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Editorial: Global solidarity for all generations

This issue features 16 papers on the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on educational systems and society. Between all generations and cultures we need to work together to rebuild more resilient and loving societies. The consequences of the pandemic will continue to be seen even in the generation who are small children today. Intergenerational solutions are necessary and we need to spend more time to document the elements of communitarism that have been rekindled during this time.

Reinforcement of solidarity between all communities living in different parts of the planet will also be a lesson we can apply to mitigation of further climate change. Most of the papers were presented during the International Public Health Ambassador and Bioethics Conferences. There are going to be clear educational consequences for children at all ages of the educational system, and for adults, and these will get worse the longer our school lockdowns continue, together with abnormal social distancing. Ryan explores how indigenous wisdom may be useful to emphasize the importance of solidarity. Suma Parahakaran and colleagues, Eviota and Maboloc, and Bayod et al., present some of the educational consequences, and suggest some solutions. Quemado and Octaviano provide an example of a community extension program in schools in an indigenous community in the Philippines.

We have all had a variety of experiences during 2020, and Esra Bilir reports on the Turkish example of how the state facilitated the safe return of citizens from abroad. Chakraborty shares some reflections from the UK, and typical of many countries, the recent waves of COVID-19 have been even worse than the earlier ones. Manual and Migallos present a study of risky behaviour among children, as they felt less vulnerable to get sick from COVID-19. However, the essence of solidarity is that all memberscof society protect each other, and especially our vulnerable elderly members.

Bhuiyan et al. raise concerns of how vaccine roll-out in Bangladesh may be challenging given experience with other vaccines. Public information in Turkey is surveyed from Sukran Sevimli. There are mixed blessings from social gatherings in Pakistan described by Naheed Feroz. There are also two papers on the social issues of business communities in the Philippines. A return to battering as a form of economic exchange is one of many unexpected consequences of the pandemic. Please join the conferences to share in a wealth of information, and submit your papers to document more of our global lessons that will better prepare us for next time.   —Darryl Macer

Indigenous wisdom and human solidarity in the midst of COVID-19

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Abstract

The COVID-19 public health crisis has changed the world. It has also revealed the vulnerabilities of people. Capitalism or its perverted form has shown its ethical deficiency as modernization theory has dominated the paradigm of progress. Governments must recognize the fact that marginalized groups actually suffer more as societies confront the grave existential threat of the pandemic. This paper will look into indigenous wisdom in terms of adapting to a new post-pandemic human order. The impact of the coronavirus is a product of a short-sighted economic model that is focused on profit making. In this study, indigenous wisdom is described as being rooted in the man's natural environment while civilization points to the enlightenment concept of progress. The challenge is how human solidarity, one that is open to identity and difference, can be used as the guiding principle as communities attempt to find ways to overcome the impact of COVID-19.

Introduction

The pandemic has shown how vulnerable human beings are. The peril that the coronavirus has brought to humankind is forcing even polarized nations to act with the same vision of putting an end to the pandemic. Reports suggest of the great hardships experienced by ordinary people as the impact of the virus to human life and well-being has not abated. In weak democracies, strong populist leaders are using their authority to subjugate the people by infringing on their basic rights. A paradigm that is focused on state-centric economic models of progress has actually done more harm than good as millions of individuals affected by restrictions look for ways to cope up with the ill effects of the catastrophic nature of this public health emergency.

Lockdowns are meant to control people. A big moral wedge is created when a sector suffers while those who possess wealth live in a more comfortable way. For example, those with private cars have less inconvenience and risk to exposure compared to people who utilize the public transport system. This means that the poor and minority groups suffer in varying degrees. Globally, the borders that separate countries are proof of the existing divide between peoples and societies. As the pandemic unfolds, politicians remain stubborn as they seek to protect corporate interests and profit first rather than the well-being of communities. It is a question of policy. In the past, public health was seen as means to an end to achieve economic productivity. The coronavirus pandemic has shown such to be wrong. Kolbert

(2020) writes that "epidemics are, by their nature, divisive. The rituals of daily life become opportunities for transmission; the authorities enforcing quarantine become agents of oppression."

COVID-19 and the end of perverted capitalism

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced capitalism to embrace the sharp edge of the spear. Stiglitz (2015) speaks about the unethical practices of corporate entities that caused a great divide in the US that led to recession. The problem was the unethical behavior of bank executives that put to risk the well-being of people. Now, the pandemic has made this great divide more apparent. States and corporations have realized the limits of their power and the inevitable consequences. So, the coronavirus has put the whole world into a standstill. The government-imposed travel bans, factory shutdowns, border restrictions and lockdowns, have dramatically diminished global wealth. A global meltdown has emerged. The question is, what has brought us to this point? The answer is that globalization caused the spread of the virus. The interconnectedness of the world has paved the way for the perfect infrastructure that would transmit the deadly SARS-CoV-2 pathogen.

It is not an exaggeration to say that this pandemic has become the crisis of our civilization. Mansueto (2020) avers that advanced transport networks have enabled the virus to travel fast. Policy makers and health experts think that without the vaccine, nothing will be able to stop the spread. The World Health Organization says that vaccinations do not mean zero transmission. Nayeri (2020) believes that "not only does the deepening of each existential threat undermine human society, beginning with its most vulnerable groups and regions, but all the threats interact in a nonlinear dynamic that amplifies the overall crisis." He explains that "unless this crisis of civilization is addressed in the coming decades, the collapse of global anthropocentric industrial capitalist society is now inevitable, and humanity may not survive the consequences." (Nayeri, 2020)

Liberal states will stop at nothing in terms of giving a blank check to save capitalism. The number of cases has dramatically risen in the US at more than 100,000 daily. It has been reported that president-elect Joe Biden will request Americans to wear masks for 100 days. Still, businesses must find novel ways to open and ordinary citizens must earn their income because the American economy is based on consumption. Liberal states are simply built on the promise of eternal wealth. But what the coronavirus pandemic has revealed is the unsustainability of modern capitalism. For Mansueto (2020), capitalistic domination is rooted in the Industrial Revolution. Now, the COVID-19 pandemic is a reminder that the West needs to change its course if it wants to save capitalism.

The death of capitalism means that the modern world cannot rely anymore on the free market economy. With the coronavirus pandemic, governments are beginning to understand that modern capitalism lacks the safety mechanisms that will ensure its very survival. Money is not

everything. When everyone stops buying goods, capitalism becomes nothing. Stock markets were in a state of shock at the start of the pandemic. Death is everywhere. Dominant businesses are in a standstill, noticeably tourism. All of these imply that the coronavirus can reshape the world and societies. In this regard, Tanabe (2020) explains that, "the global spread of COVID-19 has put social cohesion within many countries at risk as the impact penetrates deep into our society."

Indigenous wisdom as a way of survival
The history of human civilization has demonstrated how the powerful dominates the weak. Huntington (1996) has explained the three (3) stages of civilization. The first is concerned with land expansion. The Christian crusades were a prime example in the manner by which faith has subjugated the weak. The second has to do with the annexation of peoples. With this, we can cite the Napoleonic era and the evils of the Nazi period. The third is about corporate domination. Wealthy and powerful companies define global policies with an interest in profit as the primary motive. Corporate greed has compromised the environment and reduced people into instruments.

For Huntington, culture now comes to define the individual. The identity immanent to man is something that is not borne by his autonomy but by indigenization. Today, there are tensions and violence due to ethnic conflicts. Again, this is a manifestation of the revolt of those who have been reduced into "subalterns", to use the term coined by Antonio Gramsci. While Fukuyama (1992) insists on liberalism as the final form of government, emerging paradigms in politics have come to challenge this position. For instance, multiculturalism expands the way modern societies are conceived. Fukuyama relies on the demise of totalitarian regimes as the basis for his theoretical claims. But liberalism in the post-Cold War era is in a quandary. The battlefield has turned into small nationalistic conflicts where communal values serve as the precept for human survival.

Some theorists express that the idea of civilization is antithetical to indigenous wisdom. By definition, "civilization" is connected to the notion of economic and scientific progress whereas "indigenous wisdom" is linked to the capability of a people to maintain a way of life that is attached to nature. But because of economic expansion, thousands of Indigenous Peoples (IP) have been displaced. Indeed, minority groups are at the receiving end of modern progress (Kymlicka, 2007). Since the Enlightenment model grounds everything on human reason, ethnic groups are relegated to the background where their culture is considered as inferior. Reason is seen as the sole authority after faith. Indeed, the histories of the world forget the resilience of groups whose unique way of life is a taboo for a man of science. Right now, history is being re-written beyond the metanarrative of Enlightenment, putting into question the Eurocentric notion of man.

Modernization theory is utilitarian in principle. Its primary consideration as a development paradigm is the expansion of the economic as well as the cultural power of dominant societies. Its mechanisms and schemes sometimes violate the rights of indigenous peoples as well as the mainstream society. Sable (2020) notes the ethical flaws of modernization theory: "The implications of this theory of valuation to globalization are anchored on the notion that the owners of capital are motivated to engage in economic investments by some form of hedonistic expediency." The point is that in such an approach, the power apparatus is meant to protect corporate profit to benefit the rich instead of the common good. Thus, economism creates such "an environment that would enhance investor's incentives" (Sable, 2020).

Gaspar (2020) has studied indigenous communities in some parts of the Philippines. The anthropologist has challenged local scholars in Mindanao to do research in order to understand the role of indigenous wisdom in human survival. While Western societies value the progress in science, it is wrong to belittle the growth of local wisdom in the various facets of life and culture. Ethnic communities have struggled against powerful interests and abusive authorities but still, they have survived the odds given their well-knit communal bond. For Gaspar (2020), the respect for natural harmony is important. Ethnic people never get more than what they need from nature. This has enabled them to live well, although it is undeniable that powerful people continue to displace and threaten their peaceful way of life.

In particular, Gaspar (2020) has exposed how extractive industries like mining and logging affect local ethnic groups. The oppression experienced by marginalized groups seems apparent but many people in government turn a blind eye because of money. Big corporations continue in their destructive ways at the expense of indigenous communities. Even today, many ethnic groups are subjected to bias and discrimination. Their challenges are enormous. While the general concern for public health is justifiable, the prejudice against indigenous people is unacceptable. They are judged as ignorant and ridiculed on social media. What people do not understand is that vulnerable groups do not have the same guarantee of legal protection compared to other citizens. The approach of government leaders is wanting and ethically deficient.

Ethnic communities have survived many disasters, including man-made calamities such as military conflicts and environmental degradation caused by the blatant display of power. This is due to the sense of belongingness of ethnic people to nature. Wahl (2017) explains that "indigenous human cultures are an expression of generations of co-evolution of humans within the ecosystems they inhabited." There is a bond between people and nature. People learn to solve problems by looking into the processes in the environment. They find ways to adapt. We belong to the earth instead of the earth being our possession. Reflecting on how the coronavirus came to be is

like a way of looking deeper into our inner nature to realize how we have disrupted the natural harmony in the environment.

The modern man must address problems with the tools of empirical science. Lockdowns have affected the poor, most especially in urban centers. The restrictions have caused great disruptions to everyday life. People who suddenly found themselves jobless realize that they can no longer travel back to the provinces due to the lack of public transport. In India, more than a million migrant factory workers have to walk from the city to their home province. Families with young children had no option but to do what is unthinkable and that is to travel barefoot for days to a destination as far as 400 miles. In the Philippines, access to healthcare and other basic government services remain a primary concern for some IP groups.

The threat from the coronavirus forces one to look into local wisdom. For Gaspar, it matters to ask how ethnic groups have survived for two thousand years despite all the man-made and natural calamities in history. Human life is not reducible to Western economic paradigms. Modernization theory limits the way things are understood. It reduces everything to the material meaning of human comfort and convenience. But every progress is not necessarily good. Gaspar (2020) underscores that "of special focus in the critique of development projects is how these have been implemented among *Lumad* [ethnic] communities."

The question we seek to address is human survival. Indigenous groups have been subjected to centuries of domination and abuse. However, they have fought for the survival of their own way of life. The secret to this is their ability to blend well with nature. Indeed, ethnic groups have been displaced because of the construction of dams that threaten to inundate their villages. They have been forced to resettle to faraway places that are unfamiliar to them. But the modern man has more problems than indigenous peoples. It is in this regard that there is an interest to look into the latter's way of life and culture to determine how they have managed the environment and maintained its delicate balance although Wahl (2017) thinks that "to re-evaluate the wisdom of traditional and indigenous cultures does not mean returning to some supposed golden age when humanity lived in perfect harmony with the rest of nature."

Human solidarity in the midst of COVID-19

This pandemic has revealed something complex. It defies any ideological abstraction. As governments grapple with the hard facts on the rising tide in the number of infections, many hands are tied as people realize that disciplinary measures used to contain the virus run counter to our fundamental understanding of freedom. In a post-pandemic world, identity politics will have a prominent role in the manner by which societies relate to each other. The key point here is the spirit of openness to the identity of other cultures. This is what the idea of difference politics is all about.

In the West, people generally do not want to get infected, but they also do not want their basic freedoms curtailed. The most important humanist value is liberty. This liberty is the essence of man. Being human means being an independent subject. This subject is to be defined by its own interests (Rawls, 1999). The human subject desires those things that are to his own benefit. Human survival implies that man must depend on his natural instinct. Survival is rooted in the preservation of human freedom. But liberty comes as secondary in the East where society prefers to give more importance to the family, nation, and the meaning of the common good. Hence, in the conflict between liberty and the good of the society, the latter prevails.

Research studies with respect to communal approaches have been done by Bayod (2020), Arambala (2020), and Yoshizawa (2020). Bayod documented coping mechanisms among the people in Davao del Sur during the pandemic, including the activities of teachers and tribal peoples alike in the Southern Region of Mindanao. Meanwhile, Arambala investigated the strict lockdown policies implemented by the local government of Ozamiz in Northern Mindanao. Yoshizawa, in comparison, reflected on her experience in Bohol, an island province in the Visayas, as people underwent lockdowns imposed by the authorities. The reports show the deficits of state-centric approaches to the problem of public health.

Some localities in the Philippines have emerged out of the infection. This can be attributed not only to effective control mechanisms but strong leadership as well as public cooperation. The solidarity of local folks matters. Even without the presence of modern IT technology, some places have overcome COVID-19 due to the strong commitment of people. In Baguio City, contact tracing has been effective so that other LGUs want to replicate the strategy of the former. Outside, South Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam have been widely praised for their effective measures in containing the SARS-coV-2 infections. Oriental societies, it can be argued, have emphasized the importance of solidarity more than individual leadership. Western societies emphasize the latter.

A firm theoretical explanation is necessary when it comes to strategies. Survival is a human instinct. But left to his own elements, a poor man would not have the means to overcome the effects of a pandemic. He needs the support of the community. Local wisdom and values save people better than universal maxims. Indigenous wisdom instead of Western ideals give people the right strategy forward. Gaspar (2020) shows how privileging one culture over another is problematic. It is unacceptable because we need to equalize not the situations of people but their sense of self-worth. The idea of justice has a communal context. A person's sense of civic duty is preceded by that sincere commitment to a transcendental ideal.

Still, the coronavirus vaccine carries with it concerns about justice. Rorty (1989) explains what is presupposed in the communal approach and says that solidarity can only begin by means of discussion and not on the basis of a

universal foundation. He rejects the representation theory of truth. The truth in this mirror image is nothing but a reproduction of certain norms. For instance, individualism is founded in the Western way of life. But to some cultures, such a way of doing things is a detachment from the community. Therefore, the West cannot impose its own version of freedom because doing so contradicts what it means to be unique as a person, with a family background, history, and tradition. This is what a sense of communal belongingness means.

In the end, a post-pandemic world cannot be controlled by a singular principle of action. In a world in which cultural dialogue is flourishing, people will value each other on the basis of their unique identities. Life is beyond the binary configuration of black and white. This means accepting others despite their differences. What the pandemic makes manifest is that the human ego cannot be in control. The emphasis on individual achievement or benefit must be set aside when the good of community is at stake. The prime interest cannot be profit or money. Human life is what truly matters when it comes to the common good.

Conclusion

The pandemic has made man realize certain things. It reveals that the capital-driven world in which we live is unsustainable in the long run. Capitalism has created great wealth for Western societies, but its demise is a result of its internal contradiction. The modern ways of humans have hastened the spread of the virus and impliedly, the demise of an "old way of life". The coronavirus shows the internal weaknesses even of powerful states. Now, capitalism cannot save man. The business-as-usual attitude of society must come to an end. Indigenous wisdom can help people understand what this pandemic is about. This unfolding in the history of humankind is a reminder from nature. Indigenous peoples have learned how to adapt well with the environment. The way of life of IPs can teach people how to blend with nature and not disrupt the symbiotic relationship between human beings and nature itself. The indigenous way of life is a reflection as well as a critique in the manner by which the modern man has lived in the planet. In this respect, indigenous wisdom is a source of hope as we try to overcome COVID-19. People can draw and learn from other cultures those ways that have allowed ethnic groups to live in harmony with nature. This return to the natural ways of doing things can help humans overcome the paralysis brought about by this pandemic. Our development paradigm should focus on communal rather than economic progress.

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Children of COVID? The educational consequences of the epidemic on the new generations

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Someone already calls them the COVID generation, with a journalistic simplification that does not lack a certain effectiveness. They are the boys and girls who have gone through this emergency, the first generation after the Second World War that has had to face the planetary consequences of a completely unexpected and particularly violent event; what will become of them? And above all, what can we do for them and with them?

It seems to me that the emphasis on resilient children and adolescents is very hypocritical; we don't have to worry they are resilient; the youth will help them; they will come

out sooner and better than us. There is no doubt that childhood and adolescence have great adaptability and responsiveness to critical situations, but these skills must be cultivated and supported by adults. Sometimes it seems to me that insisting on this dimension of self-regulation of children means abandoning the adult role, saying that ultimately children will do it alone and not thinking of having to be questioned as role models. Children and adolescents only grow up within an adult project, whether explicit or implicit, democratic or totalitarian. No child grows up if there is no group of adults investing in him/her; and when you believe that childhood or adolescence is like chickenpox or childhood diseases, something to go through by trusting some kind of natural development, in reality you are leaving children and young people alone within the ideology of the market and competition. If not, worse, victims of violent and criminal projects.

The first point is the relationship that these children will have with their parents; especially for teenagers, staying at home for months meant breaking that path of emancipation that involves distance from home, through school or through peer groups. Having spent so much time under parental gaze may have somehow meant a regression; however, it has involved a number of problems related to the process of growth and differentiation. For some time in Italy there has been discussion about the excessive attachment of children to families, also linked to the economic difficulties for a young person in making his own life project. These months lived side by side with parents and siblings will have to be overcome through new forms of detachment and autonomy

Another important issue is that of intimacy. For many young people it was difficult to find spaces of privacy within the family universe. Just staying at home alone for an entire afternoon when parents are at work for a boy or a girl is a fundamental experience to take possession of the spaces of the house and to experience one's own growth and autonomy in solitude. Especially for boys and girls who have many brothers and sisters, the lockdown means forcibly sharing many spaces, even private ones, and having enormous difficulty in obtaining their own personal space. perhaps the difference between solidarity and isolation is in the fact that the former is sought after and is the first source of the ability to feel good with others while the latter is imposed and risks locking the subject in a dead-end prison. Have the young people experienced loneliness, isolation or abandonment in these recent months?

Obviously, the fundamental theme is that of the resumption of socialization. School will be the first area in which these children will have to learn again to be together, to work together, to confront each other. In recent months, many teenagers have experienced the phenomenon called *hikikomori*, considered a form of pathology that a young person or a teenager closes himself in his room for months without ever leaving and without keeping any contact with the world except through the web. All this has become almost the norm for these young people; and especially in activities outside the school, such as sport, it was impossible

for them to live those moments of confrontation with others both physical and psychological which is why they are so important for the growth of any young person.

The two aspects we have discussed so far are intertwined in what is perhaps the fundamental characteristic of adolescents, namely the relationship between the need for intimacy and the need for socialization, a relationship that has been upset and redefined by the pandemic. Paradoxically, the boys were forced to remain alone when they wanted to be with others and at the same time, they could not experience a true and profound solitude, the one they seek in normal situations. We do not yet know how this will affect their growth and the work of elaborating their adolescence, but certainly the theme of the relationship between loneliness and socialization will have to be at the center of educational practices, especially for the attention of adults

But perhaps the fundamental change, the aspect that must be placed at the center of the attention of research and educational practices, concerns the theme of fear. Fear has dominated these months; it has not always been processed in the correct way; the world of information has often fed it rather than teaching how to tolerate it; someone denying the coronavirus tried to walk away from it as if fear did not exist. Especially the kids were afraid, and this risked compromising that attitude of trust and openness towards the world which according to psychology, from Erikson onwards, is fundamental for this age of life. A great balance will be needed to help these children to recover the sense of trust, even physical, in other people. In any case the emergency should remind us of our fragility and our exposure to evil and above all our non-immortality and non-invulnerability.

Unfortunately, one of the problems that add to the already tragic experience of children is the insensitivity of many adults and unfortunately also of some teachers. It almost seems as if the boys are not having a unique experience in history, which affects them more than others and which will affect their lives. A subtle form of denial leads too many adults to fail to realize that children who have been denied the right to school, the right to play, the right to socialize and the right to the outdoors will need help and guidance; and above all their sufferings must be understood and not underestimated in a hypocritical way.

The emergency should have taught us that the educational relationship is essential precisely at the moment when everything seems to be questioned. Education is an attempt to give meaning to what happens, or rather to find it together with our pupils; it answers questions of meaning without which you cannot grow up; you do not insert an event in a biography. From this point of view, it is truly irreplaceable because it goes alongside concrete material needs and forms the basis for the construction of an individual and collective identity. Investing in education does not only mean preventing future damage, which would already be an important reason for making education one of the first points of any social and political project; but in reality, education is

resistance in itself, the educational relationship that is kept alive during emergencies is already the sign of the human that does not allow itself to be crushed by tragedies

A case study of teaching ethical values to STEM disciplines in Malaysia: Why silence and mindful pedagogical practices matter

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Abstract

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) in universities and schools require integrating knowledge with experiential learning and analyzing the role of human values in real life situations. Graduates of engineering, mathematics, biotechnology, agricultural engineering, environmental technology, synthetic technology, and bioengineering will play a major role and contribute to human capital in the future. The integration of ethics and sustainable behavior has a prominent position in education. The teaching pedagogies that reflect on sustainable practices are limited. There is an urgent need to explore teaching pedagogies and ways of prompting students to think over sustainable ways because of the problems addressed by the United Nations and the sustainable goals, 2030.

This study, in a workshop in Penang Malaysia, explored whether the Southeast Asian participants' capacities related to the integration of ethics and values into topics related to STEM could yield results for sustainable development. The methodology used was analytic inquiry and problem solving coupled with inductive analysis.

The small sample involved in this case study revealed that there was a significant scope for students from schools and universities to gain reflective, contemplative and mindful capacities to explore sustainable practices. The outcomes from Phase 1, Phase 2 and Phase 3 during the workshop touched on health and well-being, core values, sustainable behavior patterns, human-environment connections, social justice and equity issues. Results revealed that pedagogical considerations are important to facilitate teaching of ethics and values both for micro and macro-objectives of sustainable development. The findings revealed that Kolb's model for Science and Technology at the reflective stage plays a crucial role in the integration of ethics and values. It is at this stage that pedagogical considerations may help elicit new ways for sustainable behaviors and thoughts.

Introduction

The world is becoming a smaller place with internet systems and this will require people from diverse backgrounds to have a dialogue on the common ethical threads underlying different worldviews (Rai Singh et al., 2010). The Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia has created a blueprint to embark on Education 4.0 for future students' working life (My HE 4.0). Education comprises of tailor-made courses that require constant reassessment to suit the needs of the industry. Hence this requires teachers to have continuous professional development so that they can deliver the teaching and learning aspects in Education 4.0. The learning environment is created in a learning organization with enhanced student learning outcomes through professional development (Darling-Hammond, Hyler and Gardner, 2017).

Student learning is a significant aspect of Education 4.0 as most organizations have indicated that the future jobs at all levels will require more skills, education, and complex problem-solving ability. Furthermore, many employers have identified that the youth lack soft skills such as communication, courtesy, integrity, interpersonal skills, positive attitude and work ethics (Robles, 2012).

The recent trend in the rise of applications of biotechnology, agricultural engineering, machine-learning, and industrial technology calls for intense pedagogical approaches that address issues related to ethics, social justice, and urbanization. In the USA nearly 80% of engineering graduates do not have to take ethics related courses. The missing element in the engineering content is on ethics which focuses on individual professional responsibility (micro-ethical issues) while there are macro-ethical issues related to development of technology (Herkert, 2010).

In September 2015, the General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which includes 17 sustainable goals (SDGs) (United Nations General Assembly, 2015). According to the UNESCO (2019) the concept of sustainable development was described as development which supports the needs of the present and yet does not compromise the ability of future generations to have their needs met. The sustenance of the future generations depend on how much transformational thinking will be integrated to balance the cause and effect of human actions whether it is large data, or artificial intelligence for decision making. Sustainable development and discussions in environmental education have become more important than ever (Rull, 2014; Tilbury, 1995).

Contemplative methods for initiating discussion based on ethical values

Individual ethics

There are limited science programs that teach how science is linked to the issues that are relevant to students' lives, environment and role as a citizen. This detaches students from discussions on real life and technological applications (Hofstein, Eilks and Bybee, 2011). If educators use a comprehensive pedagogical approach using contemplative approaches in discussion, it allows all members concerned to integrate sustainability issues within the learning context. Contemplative education involves a set of pedagogies which can cultivate conscious awareness and moral living and caring for others. In all contemplative education, reflective practices support student thinking in new ways which enable them to change their patterns of thinking and behavior and adopt practices aligned with the concept of sustainability.

As students integrate course content and ask essential questions related to ethical values in their projects, they begin to develop a positive sense of pro-social behavior (Herman, Zeidler and Newton, 2018). STEM education requires students to "… *accomplish complex tasks such as brain implants, reducing carbon emissions, developing more energy efficient trains, cars and planes, and making use of solar energy, it will be necessary for individuals not only to have a deep usable knowledge in one field, supporting the acquisition of a profound, more useable knowledge, but also knowledge in other fields, so that collaborations to solve pressing complex problems can occur. Individuals will also need the creativity to imagine new possibilities and to synthesize ideas. They will also need to know how to collaborate with individuals who have different expertise"* (Krajcik and Delen, 2017, pp. 37-38).

These issues are important to address in education even at primary levels.

Professional ethics integrated studies for sustainable development

Reviewing several studies on research and practice, Wamsler et al. (2018) stated that a trend in 2015 revealed an increase in contemplative teaching and practice within the context of sustainability studies. There were limited studies related to risk reduction education and contemplative methods for climate change adaptation (Wamsler et al., 2018). Wamsler et al. (2018) identified significant key aspects relevant to mindful inquiry supporting their practical implementation in education and sustainability issues. They were: (1) subjective well-being; (2) activation of intrinsic/non-materialistic core values; (3) consumption and sustainable behavior; (4) the human-nature connection; (5) equity issues; and (6) social activism. Mindfulness and deep reflective capacities allow learners to relax and provide space for further evaluation of how humans can improve the context. Researchers stated that mindful practices can change previously rooted unconscious thinking, increase awareness and enhance the role of non-material values in people (Stanszus et al., 2017).

Teaching of science, technology, engineering and mathematics requires complex, higher thinking skills. Teaching of sustainable development encompasses divergent thinking as well as thinking processes which can be channeled to new ideas with a lot of systems coming together if teaching for affective dimension is incorporated.

Teaching practices for STEM currently are not taught in a more integrated way using real world contexts and this is a huge gap. This lies in how the curriculum is designed for STEM education (National Academies Press, 2014). The values today "still center on growth and rely on technology to mitigate environmental stress, depletion of natural resources, and loss of biodiversity" (Martin, Maris and Simberloff, 2017, p. 6105). Hensley asserted that infusing mindfulness in higher education will help promote trans-disciplinary enquiry as well as transformational thinking of our role in this planet through reflection, innovation and integration (Hensley, 2019). Any thinking process which involves unconventional processes will contribute to wider alternative solutions as opposed to convergent thinking which involves learning thought processes for a single correct solution (Hensley, 2019).

Pedagogical considerations in the curriculum for teaching ethical values

Does the curriculum content enable student reflection? Do teachers know how to strategize their teaching for developing awareness in students on how to apply ethics to issues in real life contexts and to develop civic consciousness in their own societies? Can results of such learning enter the didactic engagement between the members involved in STEM education? Are teachers able to facilitate such learning using their reflective capacities for integrating ethics and values into STEM education? The United Nations (UN) addresses several of these questions when discussing the issues surrounding sustainability, specifically with clean drinking water:

The combined effect in a business-as-usual scenario might have outstanding effects over the environment and will put at risk maintaining the economic and social advances obtained: to feed the world in 2050, food production may need to grow by 70% which may require 50% more water but by 2025 two in every three countries will be water stressed and 2.4 billion people will face "absolute water scarcity" (United Nations, 2014, p. 1).

