider” (ibang tao) and “one of us” (hindi ibang tao)” (Enriquez, 1992; p. 52).

Utilizing indigenous research methods

Many sikolohiyang Pilipino advocates have pushed for the development and use of indigenous research approaches and methods derived from Filipinos’ cultural ways of gathering information. A number of these methods have been explicated (e.g., pakapa-kapa, suppositionless approach; Torres, 1982) but three methods are worth elucidating because of their more frequent use: pagtatanung-tanong (asking around); pakikipagkuwentuhan (exchanging stories); and ginabayang talakayan (indigenous facilitated discussion).

In pagtatanung-tanong, the researcher engages the participant in a more unstructured and interactive questioning session (Gonzales, 1982; Pe-Pua, 1989). Also, 'lead questions' (those questions which directly refer to the topic being studied) are discouraged, instead the questions to be asked should be based on participants’ prior responses themselves. Meanwhile, pakikipagkuwentuhan requires the researcher to motivate the participants to narrate their experiences about an episode or event (Orteza, 1997). The interactions could be between the researcher and a participant or between a researcher and a group of people. Finally, ginabayang talakayan is a combination of a community dialogue, focused group discussion, and group attestation (Enriquez, 1994). One particular feature of this set of methods is its dependence on face-to-face interactions (both verbal and non-verbal) between researcher and participants.

Torres (1997) enumerated the features of field studies in the sikolohiyang Pilipino tradition: contextualized; draws from a more diverse and broader sample base; uses multiple methods; and open to interdisciplinary frameworks and perspectives. Meanwhile, Santiago and Enriquez
(1982) proposed that sikolohiyang Pilipino research should strive to be maka-Pilipino (for the interests of the Filipino). To ensure this, researchers should be guided by the use of two “scales”: Iskala ng Mananaliksik (researcher/method scale) and Iskala ng Pagtutunguhan ng Mananaliksik at Kalahok (researcher-participant relationship scale). The researcher/method scale represents a range of methods that vary in their obtrusiveness: the less obtrusive (pagmamasid or observation) to more obtrusive (pakikilahok or participation). On the other hand, the researcher-participant relationship scale would determine the depth or quality of relationship necessary for the research goals to be met. An assumption of this model is that a particular method presupposes a certain level of relationship with the participant that needs to be achieved. Or that a certain level of relationship prior to data gathering would restrict the range of methodological options open to a researcher. The appropriate use of the two scales is assumed to lead to a higher level quality of data.

A number of principles guiding sikolohiyang Pilipino research have been identified (Pe-Pua & Protacio-Marcelino, 2000): (1) research participants have to be treated as equa, if not superior, to the researchers; (2) welfare of the participants take precedence over any information taken from them; (3) appropriateness (and not its sophistication) to the intended population should be the primary basis for selecting methods; and (4) the language of the participants should be the language of the research.

References