In dealing with issues such as climate change, mindfulness, and reflective inquiry, learning can lead to deliberate, flexible and adaptive responses to climate change (Barrett et al., 2016). Being mindful helps to increase awareness through attention, and openness to expand individual thinking by being more flexible leading to positive behavior change (Barrett et al., 2016). A review of research has shown that mindfulness contributes to well-being, empathy, compassion and helps with recognition of both goals and values. Other research has shown that mindfulness can help in self-regulating behaviors (Ericson, Kjønstad and Barstad, 2014). The use of the term contemplation, reflection and mindful practices for

sustainability is therefore refer to deep learning which involves understanding the context and questioning both ethical and practical issues at hand. A deep inquiry is necessary because universal ethics suggests respect for every human life. There are instances where the benefit of one is taken for granted and causes harm to another, an example being the dumping of hazardous materials in developing countries by industrialized nations (Macer, 1998).

Learning models for ethics and human values for STEM education

Kolb (1984) asserted that the views of John Dewey's model of the learning process and that of the Lewenian model were similar, in that impulses, feelings and desires of concrete experiences are transformed into higher purposeful action. Experiential learning theory has to be differentiated from rationalist and cognitive theories of learning as the latter focus on acquiring knowledge, manipulating knowledge and recalling of abstract symbols. Experiential learning is also different from behaviorist theories of learning because these theories do not include the role of consciousness and the subjective experience in such learning (Kolb, 1984).

Experiential learning, according to Kolb, depends on the direct concrete experiences an individual has at that moment. The learner is in a continuous process of learning, forming new concepts from past experiences and the modification of previous knowledge (Kolb, 1984). Four learning abilities are important for experiential learning which are concrete experience abilities, reflective observation abilities, abstract conceptualization abilities and active experimentation. All four abilities must actively construct knowledge to enable effective learning (Kolb, 1984). It is at the reflective observational stage that students can discuss the integration of ethics and values for why, how and what purpose the technology is implemented.

STEM education should be coupled with the knowledge of bioethics. Tampering with nature without limits can impact many life forms. 'The origins of our selfishness and altruistic (giving) behavior are fundamental to how we behave' (Macer, 1998, p. 94). Macer (1998) stated that although people claim that science is neutral, it does not take away the fact that they are still responsible for producing knowledge as they are in fact moral agents themselves as are all human beings.

Education in human values is significant in teaching students about peaceful negotiation and cooperation. The facilitation of values such as social justice, compassion and teamwork stimulate quick progress in participant learning and reflective capacities for the society as a whole. The component of knowledge that stimulates transformation can be activated with reflective practice because sustainability is a lived experience according to researchers (Tilley et al., n.d.). From researchers' perspective it is important that those involved in discussion about sustainability issues go through a process of reflective

thinking. Firstly, they record events and facts. Here the learners reflect on what happens around them. At the next level the learner is exploring greater awareness of what is happening around them and within them. This is a recording of dialogue and non-verbal cues which include affective responses. The third stage is the recording of responses from the discussion which include transformation. Here the learner will explore attitudinal or behavioral changes in themselves or others. Reflection helps expand a student's understanding of knowledge beyond what they are taught.

The key point to remember is that although much of this thinking and activity around reflection stems from academia this does not need to be academic thinking, it needs to be more than theoretical or hypothetical. What makes reflection on practice such a powerful tool is the combination of more scholarly theorized thinking with practitioner's real-world experiences and learning (Helyer, 2015, p. 17).

At the stage of experiential learning stage, students can observe and reflect on the situation and context. The flow of consciousness which involves perceptions, experiences and the inner dialogue related to the ethical aspects for protecting and managing the environment are directly related to the stage of experiential learning.

"When humans are able to relate to a subject, they create a bond, and that bond makes the concept stay in our memory longer. The connection between emotions and learning is significant and generates deeper memories" (Rogers, 2015, p. 11).

Integration of ethical values based on inquiry into daily school curricula for STEM education

Students may ask the following questions when designing the machinery:

1. What are the ethical issues that arise related to the project?
2. What is the issue being addressed in my country and in my local areas? Is this the best solution for the problem based on ecological and economical limitations?
3. What are the raw materials needed to build this machine?
4. Are the raw materials readily available and are the material sources sustainable?
5. Can we afford to purchase the materials required to build this machine?
6. What is the expense of maintaining the machine?
7. Do people lose their jobs once this machine is made active or will the machine create new jobs?
8. How many people will be affected by the change in quality of life triggered by the machine?
9. What happens when we want to decommission the machine?
10. Are there non-degradable or non-recyclable parts?

Integrating ethical values in the discussion can help with reflective thinking about purposeful STEM projects. STEM education must integrate discriminary knowledge in

teaching, reflecting on the benefits for the largest number of people and preserving biodiversity and balance of nature. Discriminatory knowledge for STEM education can be defined as the knowledge that takes into consideration the complexities of societies and the implementation of STEM for the benefit of most people in society (Parahakaran, Ng and Sean, 2017).

The process of critical enquiry prompts people to explore the consequences of sustainability. This involves multifaceted areas such as economic, political, social, cultural, technological, and environmental forces that nurture or regress sustainable development. People will be able to question about common resources and issues related to both international and intergeneration equity Fien and Tilbury, 2002).

Case study of teachers, educators, curriculum developers working on STEM project

An exploratory study was conducted with adults in a workshop where eighteen teachers were involved in values and ethics integrated STEM learning after a conference in 2018. The workshop was to explore whether participants could go through the process of reflection and work together to think about sustainable issues in the future.

Methodology

The workshop was conducted in three phases and included teachers from Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Phase 1 focused on orienting participants to the de Bono six thinking hats. During phase 2 the participants were asked to use de Bono's six hats while contemplating how to increase the sustainability of STEM programs that integrate ethics and values related to the issue at hand. Finally, during phase 3, participants presented their conclusions from phase 2. Edward de Bono's six thinking hats align thought processes from the affective and cognitive domains for group thinking.

The white hat helps in collecting information on thought process relating to: What information is presently known about the issue; what does it convey? What is the information that is lacking? What information is needed and how to get the information? The red hat processes thoughts related to feelings, intuitions, and emotions while the black hat retrieves information on what one has to be cautious about, criticisms and assessing the risk of the action. The yellow hat helps in thought processes relating to benefits and feasibility of the idea while the green hat helps in retrieving information for creativity, new ideas, and possibilities. The blue hat helps the facilitator to make a decision on the whole topic and issues concerned with it (Mathews, n.d).

Sample: A workshop was conducted in RECSAM, Penang, Malaysia with a sample consisting of eighteen adults who were divided into three groups. Eighteen participants inclusive of educators, curriculum developers, and policy makers from Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia were present at this workshop.

For Phase 1, de Bono's thinking hats was introduced using an example. The sample of teachers, educators and education officials at the beginning were unsure of how to proceed with the de Bono thinking hats as tools. With instruction and some prompting they were able to integrate this method into their reflective process. The participants were unsure of what values or ethics meant in relation to STEM. One of the participants stated that values are "caught and not taught." The facilitator had to inform them that values and ethics in STEM can be facilitated in two ways. The first is through values which are caught from people around us and the second method was to facilitate discussion on ethical and human values with regards to issues in their own learning contexts. An example was provided using Edward de Bono's thinking hats.

Bono's thinking hats principle and the task provided were discussed on a white board. After producing an initial draft, they started working together on other topics. At the end of the presentation, it was evident that the participants could implement reflective practices using enquiry as a starting point.

Phase 1, pre-reflection phase: Participants understood the concept of how to integrate values and ethics with an example the facilitator provided. Participants were asked to reflect on any topic they found interesting. The facilitator informed participants to select a topic of their choice. However, a simple topic was introduced to the participants and they were asked to use the de Bono principles. de Bono's six thinking hats is a system formulated by Edward de Bono. The participants' responses were limited in the first phase. However, when they were appointed to their own groups and asked to initiate the topics the participants found it difficult to do. A strategy had to be provided to initiate reflection. Edward De Bono's six thinking hats was found to help start the process and hence the concept was introduced to guide the questioning process.

Phase 2 reflective, contemplative and mindful phase

In phase 2, participants applied the inquiry-based thinking model using de Bono's thinking hats to explore the chosen context. In the second attempt the participants in one of the groups who were curriculum developers and head of education units, decided to plan a sustainability course after they implemented a round of discussion on de Bono's six thinking principles. All the groups then discussed to confirm a topic so that they could use de Bono's thinking hats to explore the use of each question. All three phases took approximately an hour and fifteen minutes to complete, with the reflection process taking the bulk of that time. During phase 3 participants presented their output of the discussions.

Output of the workshop for all three groups

The images are the outputs within forty-five minutes after a discussion from a workshop conducted in Penang, Malaysia in 2017 for adults.

Group A: The topic under consideration was on how to design their own solar powered F1 car (Figure 1)

Figure 1: Group A- Ethics and values based design of a Solar powered car
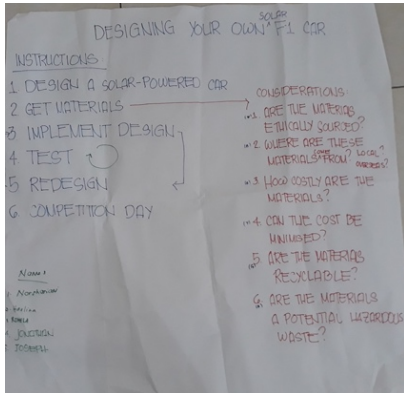
A participant from the Philippines presented the results of their group discussion as: *"The group thought about solar invention and solar energy conservation. We are going to help students learn values, from where they will get their materials. What kind of materials to use? We want them to ask; where do they get their materials? Do they exploit workers? We do not want them to buy from places where they exploit workers. We can think of patriotism. We can think of helping nations or Asian regions. Next is the cost of the materials. The materials they buy should take into account other ethical situations. This car will then have material waste. It becomes potential hazardous material. They have to think of solar F1 car. There can be a lot more. Learning about values in the context of the project. This is a loop; implement-design- fail- design – (value of perseverance)."*

Group B sustainability course

The group of curriculum developers, policy makers and educators decided that they will plan for a sustainability course. They used De Bono's thinking hats to illustrate different topics for their course.

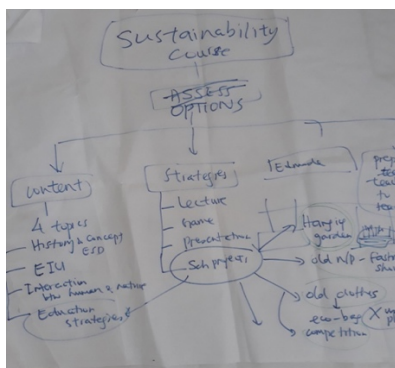**Figure 2** Group B- Course for Sustainable Development. It illustrates the reflective processes and the concepts that participants brainstormed at the initial stages for a course on sustainable development.

Participants also discussed online learning which included using Edmodo platform to teach students how to share their knowledge with all teachers in their communities. As observed in Fig. 3, the group participants chose to use a thought web to facilitate the generation of ideas. They found the thinking principles a very good strategy to start the discussion; de Bono's thinking hats were applied to the project of hanging garden and both ethics and human values were integrated to explore the issues.

Figure 3:
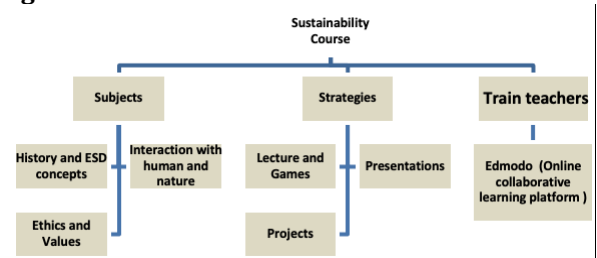
Group C hanging garden

The third group decided that they would organise a project on a hanging garden and wrote: *"This concept will keep school alive as they will enjoy the environment. This project will be supported by the parent body and stakeholders. This project will benefit everyone, and this was never done before. This would be the first project in the district. We will decide whether it would be vegetables, plants or hanging garden. We will also participate in the school competition next year. We found that the hanging gardens helped rescue garbage waste and most of the hanging gardens was not only supported by the Ministry of Education (MOE) but by the Ministry of Health and Agricultural officers. We confirmed that this will be part of their school project. We would plant vegetables and flowers"*.
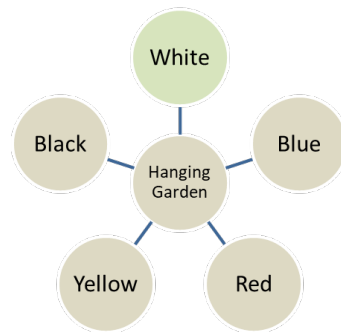
Blue hat: Participants responded to the first question; aims of the project; the stakeholders, duration, financial aspect and resources.
Red hat: Happy to stay, alive and comfortable
Yellow: Stakeholder, Principal and Students
Green: decoration, plant vegetables, eat and sell
Black: Participants did not come out with responses due to time constraints
White: environment support, garbage, reduce waste

Teachers had to initially differentiate between what could be the potential benefits related to human behavior (ethics) and values (human attitudes and potential for environmental sustainability) within the context. The

responses adjacent to the different colored hats correspond to the original thought processes as formulated by de Bono.

Findings and discussion
The above case study found that this sample of teachers, educators and education officials were at the beginning unsure of how to proceed. In both attempts the facilitator noted that the participants took time to start reflections on the topic. They found it very challenging at the beginning. This is probably due to the fact that the opportunities to delve into deep inquiry mode from an ethical perspective maybe missing. One of the three groups could not initiate the topic and the facilitator explained again with examples. Firstly, the process of brainstorming ideas for a topic took time. The implementation of sustainability issues was an added factor. By the end of an hour and quarter, all the groups had completed the process. This attempt was successful after few rounds of prompting and challenges faced during the initial phases. The process of reflection took time; de Bonos thinking hats are beneficial to start a group discussion and individual thinking (Parahakaran, et al., 2017).

Several excerpts from the participants' presentations in Group C follow. The group thought about solar invention and solar energy conservation. Using Edward de Bono's thinking hats principles, participants highlighted the issues of social justice (exploiting workers), buying what is locally made (using local resources rather than importing materials), and renewable materials. Participants started to look at many perspectives critically and they were involved in divergent thinking.

The researchers used inductive teaching and learning methods to drive the intervention. The intent was to orient participants in a way that aided them in using inquiry-based learning, which was made popular by Prince and Felder (2006). According to Prince and Felder, instructional methods include project-based learning, inquiry-based learning and discovery learning. The idea behind using these techniques was that participants would be provided a real-life context for learning that allows them to use the de Bono thinking principles to deepen their understanding of the information presented to them and their own discussion points. Participants entered into complex reflective processes that required them to retrieve memories of their experience of integrating EHV into STEM education.

The outcome for participants was a complex set of ideas that addressed the topic of sustainable values teaching in STEM. Bono's (1985) thinking hats helped initiate the reflective process that led to generation of creative ideas. After applying the thinking hats, they moved from the reflective phase to contemplative stages of thought. This is the phase where participants could generate ideas and thoughts which were: 1) in the living context, 2) required materials, 3) ethical and values based, 4) practically applied in schools, and 5) advantageous to society.

The different aspects mentioned by Wamsler et al. (2018) on subjective well-being, non-materialistic values and on consumption and sustainable behaviors were all elicited during the discussion of ideas in all groups. They were: 1) subjective well-being; (2) activation of (intrinsic/non-materialistic) core values; (3) consumption and sustainable behavior; (4) the human-nature connection; (5) equity issues; and (6) social activism.

Participants from one of the groups started working on integrating values related to equity, local demand for resources, labor issues, patriotism, and loyalty to country. The process of critical enquiry encourages people to explore the complexity and implications of sustainability as well as the economic, political, social, cultural, technological and environmental forces that foster or impede sustainable development. This entails involving people in questions about the ownership of common property resources, issues of international and intergenerational equity, investigations into regional and national ecological footprints and, most importantly, engagement in debates about qualitative versus quantitative growth (Fien and Tilbury, 2002).

The workshop helped teachers and students incorporate values and ethics into the STEM project. Bono's (1985) thinking hats were useful in facilitating a rich discussion. Incorporating these techniques into STEM education will allow students to ask deeper questions such as: who will the project benefit or harm? What will be the impact of the project after five years? Will it have a negative or positive impact on people and the environment? Can this idea be implemented in only one context or many other places? Is it cost effective? Professionals can increase their competencies if they engage in reflective practices (Leitch and Day 2001).

Limitations and recommendations
More research is needed to structure the questions depending on the contexts involved. In this case study the topics chosen were different and the questions of inquiry could not be generalized for all three groups. A larger sample can be used to explore the elicited views of learners depending on the category or topic selected. Questioning for sustainability purposes requires deep reflective capacities and structured questioning methods for integrating the affective domain. Educators, Curriculum developers, and teachers may need to structure the questions from ethical perspective to elicit more questions. The method of Bono's thinking hats supported the basic steps for bringing the cognitive and affective dimensions together.

Conclusion
Adults' reflective experiences led teachers and educators to discuss and retrieve their past knowledge and produce innovative ideas. If reflective processes can help learners to transform their current pattern of thinking processes and co-create new knowledge there will be a paradigm shift in learners. Silent and mindful practices also help in shifting attention to motivational thoughts, having deep awareness of others pain and compassion for other people and nature.

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Higher education in the Philippines during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Psychological risks, research opportunities and policy implications

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Abstract

The COVID-19 Pandemic has presented challenges to the educational system in the Philippines during the coronavirus pandemic. This study will look into some practices that have contributed to psychological risks on the part of students, the various opportunities for improvement in terms of research on the part of learning institutions, and policy implications that schools must look into in terms of the pedagogical requirements amidst a public health emergency. It is important to do a critical assessment insofar as some of the approaches of educational leaders have not considered the situation of learners. Consultations have not been truly democratic, and the real stakeholders are disadvantaged by the absence of meaningful interactions. The paper will make policy recommendations on the above concern.

Introduction

The coronavirus pandemic presents difficult challenges to higher education around the world. All of the 188 nation-states affected by the virus have pursued various means to continue the education of students in colleges and universities. Online learning has become the new normal for higher education. But this is not without its corresponding issues. According to Sensei Adorador (2020), online learning appears to be forced on young people in the midst of the pandemic. Speaking about the margins of society, the young educator mentions the difficulty of getting internet connectivity on the part of the poor. Writing about the people in the margins of Philippine society, he says that "the vulnerable in this scenario are students who belong in the lowest strata of our community" (Ibid).

Critical Pedagogy in the new normal is not about finding comfort or convenience in the delivery of instructions. As a matter of fact, the new normal in "education is about how people humanize the world. Policy makers miss the point when they focus on the delivery but do not pay attention to the substantive aspect of learning" (Maboloc, 2020a). Policy makers and school administrators are doing what they think is feasible amidst the present circumstances. But the problem is deeper than expected. It is rooted in the character of higher education which has been reduced into a means to achieve productivity on the part of the citizens of the state (Abulencia, 2015). For instance, Thompson and Thompson (2018) think that "one of the hardest-hitting impacts of poor education on communities is the failure of having a well-educated workforce."

What universities and colleges are faced with is called digital transformation through information and communications technology (ICT). This will require "abilities to apply ICT in every sphere of life on an incremental level, thus universities must be up to the task of preparing potential professional to be able to face challenges and provide solutions" (Adedoyin and Soykan, 2020). The migration of courses online is a systemic approach to address the risks to public health in view of the coronavirus. It requires "strategic preparation, trust establishment and thinking in processes" (Kopp et al., 2019). Schools in the Philippines have done these things as colleges and universities seek to pursue their mission of advancing the cause of higher education in the midst of a pandemic.

But there are fundamental issues that need to be uncovered beyond the technical protocols and requirements. These things have remained hidden since students themselves are afraid to speak and faculty members are hesitant or may not have the opportunity to be able to express their sentiments. We cannot take away from the commitment of institutions of higher learning to sustain their operations amidst a debilitating public health emergency, but it is also important to realize that the new approaches employed by school administrators will not really change the uneven educational structures in the country. The right way forward is to make education truly liberating, which will require the moral courage to dismantle unjust systems and policies.

Psychological risks of online learning

While the need for lockdowns is seen as a measure to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on the population, online learning is seen as the means to ensure the continuous learning of students. Universities and colleges in the Philippines have used online modules and virtual classrooms to address the need of students. On the part of schools, this has been seen as a temporary measure, hoping that with the vaccines, in-person instruction will return. But while this is so, there are other risks that educational leaders and teachers have not really considered in this "new normal". A finding on the mental health of students during the pandemic reveals *"a number of academic and everyday difficulties and high levels of mental health distress. High levels of depression were associated with difficulties in focusing on academic work"* (Recojevic et al., 2020).

In state universities, the level of anxiety of students who belong to the poor sector of society is high to the effect that a number of students have dropped out from their classes

after they realized that a basic need like food is more urgent than an internet connection. Many parents feel the frustration of failing their children from school. For some, online education is a choice that is only available to the rich. But a Filipino psychiatrist, Dr. Joan Rifareal, attributes the mental health of students during the pandemic to an interplay of factors (Magsambol, October 22, 2020). Reports also indicate that 44,000 college students have chosen not to enroll during the height of the pandemic (Magsambol, Sep 10, 2020). To faculty members of state universities who depend on loans to sustain their needs, online learning is nothing but an additional burden. They feel that the new system is a way to being subjected to the autocracy of education leaders.

Some schools think that resorting to online modules will help solve the problem of connectivity. The main purpose of modular learning is to allow teachers and students to interact at any given time. This is called asynchronous learning. The problem, however, is that the absence of a teacher in real time means that the students do not have a guide who can explain to them the topics in every course outline. Teachers, upon the order of administrators, merely rely on posted videos, recorded lectures, and power-point presentations. The problem is that students do not have the same academic aptitude, and for this reason, there are those who are simply left behind. Top universities have good admission systems. Other schools do not have any. For this reason, there is no quality assurance.

The impact of this impersonal approach is not apparent to policy makers in the state or even to the deans and other educational leaders inside the institution. The problem is that one cannot educate a child by means of memos to teachers, many of whom are also in quandary due to their inability to adapt. There is a technological gap since many teachers belong to the generation when "chalk talk" was the main methodology of teaching. Due to the inability of the students to have any meaningful interaction with the teacher, who is expected to have competence on the subject matter, anxiety grows every day on the part of the learner, who has to deal with the lack of social interaction with classmates or peers.

Some approaches to the above problem appear superficial. According to Toquero (2020), "strengthening the educational planning and health measures in the university can provide the students and the rest of the stakeholders with an opportunity to continue learning while preventing the spread of the virus." The problem, however, is that the lack of any meaningful interaction when it comes to planning and the absence of real consultations mean that the issues are not really discussed. Students themselves do not have the capability to ask the hard questions to teachers because the latter might take it against them. While the health risk is addressed by means of online instruction, the psychological issues are not. Toquero (2020), nevertheless, offers recommendations when it comes to policy. She (2020) writes: *"Schools need to strengthen their medical services and student support services so that constant monitoring and implementation of health practices are followed within the vicinity and beyond the academe. Due to global trends of the pandemic, higher education needs to prioritize academic and career counselling, and even the medical services and programs that should be accessible to the students in the university and even through online means."*

The suggestion of Toquero (2020) is acceptable from a macro perspective but it fails to see the anxieties of students who are being pressured by teachers in terms of requirements. The problem is actually the big ego of some senior faculty members who seek to maintain their status or image in the minds of the learners. It is a kind of reputation that these people have actually been protecting without due regard for the well-being of students and its impact on their psychological health. This pressure adds to the stress of these young individuals who have been cut off from their everyday life. Education in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic does not encourage the desire to find what makes us truly human. It is still an abstract notion of reality that prioritizes technical knowledge over the value of one's humanness. While some scholars reduce the issue of online learning into a "question of compatibility" between school and work, the point is that human attitude must be factored in as a part of this complex issue and concern.

Opportunities for research in higher education

Higher education in the Philippines has many problems. Except for a few schools, a large number of institutions in the country are not that developed in terms of a research culture. The pandemic should have allowed faculty members of colleges to develop their craft or improve their research capabilities or even writing skills, but the problem is that school administrators have bombarded them with various things, including learning how to make modules or even attend to matters that are supposed to be technical, including the enrolment of students in the modules. The modules do not educate a person – it is the teacher. The problem, however, is not just technical. It is a matter of culture. The culture is not ideal for higher order thinking. This culture is toxic. Constantino (1966) blames it on the country's colonial experience. The hierarchies in schools allow senior mentors to throw their weight on young teachers. Schools belonging to an elite group also undermine the graduate student who comes from the province. This type of elitism destroys the nature and character of education in the country (Maboloc, 2020b). But this unjust system is perpetuated because the whole colonial educational system unfairly treats provincial schools. In this way, what exists is a problem of prejudice. The only way to overcome such prejudice is to recognize the capacity of each person and give them the opportunity to flourish and develop (Nussbaum, 2006; Maboloc, 2007).

For instance, an imaginary line exists between some affluent schools and their provincial counterparts. This problem cannot be addressed since prominent professors from top universities pride themselves in their

achievements. In the case of the Philippines, it can be argued that the teachers and researchers from provincial schools have the ability to excel in research, too. The reason has nothing to do with capability. The elitist nature of higher education in the Philippines prevents many graduate students from achievements in the field of research and publication. While this is like writing something in bold strokes, it can be said that improving the research culture in the Philippine educational system is possible if we recognize the talents of individuals.

The reality on the ground is less than ideal. The top schools in the capital are favored by big employers, including NGOs that advocate social justice and equality. Unless Philippine society itself reverses this unacceptable situation, the problems of the higher education system in the country will linger on for decades. Instead of equalizing the situations of Filipinos, online learning will only benefit the rich and undermine the situation of the poor. Adorador (2020) is right in saying that some people in management positions in schools "leave their colleagues behind. They are motivated by their agenda, such as social and financial success. Thus, everything falls apart."

It may be objectionable to say that "their superiors force college teachers to submit the requirements and dismiss dialogues between the administrators and the faculty" (Ibid.). Still, the truth of the matter is that consultations assume a semblance of democracy, but in reality, people who are in powerful positions have already made decisions. Meetings in this way are just a matter of informing people. Education in the country is simply a microcosm of the realities in Philippine society. Even top professors forget about the need to care for their students and instead choose to pressure them by throwing their weight on powerless young human beings who are still groping to find the meaning of life.

The right strategy is to see the pandemic as an opportunity to change the school system in the country. If schools are concerned about the access of students to the internet, then the proper way of looking at this problem is to give parents some breathing space in terms of their educational expenses. If schools find it painful to subsidize the cost of internet connection of the students, they can instead lower tuition fees or remove some school fees since they are not actually utilizing physical facilities. There are savings in electricity, water, and manpower as some staff are told to work from home or altogether dismissed from work since most campuses have been deserted; these can be used to provide scholarship funds to poor students.

Academic freedom and policy recommendations

The principle of academic freedom means that a teacher has the right to pursue an inquiry concerning human knowledge based on his professional competence and academic background. The teacher has every right to develop the academic content of the course that he is handling without the control and domination by school administrators. Academic freedom is meant to promote the freedom of thought. A teacher must not be afraid to pursue knowledge.

Trust and professionalism are important. The school cannot impose on teachers a policy that is inimical to the constitutional "freedom of expression". The school must provide a democratic space and must empower teachers to express themselves in the best way they see fit as long as no public morals or policy is being violated. A teacher must be allowed to speak the truth without the fear of repression.

Higher education in the new normal should be student-centered, on the part of the teacher and student relation, and teacher-centered, on the part of the teacher and school relation. What is the meaning of this? On the first matter, students should not be burdened by the pressure of the personalities that they have to deal with online. By implication, they must see education as an exercise of human freedom rather than an experience of being manipulated by an adult who can use grades as a way to instill fear in the minds of the learners. On the second matter, teachers must be allowed to exercise their autonomy in terms of how they deem it best to deliver the content of the lessons online. The school must not be an impediment in the desire of a teacher to bring out the best in his or her students through a pedagogical method that promotes rather human freedom. We recommend the following:

1. Synchronous and asynchronous methods must be used. For example, platforms such as Google Classroom, Zoom, Google Meet, and Moodle learning system can be employed, but the school should never tell a teacher to limit or just focus on one platform as this will preclude the ability of the teacher to navigate the difficult learning environment during the pandemic. The idea is all about adaptability. Teachers have different sets of skill and competencies. A school may undercut the ability and put to waste the talent of a young teacher and the experience and mature judgment of a senior faculty when it comes to the learning of students.

2. In the making of the "new normal syllabus", the disposition must observe a democratic-participative approach. If the old way requires that terms in the syllabus must solely come from a single author, that is, the teacher, this pandemic is the best time for students to open up their views, their feelings, and their projected actions on the possibility of achieving the learning outcomes. The learning outcomes are results of a process. They are a product of concerted efforts where the essentials of learning must be made explicit. The unusual difficult situation nowadays needs teachers to be flexible and open to change, including learning ICT.

3. Requirements and school assignments should be limited. While board exam courses need some form of mastery, rigid practice and serious reading, the teacher can require the students to submit a comprehensive paper that synthesizes the knowledge of the latter. When it comes to actual exams, they may be postponed to a later date after the pandemic, but the student can still have an overall view of the scope of knowledge and skill that a course may require through essay type exams or problem-solving exercises that do not put pressure on a student struggling amidst the psychological effect and socioeconomic impact of a public health emergency. Impliedly, the real purpose of

learning is ultimately anchored to human values. There is no better way to express this than in caring for the well-being of a young individual who can draw inspiration not just from reading important literary texts but in the way the teacher herself handles the online class.

4. To neutralize the anxiety as a product of psychological risks already experienced by students, universities and colleges must provide both actual and virtual mental health services (Toquero, 2020). Those schools which are actively giving psychological counselling must strengthen their services. In fact, schools must gather some data when it comes to the health conditions of students so that school officials can plan and strategize the approaches to make the whole learning environment safe for everyone. As a mitigating measure and to minimize risks to health, schools should only allow in-person instruction after all students have received their vaccines against COVID-19.

5. Middle and top administrators should be more transparent and must be open to real dialogue with teachers and students alike. "Start from the ground", the ground as the nest of concrete realities, and let the voices of the disadvantaged be heard; such is a more appropriate way of dialoguing and making policies. However, dialogues are not simply for talking. School administrators and heads must provide what students and teachers need in terms of support especially in state universities to sustain online learning. The focus should not be only about deliverables. The assumption that a faculty member of a state university will always find a way is a false assumption.

6. The prejudice against provincial schools must be put to an end. While rankings matter, for now, the focus should be on strengthening the research capabilities of small schools. The government and the private sector should give grants to small colleges and not just big schools or universities that already have the resources. Science without borders should be practiced by higher education. This means emphasizing collaboration between top experts from universities and young researchers from small institutions. When it comes to science, nothing is big or small. Every pursuit of truth is beneficial. The opportunity, hence, must be open to everyone.

Conclusion
The COVID-19 pandemic presents various risks. The migration of courses by means of ICT is a given due to the health crisis. But it has also made manifest the issues and problems underlying the Philippine educational system. Toquero is correct in her macro analysis, but her paper has not addressed the fundamental issues on the ground. Mental issues that affect college students need to be looked into by schools and other stakeholders. Beyond this, the study has shown how an elitist system actually undermines the well-being of students. The nature and purpose of education cannot be mere productivity. It is about how learning makes us better human beings whose values reflect the proper ends of human progress. But this cannot be achieved if teachers and professors alike act in an immature

way by pressuring students just to maintain their reputation even in online classes. A true teacher guides a child not only in terms of concepts but must be a living embodiment of social equity. A more democratic approach in terms of preparing students and teachers for this new normal must be practiced by school administrators and middle managers, who must be open to real dialogue as a strategic way to deal with this complex issue and concern.

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Multiple risky behaviors among adolescents: A convergent-parallel mixed method

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Abstract

Aims: To examine the factors influencing avoidance and engagement of adolescent students in multiple risky behaviors as well as the level of risk stimulus, degree of psychosocial maturity, and extent of avoidance and engagement to each risky behavior referred to as drugs, alcohol drinking, smoking, sexual behavior, and suicidal attempts.

Design: The study employed convergent-parallel mixed method, in which quantitative and qualitative data were gathered simultaneously to explore the protective and escalatory factors influencing adolescents' risky behaviors.

Methods: A questionnaire that evaluates the level of risk stimulus, degree of psychosocial maturity, and extent of avoidance and engagement to each risky behavior was distributed to randomly selected 400 students aged 10-19 from public and private schools in Davao City, Philippines. In addition, 12 interviews were conducted.

Results: Exposure of the adolescent students to risk stimulus is low (1.72) with high psychosocial maturity (4.41). Engagement to alcohol drinking is higher (44.5%), with a mid-level degree, as compared to smoking (12.5%), sexual activity (12.5%), suicidal attempts (8.3%), and drugs (4% as the lowest) categorized as very low engagement. Interpersonal factors affect decision of adolescents to engage in alcohol drinking (.000) while the intrapersonal factor affects engagement or avoidance to risky sexual activity (0.43). Assurance of security, self-esteem and maturity, parental modelling, and gender sensitivity are all factors influencing adolescents' behavior whether to engage or avoid drugs, alcohol drinking, smoking, sexual activity, and suicidal attempts.

Conclusion: The study shows that when there is a feeling of security, high self-esteem, good parental modelling, and sensitivity in understanding one's gender, an adolescent fulfills his proper responsibilities towards the society. On the other hand, an insecure, unsafe, and confused adolescent may feel disturbed and frustrated due to lack of stability. Nurses and other personnel in schools, should continue to emphasize student-school connectedness where adolescent students feel that their school environment supports their growth positively and that their environment is healthy. Opportunities for family members to be actively involved in the academic and non-academic activities of the students would help provide a security mantle as adolescents transition to adulthood.

Introduction

Adolescent health risk behavior studies are mostly seen in the lens of psychology or social sciences because of the lack of a nursing model or framework that can be used to understand such phenomena. However, it is important for nurses to understand the root causes of engaging in health risk behavior in order to come up with strategic health intervention programs appropriate for adolescents.

A school nurse, in particular, should provide health information to promote physical and mental health, and informed healthcare decisions and disease prevention leading to a better performance of the individual learner and the school as a whole (Schaffer, Anderson and Rising, 2015). Health risk behavior includes activities that increase one's chance of loss of health status, and contributes to premature death and disability in adolescents and young adults (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2007).

Background

The World Health Organization (WHO) defined adolescent period as those aging from 10-19. This age group had been noted by the Department of Health in Davao Region to have had an increase in live birth deliveries, cases of abortion, and still birth specially of women below 15 years old. Also, sexually transmitted infections are reported to have increased among <15-24 years old (2013), while 3% of young people aged 15-27 were reported to have had committed suicide (DOH, 2015).

The study

Given the abovementioned risky behavior manifestations, this convergent-parallel mixed method study aimed to examine the prevalence of adolescents' involvement in risky behaviors and the factors influencing their avoidance and engagement to drugs, alcohol drinking, smoking, risky sexual activities, and suicidal attempts. Unlike many studies that have restricted their scope to youth (those belonging to age group 15-24), this study examines the entire adolescent period considering exposure to risk stimuli and psychosocial maturity as posited in the integrative model of adolescent health risk behavior (IMAHRB) by Keeler et al., 2010.

Historically, risk has been used as a neutral term, defined as the possibility of loss or gain (Stalker, 2003). The decision of whether to take the risk would depend on the balance of what could be gained or lost by the action. Moreover, the engagement in activity or behavior that may result in negative health consequences is referred to as health risk behavior (Jacobs, 2000).

From the viewpoint of Erikson in 1958 (as cited by McLeod, 2012), an individual may undergo crisis. These crises present challenges to one's individual identity. He further said that adolescence is a time of great change where the body and sexual organs mature and where new expectations for social and academic adjustments arise. With these, self-image typically suffers, and life can be very stressful, especially in the earlier transition stage.

This study was conducted between January 2017 to March 2018 in Davao City, Philippines where a total of 25,492 were enrolled in four schools selected in Davao City. This selection may limit the relevance of the findings for other cohorts such as adolescents out of school, but allows examination of the psychosocial maturity of the participants thus contributing another to an understanding of what influences an adolescent to engage or avoid health risk behaviors.

The following seven research questions were explored: Which of the following factors are protective or escalatory (cultural, intrapersonal, interpersonal)? What is the extent of the participants' engagement in risky behaviors? What is the extent of exposure to risk stimulus? What is the degree of psychosocial maturity? What are the meta-themes of the integrated quantitative and qualitative data? How do the participants describe their cultural, intrapersonal, and interpersonal situations? How do these situations influence avoidance and engagement in risky behaviors?

Design

The study employed a convergent-parallel mixed method, in which quantitative and qualitative data were gathered simultaneously to explore the protective and escalatory factors influencing adolescents' behavior towards risky behaviors.

Participants

The participants were 400 students aged 10-19 from public and private schools in Davao City, Philippines enrolled in either elementary, junior high school, senior high school, or college level. The total number of survey participants were equally divided among four schools included in the list of Department of Education that has at least 500 currently enrolled students. Simple random sampling (computer-generated process) was used to determine the 100 participants per school. For the qualitative data, 12 participants using purposive sampling were interviewed to arrive at a deeper understanding of the data regarding the protective and escalatory factors of engagement and avoidance to health risks behaviors.

Data collection

The quantitative data were gathered using a structured classification type and Likert scaled questions with six sections: personal information; protective and escalatory factors with reference to the Adolescent/Youth Assessment form or HE3ADS4 of the Department of Health; level of exposure to risk stimulus; degree of psychosocial maturity; decision to engage or avoid risky behaviors; and extent of engagement to each risky behavior.

A semi-structured interview was used for the qualitative aspect of the study. The interview questions were divided into two parts. Part one was a list of 23 open-ended questions to know the cultural, intrapersonal, and interpersonal situations of the participants, while part two consisted of 10 questions to know the factors influencing the participants to engage in each health risk behavior.

All participants as well as their parents or guardians were given a detailed explanation of the study. Those who agreed and were able to submit their signed consent forms took part in the data collection.

The interview questionnaire had been evaluated in seven pilot interviews. Following the pilot, revisions were made. The interviews took place in the principals' office or school clinic depending on the venue designated by each School Head. Each interview lasted approximately 10 to 30 minutes and was recorded with the participants' agreement.
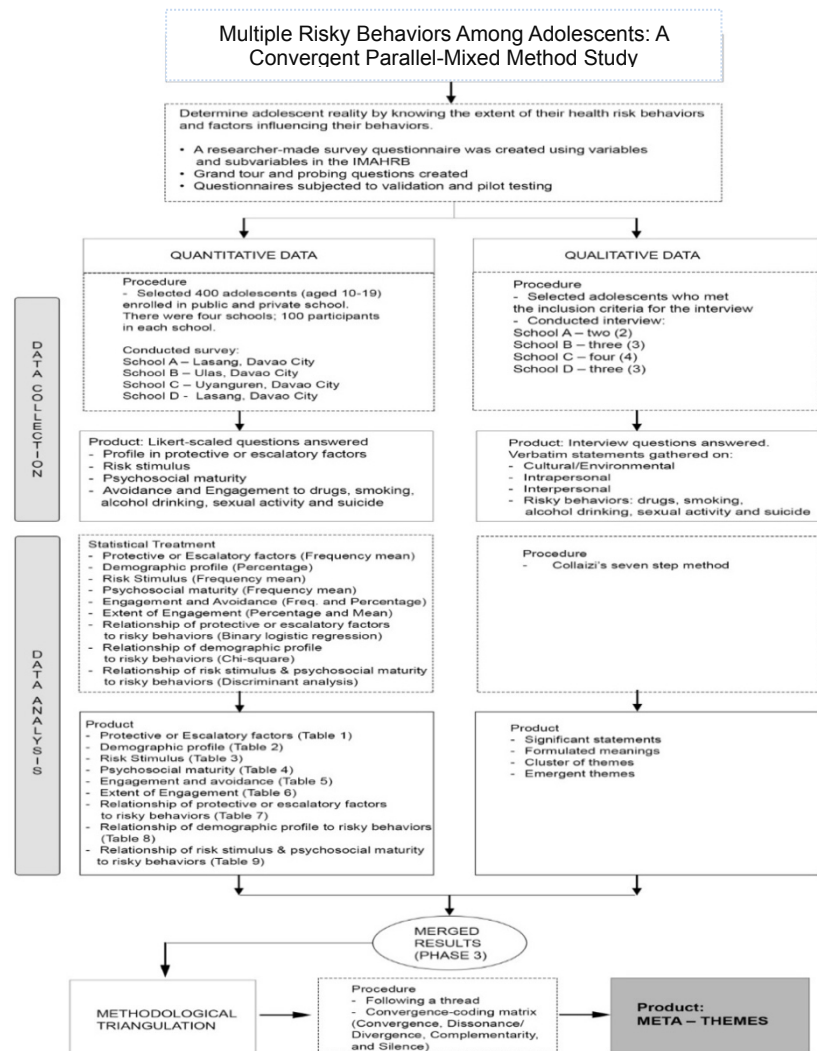
Ethical considerations

Figure 1. *Data Collection and Analysis Procedure*

The Institutional Research Ethics Committee of San Pedro College approved the study on September 2017. A copy of the approved research proposal was then submitted to the Division Superintendent of the Department of Education in Davao City for their ethical review. A letter of endorsement was given by the latter which was then presented to the presidents of the selected schools. Participants who met the studies' criteria received a detailed explanation regarding the study. A copy was also given to their parents, and consent forms were secured.

Data analysis
The responses to the questions were coded, mostly on the Likert scale. All the data were entered in Microsoft Excel with their corresponding codes. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software (IBM SPSS Statistics). The statistical methods used were frequency mean, percentage, binary logistic regression, chi square test, and discriminant analysis.

Categorization of significant statements and identification of emergent themes was done using Collaizzi's 7-step method. Verbatim statements were transcribed, coding participants with pseudonyms. A total of 265 significant statements were identified, 37 clustered themes, and seven major themes emerged.

Methodological triangulation method was used to merge the quantitative and qualitative data following the steps of Risjord et al. Four meta-themes emerged as a product of convergence-coding matrix.

Validity and reliability
The tool was submitted to three experts for content validation and was rated according to clarity, objectivity, and conciseness. The mean result was 4.03 categorized as very good. Reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha yielded a percentage of 80%. According to Newton et al., Alpha index should be between 0.77 and 0.87.

Results
Out of the 400 participants, 32% were below 14 years old, 44% were ages 14-16, and 24% were in to age group 17-19. The majority of participants were female (61%), enrolled in Junior High (48%), and Roman Catholic (82%).

Table 1: Protective or escalatory factor category

	Mean	*Interpretation*
Socioeconomic status	4.14	Protective
Family structure	4.06	Protective
Safety	3.41	Protective
Personality traits	4.04	Protective
Sexuality/gender	3.70	Protective
Peer relationship	4.50	Protective
Parental relationship	4.02	Protective
Total	3.98	Protective

Protective or escalatory Factors
The data revealed that socioeconomic status (M=4.14), family structure (M=4.06), safety (M=3.41), personality traits (M=4.04), sexuality/gender (M=3.70), peer relationship (M=4.50), and parental relationship (M=4.02) were all protective factors or factors influencing avoidance towards risky behavior.

Extent of engagement according to demographic profile
Ages 15-19 had a higher percentage of engagement in all risky behaviors than those from age group 10-14 (Figure 1). Male participants had a higher engagement in drugs (69%) as compared with female and LGBT participants. Female participants had a higher engagement in alcohol drinking (63%), sexual activity (56%), and suicide attempts (64%). While in terms of smoking, male and female had an equal percentage of engagement (48%).

Extent of exposure to risk stimulus and degree of psychosocial maturity
The extent of exposure of the participants to risk stimulus was categorized as low (M=1.72) while the degree of psychosocial maturity in terms of perspective, responsibility, and temper was found to be high (M=4.42).
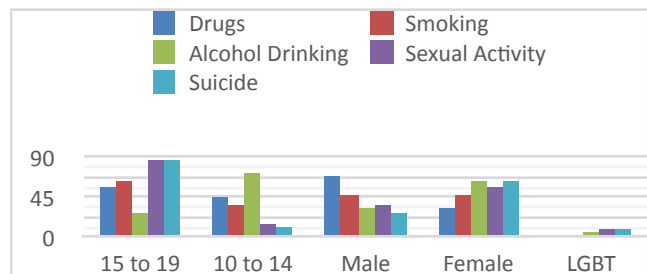
Figure 1a. *Percentage of engagement per demographic profile*

Students in private schools engaged more in drugs (63%) than those from public school. On the other hand, public school students were more engaged in smoking (54%), alcohol drinking (62%), sexual activity (54%), and suicidal attempts (61%). Junior High School students had a higher percentage of engagement in all risky behaviors (Figure 2) except for alcohol drinking where Senior High School were more engaged (40%).

Figure 1b. *Percentage of engagement per demographic profile*
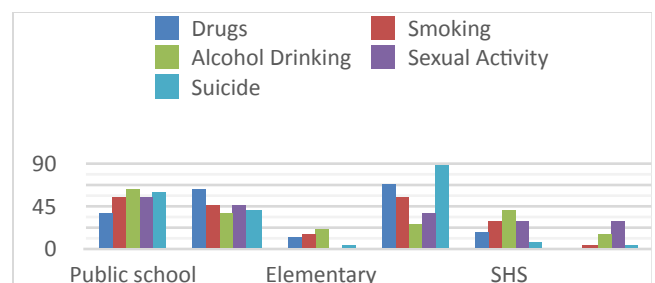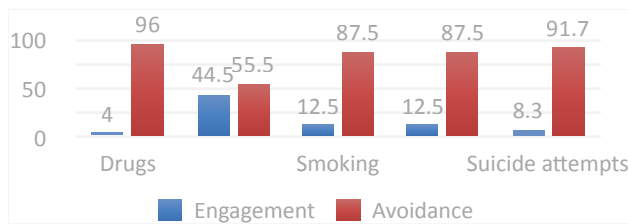
Figure 2. *Difference between engagement and avoidance*

Level of engagement and avoidance in risky behaviors
As shown in Figure 2, percentage of avoidance was higher than engagement. The results suggest that the participants had a very high avoidance and very low engagement in drugs, smoking, alcohol drinking, sexual activity, and suicide attempts. However, in alcohol drinking, they had mid-level (average) engagement and avoidance.

Demographic profile and level of engagement
The data analysis of the questionnaire revealed that age affects level of engagement in alcohol drinking (.000), sexual activity (.000), and suicide (.001) (p<0.05). Gender significantly affects behavior towards alcohol drinking (.032) and suicide (.004) (p<0.05). Type of school showed a significant difference towards alcohol drinking (0.17) engagement, while educational level revealed a significant difference in engagement to drugs (.033), smoking (.043), alcohol drinking (.000), sexual activity (.000), and suicide (.000) (p<0.05).

Analysis of the 5 main themes
Twelve interviews were conducted among the 400 participants who answered the questionnaire. The participants storylines were carefully read, reviewed and encoded. The main concepts obtained from the data were categorized into five main themes:
1. Feels safer at home than in school or outside
2. Described self as a good person
3. Certain about one's sexuality
4. Influenced by peers to engage in risky behaviors
5. Strongly influenced by parents to avoid risky behaviors

Table 2: Relationship between demographic profile and level of engagement

	Age	*Gender*	*School*	*Educational level*
Drugs	.666	.052	.134	.033
Smoking	.687	.243	.138	.043
Alcohol drinking	.000	.032	.017	.000
Sexual activity	.000	.108	.790	.000
Suicide	.001	.004	.558	.000

p < 0.05

Feels safer at home than in school or outside
Thematic analysis supports that home remains the safest environment for the adolescents. This is in the premise that loved ones or important parental figures are present in their environment such as their grandparents, parents, siblings and close relatives. Furthermore, the study showed that these homes are also provided with technical necessities like television, gadgets and even internet – a positive effect of technology. In contrast, the school and community were perceived to be the opposite. These environments, according to the participants, had bullies, gangsters, with exposure to violence, smoking, alcohol drinking, and drugs. The risky environment had somehow brought unpleasant experiences.

Described self as a good person
Participants viewed themselves as good persons as revealed in their descriptions as being friendly, innocent, studious, and even a bit shy. Helseth and Misvaer (2010) said that adolescents' quality of life is about the positive cycles of life. Feeling good, being satisfied with oneself and having an overall positive attitude are in most cases described as the starting points fir a positive cycle.

However, the participants expressed that once they are provoked or feel threatened, they become mean or hostile. There were episodes of fighting with parents or with classmates. Others also expressed being envious with the material possessions of the people around them like their classmates' cellular phones or new bags.

This shows that a positive environment helps develop positive dispositions or self-esteem among the adolescents. In the contrary, it projects a negative attitude in an environment that is negative to their perceptions.

Certain about one's sexuality
On their gender, adolescents have already recognized and accepted their respective gender preference. Girls like their cliques with other girls and the boys as well. Peers socialize gender as well. For example, the more time males spend interacting with male peers, the more gender typed their personality will become (McHale et al.,2009). Parents also had impacts on their child's gender orientation. Adolescents whose parents express traditional attitude toward gender roles are more likely to hold traditional attitudes themselves (Tenenbaum et al., 2003). Having gay or lesbian parents, however, has little effect on their romantic attractions and behaviors (Wainright et al., 2004).

Influenced by peers to engage in risky behaviors
Peers emerged as the sole influencing factor to engage in risky behaviors. Prinstein (2009) said that adolescents are quite likely to emulate the behavior of popular peers. They have a strong investment in social comparison and reflected appraisal and meeting the demands of those considered the most popular in the peer group.

Participants pointed out that they tried drinking alcoholic beverage and smoking when asked to by their

friends. It all started out with their curiosity which then developed into a habit that resulted in avoiding school rules to bring prohibited items inside the school. Some others were involved with gangsters at school at an early age that led them to experiment in addictive substances as a sort of bonding.

Sexual activity engagement is said to be common among young girls who have older boyfriends with a stable job. Hence, despite their young age, this gave them security and assurance that they would be taken care of if they got pregnant. In terms of committing suicide, depression due to stress brought about by family problems and school pressure led them to try doing it. Suicide has also been perceived as the solution to stop bullying in school.

Strongly influenced by parents to avoid risky behaviors

The adolescents said that their parents influenced them strongly to refrain from engaging in risky behaviors. The constant reminders of their parents made them conscious of the consequences of their risky behaviors. They did not want to disappoint their parents. Constant reminders are not only focused on the ill effects of risky behaviors to their education, but also health problems. Also, reminding them of their long-term dreams is an effective strategy that their parents do for adolescents to self-regulate.

To those who had been involved already with risky behaviors, continued support by their parents to their recovery made them realize not to do it again. It gave them the drive to live and to continue their education.

Analysis of the 4 meta-themes

The quantitative and qualitative results were separately analyzed and then merged in a method called methodological triangulation. Step 1 is following threads where significant verbatim statements from the interview (*n* = 12), seven emergent themes, related threads from the verbatim data as well as the mean results of the quantitative data (*n*=400) were listed in a matrix. The purpose of following threads was primarily to identify which among the qualitative themes converged with the quantitative results. The converged themes were used for Step 2 which is the convergence of coding matrix containing the themes, subthemes, related threads, and convergence assessment (meta-themes):

1. Assurance of security
2. Self-concept and maturity
3. Gender sensitivity
4. Parental Modelling

Assurance of security

There was convergence in the results that adolescents feel safer at home than in school as well as the feeling of security from the parents' presence and worries. Safety provided by home from gangs was complemented with the

monitoring done by the district officials within the community to ensure safety.

Self-concept and maturity

There was agreement (convergence) between the quantitative and qualitative results on the theme of being a good daughter/son and being open to the opinion of others. Further, the concept of being a good person but with some weaknesses was complemented by being rarely angry. The attitude of being not so friendly by the participants in the interview diverged with the participants who said that they were friendly persons.

Gender sensitivity

There was convergence in the results that the participants were happy and comfortable with their sexuality. There was a concept that emerged from the qualitative data that the adolescents openly accepted the gender preference of others. There was no related idea in the quantitative results.

Parental modelling

In this meta-theme, there was convergence that parents were considered as an important factor for the participants to deter from risky behaviors. The act of constant communication between parents and sons/daughters also contributed to the avoidance of risky behaviors. One idea emerged that the past experiences of family members are reasons for deterrence.
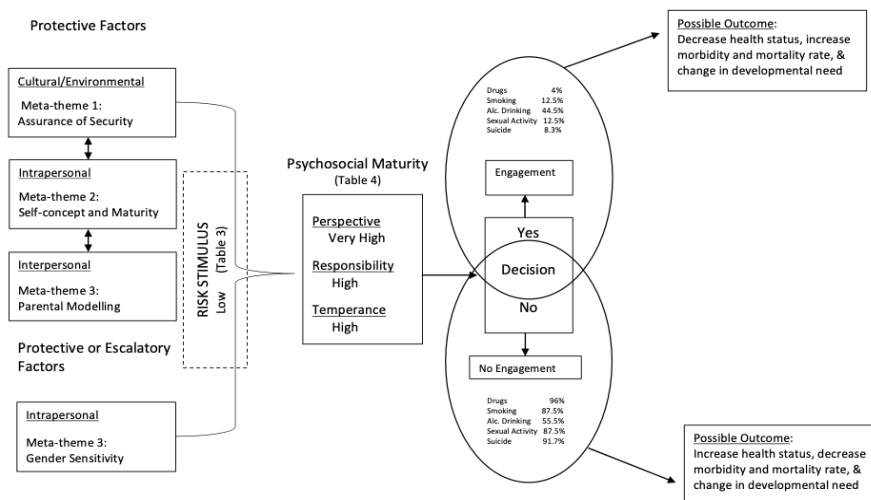
Figure 4. *Summary of results based on Integrative Model of Adolescent Health Risk Behavior Model*

Discussion

Conger et al. (2010) explained that the emotional response of the family and the individual determine the psychological effect of an event. When parents become depressed, angry, sullen with one another and have increased conflict, the result is often harsh and inconsistent parenting or withdrawal. For adolescents, that can lead to an increase in risky behavior and less development of the sorts of

competencies that protect them from those risks. Thus, a positive environment around the participants evokes positive responses from them to help avoid exposure to risky behaviors.

The adolescents have responded that when the basic needs of the family like food, shelter and even school fees are provided or when the income of the family is enough or when the adult members of the family are productive through their work or business, these conditions provided the mantle of protection for them. In turn, the positive environment manifested a positive disposition among the participants like through being a friendlier person and being open-minded which influenced them to avoid risky behavior. On the other hand, although sexuality or gender is generally a protective factor, the sub-variable of mutual attraction between a male and female is an escalatory factor to engaging in risky behavior. This however is not surprising given that adolescence is a transitional period starting at puberty which ends at adulthood. Erikson in 1963 (as cited by McLeod, 2012) stated in his theory that aside from the observable physical changes in both male and female sexes, adolescence brings about emotional and cognitive development encompassing other factors such as gender identity, development of intimate feelings or relationships, sexual orientation and experimentation. Development theories suggest that even as adolescents are growing to become more independent physically, emotionally and cognitively, they are still growing as individuals.

Among the risky behaviors identified, drug use (4%) is less common compared to alcohol drinking (45%). A considerable number (13%) of participants were into smoking and sexual activity and a few attempted suicide. Of the 178 (45%) involved in alcohol drinking, the age group 15-19 had the most engagements and they were mostly women. While there were more male participants engaged in drugs, female participants from public schools had a higher percentage of engagement in alcohol drinking, sexual activity, and suicide attempts.

Figlio and Ludwig in 2012 discussed that it is often perceived that private schools are 'better' than public schools in discouraging delinquent behavior but there is no plausible independent source that can support the claim. However, previous studies have found some evidence that Catholic schools increase civic engagement (Dee, 2005), and that religious participation generally might change behavior (Gerber et al., 2010; Hungerman, 2010). Students in Catholic schools also spend more time on homework and extracurricular activities than those in public schools (Figlio and Stone, 2000). Also, private schools may indirectly reduce teen problem behavior by exposing them to more pro-social peer groups, or by improving students' academic achievement. The first possibility is suggested by the fact that private schools have a greater ability than public schools to select and expel students and may thus be less susceptible to 'epidemics' of problem behaviors.

The school rules must be constantly repeated to both students and parents through student-parent orientation. Evidence must be kept by the school that the students and parents accept all rules and regulations and commit to comply with it. Boundaries for infractions must be well-defined especially on areas of understanding school vicinity or within school premises. Grounds and sanctions must be clear and not be subjected to many interpretations. The Prefect of Student Formation must be active in monitoring and providing interventions that can help adolescents avoid violating school policies especially in Public schools.

Consistently, the study also showed that there is significant difference in the engagement on alcohol drinking and suicide in the context of gender. The study revealed that there were more females who engaged in alcohol drinking (62.9%) and committed suicide (63.6%) but more males engaged in drugs. This show a similar trend to the Galveston study in 2012 where use of cocaine and other illegal drugs was more common among males than females. But, drinking history was more common among females. Also, research suggests that suicidal thoughts are more common among females than males particularly under the age of 25 (Krug, 2002).

Junior high-school students had a higher engagement in drugs, smoking, sexual activity, and suicide attempts while senior high-school students had a higher engagement in alcohol drinking. Despite the trend of age group 15-19 showing higher engagement in risky behavior, data showed no significant difference between age and the level of engagement in drugs and smoking. At any particular point in the adolescent life, taking illegal drugs and smoking can be perpetrated depending on their availability and decision of the person. However, there is a significant difference depending on age and engagement in alcohol drinking, sexual activity, and suicide. This may be related to the development of physical and mental capacities of the adolescents.

The extent of exposure of the participants to risk stimulus is *low*. This data revealed that Davao City is a positive and healthy community to live in. Generally, there was a low influence of peers and family members in smoking and alcohol drinking. This means it was a personal decision of the participants to engage in these risky behaviors. This situation suggests these are attempts at experimentation as they experience puberty during their growth and development from the viewpoint of Erikson (as cited by McLeod, 2013). Furthermore, participants had rated very low exposure in the context of drugs and sexual intercourse or intimacy. The strong campaign of the government (both local and national) against illegal drugs could have had a significant impact on the perception of participants. This also implied that peace and safety prevail in Davao City where one can have fun but laws are observed and strictly imposed (Olojan, 2016).

Cited in the IMAHRB by Keeler and Kaisser (2010) was the concept of psychosocial maturity by Greenberger and Sorensen in 1974 which was later expanded by Steinberg

and Cauffman in 2000. Psychosocial maturity was defined as the capacity to function adequately on one's own, to contribute to social cohesion, and to interact adequately with others. Characteristics of a psychosocially mature adolescent include those related to perspective, responsibility, and temperance. All three describe that an individual has the ability to base decisions on possible future effects, health outcomes, and the effects of decisions not only to self but to significant others. The psychosocial maturity of the participants in terms of perspective is *very high*. This data showed the participants have better perspective or understanding of the ill-effects of engagement in risky behaviors. In terms of perspective, they have intentions to become successful in the future, thus they intend to keep themselves healthy (rated very high); that involvement in risky behavior may negatively affect their future (rated high); and that they understand that engaging in risky behaviors may somehow affect their future. The participants also rated high on responsibility and temperance. The data showed that they have the ability to stay away from negative influences of peers, understand the possible consequences of their actions and they can make decisions for themselves. This can also be alluded to a positive cultural and environmental situation at home and the social functions (clubs and organizations) they are involved in.

The study also revealed the high temperance of the participants. Data showed they have the capacity to reflect or give enough thought over critical decisions they make. Parents are still a recognized sources of advice; thus, their presence and constant guidance strongly influence their children's decision-making process. Steinberg et al. in 2010 discussed in a study on youth violence and juvenile justice that young people are expected to take on more mature roles and responsibilities and figure out how to become healthy and responsible members of the society. Further they emphasized that in order to achieve sufficient psychosocial maturity and, along with it, the abilities to function as independent and productive adults, youths in contemporary industrialized society need to complete a series of development tasks in each of the three areas of psychosocial maturity. Thus, adolescents must be given avenues to carry out independent decisions, to contribute ideas in school and at home, to be appreciated in every accomplishment and to be encouraged in every failure in order for them to psychosocially mature as they grow.

In all of the results in the quantitative survey, thematic analysis supports that home remains the safest environment for the adolescents. This is in the premise that loved ones or important parental figures are present in their environment such as their grandparents, parents, their siblings and close relatives. Furthermore, the study showed that these homes were also provided with technological necessities like television (most common), gadgets and even the Internet. In contrast, the school and community were perceived to be the opposite. These environments according to the participants had bullies, gangsters, and were exposed to violence, smoking, alcohol drinking and drugs. This risky

environment had somehow brought unpleasant experiences. The adolescents had been victims or witnesses of bullying, gang fight, fist-fight, drug or alcohol invitations and even intruders in their boarding houses. Some of these events happened inside the school campus. The Department of Education still has a long way to go to make the school environment a child-friendly one. If students perceive the school as unsafe, it could affect their studies and school performance. From 1993 to 2007, school absences due to concern for safety rose from 4.4% to 5.5% (CDC, 2010).

One survey of middle school students reported that nearly 13% of sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students missed class because they felt unsafe in school and 27% reported they were threatened with violence (Orpinas et al., 2000). Twenty-seven participants indicated that they felt unsafe for reasons other than being teased, and unrelated to academics. These incidents created a general feeling of uneasiness resulting from (a) witnessing fighting or bullying, (b) knowing of the presence of weapons and gangs, (c) feeling vulnerable to unruly students, (d) witnessing drug dealing, (e) hearing of a possible child enticement, and (f) other perceived threats.

In terms of describing their personality, participants view themselves as basically a good person as revealed in their descriptions as friendly, innocent, studious, and even a bit shy. Helseth and Misvaer (2010) said that adolescents' quality of life is about the positive cycles of life. Feeling good, being satisfied with oneself and having an overall positive attitude are in most cases described as the starting points of a positive cycle. To get into and stay in a positive cycle, a positive self-image, good friends and good family relations are important. Consequently, adolescents' quality of life is threatened when these factors are negative. The participants, however, noted that once they are provoked or feel threatened, they become mean or hostile. There were episodes of fighting with parents or with classmates. Others also expressed being envious with the material possessions of the people around them like their classmates' or neighbors' cellular phones or new bags. This shows that a positive environment develops a positive disposition or positive self-concept among adolescents. In the contrary, this may project a negative attitude in an environment that is negative to their perceptions.

Hoffman and Futtherman (1996) commented that many adults have difficulty acknowledging adolescents as sexual beings, and therefore adolescent sexuality is viewed as something which must be controlled and restrained. As a result, sex education in schools either does not take place or promotes only certain risk reduction measures (most usually abstinence). However, in this generation through the incorporation of reproductive lessons in schools, adolescents are knowledgeable about their sexuality and gender preference. The family, peer groups, and media all participate in socializing gender.

Peers emerged as the sole influencing factor to engage in risky behaviors. Prinstein (2009) said that adolescents are quite likely to emulate the behavior of popular peers. They have a strong investment in social comparison and

reflected appraisal to meet the demands of the most popular in their peer group. He noted the important distinction between adolescents who are well liked and those who are identified as popular, the latter signifying those who are at the top of a dominance hierarchy. It is the dominant individuals who seem to be the most influential, particularly with regard to high-risk behaviors. They tend to be both aggressive and usually more prone to those behaviors. Moreover, it is rare for friendship dyads to occur in isolation; more typically they occur within a friendship network or clique. These social patterns are very difficult to study, he added, because they evolve so rapidly. Even those who do not interact with one another within the peer crowd might feel the need to adopt the attitudes or behaviors of the crowd with which they would like to associate.

In addition, adolescents spend a lot more time with their peers than younger children do and are more heavily influenced by them than younger children are. The drive for affiliation and acceptance at this stage makes adolescents more open to peer influence and tends to promote the rapid development of new relationships (Brown, 2011). Peer pressure is considered in the literature to have a significant influence on the youths` sexual behaviors (Bernstein, 2001). It can encourage youths to experiment a range of sexual behaviors, and doing so may lead to an increased risk of unwanted pregnancy and contracting sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDs (Kirby, 2007). On the other hand, despite the negative influence of peers, one of the emergent themes is the feeling of being happy and inspired in the company of friends.

Therefore, friends must be chosen well and parents should be keen in knowing the whereabouts of their children so that proactive interventions and decisions can be made towards the adolescent crisis of choosing what is right and wrong. Collaborative programs can also be initiated between the school nurse and guidance counselor on giving educational activities that promote harmonious relationship towards classmates and friends such as the "friendship factor" session where students will be oriented on the characteristics of good friends from those who will be a bad influence to them.

Parents have a strong influence on decision not to engage in risky behavior. Gonzales (2011) explained that effective parenting (nurturing, supportive parenting that includes clear and consistent discipline) can prevent negative behaviors and promote prosocial behaviors and values. It also helps children develop various competencies that are protective. Parental monitoring and supervision may prevent children from associating with deviant peers. High levels of family conflict and poor communication skills disrupt parenting and family relations, reduce children's emotional security, and reinforce the use of aggression and interpersonal hostility. Further, he added that high levels of social anxiety or low levels of self-esteem tend to make adolescents more likely to adopt the perceived behaviors of their peers, than those who have been rejected.

Poor family relationships make adolescents more likely to attract and affiliate with deviant peers and to adopt their attitudes. According to Datu (2012), reinforcing the conception of happiness as a satisfaction of needs in its interaction with the social support system (e.g. primary, secondary) causes a feeling of contentment and joy from meaningful relationships. This is a central theme that was found in the participants' responses. The most crucial relationships emerge from family, friends, peers and colleagues. For example, one participant said: "Whenever I see and keep in touch with my parents and my friends, I feel glad and happy." Most of them shared commonalities in terms of prioritizing the impact of relationship satisfaction on the achievement of a positive and joyous state. In a study conducted by Fernandez (Ateneo De Manila University) in 2011, results revealed that Filipino adolescents conceptualize support mainly as hand-on support. They appreciate when they receive advice, personal assistance, and being challenged because they consider these as expressions of care and concern rather than intrusive acts. The Filipino identity, at any age, is characterized by a collective sense-concept. For example, for an adolescent to be told what to do, does not violate personal boundaries. Furthermore, Filipino adolescents value the wisdom of their parents, teachers and mentors, and feel supported when these people intervene in their lives.

Moreover, assurance of security is an important aspect in the life of an adolescent. When there is a feeling of security, an adolescent fulfills his proper responsibilities towards the society. On the other hand, an insecure adolescent feels disturbed and frustrated due to his lack of stability. He may not be able to cope with the demands of a normal social environment. Therefore, there is a need to a proper congenial environment at home for the child's stable and secure personality development (Manisha, 2016). Goel (2002) emphasized that feelings of security–insecurity significantly and positively relate to family attachment.

Further, self-esteem refers to a student's perceptions of competence or adequacy in academic and non-academic (e.g., social, behavioral, and athletic) domains and is best represented by a profile of self-perceptions across domains (Manning, 2007). Its significance is often exaggerated to the extent that low self-esteem is viewed as the cause of all evil and high self-esteem as the cause of all good (Manning, Bear and Minke, 2006). Promoting high self-esteem is important because it relates to academic and life success. As students transition from mid-level to high school, their self-esteem gradually grows. Moreover, adolescents face a number of unique developmental challenges, including coping with abrupt changes in their bodies, managing their sexual interests, forming new kinds of relationships, and planning their academic and occupational future. Gender affects how youths manage all of these challenges (Perry and Pauletti, 2011). It is important to identify the origins of these relationship styles because they predict important aspects of social and personal functioning in adulthood; e.g., avoidant men are more sexually promiscuous; preoccupied

women are more angered by perceived partner lack of support (Perry and Pauletti, 2011).

Lastly, parents affected their offspring's use of alcohol and cigarettes both through modeling and parenting behavior. However, the importance of modeling relative to parenting behavior differed by the type of substance (White and Buyske, 2000). Therefore, parents must see to it that they play their part as the role model of the family because an adolescent who is deciding what he wants when reaching adulthood is very observant and tends to imitate what he sees and experiences inside the family.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be said that three factors, namely culture and social environment, interpersonal relations, and intrapersonal factors of the participants directly contributed to their positive behavior. The weak involvement of the participants in risky behaviors connotes that students enrolled in both public and private schools in Davao City are sensible, well-grounded individuals who respect the authority and advice of their elders. Among the significant influences in reducing risky behaviors are the advices and guidance of their parents, other family members, and teachers. The decisions of the participants in the non-engagement in risky behaviors are taught at home and in school.

Recommendations

Schools should continue to emphasize student-school connectedness where students feel that their school environment supports their growth positively and that the environment is healthy. This could be done by providing opportunities for family members to be actively involved in the academic and non-academic activities in school like "Family Day" celebration, quiz bee for students and their parents, consultation days, among others. Parent monitoring and guidance are important in transition of adolescents to adulthood.

The school nurses may have been successful in informing the students of the negative health outcomes in using drugs, smoking, risky sexual activity and suicidal attempts but emphasis must be more on the reduction of alcohol drinking which is quite common. There seems to be a lack of enforcement of laws and monitoring of small stores selling alcohol in the community. The model also explains that involvement in risky behaviors results in poor health outcome and vice versa.

Future nurse researchers are recommended to do a study that will focus on the prevalence and the health outcomes as illustrated in the IMHARB. The method selected in this study provided a cross-sectional analysis by comparing both quantitative and qualitative results. This cross-sectional analysis was needed to examine the participants by determining commonalities between the two sources of information. Nurse researchers are recommended to use a mixed method, either convergent, exploratory, and explanatory to ensure of getting enough data and results.

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Marist welfare arm: A community extension program in Santa Cruz mission schools incorporated

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Abstract

This phenomenological study was conducted to gain insights from the experiences of the personnel of Santa Cruz Mission School, Incorporated (SCMSI) on their involvement in the implementation of the Notre Dame of Marbel University (NDMU) community extension program for indigenous students. The study was conducted in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato with the faculty and staff of SCMSI who have been actively involved in most activities in five years (2014-2019). In-depth Interviews with three key informants uncovered their perspectives of the program, the program outcomes and the facilitating and hindering factors for implementation. Insights drawn from the emergent themes are recommended for consideration in formulating plans for other extension communities.

Introduction

Notre Dame of Marbel University (NDMU) is one of these organizations that responds to the needs of the less fortunate. NDMU being run by Marist Brothers, through its welfare arm, the Champagnat Community College (CCC) developed a Community Extension Program for its extension community, the Santa Cruz Mission Schools Incorporated (SCMSI) located in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato , which is implemented by the university administrator, personnel, and students.

CCC shares with the vision of the university in building a progressive and healthy community (CCC Manual, 2016) to demonstrate the university's trademark *"an institution that cares for humanity".* The community extension program been desired by the Marist Brothers whose advocacy is taken from the values of their founder, St. Marcellin Champagnat who asserts *"Love of the poor is a precious heritage"* (CCC Manual, 2016).

CCC has been established *"to assist in the development of communities through the provision of education to the Tboli people from the hinterlands of Lake Sebu in the Province of South Cotabato in Mindanao, Philippines."* Extension community refers to the community being served by the agency or institution that are considered deprived, depressed and underserved (CCC Manual, 2010). It is in response to the call that schools must also extend help to highlight their latent functions.

Schools can be agents of social change because of their potential to perform key roles in spreading new things and ideas (Arriaza, 2004). *"They are the path for initiating and disseminating innovations"* (p.14). The schools, as institutions convene people to meet primarily for supporting the educational mission and the countless purposes of civic life. This principle inspired various colleges and universities in implementing their community extension services [program] for marginalized communities; although historically, extensions as a mode of knowledge exchange have existed across the world with a more or less institutional forms in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece and Phoenicia (Jones and Garforth, 1997).

Community Extension Services of NDMU to SCMSI

The Community Extension Services (CES) office is directly under the office of the University President. CCC's objectives are: to develop and implement innovative sustainable programs that will help improve the quality of life of deprived, depressed, disadvantaged and underserved communities; to establish strong linkages, and network

with LGUs, NGOs, GOs, POs and funding institutions for inter-institutional cooperation toward service area for development and possible fund sourcing of program in international and national levels; and to strengthen on-going programs through participative efforts in planning, management, implementation, monitoring and evaluation (CCC Manual, 2010). In collaboration with different colleges, university clubs and organizations,

CCC is implementing the following programs in Santa Cruz Mission Schools, Inc.; education and socio-cultural, faculty and instruction, student development services, facilities and instructional support, and skills training and livelihood projects. Various colleges, clubs, and organizations take turns in conducting community extension services in the area as time permits.

The term 'extension' is more recent because this originates from academia and its first use was recorded in Britain in the context of 'university extension' as described by Israel et al. (2011). Extension program is defined as *"comprehensive set of activities that are intended to bring about a sequence of outcomes among targeted clients"* (Rubio and Sastre, 2016). Among other things, extension programs are characterized by the following; *"a focus on the needs of the clients, the intent to affect particular learning and behavior outcomes, multiple activities that are comprehensive in nature, and the presence of formal evaluation"* (Rubio, et. al, 2016, p. 110). Community extension programs were organized into the national system in 1952 before it became a thrust of the educational system to support the poverty reduction program of the Philippine government (Rubio, et. al. 2016).

The constructivist approach to learning considers community as a source of knowledge that both educators and students alike need to access in order to understand the cultural, social, and linguistic barriers that separate schools from the communities (Arriaza, 2004). The constructivists believe that a community is a *"school's natural extension because students exhibit cultural traits that spring from within the community they come from"* (p.2). In this context, *"educators encourage the school's involvement in community's social event as long as this yields knowledge"* (p. 15). Constructivist theories are influential throughout the learning sectors as this suggested the processes called accommodation and assimilation originally presented by Jean Piaget in 1950 (Duveskog, 2013). Piaget (1950) argued that through these processes, *"individuals construct a new knowledge out of their experiences"* (p.22).

Assimilation occurs when a new experience is aligned and integrated in individuals' already existing framework and perception of the world; while accommodation is the process of reframing one's mental representation of the external world to fit the new experiences (Duveskog, 2013). Further, the constructivists approach in facilitating empowerment stipulated that knowledge, behavior and social relations must be created by human agent as *"a consequence of critical thinking, experimentation and communicative action and the core feature is the ownership of the learner"* (p. 22). This claim is also supported by the

principle of experiential learning. From the learning theories of Dewey, Lewin and Piaget, Kolb developed a simplified and harmonized learning model—the Kolb learning cycle which is also described as experiential learning (Duveskog, 2013). The basic assumption is that the learning is always rooted in the prior experience (Kolb, 1984), and through the transformation of this experience, knowledge is created (Percy, 2005).

The process of experiential learning is one that links education, work and personal development and it is highly relevant as shown by the experience of community extension workers in the study of Duveskog (2013). The community extension workers while working in groups were able to find their own solutions to problems through testing and experimentation of ideas and practices. This coincides with the position of Fletcher and Vaughn (2009) in their study of student-volunteers. Accordingly, students that volunteered or doing volunteer work are doing it *"because the activities were related to their courses"* (p.111). Thus, the experiences derived from the volunteer works will help them in their future career as this will provide enhanced knowledge in their craft as they will have a real-world experience when it comes to their courses (Rubio et. al., 2016). Student motivations for volunteer works are varied (Taylor and Keim, 1999).

Cha et al. (1994) argued that community extension programs are formed to foster students' experience and boost community resources at a minimum cost. This collaboration between the students and community people enhances their capabilities and it paved the way for the establishment of their social capital. Coleman (1988) puts forward that social capital *"strengthens the inter-relationships between individuals and facilitates the exchange of services as it greases the wheel that allows the community to advance smoothly"* (p. 288). He defined social capital as *"a variety of entities consist of some aspects of social structures that facilitate certain actions of actors – whether personal or corporate actors—within the structure"* (p.10). Moreover, Fukuyama (1995), regarded social capital as a constructive element in the creation and maintenance of economic prosperity, regional development (Grootaert and Bastelaer, 2002), collective action (Burt, 1992) and democratic governance (Putnam, 2000).

Lin (2001) refers to these connections as social networks, *"the social relationships between individual actors, groups, organizations, communities, regions and nations that serve as a resource to produce positive return"* (p.10). Similarly, Ishimaru (2014) argues that although social capital has been interpreted within various perspectives but this concept focuses on relationships between individuals, networks, norms and resources.

Furthermore, Deci and Ryan (2000) contend that the concept of social capital parallels other concepts of action. It comes into being through the combined actions of several or many people. The decision of one individual has consequences for all. In this notion, social capital is attributed to social structures that it only exists when it is shared. For Anirudh and Uphoff (1999), *"social capital is an*

accumulation of various types of intangible, social, psychological, cultural, institutional and related assets that influence cooperative behavior" (p. 202). It improves with use and deteriorates with disuse (Deci and Ryan, 2000). Often argued as mechanism to enhance institutional development, social capital needs to be complemented so as to translate individual attitude and values to cooperative behavior and transformed into positive outcome that promote community agency (Arriaza, 2004). Agency is defined by Sen (2005) as *"what a person is free to do and achieve in whatever goals or values he or she regards as important"* (p. 154). Agency is related to empowerment, autonomy, self-direction, self-determination, liberation, participation, mobilization, and self-confidence. Several authors frame empowerment as an increase in power, understood as control or real ability to effect change. While, a widely cited definition of empowerment is from the World Development Report in 2000/2001 which views it as the process of enhancing the capacity of the poor people to influence the state or institutions that affect their lives, by strengthening their participation in political processes and local decision-making.

Saeed et al. (2005) argue that any 'workable' definition of empowerment needs to include two main aspects—the information and influence because these will allow people to express their preferences and have an effective impact on particular decisions. Bennet (2002) emphasized that empowerment is also based on social mobilization that gives people voice and allows them to demand . Friedman (1992) argued that definitions must *"focus on the moral aspects of empowerment, such as fulfillment, human rights, and the removal of oppression and injustice"* (p.13).

Boyle (1981), contended that a program refers to a comprehensive set of activities that includes an educational component which is intended to bring about a sequence of outcomes to targeted clients. Extension programs are organized in a variety of ways to address many different needs and issues. Every program has measurable outcomes because without measurable outcomes, programs are really just activities.

As the phenomenon of student community engagement has become more widespread, a field of scholarship has validated the importance of this work (Erickson, 2010). However, the premise of engaging students in service with community partners are based on the assumption of mutual exchange, both partners –the students and community organizations give and receive something of value. Scholars have agreed that community service enhances the educational outcomes for students and they also agreed on the core set of best practices to create from these outcomes (Erickson cited in Eyler and Giles, 1999). But, because of the very little research on community outcomes of community engagement, scholars have not reached a consensus about what constitutes a best practice for community partners or even what types of benefits might accrue to communities that participate in these mutual exchanges with academic partners (Erickson cited in Cruz and Giles, 2000).

A number of indirect impacts in community extension services have also been discussed in some studies. For instance, Carrasco and Alcalla (2009) mentioned about partnerships with universities opened doors to broader networks and possibilities, and enhanced the legitimacy of community projects to funding agencies because of their partnership with universities is another impact. Accordingly, students bring a fresh look at the community from a critical and informed distance and a new perspective to neighborhood issues (Carrasco and Alcalla, 2009).

Santa Cruz Mission School, Inc. as the Extension Community

Santa Cruz Mission School, Inc. (SCMSI) is a non-stock, non-profit Catholic institution organized in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato, Mindanao, Philippines in 1961. It was registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC-Registration No. 36994) on December 9, 1968 as a Non-Governmental Organization to assist the Indigenous Peoples (Tboli, Manobo, Blaan, Ubo, Kalagan and Maguindanao Muslims) to realize their full human potential as individuals and as people (CCC Manual of Operation, 2016). However, the indigenous groups being served by the SCMSI are within Lake Sebu area which comprised only of the Tboli. Accordingly, due to limited operating expenses, the 26 service centers of Santa Cruz Mission back in 1980s are now reduced to 3 communities as others are already turned-over to the management of the government, specifically, the Department of Education (DepEd). During 1980s, SCMSI had programs on Education, Health, Community Organization, and Sustainable Agriculture, however, these programs were all foreign-funded and at present, SCMSI focuses on Education because of the lack of funds to operate other programs.

These SCMSI centers were established to address the educational needs of indigenous cultural communities with the mission of *"In the Service of Tribal Community", along with its vision statement: "The Santa Cruz Mission School, Inc. is responsive to the educational needs of indigenous cultural communities, envisions a catholic education. Contextualized in the life of the indigenous people thereby uplifting their identity and empowering them as peoples toward self-reliance."* (SCMSI Revised Manual of Operations, 2016).

NDMU has been implementing the CCC's community extension program for a duration of five years up to March 2017. Program evaluation (Alkin, 1990) was conducted to determine the impact of the program to the various aspects in the school- community.

This qualitative phenomenological study explored the experiences and gained insights from the perspectives of the faculty and staff of the extension community who were directly involved in working collaboratively with NDMU-CCC personnel during the implementation of the community extension program to SCMSI. *"Phenomenology is an approach to qualitative research that focuses on the commonality of a lived experience within a particular group. The fundamental goal of the approach is to arrive at as*

description of the nature of the particular phenomenon" (Creswell, 2013).

This is a transcendental -phenomenological study in the context of Santa Cruz Mission School, Incorporated in Lake Sebu, South Cotabato. It is transcendental since it is focused and detailed, in which the perspectives on implementation are carefully scrutinized and articulated based on the data presented by the participants. As Husserl (1997) and Moustakas (1994) assert *"The researchers must set aside prejudice, prior knowledge, judgements, and preconceptions about the phenomenon to hear the contribution of research participants with an open mind."* This also means that in doing so, the researchers are entering a state *"where everything is perceived freshly as if for the first time"* (Moustakas, 1994) which is "*free from constructs of the intellect and society as possible"* (Groenewald, 2004, p.12). This study also followed the stages in the transcendental phenomenological study contended by Creswell (2013).

The study will benefit the providers and service communities in understanding their roles as partners in order to maximize the internal resources available in the community. It is also a great help for the volunteers who conduct the community extension services to the community so they will initiate activities that will appropriately respond to the needs of the service-communities. Furthermore, this study will also assist community development agents of different organizations to understand, evaluate, and strengthen their partnership with their extension communities.

This study specifically answered the following questions:
1. What are the perspectives of SCMSI employees of the Community Extension Program of NDMU?
2. What are the outcomes of the community extension program to the SCMSI community?
3. What are the contributing and inhibiting factors that affect the implementation of the community extension program? What were the contributing and hindering factors that affected the implementation of the community extension program?

Methodology
This study was conducted in Lake Sebu and describes the perspectives of the participants about the implementation of the community extension program of NDMU through CCC to Santa Cruz Mission Schools, Inc. It interviewed four teachers and staff who were actively involved in working collaboratively with the representatives of NDMU in the delivery of the community extension services.
The data were gathered through in-depth interviews with the key informants who were purposively chosen. A semi-structured interview guide was formulated in English language. Follow up questions were also asked in order to extract the appropriate information to substantiate the data. Information gathered were transcribed and translated to English since some answers were stated in Tagalog, Tboli, and Ilonggo. After the transcription, follow up interviews through mobile phone were done in case of missing information.

For ethical considerations, the researchers asked permission from the president of the school that an interview will be conducted to the participants which will be tape-recorded for easier transcription. An informed consent form was also accomplished by the participants to ensure their permission and there would be no ethical issue that will arise. The objectives of the study and some possible benefits to the school from the results of the study were also discussed before the questions.

For data analysis, the researcher considered the procedure that Moustakas (1994) which focused on the description of the experiences of the participants. Bracketing was also observed by the researcher in the data processing. Building on the data from the research questions, the researchers went through the interview transcripts and highlighted significant statements that provide understanding of the participants' perspectives on the phenomenon. Moustakas (1994) called this step horizontalization. After which, formulated meanings were developed from the significant statements, and from significant statements cluster of themes were developed where emergent themes have surfaced. Based on the emergent themes, the researchers presented the participants' perspectives about the implementation of the community extension program of NDMU.

Results and Discussion
Participants' perspectives on the community extension program of NDMU
Community Engagement through Education
Time and again the importance of education cannot be overemphasized. For the Tboli people it is an agent in the attainment of their dreams and their hopes for a brighter future. The participants believe that one benefit brought to SCMSI is community engagement through education. NDMU helped to address educational issues through enhancing the teachers' capability. Accordingly, this leads to the improvement of SCM students' academic performance.
My experience so far is that the teachers have shown real concern when they came to our school and conducted seminars. Sometimes, I received calls that they are coming as a group. They bring us new knowledge and expose us to new strategies in teaching which we have applied in our classrooms. So, I think overall, that they like to be with the people in the community. (p. 10, line 3).

The statement concurs with Mapp's (2002) study as cited in Matoke (2014) which reveals that it is essential for programs to implement strategies that will develop partnerships in order to serve a diverse population. The lectures during seminars, trainings and workshops conducted by NDMU representatives, provided the members of the SCMSI community an opportunity to be educated in various aspects.

For instance, sessions for teachers enhanced their knowledge on teaching strategies while lectures for students provided new ideas which are believed to have helped them in understanding their roles as members of the indigenous community. These community engagements are

in the form of formal, informal and non-formal education. One participant shared that the hands-on trainings for agricultural skills development have given the indigenous people the means to pursue their dreams and aspirations in life.

In addition, another participant shared that, *"When NDMU teachers and personnel responded to our call for scholarships they give assurance of the education to our students. It is an opportunity given to us to help our students pursue their education in college". "NDMU has been willing to educate us and our students. We are happy to see everyone enjoying the opportunities to be in school rather than staying at home and waiting for the end of the day."* (p. 4, line 8).

Contributions to Teachers and Students Holistic Development

The second theme that emerged is about how the program contributed to the teachers and students' development. An effective teachers' development is crucial for creating a quality learning environment. This is what NDMU has envisioned when faculty from the different colleges came to SCMSI to conduct sessions on professional development of teachers. The participants viewed that the content-driven sessions about the new trends in teaching are for long term development that teachers will benefit from. Castleberry (2010) puts forward the idea that teachers must be equipped with new knowledge, *"to individualize instruction for a diverse population of students, to help all students achieve high standards, to introduce new technologies into the classroom, to become experts in student growth and development, to help manage the school, and to reach out to parents and the community".* The training and seminar given by NDMU was anchored in these ideas and delivered in a manner that is culture-sensitive to the Tboli. Hence, this intervention has alleviated some of the challenges experienced by SCMSI teachers in teaching the indigenous children.

Moreover, holistic development of SCM college students was addressed by NDMU through activities on pro-social values and character formation. For instance, this was done through recollection, retreats and other activities that helped the students to enhance their personal values and social relationships with teachers, peers and community. As Jenney (2010) asserts, educational institutions promote character formation to make the college or university become distinct from other institutions by not only educating the minds of young people, but also by developing character and civic responsibility (p. 5). Character formation also enhanced and strengthened pupils/students' self-esteem and confidence.

The trainings, seminars and workshops conducted by NDMU such as leadership trainings, sports and the community immersion within SCMSI campus made our pupils, students and officers' area more responsible to their tasks and jobs. It strengthened student leadership skills with sense of commitment and service-oriented (p. 2, line 6).

Facilitated in the Preservation of Cultural Heritage

Living and working in a community with rich cultural heritage is considered by participants not only as a responsibility but also somethng they are accountable for. They feel the need to preserve the cultural heritage of the people. They believe that South Cotabato is rich in cultural diversity and this is one advantage of the province. Thus, they are obliged to serve like stewards of this cultural heritage as what they are doing in the Tboli communities. Further, the community extension program to SCMSI, gave the faculty and students a wider horizon to showcase their culture through performing arts to different events hosted by the university both inside and outside the two campuses of both schools. The participants shared that they were happy and excited every time NDMU invited the dance troupe of Tboli students to perform: *"They also strengthened our school collaboration, networking and linkages. The activities on preservation of showcasing our cultural heritage also leads to unity and diversity. They also help promote the school identity as the center of IP education."* (p. 6, line 6).

World Bank (1994, cited in Anasi et al., 2013) defined cultural heritage "as a record of humanity's relationship to the world, past achievements, and discoveries. It is the present manifestation of the human past. It refers to sites, structures, and remains of archaeological, historical, religious, cultural or aesthetic value". The collective part of the Tboli society were disseminated through the help of NDMU which gives members of the dance troupe the chance to explain the nature and meaning of the specific performance that depicts the culture. Dissemination is significantly appreciated since it a way to ley the people understand and accept the culture that somehow have been forgotten or set aside. It is one of the findings of the study of Anasi, et al (2013), which states that one of the great benefits of human society is dissemination of cultural heritage.

Conversely, Santa Cruz Mission School, Incorporated has been NDMU's partner also in the establishment of Mindanao Center of Culture in the university's library. The faculty and staff from SCMSI had contributed ideas on how to design the center and identify particular icons and tangible heritage that must have been displayed in order for people to understand the Tboli culture. Also, the researchers learned from the participants that the preservation of Tboli culture has long been practiced by them since Catholic Missionaries presence in the area. More so, they are aware of the institution of Indigenous Peoples' Education being spearheaded by Department of Education.

"As Tboli teachers in the SCMSI, we are also invited to share our knowledge about the particular things being displayed at the NDMU library 'Center of Culture'. I feel that in that way I did my responsibility to preserve the cultural heritage that have been part of our life ever since. Thank you, NDMU for the opportunity." (p. 7, line 9).

Collaborative Efforts Towards Mutually Beneficial Pursuits

Mutual benefits can be achieved through collaboratively accomplishing the goals and objectives of community extension program. This collaboration between NDMU and SCMSI was made effective through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2013. NDMU has responded to the educational needs of SCMSI's faculty, staff and students through provision or school supplies, scholarships, uniforms and other material resources to suffice the needs of the students. Similarly, NDMU students brought gifts to the beneficiaries during Christmas. Stewart (2011) asserts that extension partnership must provide a structure that enhances the capabilities of the clientele trough educational resources. One participant claimed that working with NDMU for five years is like working together, journeying together towards what they are now as an educational institution. Stueart (2011) further claims that *"through partnerships, individuals and organizations have enhanced program development efforts for sustaining and increasing productivity"* and indeed this is visible in the two schools' working relationship.

The relationship between NDMU and SCMSI personnel is always at the center of activities. However, one of the participants shared that most of the time the community outreach activities conducted in the school are planned by NDMU groups that implemented their plans without consulting the people. The participant feels that the teachers and students are just but recipients of services rendered by NDMU. It is clear, that the activities are centered on the plans of the clubs and organizations of students which are anchored on the vision-mission of NDMU but sometimes do not address the needs of the service community.

However, despite the lack of consultation with the service community, the personnel of SCMSI still cooperatively pursued the activities because they believed in shared responsibility. One participant claimed that the activities could be more prolific if they were informed thus, they could have suggested the most appropriate actions to be taken to address the felt needs of the partner community. As Lieberman (2000, cited in Silanes and Valero, 2013) contends that *"a shared responsibility emerges when the participants sense that network activities are aligned with their needs and demands for support activities that can change their own teaching practice".*

Outcomes of Community Extension Program to the SCMSI Community

The participants' perspectives on the outcomes of community extension program of NDMU are discussed below.

Positive Community Changes

Positive community changes can be considered as one of the key underpinning outcomes that emerged from the participants' perspectives. The participants were happy for the contribution of community extension program that it brought changes at SCMSI community. For example, the installation of electrical wires by the engineering students in almost all buildings has brought positive effect to the services of the school towards the students. One of the participants shared: *"The engineering students made our life as teachers easier because we can already work on our tasks even at night time without worrying that the old wires will malfunction. I believe that NDMU is proactive in thinking of this positive result for our school. We are grateful for this effort."* (p. 11, line 22).

Another participant shared: *"NDMU donated a lot of facilities for instructional support to SCMSI such as computers, books, kitchen utensils, sports equipment, laboratory facilities, AVP materials. These facilities helped also upgrade the standard required from us by DepEd and CHED."* (p.11, line 25).

The positive changes in the community seemed to have motivated NDMU to even conduct extensive activities. Most of the community service providers were motivated by the high visible impact of the community-based intervention on poor and vulnerable communities (Datiko et al., 2015).

The participants said that *"students and pupils are also assisted in terms of physical alertness and medical assistance through dental check-ups"*. Indeed, the gratitude and positive feedback shown by beneficiaries in the service community is also a source of satisfaction for the groups that have come to conduct their activities.

Moreover, when the participants were asked about the changes brought by the extension program, one of them shared: *"Community Agricultural and Educational Program (CAEP) department of SCMSI appreciates NDMU's advocacy in doing extension programs that benefit the indigenous people in terms of learning and improving their talent. CAEP department supports programs that motivate the student in different fields of learnings specially in agriculture. It is indeed important because the students can apply their learnings into real-life situations"*. Furthermore, a good number of graduates from the school who benefited from the scholarship and are now part of SCMSI workforce; an evident outcome of the community extension program.

Increasing the Skills of the Workforce

The fact cannot be ignored that the shortage of skilled teachers in the Philippines is increasing. As an effect, many educational institutions hire teachers that sometimes lack the qualifications and SCMSI is one institution that does this. SCMSI administrators do not have the capacity to hire seasoned teachers and it has been hard for them to cope with the demands of the higher education that most of time compromised the quality of instructions. Teachers are the backbone of the educational institutions and a skilled and talented workforce is critical for business success in all sectors (Region Bulletin, 2004). The participants shared that the various support given by NDMU to the SCMSI staff speed up the accomplishments of their requirements to the Commission on Higher Education and were able to make them equipped with skills they needed. One of the participants shared:

NDMU assisted SCMSI Faculty and staff through the following: curriculum development and syllabi-making, training for science and mathematics in the 21st century teaching, training for our librarian and other related activities was of great impact to SCMSI faculty development. (p. 10, line 27).

Apparently, educational extension programs that range from short-term information dissemination processes to longer-term will lead toward transformation (Williams, Dickey, and Hergert, 2001, cited in Hilliker, et al, 2007). Indeed, the enhancement sessions conducted by NDMU skilled-up the SCMSI workforce.

However, McCamby (2017), in the article "*The Catalyst*" talked about the strategies for continuing education and workforce development; and asserted that *"both workforce training and continuing education have become a critical component to maintaining a competitive workforce and personal enrichment. It can be vital to the individual employee as well as the business as a whole"* (p. 9).

Interconnectedness of its People through Spirituality
Another emergent theme that came out from the participants' perspectives on the explicit outcome of the community extension program is the interconnectedness of the people in the community through spirituality. The spiritual formation given by the Campus Ministry and Religious Education (CMRE) department has strengthened the connections among the members of the community. This is due to the spiritual guidance given to the students by making the Marist values known to them. By identifying themselves as part of the Marist community, people in SCMSI feel the interconnectedness of one another being part of the mission of St. Marcellin. This connection among the community members help them find their life's meaning and purpose.

The impact of NDMU community extension program to SCMSI in terms of spiritual formation is that they are not only bringing happiness but they also bring spiritual lesson especially during the feast of one particular saint. Through this activity, our pupils learn more about the background and religious deed of a saint which are not yet familiar to them.

Many people find meaning and purpose in their life and the answers to their personal spiritual questions through experiencing connectedness. Connectedness can be seen as being a harmonious relationship or 'oneness' with self, 'other' (Willson and Suhud, 2016). This interconnectedness is considered an integral part of any conceptualization of spirituality and religion. However, in understanding these themes, it is important to highlight the stand of NDMU in the spiritual formation of students at SCMSI. As the spirituality of Tboli emanates from their culture, and as NDMU respects culture as enshrined in its core values; the consequence is, NDMU also exhibits high regard for Tboli spirituality. As Wane (2007, 2009) 'indicated that there is no need to name one's spirituality, however one should allow a space for it and provide space for students to define

their spirituality from the roots or religious background because the definition of spirituality has to be open ended (Wane and Ritskies, 2011). Moreover, the extension activities enabled NDMU students to learn from the community people. The spiritual formation program focused its activities on the cultivation of altruism and empathy and these activities teach the students the ways of the Tboli people and the process enabled them to experience their community life. *"The community extension experience brought happiness to us as they share to us stories of Catholic saints, their hardships and their joy and the ultimate meaning of their earthly existence".* (p2, line 18).

Further, spirituality teaches them about empathy. Empathy refers to the ability to enter another's frame of reference and sense the meaning in her or his inner world (Rogers, 1957, cited in Giordano et al., 2014). Two potential predictors of empathy are religion and spirituality. Given the empirical role of empathy in understanding the behaviors of every member of the community, the participants' perspectives that interconnectedness through spirituality as one of the outcomes of NDMU's community extension is manifested in the physical and emotional connections of the members during the retreats and recollections conducted for them almost every year since the collaborative partnership between two schools has started.

Our pupils learn to develop companionship, giving of happiness, sharing of blessing and love, and helping hands to the needy. All these factors were being practiced during Christmas season as NDMU always invite and welcome us to celebrate with them the birth of our Jesus Christ. SCMSI system is supportive of the same activity of campus ministry in the school. We hope that NDMU continue to support our spiritual activity.

Contributing Factors that Affect the Implementation of the Community Extension Program
Every program that reached its optimum level in achieving its goals has contributing and hindering factors. These are taken into account in order to improve the delivery of extension services in the next communities.

Organizational Capacity
The capacity of NDMU to adopt SCMSI as its service community is one of the contributing factors that made the extension program successful. It is one of the themes that emerged. A number of school-based activities being implemented by different colleges of NDMU are responses to the needs and calls of SCMSI and have been said to be effective at reducing behavior problems of the students and helped them become resilient in facing challenges. These are manifestations of the readiness of NDMU to share and extend help to the service community. However, the participants also view that there are certain gaps in the implementation of the community extension program, albeit the well-designed interventions. Thus, it encourages a relatively more variability in implementation system

considering the context that is sensitive to geographic, economic, cultural and other conditions (Spoth, Schainker, Redmond, Ralston, Yeh, and Perkins, 2015).

As one of the participants shared: *"It is hard to say if the assistance given is really answering the needs of the community but still we are grateful to them. NDMU has all the resources but sometimes these resources are not what the students need. I mean the gifts, the dole-outs that they give are only temporary."* (p. 11, line 7).

Experience with Collaboration
The NDMU's experiences in collaboration with other organizations greatly contributed to the smooth implementation of the community extension program. NDMU has been working with a number of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) for more than seven decades already. The formative experiences of the administrators and personnel promoted collaboration among the NDMU and SCMSI communities. Collaboration among faculty and staff employees has been suggested as a means to attain a number of important outcomes to higher education such as student learning and institutional excellence (Markland, 2009). The participants shared that NDMU administrators are seasoned in collaborating with SCMSI administrators, local government units and other stakeholders.

Hindering Factors that Affect the Implementation of Community Extension Program
Technological Barriers
Technology could make knowledge sharing and knowledge transfer easier and more effective. It could create connections between employees and an organization. However, the lack of technology that can facilitate knowledge transfer between the partnering organizations (SCMSI and NDMU) is considered a barrier in this case. For instance, SCMSI lacks computer units and other resources and they are still using the old system which does not support the nowadays requirements. Also, providing them with new technology could be an obstacle because they still need training for its use. Moreover, the geographical location of SCMSI rendered it difficult for fast internet connections that they can use in offices and classrooms. This area has to be separately addressed if knowledge transfer is expected during community extension activities.

Different Organizational Culture
To fulfill its mission, SCMSI needs to operate within a structure that is best suited for its purpose as an organization. In the process of partnership, lapses in the organizational structures of SCMSI were identified by NDMU, however, this area is not within the ambit of the community extension services. For instance, it is noticeable, that that succession of leadership in the management of SCMSI is not properly stipulated in their retirement policies. Arbitrarily, this hinders the infusion of new ideas and energies in the organization. More so, NDMU representatives noticed that job descriptions of the SCMSI

employees are not properly designated. Thus, there are instances during the community extension that confusion arose as to their responsibilities.

Insights and Implications
This study explores on the perspectives of Santa Cruz Mission School employees on the community extension program, as a Marist Welfare Arm of NDMU. This undertaking is in consonance with the mandate that universities and colleges shall perform an active and constructive role in rural development. Universities need to adjust their programs to accommodate new teaching models and to foster partnerships with various institutions such as schools and academia and rural space stakeholders. Because universities and colleges can provide knowledge for rural development; as such, they have the responsibility to facilitate learning to those who work in the management of rural development (Achaean and Holmes, undated).

The employees of Santa Cruz Mission believed that the community engagement of NDMU improved the delivery of classroom instructions. Also, the support of NDMU in the education program of SCMSI is extensive as it covers not only the transfer of knowledge in terms of training of teachers and students but also in terms of fund transfer and other donations in order for them to sustain their operation.

The engagement in SCMSI highlighted the importance of leadership training among their students because their community needs true leaders that are concern about people's welfare. However, leadership development does not happen in the vacuum; additional efforts must be made. According to the participants/key-informants of this study, the leadership training programs and team-building activities had a profound effect on student-leaders. This study also finds out that if economic and community development are to occur, it is the responsibility of the leaders to make it happen. Thus, the time, effort and money for training student-leaders at SCMSI are properly invested as future leaders are much needed by their community.

Preservation of cultural heritage is not new to SCMSI. It is deep in the consciousness of people (Tboli) working at Santa Cruz Mission because efforts on cultural preservation and restoration have been made in the past by former Catholic Missionaries who have long existence in Santa Cruz Mission. In fact, the fruition of this effort has been recognized throughout the province of South Cotabato by highlighting the culture of the people in the tourism campaign of the province. Consequently, the conviction of the people in cultural preservation is also demonstrated in their efforts to promote indigenous peoples' education. Indigenous Peoples education however, has been institutionalized by the Department of Education through DepEd Order No. 62, series of 2011 which is entitled as National Indigenous Peoples Education Policy Framework.

Thus, in reference to this, NDMU also showed support to work alongside the government by encouraging SCMSI to continue their advocacy of educating the Tboli children with their culture as the core of their education. The support of NDMU to all these undertakings would nurture a situation

that will lead to respect and tolerance among different ethnic groups in the province. This is in consonance with the mandate by UNESCO that is *"advancing through the educational, scientific and cultural relations of the people of the world; the objectives of peace and the common welfare of mankind"* (UNECO Constitution, 1945).

The teachers and students of SCMSI are not only recipients of the extension services of NDMU, they also provide critical local knowledge for the students and faculty members of the latter. Thus, democratic participatory opportunities are intangible but important outcomes of university-community partnerships (Fischer, 2009). This democratic participatory approach was observed in the conduct of community extension at SCMSI because the projects being undertaken by NDMU were all suggested by SCMSI at the onset of the extension program.

The extension activities enabled NDMU students to learn from the community people. The spiritual formation program focused its activities on the cultivation of altruism and empathy and these activities teach the students the ways of the Tboli people and the process enabled them to experience the Tboli community life.

SCMSI has not woven into its organizational structure the sustainability scheme of the projects after the termination of its partnership with NDMU. This research highlights the need for capability building of SCMSI as an independent institution. However, this research also agrees with some scholars that capabilities are not seen as exclusively within the ambit of community to develop but broader social responsibilities are required. There is a need for the management of SCMI to set long-term goals and determine strategies that will generate desired outcomes.

Moreover, this study shows that some improvements in the community can occur through the willingness of the academic institutions to share their expertise and related resources. This is evident in the partnership of NDMU and SCMSI. It becomes a form of knowledge sharing as it promotes mutual exchange between partner organizations (Donato, 2006). If students (NDMU) are engaged in community service and when their gained knowledge is practiced, more effective learning will happen. As such, it will result to integral formation of a person that is manifested in a person's commitment to uplift his/her fellow human beings. This concept is further illuminated in the thoughts of John Dewey which is both a philosopher and an educator. According to him, education is a continuous reconstruction of experience that promotes growth towards social ends (Donato, 2006). He emphasized the importance of "learning by doing" as opposed to authoritarian teaching methods. He viewed the community as an integral component of educational experiences that will enhance students' education and develop societies (p. 3).

Another implication is the development of the sense of volunteerism among NDMU students. The experience derived from the volunteer works will help them in their future career as this will provide enhanced knowledge in their craft because of the real-world experience as application of their courses (Rubio, et. al, 2016). As argued by Taylor and Keim (1999), the motivation of students in volunteer work are varied i.e., resume, credit, recognition, civic responsibility, understanding of others, reflective communication abilities and community extension programs. They are intended for the following; helping others, changing society or laws related to social issues, promoting personal enjoyment, gaining experience for employment and raising money for a cause (p. 82). Furthermore, Cha, Rotman and Smith (1994) argued that community extensions programs are formed to foster students' experience and boost community resources at a minimum cost.

However, since this study focused on the employees of Santa Cruz Mission, it also recommends that future researchers will explore on the contexts of NDMU faculty and students who conducted the community extension program. Also, it is important that SCMSI students who were recipients of the extension services can be part of the research undertaking to come up with a holistic view of the NDMU community extension program.

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Maintaining grace under pressure: Challenges and insights of teachers who are mothers during the COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstract

The outbreak of COVID-19 has forced schools to implement online or blended learning system where students stay at home while attending to their classes and doing their learning tasks. While some parents are fortunate to be with their kids and guide them in their educational journey, working mothers, especially teachers who are also expected to guide other students, have faced additional challenges on how to balance their time and attention to the needs and concerns of their students online and also the needs and concerns of their children who are staying at home and doing their online classes. This present study focuses on the challenges, coping mechanisms as well as insights and

suggestions of teachers who are also mothers of pre-school or elementary children. We argue that many of the teachers experienced various challenges especially on how to double their effort to satisfy the needs of both their children and their students; they developed an attitude of grace under pressure because they were left with no other choice but to embrace this so-called new normal. Many of them believed that as human beings, they are gifted with utmost capabilities, flexibility and resilience to face all the challenges and more importantly, to play the role expected by the family and workplace. But still, they have the desire that employers will be considerate on their present predicament by not requiring them to go to school and to submit plenty of paperwork. In addition, they wish that employers will provide them moral and financial support to combat the pandemic.

Introduction

Grace under pressure means that an individual is not nervous in a given predicament instead acting agile in holding one's composure. Feeling pressured is not uncommon to most people. We experience financial pressures, social pressures, career and professional pressures, relationship pressures in marriages, partnerships, parenting, and more. In today's new normal because of the pandemic, mothers with academic jobs try to balance duties in school and responsibilities of guiding their children in their online classes. With activities and tasks piling up, these teachers who are also mothers slowly develop pressure. According to Doubt (2018), pressure is a feeling we generate inside of us in reaction to outer stressful stimuli. And every time we feel pressure, we tend to get back our energy from the constant state of worry and urgency. Imagine making a balance between duties and responsibilities at work and performing motherly activities that also entail full energy to guide the children to cope with the demands of online classes apart from routine household jobs. Academic mothers have to deal with work and family conflict because simultaneously complying with both would only mean difficulty in compliance with the other.

According to Manzo and Minello (2020), the lockdown has exacerbated gender disparity, since women, especially those with children, spend more time in care activities than they did before. For working mothers, they must ensure that both tasks are maintained well enough to be able to address work and home related responsibilities. Clark and Knights (2015) mentioned that aside from the uncertainty caused by the pandemic, insecurity and stress have always existed in the academic career path. This can also bring pressure to the teachers who are mothers because there is an overwhelming demand in the area of teaching in this new normal. They need enough courage, and it is the grace under pressure that enables them to maintain the composure and a sense of security so that they can handle all the pressure.

Methods

What motivated us to conduct a study on the experiences of teachers who are mothers of pre-school, kindergarten and elementary kids and are having online and/or modular classes was the thought these mothers might be facing great challenges during this time as they are expected to assist their kids and at the same time as teachers, they are expected to do their tasks of educating their students and other functions by their supervisors. As teachers we have firsthand experiences of how challenging education in the "new normal" is. We experience sleepless nights preparing lessons for online classes as well as modules. We also experience adjusting our budget in order to buy the needed gadgets for online classes and in securing "strong" internet connection/signal. But these adjustments and difficulties that we experience, are simple compared to the experiences and challenges faced by our colleagues who are mothers. Thus, we decided to conduct this study. We interviewed teachers who are mothers of pre-school, kindergarten and elementary kids. We limited our selection to only teachers who are mothers of pre-school, kindergarten and elementary kids because these kids need special attention and guidance from the mothers and other adults in the family as regards to online and/or modular classes. We asked for their consent and explained to them the purpose of our study and assured them that their names will not be divulged and if ever they feel that they do not want to continue with the interview they can withdraw anytime. We were able to get 15 participants for this study. Because of the pandemic, we conducted our interview via Facebook messenger. Following Colaizi (1968), we carefully read and re-read the statements and looked for emerging themes.

Results and discussion

We organized this section according to the following research questions: 1. What are the challenges/difficulties you encountered as a teacher at the same time a mother of small children having online and/or modular classes at home? 2. How did you cope with the challenges/difficulties? 3. What lessons/insights did you get from your experiences? and 4. What do you think can the school administrators do to help you?

Challenges/difficulties experienced by teachers who are mothers of school children

A challenge or difficulty that is enough and proportionate to people's capacity is an impetus to ignite creativity and resourcefulness among individuals who have experienced it. However, a challenge or difficulty that is too much may break a person. Indeed, a challenge or difficulty may either make or break a person. For the participants of our study, the challenges or difficulties that they experienced as teachers and mothers of small children doing online and/or modular classes at home during a pandemic fall into the following themes: *difficulty in managing time and their two roles, financial constraints, and physical as well as emotional exhaustion.*

Difficulty in managing time and their two roles (teachers and mothers). Asked about their challenges and difficulties as teachers and as mothers in the "new normal" mode of education, they all mentioned experiencing difficulties and challenges in managing their conflicting time as teachers expected to conduct online and/or modular classes to their students while also assisting their kids with their online or modular classes. There was difficulty in managing their time since most of them said that the schedules of their online classes were the same with the schedules of the online classes of their kids at home; they also experienced difficulty in managing their roles as teachers and as mothers. As much as they would like to be with their kids to assist them and to inspire them, they are also expected to conduct classes and guide their students.

This is beautifully captured by one participant, a college professor who is also a mother of two kids who are pre-school and elementary students, when she said: *"Although I learn to multi-task, I have difficulty in terms of giving quality time for my kids and to assist them in their school tasks. As an educator, I want to be hands-on in terms of academically guiding my children while they are having classes at home, but I am limited because of my duties and responsibilities in school. In most instances, our class schedules are the same, so I have to stop for a while to attend to the concerns and needs of my kids when they are also having their online classes. It is very stressful. It disrupts my on-going online classes."*

Since their kids are having their classes at home, all of our participants really wanted to assist their kids with their online classes, but they cannot just do that because they also have online classes to attend to. It became more challenging when they only have one gadget like laptop at home and they have to share this gadget with their kids. In fact, one participant said: *"As a working teacher/mother with a kid who is also having his online class, there are several challenges that I've encountered. One is when we are having conflicting online classes and we only have one laptop available. Another challenge is when no one is available to assist my son during his online class because everyone in the house who knows how to utilize the laptop is busy."* This was supported by another participant when she enumerated all the challenges that she experienced such as: *"juggling the time to prepare their materials before 8:00AM and making sure that all links are working well, connection is stable, modules are prepared. In terms of monitoring, I fear that they are going through tough times coping with the new normal. I have less ability to monitor their activities, behavior and their progress."*

Aside from difficulty in managing time, all our participants had difficulty in managing their roles as teachers and as mothers. One participant who is a single mother empathically narrated her ordeal: *"I have to balance between four (4) roles: Being a college professor, I have to deal with my teaching loads plus I have to check if my students are still on track and if they have difficulties, I have to adjust to it. I set deadlines but still accept late submission and send feedback on their work. Aside from that I also talk to them to encourage them to continue, because some are now*

experiencing frustration due to their home related problems and internet connectivity. As a mom, I have to guide my daughter on her online class, have to check her output and at the same time allocate time for her tutorial lesson specially in her math subjects. As a father, since I'm a single mom for 11 years, I have to engage in other jobs, like engineering related works to have sufficient funds to compensate for our daily needs and to pay for our rent and buy essential stuff. As a round-the-clock helper, I have to do all the household chores from preparing meals, doing the laundry and doing the cleaning."

Indeed, education in the "new normal" where students are forced to stay and have their classes at home, is very challenging not only to the students but also to the teachers and most especially, teachers who are also mothers. In the study by Bayod and Bayod (2020), they found out that most parents who were teachers shared that it was difficult for them to really guide their children during the free online tutorial program that the educators had offered to children during the early onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. They pilot tested their program last summer to find out how the students and parents would receive and assess it. While most of their parents and children found the program very helpful, they also reported significant challenges and one of those was the time the parents needed to monitor their kids since they also had work to do.

The demands on working parents in the new normal are stressful, and illogical. The burden on mothers tends to be worse. According to a large biological study of eleven key indicators of chronic stress levels in the UK, working mothers with two children were found under pre-pandemic conditions to be 40% more stressed than the average person (Chandola et al., 2019). These working mothers have no choice than to serve both jobs which would mean sacrificing the quality of the other task because it is difficult to serve two at the same time. Though quarantine means that time shared with loved ones has increased, it also poses a major burden on parents' shoulders, as they are called to take an educational role while also trying to live their own lives and get on with their everyday job commitments. This situation has significantly increased the risk of experiencing stress and negative emotions in parents, with a potentially cascading effect on children's wellbeing (Sprang and Silman, 2013).

Financial constraints. Another theme that emerged from the answers of our participants to our interview questions was financial constraints. This is because they were caught unprepared for the financial implications of the pandemic. Most of our participants did not have stable internet connection in their homes. In addition, they did not buy separate laptops for their pre-school, kindergarten and elementary kids. Thus, when this online and/or modular classes at home were introduced as the "new normal" mode of education, it resulted in financial struggle. Our participant who is a single mom shared her financial struggle: *"I need to have my own laptop and my daughter should have her own. Plus, I need to invest in internet*

connectivity, I have to spend 1,000.00 per month on each modem to lessen connection related problems." This was supported by another participant when she said: *"I need to buy a new gadget for them to join the class."* The same concern was shared by another participant: *"I have difficulty in terms of availability of laptop. At first, what I have is enough since the kids are having cellphones and I have my laptop but phones are not enough, so I need to buy laptops for my two kids but it's not in my budget."*

Since the home turned into the classroom, some parents have not prepared for their role as teachers. Many parents struggle to perform this task, especially those with limited education and resources (Yan, 2020). The most basic needs in today's pandemic are internet connectivity, laptop, and cellphones to be able to join online classes and cope with the online requirements. Some parents are not privileged with these resources and yet they tried to meet ends just to sustain their children in their online classes. The cost and coverage have become the main problem in joining the online learning platform. This is supported by Marcial et al. (2015) finding that the most severe barrier is the issue of cost and access to the internet.

Physical as well as emotional exhaustion. Most of our participants experienced physical and emotional stress. They shared that their patience was tested during this time. For instance, one participant said: *"I experienced lack of sleep and not being on time during meals since I was given subjects that are not my "common" teaching loads just to cope up with the load requirements of the college. I have to allocate time to prepare for the module and should upload it to google classroom before starting an online class with them."* This was supported by another participant when she said: *"I am physically and emotionally exhausted. It is indeed tiring, so tiring making modules and monitoring students while checking on their works of the day."* Another participant said: *"every day is a struggle for me as a mom with kids having an online class, especially dealing with my grade 1 because our day will depend on the mood of my daughter. I have to wake up early to attend the needs of my kids before their class and my class. I have to take the responsibilities and role of their teacher and sometimes they will not listen to me. It is so tiring both physically and emotionally."*

While many parents have lost their jobs, others have learned to work from home while simultaneously assisting their children in various virtual activities. Balancing everything may take more time throughout the day and may require parents to engage in more work activities outside of their typical work hours, after schooling ends for the day or children have gone to bed (Griffith, 2020). This leads parents especially mothers to feel physical and emotional exhaustion because of the new task they engage in and majority of these tasks are new to them which requires a period of adjustment to get used to it.

How do they cope up with their struggles?
People commonly develop coping mechanisms when they encounter different problems. Our participants shared how they coped with the challenges and difficulties they experienced as teachers and mothers. As we analyzed their responses, we found out that their answers fall into the following themes: *time management, self-motivation, prayers and presence of mind.*

Time management. All of our participants have time management skills because they have many roles to play in life. However, this new educational set up has pushed them to manage their limited time even more. In fact, one participant said: *"I learned that time management is not only important but a must in today's realities. I have to scan modules of my kids ahead of time so that I will be oriented on their lessons because I am the one tutoring them in their lessons and then I also do advance studies for my own classes with my students."* Time management also helps them in managing their limited gadget such as laptop. For instance, one participant shared: "*whenever we have conflicting schedules, I just have my class at school using the office computer and my phone. And when no one is available in the house to assist him because my husband is also very busy as a front-liner, I usually go home and assist him with his class for two hours*." Another participant says, "*I manage my time well and set my motivation goals on a daily, weekly and monthly basis*."

Time management is a discipline according to Gresakova and Chlebikova (2020). Efficient use of time means following certain rules and being maximally focused on your work. Teachers who are also mothers gradually practice time management because it will enable them to save time and energy in performing their duties and responsibilities. It is not an easy task to have two or more roles. It takes courage and determination to be satisfactory in both jobs. The more these mothers are exposed to similar circumstances every day, the more they become resilient in facing the challenges brought about by the new normal.

Self-motivation. Most of our participants shared their coping mechanisms which fall into motivating themselves to face the present situation and accept it. For instance, one participant said: *"to perform many tasks is truly challenging. But because I am left with no choice, I have to accept my predicament and be positive with the situation. I conditioned myself that I have to deal with the new normal because more than the demands of my job, my kids need me even more in this time of pandemic."* Another participant said: *"I just motivate myself and I am just thankful that I still have my job to support my family's needs."* Another participant said: "*I just stay calm and positive by motivating myself that these difficulties are just temporary*." Believing that everything will just pass is a good coping mechanism for many people. This is an example of a "one liner" that helps people endure the difficulty they experienced (Bayod, 2020). Indeed, in the midst of the many challenges they experienced, they

developed self-motivation to be able to keep their sanity. This is beautifully captured by one participant when she said: *"I need to encourage myself to be more patient and avoid showing a bad temper to my daughters. I also motivate myself that I can really overcome all these difficulties through prayer and hard work."*

Self-motivation is the force that keeps persons going on – it's the internal drive to achieve, produce, develop, and keep moving forward. For mothers who maintain dual tasks, there is a need to condition their selves to sustain them and develop resilience during critical and difficult times. All mothers are working mothers, striving under the fallacy that things will look up, sleep cycles will auto-adjust, mood swings will halt, dark circles will disappear, and she will revert to work relishing in the afterglow of conception that rarely happens. Most mothers are exhausted, guilt-ridden, tired, and fighting, whether they work at home or work from home (Wives, n.d). With these various roles expected of working mothers, self-motivation can be very effective in unleashing negative thoughts and conditioning oneself to be tough because the family especially the children rely on them.

Prayers and presence of mind. A lot of our participants also shared that prayers and presence of mind help them a lot in terms of coping with their difficulties. Indeed, spirituality is a very important resource for people to deal with any struggle or problem that they face (Bayod, 2020). This is true to many of our participants. They said that they resorted to prayer in order to help them cope with the challenges. For example, one participant said: *"constant prayer and presence of mind really keep me sane during this time of pandemic."* Another participant said: "*I began to be more prayerful and to meditate. It helps me ease the physical and emotional burden."*

As many have said, this is a wonderful time to develop a stronger relationship with God by concentrating on personal religious activities. According to Koenig (2020), when life was "normal," one might have been so busy that there was no time for spiritual matters, with hobbies, jobs, housework, recreational activities, social and family activities filling up every moment of the day. Now that normal activities have virtually come to a halt, there is lots of time for activities that will help build spiritual health. It is best to pray to God and ask for his Divine intervention and more so, focus on doing what is best for the family most especially for the children.

Insights of teachers who are mothers

We also asked our participants about the insights they get from their experiences. Their insights fall into the following themes: *Life is a matter of choice and trust in peoples' capacity.*

Life is a matter of choice. All them shared that indeed they still have a choice in terms of responding to the challenges. This is beautifully captured by one participant who said: *"Because we carry ourselves to this situation, we are also*

responsible with whether or not we succumbed into fear of the unknown or to embrace the changes brought about by the unknown." This is supported by another participant when she said: *"Even when life hits you hard, the decision will always be coming from you whether you want to overcome or let it sink you. And that even in struggles, one can see the true colors of those people surrounding us. And that this pandemic brings out the best and worst in us, and its upon us who will emerge more. This also gives me enough time to rethink and reflect on my life choices."* All of them chose to fight because they have their families to support and sustain.

During uncertain times, workers look for trust, compassion, stability, and hope from their leaders; people want to be part of the solution and are incredibly resilient when action plans are clear (Harter, 2020). Working mothers need psychologically safe environments to protect the well-being of their families. As they start to develop resilience, they have inner fears and need not only their own self to help them get going but also the people that surround them play a big role during this difficult time. This type of environment boosts self-compassion and self-care while building resilience among workers; organizational and employee resilience help control mental health issues that may interfere with work–life fit (Blake et al., 2020).

Trust in peoples' capacity. Another beautiful insight shared by our participants is their belief in human potentials. One participant said: *"I believe that human beings are gifted with utmost flexibility and intellect to be able to adjust to a given situation."* Another participant says that "*she needs to trust in her students' capacity to learn and be productive even in online classes".* This participant said that she fears that maybe her students cannot really learn many things from her. She further said: *"she also needs to trust in the capacity of her kids to cope up with their studies even if she is not always there to guide and assist them."*

It is said that capacity is the ability or power to contain, absorb, or hold. Human beings are gifted with intellectual capacity that can either make or break their life. Resilience is strongly predicted by the cultivation of social support (Ozer, Best, LIpey, and Weiss, 2003) and adaptive skills (Burton, Cooper, Feeny and Zoellner, 2015), suggesting it is learned and acquired. Individuals and communities can influence one another to cultivate resilience.

What help they need from school administrators?

To be able to rally for some support from the school administrators, we asked them what the school administrators can do to help them. Their answers fall into the following themes, *be considerate and provide some financial support.*

Be considerate. All of them wished that school administrators be considerate of their circumstances by allowing them to have flexible time schedules in their required school attendance and also in the submission deadlines of their paperwork and other tasks. Some even said that they hope school administrators would allow them

to bring their kids to their offices: "*for us working mothers, they need to give us special consideration by giving us time to go home early from work*" according to one participant. Another says, *"I hope the school administrators will be considerate with the demands of paperwork that can add to our burdens. This is a give and take relationship. In return, we will also make use of our own initiatives to help the school sustain in this trying time by providing quality education to our students."* Another participant said: "*I think the school administrators must consider us teachers who are also mothers/fathers to give us time to assist our kids during their modular/online classes because it is during these times that they need also our constant support and assistance as their parents.*" One participant said: *"I hope the administration sees what we are going through right now, I know it is not possible, but I would love to bring my child once in a while to school just to assist him during his online class. It is his outmost desire to be in school. And I think this will help him cope with his boredom at home."* She further said: "*I would appreciate allowing us to be home earlier. Going home at 4 is great*." A teacher who is a single mom said: "*the administration can help us, by not requiring us to be physically present in school and in those activities that are not essential.*"

Research suggests that when people at work are treated with kindness, energy levels are increased, biological markers of stress such as blood pressure are lowered, and people feel more satisfied with their job. Productivity also increases (King's College London, 2020). If employers are more considerate to their employers, they learn the value of true service and dedication. In this trying time, putting oneself in the plight of the other helps one realize that being in a situation with no choice other than to embrace the new normal entails understanding on both the employee and the employers.

Provide some financial support. They also hope that school administrators will provide some financial support in the form of subsidy to internet and loans to buy gadgets such as laptops. For instance, one participant emphatically said: *"And I think, a lot of parents are struggling right now with finances, if they can allocate special loans that would be an option. Another thing, instead of requiring a 7.0 load and reducing some loads, I think it's time to change that system, since other schools require only a min of 6.0 loads to their faculty. …. It's time to show their compassion to their faculty and staff."* Another participant said: *"I think the school as my employer can at least help us make our lives a lot easier by providing us both moral and financial support to combat the pandemic."*

In these challenging times, financially vulnerable individuals need support to maintain financial activity. At the same time, there is a delay in income, unexpected loss of income and a severe change in circumstances, and these individuals need to pull through. Individuals going through a vulnerable state must be resilient, they should have the ability to bounce back, adapt to changing circumstances

(Salignac et al., 2019) and withstand financial or emotional shocks (Mogaji, 2020). It is significant for the teachers who are also mothers to be given financial assistance and related considerations. The administration's ingenuity in crafting favorable considerations to both parties becomes very challenging because it is understood that everyone is affected by the pandemic.

Conclusion

Working women play various roles in managing career while attending to household duties and responsibilities. In this pandemic, their jobs have become more complex because they have to deal with many changes that take place especially in their children's modality of learning. This holds true for teachers who are mothers as they are torn between performing their task as educators while at the same time guiding their children to cope with their online classes. The challenges and difficulties they encounter are in managing time and their two roles, financial constraints, and physical as well as emotional exhaustion*.* These teachers/mothers are able to deal with their predicaments through *time management, self-motivation, prayers and presence of mind.* With their work and household experiences in the new normal they realize that life is a matter of choice and that trusting in people's capacity is favorable to learning the value of resilience. It is their appeal that school administrators would be considerate and at least provide financial support or be resourceful and creative in designing ways and means to help the employees manage the critical times because this is a way to motivate them to become productive and efficient at work even in a challenging work set-up. Maintaining grace under pressure becomes a necessity now for working mothers. It is important that they learn how to keep up with pressure and still uphold their composure to be able to concurrently manage the demands of their work and the loads of being a mother to children experiencing the consequences of the Covid19 pandemic.

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Experiences from my Mandatory COVID-19 Quarantine Upon Arrival to Turkey from the USA

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It gives me great pleasure to share my mandatory coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) quarantine experience in Ankara from 25 April 2020 to 8 May 2020. This experience was deeply influential in terms of my own health and experience as a junior medical doctor. I will evaluate it based on the World Health Organization's definition of health (1). Briefly, it has three components: physical, mental, and social well-being.

I had the Turkish Airlines evacuation flight ($899.10 per person) that was solely for Turkish citizens from Los Angeles, the USA to Ankara, Turkey. The Turkish Embassy in Los Angeles contacted Turkish citizens regarding this special flight. To buy a ticket, one had to accept the fourteen-day quarantine. There was no business class ticket as they were reserved for the elderly and the passengers with children. The plane was almost full (only 20 empty seats); thus, no physical distancing. All the passengers were wearing different types of masks, such as surgical and fabric. However, the correct use of the masks was visibly low. Although the majority of the passengers were young, there were also elderly (>65 years-old), pregnant women, and newborns. The cabin crews were wearing disposable protective gear, mask, and goggles, which will be referred to as full personal protective equipment (PPE) in this paper. The cabin crew provided masks upon request. During the thirteen-hour long direct flight, only packaged food was delivered twice (Figure 1).
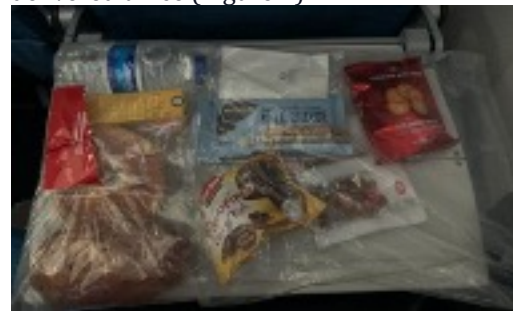
Figure 1: Packaged food including water, juice, pastry, sandwich, cake, cracker, and dried grape and tissue given during the flight

Once we landed at Ankara Esenboğa Airport, the passengers were told not to take any pictures by an announcement. The officials from the Ministry of Health measured everyone's temperature with a non-touch thermometer . Our passports were collected. It took almost an hour to start disembarking from the plane. Later, they

announced our full names, one by one, to leave the plane. Herein, they violated our privacy by giving our full names. Alternatively, they could have announced our seat numbers, which were unique. We collected our passports and collected our luggage (Figure 2). We did not enter inside of the airport.

Figure 2: Collecting our luggage and getting the bus

Four parties managed our stay at the dormitories: i) The Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), ii) Turkish Red Crescent Society, iii) the Ministry of Youth and Sports, and iv) the Ministry of Health. We went to the dormitories by bus, during which the rule of physical distance was followed. During this travel, we learned from the driver where we would stay for the first time. When we arrived, the officials with full PPE cleaned our luggage with disinfectant. They helped us to carry our luggage to our rooms. Single people were given single rooms, whereas families could choose to stay together.

The rooms had private restrooms and bathrooms, study desk, chair, 24-hour hot water, 24-hour heating, fridge, and unlimited internet. The rooms were equipped with many essential items, including many toilet papers (Figure 3A and B). Unfortunately, there was no key to lock the door. The informed consent papers, a notebook to share our quarantine experience, a paper asking our contact information and medical history, and an information sheet about the daily routines, Covid-19 precautions, and contact information were also present at the rooms. Due to the Covid-19 risk, our rooms were not cleaned by staff. Nevertheless, they provided all the necessary equipment to clean the rooms. However, it remains unclear if the people who needed help for this received any help from any of the staff. Overall, these reflected Turkish hospitality and our social government.

All the staff always strictly wore full PPE during our stay. The daily routine for 14 days included the delivery of breakfast, lunch, dinner, hot water, at least two liters of drinking water, bread, fruit, tea, coffee, sugar, and several disposable cups. A representative image of breakfast and lunch/dinner was shared (Figure 3A and B). Daily market service was also offered to buy junk food, fruits, and tobacco. It was disappointing to see the selling of tobacco and also junk food. Once, they delivered a packet of chocolates. The officials working for the Ministry of Youth and Sports offered us to choose a gift book among many international and national novels, such as The Little Prince, Madonna in a Fur Coat, and The Ballad of Ali of Keshan. This

could be a perfect example of promoting mental and social health during our stay. However, it is worth giving credit to unlimited internet due to the fact that we use it to interact with other people. I think providing internet access was very essential for me to maintain my contact with my family and friends who were worried about me and needed to see that I was fine and safe. I believe internet access played a very important role for my mental health.

Figure 3: A) bed, bath towel, hand towel, disposable slippers, and prayer rug;

B) a package of wet wipes, shampoo, shower gel, towel, water (2 L), pen, fiber scrub, liquid soap, cartoon cups, thermos vacuum flask water bottle, apple, orange, tea bags, coffee, sugar, notebook, garbage bag, and cologne.

Figure 4: A) Breakfast including bread, pastry, tomato, cucumber, cheese, olives, butter, jam, and egg;

B) Lunch/Dinner including bread, juice, salad, soup, bulgur pilaf, chicken, and milk

Later, officials collected the signed informed consent form. However, they delivered the same form twice and collected them as well. Although there was a part to fill in by an authority that informed us, we were not verbally informed, which was highly reasonable during the pandemic, instead, we only read the text and filled in the necessary parts. They also gave us a one-page survey to evaluate our stay at the government dormitories on a scale to none to excellent. I

assume that we all had the question of when and how we would go to our homes since the beginning. On 30 April 2020, a person from AFAD came and informed me that I would leave on 8 May 2020. Once I said my family could not come to pick me up, he said that AFAD would.

As part of the daily routine, the healthcare professionals measured body temperature by non-touch and assessed the Covid-19 symptoms (difficulty in breathing, cough, and sore throat). They questioned whether I use any medication regularly due to their chronic condition and, if so, provided them. We left our rooms twice for Covid-19 testing on 27 April 2020 and 6 May 2020. The healthcare professionals collected samples from the tonsils and nasopharynges, bilaterally. The day after the testing, the results were available on the "E-Nabız" that is a national online system to reach health data. These were very important for our physical well-being.

Around 9.00 am on 8 May 2020, the officials started the departure by announcing the full names of the people and asked them to come downstairs with their luggage. Herein, the second time they violated our privacy by giving our full names. Alternatively, they could have announced our room numbers, which were unique. The personnel, wearing only surgical masks, helped us from dormitories to buses for carrying our luggage. Before getting to the buses, our luggage was cleaned with a disinfectant like on our arrival. We were seated according to the physical distance on the buses—only a couple who stayed in the same room during the quarantine sit together. For the third time, they violated our privacy by giving our full names on the buses to check the list of the passengers. Since the intercity travel was forbidden in Turkey, the buses had official approvals to do so. The people who were going to close cities had the same bus. For example, I shared the bus with people from Antalya, Denizli, and Burdur. The deliveries were only to city centers, not the towns. Wearing a mask was mandatory during the travel. Unfortunately, the proper mask-wearing was low during bus travel like the flight.

In conclusion, I summarized my mandatory fourteen-day quarantine due to coming from the USA as a young physician. Overall, it was a positive experience. When considering the three components of being healthy, it was clear that the Turkish government had all the efforts without any charge. Although on several occasions, privacy was violated, and informed consent was obtained improperly, it was understandable due to the chaotic pandemic environment. However, the suggestions made in this article should be followed for the people who will undergo the mandatory quarantine.

Finally, I would like to thank the university students who had to return their homes for us to stay in their rooms, all the personnel who treated us with great empathy, and mostly the healthcare providers for their endless efforts to fight against Covid-19. The critical feedback provided by Kubilay Kaymaz, M.D. was greatly appreciated.

Reference (1) Preamble to the Constitution of WHO as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19 June - 22 July 1946

A Reflection on Life in the United Kingdom during COVID 19 Phases

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London, United Kingdom, being a multicultural and cosmopolitan city, gives enough opportunities to interact with people of diverse background. On the auspicious day of *Buddha Purnima* (7 May 2020; Birthday of Gautama Buddha), I first sat to pen down my experiences of COVID-19. I reflected on this and tried to capture my memories of the discussions on COVID-19 with Chinese, Sri Lankan, American, and Bangladeshi colleagues and, of course, our students from parts of the world.

In December 2019, when COVID19 was spreading in China, sitting in London, United Kingdom, one of my Chinese colleagues shared that a particular kind of fever was already circulating in China from November 2019. With Chinese New Year in January 2019, more people travelled in and out of country, worsening the situation and prompting government officials to take necessary steps, even monitoring social media websites and controlling the information flow about this newly circulating fever. As China's lock down strategy was catching global attention, my colleague mentioned that her mother got stuck in a local temple when lockdown was announced in their native state. Just as she was getting worried about the situation back home, she was also sharing the news of how people were respecting the lockdown measures, staying at homes, counting 100s of seeds in a strawberry to be entertained, engaged, to pass the time. She also mentioned how the local councils were visiting each and every household, helping people with food and other necessary stuff. Our discussion about the new disease in China continued, this new fever was named as COVID-19 and was gradually taking the form of pandemic. By mid-February 2020, my Sri Lankan colleague reported that they had only about 4 cases and she was very pleased with the Sri Lankan government's strategic measures in dealing with the cases.

The first reported case in the United Kingdom was reported in the news in late February. On 11 March 2020, COVID19 was declared a pandemic. As the news broke out, me and my colleagues started discussing about essentials: masks, gloves, sanitizers, paracetamol, we need to stock. As we were keeping eyes on the daily increasing numbers, we were getting aware of the medical emergency in near future. As a higher education institution, we also started giving calls to our absentee students on daily basis to enquire about their health and safety. And our campus started being sanitized often.

Meanwhile, I got to know that shortage had already started in local supermarkets for sanitizers, toilet rolls, eggs and milk. Our online surveys also resulted in prolonged wait for delivery of masks, gloves, sanitizers and even some food stuffs but I managed to order different kinds of masks,

sanitizers, and toilet rolls through Amazon and received the message that these cannot be delivered before April. Perceiving the indefinite shortage of sanitizer and masks, I even called my mother back in Kolkata, India to parcel some bottles of sanitizer and masks for us, of course, keeping her safe share intact. For, Kolkata had not had any COVID19 cases at that time.

The situation was turning grim, with spiking numbers of mortalities and morbidities. On 16 March 2020, Prime Minister Mr. Johnson, in his daily briefing, advised everyone to work from home, if possible. Many academic institutions, including schools, local parks and shops were shut from the very next day. My husband was already working from home. Myself, being in teaching, was going to work as we did not hear anything from the awarding body and Department of Education. Fear, anxiety of catching infected aerosols on public transport and use of mask and sanitizer became my daily companion, whenever, I was outside the house. I was getting more concerned about social distancing and personal hygiene. Meanwhile, as teachers, we were in a process to complete the whole curriculum through classroom teaching, conducting students' presentations. I also heard through my students that few nearby schools and people from local communities were found to have positive COVID cases. This was only the second week of March 2020 and I could feel a chain of infection spreading from one community to another, from Brighton to York, from London to Glasgow. Shall I consider this as my awareness or concern or am I being too anxious unnecessarily- I was not sure at that time!

I continued to travel to work, with more than an hour journey through public transport and gradually I observed how the public transports were getting emptier day by day even in the rush hour. Anticipating the worse time ahead, every evening while returning from work, I was doing my food shopping, in bits and pieces. One evening, I went for food shopping to a big brand of Supermarket near Bethnal Green Station and I overheard a staff staying that they are two weeks short of milk, eggs, toilet rolls, sanitizers. The saying saddened me for a while, for, I never imagined that I will witness such a crisis situation ever in my lifetime! As I tried to introspect on the shortage, I observed a stark shadow on the face of the elderly customer specifically looking for those materials.

My search for eggs that day, made me visit different shops and resulted in buying 30 eggs in bulk with a good price. The reason being the shopkeeper prioritized me as a woman who needs to take care of the family! Indeed! I am a woman and I have to take care of my beloved. That day, while walking back from the shop, diverse thoughts emerged in my mind; if being in the UK, I face food scarcity, shortage of sanitizers and other essentials, what about others in the developing countries? what about my mother? other elderlies? how will they be able to manage and cope with the situation irrespective of their geographical locations, if the crisis take control of the whole globe?.

Being concerned, it became a every-day custom to keep an eye on the media briefings either by the PM or by top government health and non-health officials.   When the death toll reached 1000, on Sunday 22nd March, I informed my line manager that considering the safety of all, I should be permitted to work from home. As my request was under consideration, on 23rd March 2020, PM Mr. Johnson, politely asked everyone to stay at home except the key workers such as healthcare staff, social care staff, volunteers working in health and social care sector, bin collectors, food suppliers, postmen and other key workers including teachers to teach children of key workers. Restrictions were also put on place to close all community parks, garden centres, non-essential shops. On the very next day, parks in our neighbourhood got locked.

As I took time to understand the polite request of PM, my husband made me understand that this means we are in lockdown state but it is a "liberal lockdown", unlike Italy, Germany, Spain, France. So, the "New Normal" started for me! Staying at home, going out only for food shopping or walk. To my husband, this measure turned out to be a "necessary evil" like income tax.

With sharp spike in cases, the government declared shortage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and every day came up with slide presentation to show the numbers of new cases, number of hospital admissions, number of deaths in hospitals (initially and then also numbers of deceased from care homes) and also gradually communicated that the country started manufacturing its own PPE. Through the end of March and beginning of April, the cases started jumping every day and ICU capacities in all hospitals were overwhelmed. The need arose for new hospitals. In just 10 days, a temporary hospital named, "Nightingale Hospital" (to commemorate 100 years of the death of Florence Nightingale) came in place in London with the help of Army. Several other hospitals of the same name were built in other cities including Birmingham, Harrogate, Manchester, and Bristol. My in-laws' house being close to high road and having two big hospitals near-by, I could hear the rising frequencies of ambulance sirens from one corner of high road to another. A day came when one of the two nearby hospitals had to close its door for being overburdened with COVID-19 patients. My ex-colleagues from the social care charity reported that they were keeping very busy taking care of their elderly clients living either in care homes or had been very vulnerable otherwise. So, it's not just health sector but COVID 19 also overwhelmed the social sector.

When I started writing these lines, COVID 19 pandemic had already affected the UK and its been 1 and half months of the country being under lockdown. I kept on trying to adjust to this work-from-home style balancing household commitments. Initially, I felt busier than usual. I was happy on one side that I got more time to dedicate to my pending research work, and spend more time to family. On other side, household chores seemed never ending with responsibility to arrange breakfast, lunch, snacks, and

dinner, more so, to bring in variety on the plate with limited stock on the shelves of the supermarkets. As the new set up for teaching and learning continued for me, I started looking for more research opportunities; webinars (even from China), research collaborations, and more online platforms to be connected to the globe.

In context of research, to boost the researchers' motivation, I witnessed all publication houses started giving more online accesses to articles, especially on epidemics and pandemics. One day I received an email from SpringerLink mentioning that with my consent, my research article would be given open access to help researchers of the world. To be connected, to enhance the scope, one of my teachers in USA, organised committees to conduct more research on COVID 19 and I was absorbed in such committees. I felt really privileged and happy to do something for the society through the Eubios Ethics Institute. Thank you Prof. Darryl R J Macer.

Gradually, I observed people started adjusting to this new lifestyle. New rules were created for supermarket food shopping. Many like me started shopping groceries online, however, different supermarket slots were still allocated to ICU workers, NHS staff, the elderly and markings were put on place for people to stand 2 metres apart. Families, not living together in one house, were not allowed to meet face to face but outside doors/windows. People, being rational, used this opportunity to feel connected through social media. I could see more Facebook live pages for different cultural programmes from Leeds, Sheffield, Birmingham, Cardiff, and even from Kolkata uniting the globe amidst this crisis. I also witnessed several others enjoying their culinary, art, and craft skills and exercised different fund-raising options to help and save health workers of the country. However, uprising incidences of domestic violence, increased rates of divorce appeal also caught media attention during this time.

While some were busy utilising their quality time in a quality manner, many others, in my circle, did repent that they could not go out for vacation during Easter break. Well, its just been few days, if you start repenting in such a brief span of lockdown time, can you ever imagine of all those people, the refugees in the crisis zones who had not got any form freedom left in their lives! This is a very deep philosophical discussion, so better not to get into this.

To explore more during this time, we discovered that our yoga teachers have started conducting online classes with participants joining from Italy, Australia, and Germany. We started practicing more yoga and exercise and explored more of Zoom, Google Meet, Hangouts, and Skype. The lockdown by then had made us a bit tech savvy! I felt that I probably had wanted this long outstanding break from my stereotype daily life.

To encourage all those at the frontline, it became a ritual on every Thursday 8 pm to clap for the COVID19 heroes. Even few days back, my yoga teacher mentioned first we need to clap at 8 pm and then yoga session. A positive sign of love and caring in this negative time! The 9 weeks applause began on 25th March and ended on 28th May with the relaxed lockdown measures from 8 June. Kind of community solidarity was also noticed when Hindu and Sikh temples, students and staff of different higher education colleges started delivering food to the frontline workers. A few incredible things did happen during the lockdown period in the U.K.. Mr. Thomas Moore, popularly known as Captain Tom, a former British Army officer served in India and Burma, became a popular figure overnight. His popularity gained attention for his achievements of making laps in his garden. With deep courage, he decided to raise money for charity in the run-up to his 100th birthday during the COVID-19 pandemic. At the end he raised around £100 million. On his 100th birthday, he then received 100s of cards and gifts which were accommodated in the local grammar school in Bedford. Does not this gesture show a kind of harmony in crisis?

With regard to socioeconomic and environmental conditions, COVID19 had created a big impact. Amazon and other retails had stopped provisions to buy, sell, and deliver nonessential products. From end of April, I got news of job cuts, hour cuts in my own circle and even heard of my own colleagues been furloughed, made redundant within short notice. My organisation was a small reflection of the bigger picture of the world! I got to know that many academics were been laid-off as COVID 19 situations were worsening all over the world. However, there is other side of the coin as well- homeless people were given shelter in a luxury hotel in Manchester to keep them safe and warm; local councils supplied food to vulnerable who are unable to go out for food shopping; more birds have made their appearances on the island and many have returned after years. As less people were rambling through the woods, blue bell started showing its glory to bunnies, deer started strolling on the otherwise busy East London localities.

During the lockdown phase, every day, I looked forward to news of safe and secure options to save all lives. Every week, I observed bin collectors, being dropped off by the council bus and being picked up by the same bus after bin collections. In usual times, they travel by the same litter picking vans while collecting the rubbish. Social distancing restrictions being in place, with no more than two people together in one place, they were given the council bus ride to work.

From May onwards, disproportionate impacts of COVID19, on some population groups was gaining attention. Before that Covid19 had only exposed different underlying vulnerabilities and made us witness passing of many lives. End of April, my husband was notified by NHS to be at high risk category for medical conditions of childhood diabetes, COPD, and being recorded with the history of a rare chest infection. He had been asked to shield till end of July. Overnight I felt- COVID 19 could be alarming. Very spontaneously I felt the urge to knock all my contacts, in London and Sheffield to check about their whereabouts. Out of my special bond, I started calling my mother more often and sent texts to Aunty Naka for she is living by herself undergoing treatments for breast cancer. I also contacted my friends and colleagues all over the globe and it is in April

I got the news that next to kins of two of my friends had been COVID19 infected. One of them being a doctor in hospital, most likely contracted it from the hospital. More news of illnesses and deaths started coming from mid-April and by the end of April, I lost one of my beloved colleagues. I was numb for few minutes on that morning, for I spoke to him last on 30th March 2020 and he responded with positive vibes even with treatments for pancreatic cancer and mentioned being with his son. You will always be in my thoughts TP!

Lockdown has been more relaxed, with travel restrictions on place, from 8th June in the UK. It has given the scope to manufacturing and food industries to regain the economy but for many people who had to go back, perhaps, it was a bit too early to break the safety chain. However, we love to have trust on authorities. Meanwhile, I was blessed to continue work from home.

To finish up- I would like to draw attention to the cross-cultural London again. On the occasion of *Buddha Purnima*, I wished my Sri Lankan and Chinese colleagues who practice Buddhism (You can call it a lockdown effect to get more time to ask about each other). In response to my calls, my Chinese colleague replied that they observed Gautama Buddha's birthday few days back in April and she was pleased to know about Buddha Purnima being celebrated in India. My Sri Lankan colleague, on the other hand, replied saying that they address Buddha Jayanti as V*esak* and prepare hand lanterns to decorate the house on the day. She had been pleased to know that *Buddha Purnima* is also a big celebration in India, and wished me *Happy Vesak*! The world is amazing- when you bond to spread smiles on face- is not it?

As on 25th January 2021, UK had suffered three phases of lockdown measures. Currently, we are on the third lockdown phase in the UK with regulation for all to work from home. This phase started from midnight of 5th January 2021 as a result of the circulation of a new strain of SARS-COV2. The new strain has been found to be more infectious and virulent. The third lockdown measure has been more stricter than the second phase which started from 4th November 2020 for a month with all non-essential shops being asked to close but schools, colleges, universities were kept open until Christmas break. It is in this lockdown phase, my beloved and few of my family members either tested positive or admitted to ICU and I had to be on self-isolation for 28 days.

Nearly one month has passed in this third and strict lockdown. On reflection, I could recapitulate 2020 as a memorable year in our lives. As a family, we witnessed a lot- the year started with an outbreak of fire in our house; we had undergone few medical procedures; I moved into a new job with more responsibilities and longer work hours, we got first-hand experience of COVID-19 and witnessed to what extent the SARS-COV-2 can weaken a human biological system. Life has taught us a lot in the lockdown phases. At the beginning of December 2020, when the country was under the second lockdown phase, the COVID vaccination

started in the community. The vaccination rolled out respecting the triage system. My family in the UK, except myself, being in the first, second, third, and fourth category been vaccinated with the first dose in January 2021. Discovery and vaccination strategy had really been a bliss in the COVID infected glocal community but question of the efficacy of the vaccine and the fear of more deadly strain will always accompany us and will remind us of the danger of the emerging infectious diseases. In sum, COVID-19 teaches us life lessons - how to behave with more individual and shared responsibility to mitigate the greater danger of the public health concerns. I am almost at the end of the write up when I received two news to ponder- a) the cold storage rooms, rather the open market, in the Wuhan city, could be the potential source of the transmission of SARS-COV-2, b) Captain Tom Moore passed away from COVID-19 pneumonia. Both the news did put me in deep thoughts with a hope of a better prepared world in future as I wait for the ease of the lockdown phases by Easter break and the country moving back onto the Tiered phases.

Choosing positivity in the midst of difficulties: The case of public schoolteachers in Mindanao

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Abstract
The outbreak of COVID-19 has changed the curriculum implementation bringing additional burdens to the already challenging and stressful situations of many public school teachers, especially in Mindanao. Some teachers died because of fatigue, while others experienced burn-out and mental health related problems. However, there are those

who chose to rise above the challenges and continue to find beauty in the midst of the mess they experienced. This present study focuses on the creative ways of public schoolteachers in Mindanao on how they maintain their sound mental health in spite of all the difficulties they experience in the present educational set-up of the Department of Education (DepEd) because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We argue that indeed, many teachers have experienced difficulties in coping with the demands of their work because of the Alternative Delivery Mode (ADM) that DepEd is imbedding, but they chose to rise above the circumstances and find beauty and inspiration to maintain their sanity in the midst of strain and exertion. These teachers have shared their advices and insights which might be helpful to some other teachers especially those who succumbed to despair and are on the brink of giving up. It is the aim if this study to share the plight of the public schoolteachers in their own battle to keep up with the academic demands in the time of the pandemic, and yet, still be able to achieve delivery of quality education among the students. This study can also provide additional input for the schools and the DepEd in general to come up with policies and programs that will ensure the mental health of teachers during this pandemic.

Introduction

A "blessed mess", "blessing in disguise" are terms that signify something beautiful that came out because of negative events or experiences such as sickness, trials, or pandemic. In today's new normal activity because of the pandemic, many people experience bad things such loss of loved ones, loss of jobs, or additional stress or pressure at work. People have different reactions or responses to negative events. Some wallow in pain while others choose to rise up and find beauty and meaning in the midst of their negative circumstances (Bayod, 2020). This scenario is not uncommon to many teachers. When the public schools in the Philippines started their "new normal" way of education on October 5, 2020, many teachers were caught off-guard in facing the many demands of the new educational set-up. Many of them, aside from focusing much on preparing and printing the modules, had to solicit for material via social media to various people whom they hoped would be generous enough to provide the needed materials such as bond papers, printers, ink and others. The next weeks became more stressful to them especially to some teachers in the far-flung areas in Mindanao because they have to traverse mountains and hills in the midst of either scorching heat of the sun or muddy trails because of rains to bring the modules to their students and to get the modules supposedly answered by their students.

Indeed, Clark and Knights (2015) were right when they said that aside from the uncertainty caused by the pandemic, insecurity and stress have always existed in the academic career path. They claim that one of the most stressful jobs is becoming a teacher. But to teach others is also one of the most fulfilling jobs in one's lifetime. It all depends on the situation and especially, right perspectives

of the teachers. While others continue to be bitter about the system, the set-up, the policies and even the comments of some parents against them, there are some who have developed an attitude like that of scavengers and continue to discover beauty and goodness in the many things. Through this endeavor, we present the emotional and mental difficulties of teachers, who because of strong will and commitment in pursuing their job despite the pandemic, become champions in realizing the goals of educating the youth. Previous research has shown that while many teachers find online instruction to be rewarding, those who are new to it tend to report having to deal with increased workloads and a variety of challenges related to using the technology, communicating with students, organizing synchronous sessions, and measuring student outcomes (Choi and Park, 2006; Conceição, 2006). These difficulties tend to occur with any transition to online teaching, no matter how gradual. It must have been a path difficult to traverse and new learning experience to conquer, and yet teaching is a passion and the desire to teach is in the hearts and minds of this profession. In this paper, we will give them the opportunity to share their stories, experiences and also insights.

Our journey as teachers

We, the authors, are also teachers but we are teaching in higher education and private institutions, mostly preparing students to be teachers, psychologists or guidance counselors in public schools and business professionals. Thus, we know of many teachers in public schools since many of them have been our students, classmates in the college and also friends. One of the activities that we do aside from teaching is to follow up to our former students. During this pandemic, we have plenty of time to send personal messages to many of our students and former students, asking them how they are doing in their academic journey. This is how we come up with this research project because in our conversations with our former students who are now teachers in public schools, we found that many of them chose to stay positive in the midst of many negativities that they experienced in their work and in the department. Many of them said that they continue to find beauty in the midst of the mess. Because of this, we asked them if they are willing to be our participants in this research project which they happily agreed. They even helped us to look for some other teachers whom they know. Thus, we were able to do online interviews to forty-six (46) teachers for this research project. Twelve of (12) of them are assigned in the Division of Davao del Sur, eight (8) are assigned in the Division of Digos City, five (5) are assigned in the Division of Davao Occidental, fifteen (15) are assigned in the divisions of Sarangani and South Cotabato, five (5) are in the Division of North Cotabato and there is one (1) who is assigned in the Department of Education division of CARAGA in Butuan City.

Purpose of the study and research questions

Our main purpose for conducting this research project was to gather positive stories and experiences from the teachers despite many negative things they have experienced. It has been reported in the national and local news that teachers have started to experience burn-out due to heavy demands and pressure in the new educational set-up. In fact, as of this writing, one teacher from the Division of South Cotabato died due to fatigue. Indeed, the demands of education in the new normal for teachers are too heavy. In addition, teaching online has not been so inspiring for those who really want to see their students inside the classroom and engage them with different activities. But all these are not possible because of this pandemic. Instead of dwelling in the negative, we highlight the positive experiences of teachers so we can inspire other teachers to be positive in this time of pandemic. By this, we asked our participants the following research questions:

1. With the realities of the new normal mode of education and its pressing demands, how did you manage to maintain your psychological and mental health?
2. What advice, insights or learning can you share with other teachers who have experienced difficulties and mental health problems brought about by this pandemic?

Ways of maintaining psychological and mental health

Jack Canfield (2005) says that the number one rule for a successful life is to take one hundred percent personal responsibility for our life. In the book, he says that "one of the most pervasive myths in the America [and maybe in many parts of the world: our own emphasis] today is that we are entitled to a great life – that somehow, somewhere, someone is responsible for filling our lives with continual happiness, exciting career options, nurturing family time, and blissful personal relationships simply because we exist". But the truth according to Canfield is that there is only person responsible for the quality of life you live and that person is you. Of course, Canfield is not disregarding the fact that structural injustices and coercive systems of governance will affect our effort to achieve a good life. What he is trying to say is that our attitudes in the midst of adversities will matter a lot. This is also what we found in this research project with public schoolteachers in Mindanao. Their attitude to focus on the positive things like *doing something more beneficial that they enjoy doing to relieve stress*, *living a positive healthy lifestyle*, and *talking to god and to someone they trust* are their different ways of maintaining their psychological and mental health as public schoolteachers in this difficult time in the new normal.

Doing something more beneficial that they enjoy doing to relieve stress

All of our participants said that in order to maintain their psychological and mental health, they engage in different activities that they enjoy doing and are also beneficial for their total wellbeing. Many of them engaged in gardening. Some developed their skills in cooking, dancing and singing while others developed new friendships because of biking and spending time in walking along the beach or beautiful nature. For instance, a Mathematics teacher in the Division of Davao del Sur said: *"I do a lot of hobbies to avoid depression and stress.... I do gardening, I practice playing the ukulele and drawing/painting and read a few novels if I can. I am also avoiding from negative news, rumors, and negative people by getting busy and enjoyable beneficial stuff."*

Another Mathematics teacher from the Division of Davao Occidental shared: *"In this time of pandemic, I do a lot of activities to maintain my positive mindset: socialize with friends through Facebook and messenger, making myself busy with works given by my Principal. I also do gardening, planting flowers, buying pots, online selling and buying, eating foods sold online and biking which is my new hobby."* A teacher from the Division of North Cotabato also shared: *"To deviate my attention from stress, I spend time talking to my plants in the garden, take care of them, taking pictures of them and posting them on Facebook. The good thing is that I earned extra income because a lot of my friends contacted me to buy my flowers and so I focused much of my spare time on gardening and selling flowers online. Not only did I gain additional friends and income because of this, I also discovered that I have talents in gardening and selling flowers. I think I have discovered another career which I so love doing."* Another teacher who is assigned in the Sarangani province affirmed these teachers when she said: *"Instead of focusing on the problem, I focused on doing things which are beneficial to me and to my family. I do online sale of plants and food stuff. I spend time in the garden, taking care of my plants and I discover that I have green thumbs and I am capable of nurturing them and I feel so good every time I see my flowers grow and bloom. I also earned extra income because there are plenty of people who are crazy about plants and flowers during this pandemic. I even gained friends because of it."* The experiences of these teachers have affirmed a pervious study by Bayod et al. (2020) on the beneficial effect of gardening to the gardener. In that study, it was found that gardening also contributed to the wellbeing of the people and helped them gain additional friends and income.

These ideas support the study of Scheier (1985 as cited by Yugay, 2019) regarding the real power of positive thinking or dispositional optimism. According to him, there is a direct link of positive outlook on life to our overall health: physical, emotional, and mental. The positive energy that we cultivate everyday results in decreased feelings of loneliness and increased resilience to any hardships that we encounter in life. Thus, people experiencing negative experiences stop thinking about them, and can find blessings and lessons in any situation they confront. Those teachers who chose to be positive are the ones standing still and gaining positive synergy amidst the pandemic. A positive mindset helps find opportunities in the midst of difficulty. This might somehow become part of a teacher's way of consoling him- or herself in order to

get through hard times in the field of teaching especially during the pandemic.

Furthermore, some teachers said they were watching Korean drama (K-drama) to relive their stress. They also gained a network of K-drama enthusiasts which became their support system during the pandemic. According to Dr. Ellis (2020), watching TV or anything that is enjoyable or interests the person provides opportunities for storytelling to teach valuable lessons about empathy, friendships, kindness, respect, justice and hope. This could be an avenue for the individual to see the positive and negative sides of life and be given a chance to explore and appreciate the different experiences of life.

Living a positive and healthy lifestyle

Living a healthy lifestyle is very much important in all situations. It becomes a necessity during the pandemic when people really need to have a strong immune system to fight the virus. But for some public schoolteachers in Mindanao, living a healthy lifestyle is needed not only to boost their immune system to fight the coronavirus but also other viruses that they encounter in Mindanao. Aside from the many demands they have to endure in making, printing, sorting, distributing and checking the modules, they have to also deal with lack of budget in the materials needed as well as in the attitude of some parents who thought they have done nothing and are not teaching the kids and it is the parents who have the responsibility of monitoring and teaching their children in the modular mode of education. The Department of Education in Southern Mindanao has geared up to an alternative mode of education with a blended learning approach and a combination of modular, radio-based and television-based instruction to educate the children despite the threats of the pandemic. As to the attitudes of some parents who thought that the teachers did not do their job and just left the responsibility to the parents to do the monitoring and teaching of their kids, it can also be seen as a valid complaint because of the new mode of curricular delivery in the new normal demands a lot of time from the parents to really monitor and supervise their children while they learn at home (Bayod, C. and Bayod, R., 2020). All these circumstances have caused additional stress to the already stressful situations of many teachers who are assigned in different public schools in Mindanao. Yet there are many teachers who chose to rise above their internal and external predicaments by living and practicing a healthy lifestyle. In fact, one teacher who is assigned in Butuan City said: *"With the very stressful situations that I am into today as a teacher, I make sure to continually take care of my mental health through the following ways... getting physically active, getting enough sleep, and developing coping skills."* This was affirmed by another teacher when he said: *"We may face challenges and baggage from the call of our duties, but self-care by living a healthy lifestyle is still a valuable aspect in considering our mental and psychological health. We still need to balance and value our time, have rest, take a nap and most importantly, I see to it that I can manage my time well."* For many teachers living a healthy lifestyle is a form of self-care that includes proper time management and staying away from negativities.

This is beautifully captured in the shared experience of a study participant when she said: *"Teaching is one of the hardest yet noblest jobs in the world especially in this time of pandemic. I admit I felt a bit anxious during the first two weeks of this new normal mode of teaching. It's overwhelming and exhausting but I cultivated a (healthy lifestyle) and positive mindset. This is the way things work now and I have to deal and make the most out of it. Though we are bombarded with so many tasks still I make time to unwind, to relax and to take care of myself. I also avoid from exposure to social media. Social media feed is now flooded with news and information which can trigger uncertainty, anxiety and restlessness."*

Another teacher also shared: *"the new normal mode of education is truly challenging. Despite the challenges I've encountered, I always keep in mind the goals I have to achieve not only for myself but also for my pupils. To preserve my psychological and mental health, I instill positive thoughts every time I feel like things aren't going the way I wanted it to be. Also, having a conversation with people with the same mindset is a great help."* Still another teacher shared how living a positive and healthy lifestyle helps in the pandemic: *"to stay in good mental health, I tend to eat well, keep in touch with people who inspire me, read motivational books, focusing on positive things... and the most important thing I do is to take a break."*

This is also confirmed by a teacher through these words: *"to ensure that I am mentally and psychologically healthy despite the challenges we encountered with this new normal mode of education, I maintained my psychological and mental health through keeping a healthy living such as eating healthy foods and drinking a lot of water, getting enough rest and sleep and I also do light exercise at least three times a week for relieving my stress at work."*

Another way of living a positive and healthy lifestyle is to focus on gratitude for having a job in this pandemic. This is beautifully captured by one teacher when she said: *"As an educator, a public servant and a classroom adviser, it is indeed challenging to cope with the new normal especially that the learning modality has changed from face to face to blended learning. Our school focuses on ADM (Alternative Delivery Mode) modules, where I as a teacher do the following: printing, sorting, and binding. After that, I will consolidate all the 8 subjects/ modules, disinfect the learners' envelopes, insert all the consolidated modules, call/inform the parents and learners and many more. All these things are new to me and to all the people around me. It is very tiring, time-consuming and monotonous but I still maintain my psychological and mental health by telling myself that I am blessed to have a job in the pandemic and to stay healthy in spite of what is happening; by enjoying the monotonous stuff with music; by reading positive quotes in the social media."*

It is evident from the sharing of these teachers that they chose to live a positive and healthy lifestyle in order to maintain their psychological and mental health amidst

different trials, pressures and difficulties that the new educational set up brings to them. Indeed, life is a matter of choice to stay mentally and psychologically healthy. This also means giving up all excuses and victim stories that many people cling to most of the time which makes them unhappy and unsuccessful. Systems and administrative failures, unjust laws and policies, unfair distribution of burdens and opportunities of course have to be dealt with in a proper venue. But all that matters now is to have the right choice in terms of what, when and how to act and respond to the situations. These teachers are on the right direction.

Jensen (2019) cited John Bargh's famous saying: *"We have a single, unified mind that operates in both conscious and unconscious modes, always using the same set of basic machinery, fine-tuned over the course of evolutionary time."* This means we can control our mindset and we can even change our outlook on things. A positive life is one we can take control of and change from within because we can live a positive life no matter where we are, who we are and what we do in life. According to MacIntyre et al. (2020), balancing personal and professional roles is a challenge for many teachers, but online delivery of courses with work-at-home protocols and ubiquitous online work-related activity creates a lack of physical, temporal and/or psychological boundaries between school and home. There is now a great challenge of choosing to be positive or to be affected by so much stress that are brought about by the pandemic. Some of the 'normal' (i.e., pre-pandemic) stressors that teachers in general suffer from include pressure inflicted by heavy workloads, time constraints, unbalanced work-life integration, limited autonomy, excessive administrative obligations, strained relationships with colleagues and school leaders, role conflict/ambiguity, managing innovation and change, emotional labor, dread over losing control of the class, fear of evaluation, and low professional self-esteem, among others (Mercer and Gregersen, 2020). To be able to maintain their wellbeing and still find positivity in the midst of adversity is a choice that perhaps not all are able to achieve because of varied life dispositions.

Talking to God and to someone they trust
Another important way for these teachers to maintain and manage their psychological and mental health is spending time to talk and pray to god and to share their feelings and emotions to someone they trust. For instance, one teacher said: *"Every time I am anxious of everything that has been happening, I talk to god and to someone close to me about it, it is either my family or friends."* Another teacher also shared how his spirituality helps him in this of pandemic: *"In coping to such pressure, I spend a moment of silence and prayer. Sometimes a cup of coffee under the tree, be with nature, keeping away from social media, and chatting with family or friends is in fact a quality time for me."* Still another teacher shared, *"In this pandemic, I keep myself calm, surround myself with my family, share my feelings to others,*

reflect on what this pandemic has brought to me in a positive way... and pray to god."

The concept of prayer and talking to someone you trust and pausing for a while to reflect were very common among the study participants. Indeed, these teachers do have strong spirituality which has allowed them to find beauty in the midst of many difficulties. This is beautifully captured by the sharing of this teacher: *"Despite the challenges that I have encountered in this time, I have maintained my psychological and mental health by thinking positively. Whenever there are difficulties encountered, I pause for a moment, pray for god's guidance and then continue what I am doing but if I feel so tired and discouraged, I listen to music (since music is my remedy). Some of this music is Christian and love songs. Also, I tried to do some breathing exercise (watch it on YouTube and repeat doing it). Sometimes, I go to a beach or pool and have a dip so that I can breathe fresh air as well."*

Connecting to the source, talking to god, sharing their feelings to their families and friends and spending time to reflect have helped these teachers to stay positive despite encountering various problems as teachers during this time of crisis. Prayer and talking to someone they trust are the main source of strength for many people in the Philippines. In the study of Arnado and Bayod (2020) college students said that their source of strengths are god and their families. Although, they are open for guidance services if needed, they still find it less important compared to the presence of god and their families and loved ones. Spirituality and its many expressions like focus on meaning and staying positive is also mentioned by Bayod (2020) to be very important especially in dealing with different forms of losses during the pandemic. In fact, Studnicki (2020) uttered in one of her prayer journals: "This current pandemic has been one of the most difficult things I've had to go through. I've never felt so unsure of what tomorrow will bring. But this has been a reminder that I truly never know what tomorrow will bring, let alone the next minute of my life. It really has put things into perspective for me and given me the opportunity to place my trust in god more than ever before".

Their advice to fellow teachers who've experienced difficulties
These teachers have shared their insights and also advice to their fellow teachers especially those who experienced difficulties and are at the brink of giving up. Their advices are the following: *be compassionate with yourself and practice self-care, focus on positive things and also talk to someone you trust.*

Be compassionate with yourself and practice self-care
On top of their advice and insights to fellow teachers, these teachers send a strong message to be compassionate with yourself and to always practice self-care. *"To all the teachers out there who have experienced different psychological and mental health problems, please be compassionate with*

yourself. Don't deprive yourself from actions that can make you forget the stress and struggles, have fun on weekends or during your free time. Have someone to talk with you, be optimistic, let us be reminded that we are only having a bad day but never a bad life", advices one teacher.

This was supported by another teacher when she said: *"the advice I wanted to share with my co-teachers who experience the same feeling is that we have to learn to deal with the stress that surrounds us. Don't be too hard on yourself. We should value ourselves most of the time. When everything doesn't seem right, take a break. Work, but don't forget to take good care of your mental health.* Indeed, the most important requisite to have mental health is to be compassionate and not to be too hard and harsh with ourselves. Self-care is very important during this trying time. Self-compassion is empirically correlated with reduced anxiety and depression, as well as greater life satisfaction, psychological wellbeing, and social connection (Allen and Leary, 2014; Barnard and Curry, 2011). This means loving oneself and nurturing the gift of life. If there is self-compassion, a person tends to look at the positive side of circumstances and still choose to feel worthy in a given situation whether it is good or an unlikely predicament.

Focus on positive things

Since these teachers continue to focus on positive things in the midst of many negative events, they want to admonish their fellow teachers to do the same. For example, a teacher from Davao Occidental said: *"my advice to other teachers who have experienced psychological and mental problems caused by this pandemic is to stay strong minded, open minded and goal minded. We, educators, should be proactive in the change of our educational system. If we put ourselves in a negative way, worse consequence will appear not just to us but especially to our students. Strive hard and stay positive."* Another teacher assigned in Butuan City said: *"to my fellow educators, let us be open-minded and stay positive. Everything will fall into place someday. Trust in yourself and pray. All of these will be over soon in God's time."* A teacher from Davao del Sur also shared her advice: *"Give ourselves a break from everything that gives us stress, learn to say no sometimes to people. Take a rest if tired. For me, it's perfectly okay not to be productive all the time. Focus on the things we can control and leave what we can't. There's nothing we could do but to accept the reality and see the bright side of it like I still have the job the I earnestly prayed for. I believe that sometimes, the problem is within us; it's the way we think, the way we see things or the way we handle the situation. Working smarter, not harder also helps. Making complicated work/things simple and have your own strategies in doing tasks easy. For me it saves time and energy to the things that really matter."*

Teachers are normally confronted with a lot of challenging situations and obstacles but to some, they consider these experiences a part of life. Most of them become resilient to stress and pressures because they learn how to focus only on the good things, no matter how small or insignificant they seem. They can find the proverbial silver lining in every cloud even if it's not immediately obvious. This is what other teachers do in handling their work. These thoughts would relate to Legg (2019) about the benefits of thinking positively and how to do it. According to him, positive thinking is not magic, and it will not make all of our problems disappear. What it will do is make problems seem more manageable and facilitate the approach to hardship in a more positive and productive way.

Talk to god and someone you trust

These teachers encouraged their fellow teachers to be open to their emotions and talk to god and to someone they trust. For instance, once teacher said: *"...you need to stay connected with your social and family networks even if sometimes it is via technology. You also need to exercise regularly and practice habits that you enjoy and find relaxing. It will also help if you seek practical, credible information at specific times of the day."* Another teacher said: *"my advice to other teachers is to continue to pray. Never cease praying and ask for god's guidance. Also, find a company whom you can trust and share what you are feeling. In these ways, you will be able to ease the pain and unload your heavy feelings if there are any."* One teacher from South Cotabato shared his advice to his fellow teacher: *"my advice to my co-teachers is to always pray and stay connected to god and to your families and loved ones. Spend quality time with them and with the people you trust. Share your feelings and doubts as well as frustrations to them. This way, you will be relieved."*

Prayer is considered a strong support system through a challenging life journey. This is the way to navigate many challenging situations particularly nowadays that we are confronted in the battle to save ourselves from invisible enemies. Chaplain Major Doug Hedrick once said: "Why is a support system important? One reason is this—it's biblical. God created humans with the innate need to be in relationship with others, said in another way, to be part of a support system." This would mean that no one has everything they need or has all the answers to life successfully by themselves. Therefore, we must remember to support, to give assistance, and it can take many forms regardless of time, place or conditions. We need to strengthen our connections to god and to others in order to survive and be happy. Frankl's concept on logotherapy emphasizes that humans are motivated by something they believed in (Frankl, 1977). According to Frankl, our life can have meaning even in the most miserable or difficult times and the desire of the person to live comes from finding the meaning or reason to survive. Looking at the situation of teachers, they cannot change the circumstances or conditions of the world; thus, they are forced to change themselves in order to meet the demands of times.

Conclusion

It is essential to know that the teachers are the prime facilitators of education and are the first to adjust to the transition brought about by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As it impacted every aspect of the human

experience, teachers in the public schools find beauty in the mess, as in the form of unavailability of academic resources, connectivity and many others that cause discomfort and require a period of adjustment to cope with the demands of the pandemic. Their ways of maintaining psychological and mental health is to do more beneficial activities including the things that they enjoy, to relieve stress, like gardening, watching K-drama and selling flowers from their gardens. These teachers are living a positive and healthy lifestyle by getting physically active, getting enough sleep, and developing coping skills by eating healthy foods and drinking a lot of water, getting enough rest and sleep and doing light exercise at least three times a week, enjoying music and reading positive quotes in the social media.

They also emphasized that talking to god and to someone they trust are essential to staying positive and for mental health: keeping oneself calm, surrounding oneself with family, sharing feelings to others, reflecting on what the pandemic has brought them in a positive way and most importantly praying to god.

The advice of the teachers especially those who have experienced difficulties is to be compassionate with oneself and practice self-care. They emphasized not to deprive oneself from things or actions that can help forget the stress and struggles. It is best to have fun on weekends or during free time. It is also helpful to focus on positive things in order to stay strong minded, open minded and goal minded. And above all, never cease praying and asking for god's guidance to ease the pain and unload heavy feelings of uncertainty and discomfort brought about by the pandemic.

Indeed, these teachers have found beauty in the midst of the different mess they have experienced. Their stories will serve as inspiration to others, especially those who continue to wallow in pain and negativities in life.

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COVID19 and Challenges in vaccination programs in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The article tries to explore the current situation and challenges faced by the health system in Bangladesh regarding child immunization and also present the alternative methods adopted to make it functional. Data were collected from various secondary sources along with key informant interviews (KII) over the phone. The vaccination program is largely disrupted due to COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh. All static clinics remained open, but satellite clinics needed to be closed due to transport restriction and shortage of health workers. Overall, the

attendance rate is low in both types of facilities. Experts suggested to open the centers by maintaining physical distancing and frequent hand washing by health workers. The EPI division of the Directorate General of Health Sciences (DGHS) releases guideline. Vaccine shortage may create problem. Initiatives have taken place like solidarity flights, allocation of more funds and awareness building by developing partner. The reasons include transportation problems, health workers being affected by COVID-19, lack of PPE supply and awareness. The shortage of stock is another problem. A guideline has been prepared by the ministry, several strategies have been taken, like solidarity flights fly to import the vaccine. Effective action is needed to overcome this situation. Otherwise, the giant successes that have been gained over a long time in the country with tremendous effort may be ruined due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Introduction

The coronavirus outbreak was first detected in Wuhan, China in December 2019 with unknown origin. This is a highly infectious disease and symptoms include fever, cough, fatigue, shortness of breath, and loss of smell and taste. On 30 January 2020, World Health Organization (WHO) declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern worldwide.[1] Although the cause is unknown, it is assumed to have come from animals and now it is confirmed that the virus has been transmitted human to human. Within less than 5 months from its first detection, nearly two million people from almost 188 countries are affected with this virus.[2] On March 7 the first COVID-19 patient was identified[3] and as of 09 June 2020 there are 71,675 confirmed cases of them; 975 are died[4] and the death toll is continuing to rise.

To reduce community transmission initially the government of Bangladesh banned most flights on 15th March.[5] On March 26, country enforced lockdown included bans on travel on water, rail, and air routes and road-transportation was suspended. All non-essential organizations, businesses, and educational institutions are closed, except for pharmacies, groceries, and other unavoidable necessities.[6]

The immunization program in Bangladesh is a successful program and has been impressive in coverage.[7] In Bangladesh the Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) was launched on April 7, 1979 in a small scale and gradually was made available to all target groups (infants and pregnant mothers) by 1990.[8] According to Bangladesh EPI: Coverage Evaluation survey 2016, from 1995 to 2016 the vaccinated rate reached from 76.0 percent to 95.1 percent.[9]

However, due to COVID-19 pandemic, the immunization activities are interrupted. Recent review of WHO and partners mentioned that this could put the lives of nearly 80 million children under the age of 01 at risk. Moderate, severe or total suspension of vaccination services was reported during March and April 2020 in more than half of 129 countries where immunization data are available. The director-general of WHO stated that "Disruption to immunization programs from the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to unwind decades of progress against vaccine-preventable diseases like measles."[10]

The aim of this paper is to explore the current situation and challenges facing in immunization program during COVID19 pandemic, and to identify the alternative methods to continue the services and limitations that need to be overcome.

Methods

This study has combined primary and secondary data sources. The electronic databases PubMed, MEDLINE and Google Scholar were searched. A keyword search was also conducted in the Google server. We initially screened all titles and abstracts identified by electronic search and potentially eligible free articles were obtained in full text and abstracts for paid articles. Additionally, all online newspapers, documentaries, online/ television interviews, social media and blogs were included as data sources. All selected authentic articles and information were reviewed and addressed in this article with reference as secondary source of data.

Key informant interviews (KII) over phone and data from a few centers were collected as a primary source of data. As a written consent from the respondents was not practical, the interviewers' identity and opinions are presented anonymously.

Findings

The challenges faced by the vaccination program in Bangladesh during COVID19 outbreak have become a national concern. Stakeholders are trying to overcome these issues as a top priority and have started a dialogue. The findings are addressed based on data sources obtained below.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

They expressed that the stock is running low and there is a need to import immediately. Manufacturers also warned about the shortage from their side and a double shortage. UNICEF expressed that there will be no harm if frontline workers maintain proper distancing and hand washing during vaccination. Bangladesh has postponed national measles and rubella campaigns where 34 million children aged from 9 months to 9 years were targeted.

The DGHS has released a guideline to continue routine immunization during COVID-19 pandemic in line with UNICEF and WHO global and regional advisories. They mentioned the services should continue both in fixed and outreach sites as an essential service. UNICEF proposed to build knowledge, motivate, support and empower the health workers to protect themselves with frequent hand washing and other personal protection precautions so that they can continue their work. Additionally, there is a need to build trust in communities so that parents understand that with proper protective measures they can immunize their children safely. Also, it is needed to begin rigorous planning

to intensify suspended activities once the situation is under control.[11]

UNICEF released a warning on their website under the title "Disruption of child vaccination in South Asia poses an urgent threat to children's health". Around 4.5 million South Asia's children miss out on routine immunization due to COVID-19 situation.[11] The UNICEF's executive director, Henrietta Fore said: *"We cannot let our fight against one disease come at the expense of long-term progress in our fight against other diseases; we have effective vaccines against measles, polio and cholera. While circumstances may require us to temporarily pause some immunization efforts, these immunizations must restart as soon as possible, or we risk exchanging one deadly outbreak for another.*[10]

World Health Organization (WHO)
WHO reported that more than 116 million infants are vaccinated globally. But there are still more than 13 million children who miss out on vaccination. However, this number will increase because of COVID-19.[12] The Director-General of WHO, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus says *"Disruption to immunization programs from the COVID-19 pandemic threatens to unwind decades of progress against vaccine-preventable diseases like measles."*

Around 14 vaccination campaigns supported by GAVI against polio, measles, cholera, human papillomavirus, yellow fever and meningitis have been postponed, which would have immunized more than 13 million people and the tragic reality is that children will die as a result. WHO urged countries to support Gavi's "ambitious goal" of immunizing 300 million more children by 2025, which will require $7.4 billion in funding.

"GAVI" the vaccine alliance
"GAVI" along with WHO and UNICEF warned that COVID-19 pandemic disrupts vaccination efforts so nearly 80 million children are now at risk worldwide. Their report shows, out of the 129 countries, more than half (53%) reported moderate-to-severe disruptions, or a total suspension of vaccination services during March-April 2020.   They explained the reason of disruption as parents unwilling to leave home, lack of information of the infection of COVID-19 virus and other health workers are unavailable due to restriction and in some cases shortage of PPE.
Dr. Seth Berkley, GAVI CEO stated: *"More children in more countries are now protected against more vaccine-preventable diseases than at any point in history, but due to COVID-19 this immense progress is now under threat, risking the resurgence of diseases like measles and polio. Not only will maintaining immunization programs prevent more outbreaks, it will also ensure we have the infrastructure we need to roll out an eventual COVID-19 vaccine on a global scale."*[13] However, they called for joint effort to safely deliver routine immunization and proceed with vaccination campaigns against deadly vaccine-preventable diseases.

Online newspapers and other media

The issue has been publicly disseminated through the online newspapers. Before that it was under the discussion of concerned authorities. The *Financial Express* reported on 26 may, 2020 the headline "Pandemic halts vaccination for nearly 80 million children". [10] The *Newage Bangladesh* reported on April 30 that *"Two million newborns and toddlers are on the risk of missing the schedules of 10 vaccines schedules".* [14]

The famous Bangla newspaper *Prothom Alo* reported that about 1.9 million children are deprived from vaccination program due to COVID-19 situation in a Barisal division of Bangladesh. [15] The *United News of Bangladesh (UNB)* reported from UNICEF that over 28,000 children under the age of five may die in the next six months as an indirect result of coronavirus pandemic in the worst-case scenario.[16] The service utilization for children under five in March 2020 was down 25 percent compared to March 2019.[16] This is due to nationwide lockdown, and delayed vaccine deliveries[10]; Parents are not bringing their children to the clinic for COVID phobia although the government has opened the static clinics.[15] 26 thousand health workers related to EPI activities are providing services without PPE during COVID-19 pandemic. Till April 2, 2020 the government did not provide any instructions on how to provide service during the lockdown situation. [17]

Therefore, health workers have become anxious and agitated. Their association leaders proposed to stop the program unless sufficient protective equipment is provided by the government. Frontline health workers related to vaccine program in Moulovibazar district of Sylhet division were not provided PPE; therefore, they were at risk and some were not willing to provide services.[17] Nearly 6 to 7 thousand static centers all over the Bangladesh are open except on Friday. Almost 1 lac 20 thousand satellite centers provide services throughout the country and these centers are in different houses, schools, etc. Some of the owners of these places were not willing to allow public gatherings during this situation, hence the health workers got in trouble whether to continue or open the center. [18]

Health worker reports
They have reported that although they attend the satellite clinics 4 days per week but less than one third did not present to receive vaccines.[15] They also said that fever is post symptom of some vaccine, therefore, parents also become unwilling to take vaccine for their child as this symptom is similar to COVID-19 and may be taken as a social stigma. One reported even calling the parents from door to door they are not attending the clinics. Additionally, the place owners of satellite clinics don't want to allow the gatherings. Another health worker said she did not even get one child in the last two weeks under her 8 centers which is alarming.[15] Health workers also said that due to this situation they are not able to fulfill their target and backlog is going high.[19]

Officials of EPI, Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS), Bangladesh

They said: *"It has been a difficult task for us to run routine vaccinations in the current situation".* The report concluded: They are about to run out of their stocks and arranging for a chartered flight to bring vaccines from abroad. Additionally, whether women aged 15-49 years and adolescents between 16-17 years are vaccinated with tetanus and measles, and rubella, respectively, is uncertain. The postponed measles and rubella campaign which targeted millions of children aged between 9 months and 9 years is in danger. DGHS issued guidelines to continue routine immunization during COVID-19 pandemic in line with UNICEF and WHO global and regional advisories.[14]

Key informant interviews (KII) over phone:

Information from various key informants was presented in a summarized way as we were not able to take formal consent and no one wanted to provide information other than in an anonymous manner. The overall findings are that the satellite clinics may open depending on condition. But the problem is that sufficient number of PPEs have not been provided to the health workers. Health workers reported that parents are not coming to the centers for service.

A few health workers reported that they got very successful result in terms of response. They would even call the mothers to confirm the vaccination schedule. The surveillance medical officers (SMO) reported that although the response rate is low in city corporation areas, in rural level presence is a little better.

Conclusion

The national vaccination program is largely disrupted due to COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh. Although static clinics are open, but the satellite clinics needed to close due to countrywide lockdown. The reasons are transportation problem, health workers are affected by COVID-19, lack of PPE supply and awareness. Overall, the attendance rate is low in both types of facilities. The shortage of stock is another problem. Healthcare facilities need to be ready for treatment, besides prevention of diseases, even during the pandemic. Also, it is a duty of the health system in general to make sure the panic caused by the pandemic is not outgrowing the demand for vaccination among parents of the target age group of EPI.

The health system needs to gain back the trust of parents and to encourage them to cooperate in executing the EPI by bringing their children to the facilities maintaining schedules. Awareness has been created through TV and social media for continuing the schedule with precision to make the parents bring their children. If needed extra camp and manpower should be added. Effective action is needed to overcome this situation immediately. The health system needs to gain back the trust of parents to encourage them to cooperate in executing the EPI by bringing their children to the facilities maintaining schedules. Otherwise, the success that has been gained over a long time with tremendous effort may be lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic. [22, 11]

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Reviving the ancient business model: The case of the Digos Barter trade during COVID-19 pandemic

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Abstract

Barter is an ancient charter before the advent of the cash economy wherein individuals and businesses use cash as a medium of exchange. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, the barter system, driven by social media's influence, suddenly resurrected. The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore on the success of the resurgence of bartering in Digos City during COVID-19 pandemic. The case focused on the Digos Barter, a popular group of Digoseños with a strong presence on Facebook through its page named "Digos Barter Trade." Five individuals, including the administrator of the Facebook Page, participated in the Key Informant Interview (KII). Secondary data, such as comments and reviews on Facebook page and reports, were other sources of data. Results showed the drivers of the success on the resurgence of the Digos Barter Trade are unemployment, lack of cash, and a sense of community. Based on the results, the Digos Barter Trade members were driven by the loss of income and their need for socialization. The resurgence of the ancient business model during this recent pandemic showed how this model could fill in the people's physiological, social, and psychological needs in distress.

Introduction

The first form of commerce in human history was barter trading, a simple exchange where people could freely swap goods and services. With civilization, people needed more and more economic advances to meet their social needs. Hence, barter was not enough to meet the requirements (Rotolo, 2013). During the Great Depression in the 1930s, the scarcity of money led to a revival of cashless deals (Kaikati and Kaikati, 2013). Consequently, people began bartering again; they exchanged work for food, goods for other goods (Rotolo, 2013). Barter is said to be on the rise again worldwide.

The Universal Barter Group (2008) reported that in 2004, 30% of all world trade came from barter trading; 65% of the fortune 500 firms engaged in barter trading in one form or the other. Almost one-third of all small businesses in the United States of America used some form of bartering. The Small Business Association (2008) stated that all indications show it increasing by the year. Barter trade is one of the tools individuals and firms use to survive during difficult times (Bazar, 2008). However, as commerce has become more complicated, slowly the barter system was fading away. But, when the COVID-19 pandemic hit the entire world, the idea of bartering goods resurrected.

The world is in the midst of the most severe pandemic that has led to increasing concerns and uncertainties (Ataguba, 2020; Weible et al., 2020). Nations responded differently, but with one common goal of fighting the virus. In the Philippines, this was by community quarantine. As the community quarantine dragged on for a while, individuals began to feel the burden of an acute shortage of goods and services that even led to hunger (Dutta, 2020). Businesses and individuals are thinking of ways how to address the problem. One of these is bartering of goods.

In the Philippines, bartering has been practiced long before the Spaniards colonized the country. During the COVID-19 pandemic, because of its impact on business and employment, it appears that bartering is back in time with a modern twist. A growing online community in Iloilo, Philippines has rediscovered the practice of barter or exchanging goods without money (CNN Philippines, 2020). In the process, many other cities followed, specifically in Digos City. The Digos Barter has about 44,000 members to date. Not only has bartering become a fresh way of securing goods, but it has also become fun.

The present study is our contribution to the literature on the resurgence of barter system, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. As this phenomenon is still developing, not much has been written about it. In this paper, we discuss the drivers of success for the Digos Barter Trade, facilitated by its strong presence in Facebook, a popular social media platform in the Philippines.

COVID-19 pandemic and the economy

The recent crisis, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), was declared a pandemic. Given the rise in the recurrence of pandemics, numerous researchers, including Garrett (2007), Keogh-Brown et al. (2008), Madhav et al. (2017), and Fan et al. (2018) argued that a largescale global pandemic was unavoidable. The Imperial College of London Coronavirus Response Team argued that COVID-19 is the most severe episode since the 1918 Spanish Influenza pandemic (Ferguson et al., 2020). Kuckertz (2020) stated that the COVID-19 pandemic

triggered a twofold crisis: an exceptional weight on numerous health systems worldwide; and an economic crisis when the infection control measures brought a economic activity to a sudden end.

The COVID-19 pandemic has wreaked havoc on the lives of people. For example, Gourinchas (2020) discussed about its effect on the economy, which disrupted the normal transactions of employees, firms, suppliers, consumers, and financial institutions. According to Carlsson-Szlezak et al. (2020), there are three main transmission channels. The first is the direct impact, which is related to the reduced consumption of goods and services. Prolonged lengths of the pandemic and the social distancing measures might reduce consumer confidence by keeping consumers at home, wary of discretionary spending, and pessimistic about the long-term economic prospects. The second one is the indirect impact of working through financial market shocks and their effects on the real economy. Household wealth will likely fall, savings will increase, and consumer spending will decrease further. The third consists of supply-side disruptions as COVID-19 halts production, negatively impacts supply chains, labor demand, and employment, leading to prolonged periods of lay-offs and rising unemployment. Indeed, the economy is hugely affected, and the people suffer.

Online barter

The government restricted people's movements to the minimum and the most essential ones. As they stayed home most of the time, online usage increased. A new phenomenon was born, online bartering. According to Stodder (2020), bartering is a natural occurrence during an economic crisis. Historically, it has been the form of trade in ancient civilizations when money did not exist. Orme (2004) defined barter as trading goods or services for other goods or services and is believed to be the world's oldest form of exchange. Researchers have often concluded that barter trade can be beneficial in some situations, mostly due to difficult economic or business times (Crest, 2005; Lecraw, 1989). Online bartering emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic. People have been turning to swapping, trading, and bartering as a form of entertainment or a way of getting or exchanging goods. With economic uncertainty looming and anxiety levels soaring, barter is becoming an emerging alternative solution (Jones, 2020).

Current trends indicate that bartering frequency is on the increase worldwide, with a major increase in internet barter transactions. A significant contributing variable to this development is the utilization of existing and rising electronic business advances (Rise, 2003). In today's harsh economic climate, Ortutay (2009) asserted that online bartering is becoming a way of getting rid of old things and shopping without opening wallets. The number of bartered goods posted on Kijiji, one of the leading barter websites in Taiwan, had almost quadrupled in the latter half of 2012 (CommonWealth Magazine, 2013). In the Philippines, 85 popular Facebook barter groups with 2,150,448 Filipinos are members of these groups (iPrice Group, 2020). We

could say that Filipinos are getting into barter much as we did back in the old days (Mendoza, 2020). The purpose of this qualitative case study is to explore the success of Digos Barter Trade during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research question

What are the drivers to the resurgence and success of the barter system amidst the COVID-19 pandemic?

Methods

Research design: This qualitative study was conducted using a single-case study approach. It was used to explore the drivers of success of Digos Barter Trade during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Participants: Five (5) members of Digos Barter Trade, comprising of two men and three women, who qualified on the criteria set for this study, willingly participated in the key informant interview. The criteria were as follows: (1) they must be a member of Digos Barter Trade; (2) they must be residing in Digos City regardless of their age and gender; and (3) they must have at least five (5) successful transactions in barter. For the purpose of triangulation, we also got reviews on the page of Digos Barter Trade to analyze important information that confirmed its success.

Sampling: This study used purposive sampling, which is typically used in qualitative research to identify and select the information-rich cases for the most available resources (Patton, 2002). This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals who are proficient and well-informed and interested (Cresswell, 2011). It was fitted for this study since we used the key informant technique. This study involved five (5) individuals who engaged in barter during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data sources and data collection: The main source of the data came from the informants and the reviews on the Facebook page. Interviews were conducted from August to September 2020. All interviews were noted and transcribed. Data were gathered through Key Informant Interview (KII). Since the participants are accessible online, text-based instant messaging (e.g., Messenger) was used for data generation. The principal advantages of the key informant technique relate to the quality of data obtained in a relatively short period (Marshall, 1996). The KII technique was suitable because the participants represented people directly related to the case study.

Analysis and interpretation of data: To analyze and interpret the data, we followed Colaizzi's (1978) distinctive seven-step process that provides a rigorous analysis with each step staying close to the data. We also used the technique utilized by Tudy and Tudy (2020), like using tables for analysis. *First*, we familiarized ourselves with the data by reading through all the participants' responses in their interviews several times. *Second*, we identified significant statements that were of direct relevance to the

case study under investigation. Thus, we created a table with three columns consisting of significant statements, sources, and formulated meaning. *Third*, after the identification of the significant statements provided by the respondents, we formulated meanings. We identified meanings relevant to the study that arise from a careful consideration of the significant statements. *Fourth*, since formulated meanings were given, the process of grouping all these formulated meanings into categories that reflect a unique structure of clusters of themes was initiated. Each cluster of themes was coded to include all formulated meanings related to that group of meanings. After that, groups of clusters of themes that reflect a particular vision, was incorporated together to form a distinctive theme. *Fifth*, at this stage of analysis, all emergent themes were put into an exhaustive description. We wrote a full and inclusive description of the study, incorporating all the themes produced at step four. *Sixth*, we began the reduction of findings that did not fit the themes in the overall structure. *Lastly*, we verified the fundamental structure through the member-checking technique.

Trustworthiness refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study (Pilot and Beck, 2014). Amankwaa (2016) stated that researchers should establish protocols and procedures necessary for a study considered worthy of consideration by readers.

Credibility: Pilot and Beck (2014) asserted that the credibility of the study, or the confidence in the study and, therefore, the findings, is the most important criterion. Credibility is achieved through reliability, replicability, consistency, and accuracy of a study's findings (Tracy and Hinrichs, 2017). Lincoln and Guba (1985) stated that it is the equivalent of internal validity in qualitative research and is concerned with truth-value. We ensured that the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants' original data. Before we conducted the interview, we made sure that the participants know the purpose of the study so that they would be comfortable enough to share their experiences with us. Also, the participants must be qualified to give the relevant information needed. In the interview protocol for the Key Informant Interview, the experts validated the questions. We applied the member-checking method, wherein the participants validated the correctness of their answers.

Transferability: For credibility or authenticity, the qualitative research projects' findings should be transferable (Curtin and Fossey, 2007). Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts or settings with other participants (Korstjens and Moser, 2018). In case of using different terms for techniques to establish transferability, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) recommendation is to provide a detailed description of the phenomenon. In this study, we shared our findings to the participants and

also the bigger audience hoping the phenomenon would be transferrable in other contexts.

Dependability: We explained how the data gathering was done. Dependability includes the aspect of consistency (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). According to Shanton (2004), dependability is difficult to measure where there is a need to facilitated future investigation to obtain consistency of study. We discussed thoroughly the methods we used to conduct the study so that others who would want to know about the study and would like to replicate it in other contexts would be guided.

Finally, confirmability requires the researchers to demonstrate how conclusions and interpretations have been reached. It is concerned with establishing that findings are clearly derived from the data (Tobin and Begley, 2004). Confirmability is usually established when credibility, transferability, and dependability are achieved (Ryan et al., 2007). In this study, we provided an audit trail to make sure we can trace and connect how we journeyed from data gathering to analysis, and interpretation.

Ethical considerations: At the beginning of the research, we clearly disclosed the purpose of the study and made sure that the respondents voluntarily participated. Moreover, we explained that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any stage if they wished to do so. Ethics has always been an important consideration when doing research and are regulated by law and ethical standards. Creswell (2013) suggested that ethical concerns need to be considered throughout the process of doing research. Creswell (2013) noted that it is important to be aware of cultural norms and the needs of any vulnerable populations that may be part of the research. We secured the participants' informed consent. Mandel and Parija (2014) pointed out that informed consent is the bond of trust between the researchers and the participants. It is the single most important aspect of any good research because it assures that participants' wellbeing will be protected and that they have self-determination in terms of participating in the research. Rose (2009) stated that the informed consent process must be a dialogue of the study's purpose, duration, experimental procedures, alternatives, risks, and benefits. Hence, before the interview, we asked them to read and to sign the informed consent form.

Results
Drivers of success of the resurgence of the barter system amidst of pandemic: When the participants were asked how they ended up engaging in barter during the COVID-19 pandemic, the following themes emerged: unemployment, lack of cash, and sense of community.

Unemployment. Millions of inhabitants of the archipelago have lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic; many got unemployed and some of them ventured into bartering because there was an opportunity, as expressed by the

participants. They had to stay at home because of the quarantine protocols. Hence, they could not work.

In the case of Ms. Ana, she shared: *"We participated in bartering because we had a hard time when the Enhanced Community Quarantine was implemented. My father lost his job as a tricycle driver. He cannot go out and work since he is a senior citizen."*

Like the first participant, Mrs. Mary who also joined barter, mentioned: *"My relatives are struggling with unemployment. Their workplace was closed due to the pandemic. They have nothing to eat so I bartered my personal belongings in exchange for groceries and rice".*

Struggling to make ends meet, Mrs. Arlene offered optical services to Digoseños in exchange for groceries. She said: *"I started to barter last June. I bartered a complete one eyeglass for eight kilos of rice and groceries. Since I cannot go back to Palawan (around 900 kilometers apart) and my clinic is there. It was even closed due to pandemic."*

Lack of cash. Lack of cash was another driver cited by the participants. Many people talked about the health crisis brought on by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is not the only challenge causing stress. They were also worried about their finances, both short-term and long-term. Thus, they responded by bartering as a natural solution when there was no money. For instance, in the case of Ms. Ana, her family suffered financially due to her father's unemployment because of the pandemic. She shared: *"It's so difficult nowadays. We do not know where to get money to settle the bills for groceries."*

She added, *"I bartered my mother's snake plant. It's easier to convert them into food with bartering, especially when we don't have a source of income."*

Mrs. Arlene maximized her skills since she also needed food for the family. She shared: *"During the pandemic, many benefited from my services as I was offering complete eyeglasses to those who could not afford it or had no money to spend for their eye problem. Truly, many have availed my services. In return, it also helped me like providing food and milk for my mother while we were waiting to return to Palawan where my livelihood is."*

Based on the sharing of our participants, the lack of money or cash prompted people to consider bartering just to get food. Also, they realized that while they had no money, they had accumulated material things which they could swap for other needed goods like food.

Sense of community. At a time of extreme isolation, bartering makes the participants feel they are a part of a community that looks out for one another. It is not just about the goods that they get but that feeling of solidarity amid a crisis. Mr. Benjamin revealed: *"I learned more about how to improve public relations through bartering. That is exactly one of the reasons why I like barter. You get to know people you are dealing with."*

In the case of Mr. Franklin, who is the administrator of the Facebook group, he explained how the Digos Barter went beyond just bartering. He shared: *"As the administrator of Digos Barter Trade, I posted a request to solicit help to seniors who cannot get out of this pandemic. They requested to barter their 200 bundled firewood in exchange for a sack of rice and groceries."*

Somehow, just knowing that someone out there is experiencing the things the same way you do brings comfort. Hence, bartering had brought not only sharing or exchange of goods but it also created a sense of community and an expression of compassion for those in need.

Discussion

The results of this study revealed that the resurgence of barter succeeded in times of COVID-19 pandemic because of the different drivers. When the participants were asked why they ended up bartering, one reason was unemployment. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused an exponential increase in unemployment. To provide a lifeline, Digoseños started online bartering. During the pandemic, however, scarcities of items and a high unemployment rate are forcing people to think outside the box. Birch and Liesch (1997) indicated that the barter system is the most attractive to the unemployed and those with low household incomes. Hence, those who do not have much financial resources are most likely to indulge in bartering.

Another reason for the revival of barter was lack of cash during the pandemic. While many Digoseños talked about the health crisis brought on by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, that is not the only challenge causing stress. They are also worried about their finances, both short-term and long-term. For them, barter is a natural solution when there's no more money. Bartering became popular during the Great Recession in 1930s. Ozgul (2017) explained that bartering can contribute to the country's economy by relaxing companies even in times of crisis. In a time of pandemic, most people are affected by the financial crisis due to loss of income. With no more cash to buy necessities, the barter allows people to trade their unused or used items. It is a welcome relief for cash-strapped individuals and families, especially during a pandemic.

Sense of community is also indicated as a driver to the resurgence of bartering. Sometimes it is not just about the goods we get but that feeling of solidarity amid a crisis. At a time of extreme isolation, bartering makes people feel they are part of the community that looks out for one another. Marmarosh et al. (2020) found that human beings are fundamentally social, and the need to gather with others is extremely important, especially during times of distress. The need to belong and the importance of reducing loneliness during uncertain times often encourage people to connect, despite recommendations to remain socially distant. It takes more energy to barter, but it also builds a sense of community.

Implications of the study: For local barter trade, there is no clear prohibition. But these are still subject to regulation, must be registered and are subject to tax if done again in the course of trade or as regular business. In fact, there was already an attempt to tax bartering. Nevertheless, the

findings of the study provided a glimpse of how government can support barter in times of pandemic. How can it support or tolerate when people in need can benefit from it?

Concluding remarks

Indeed, bartering is becoming very helpful, especially for those who have lost their jobs due to the pandemic with little money left to buy daily essentials. The economic hardships people are coping with are driving the rediscovery of bartering. Many community members may have begun to barter not so much for economic but social reasons, as bartering can reinforce social connections, express kindness, or secure essential supplies for neighbors suffering hardship. Moreover, the barter group has expanded its reach by serving those in need. This is another area for future research worth investigating.

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The evaluation of public health ethics, individual, collective and state with institutional, responsibilities and obligation during the COVID-19 pandemic through online media reports in Turkey

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Abstract

Qualitative content analysis of Turkish Medical Association, Turkish Public Health Association, and online newspaper articles and videos using keywords was made. After that, related online reports and interviews have been classified and analyzed according to the context between May 22, 2020 and November 16, 2020. The Turkish COVID-19 scientific committee and the Ministry of Health have suggested a new way of normal life called controlled social life for all places in Turkey. In the frame of these recommendations, with the Google research engine many articles of online media including announcements of medical and legal associations, interviews, and calls made by the authorities were selected and analyzed. These articles and interviews containing each problem and pieces of information provided for the common understandings of the society were selected and evaluated for three topics individual, collective and state and institutional responsibility and obligations.

Although the warnings of associations, health authorities, and scientists are mostly about personal-civil responsibility, some occurring practices have caused violations. The research found that the level of education, perception capacity, and habits that include existing social-cultural and religious rituals have prevented people from adapting to this controlled social life. Therefore, besides the original national culture and customs, universal ethical responsibilities and obligations should teach starting from

primary school and should consist of whole life understanding as a higher perspective.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the importance of public health ethics (PHE). PHE is assisted by many-ethicak approaches, utilitarian, deontology, social contracts, and virtue ethics. Utilitarianism and consequentialism in the 19th century, seriously affected public health. The classical utilitarian's, Jeremy Bentham (1748- 1832), and John Stuart Mill's (1806-1873) views were adopted as a public health approach as "*the greatest good for the greatest number and the least harm for the fewest".* Macer (1998) stated that this philosophy is internally coherent, simple, and comprehensive and can be effective to resolve dilemmas. In this utilitarian context, PHE constraints should be for the benefit of the individual and/or the benefit of the community. In this perspective quarantine and isolation practices are provided to protect the greatest people.

A second ethical approach is deontological or duty ethics (e.g. Immanuel Kant). This theory includes ethical rights and duties, both actions and the intentions of those who practice the actions. These are beneficence, non-maleficence, fidelity, reparation, gratitude, self-improvement, and justice (Etkin, 2016; Zack, 2009) . This approach has played an important role in the preparation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Etkin, 2016). Two articles of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights are *"Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person"* and *"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family… and the right to security in the event of… circumstances beyond his control."* (The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), 1948; UNESCO, 2005). Although the deontological approach is criticized because it is not a gray area, it is important in terms of evaluating the four basic measures created during the pandemic period within the scope of responsibilities and obligations towards individuals own themselves and society.

Virtue ethics (e.g. Plato and Aristotle) is concerned with living well (Etkin, 2016; Zack, 2009) . The person is pleased to behave virtuously, s/he does not do the virtuous behavior to get praise from others, and that is, person only chooses to be virtuous. It considers each person should have moral/ethical values to act and to attitude. This approach leads to moral autonomy as a person's self-determination, however at the same time; it brings also an individual's individual ethical responsibilities and obligations.

According to social contract theory there is a contract between the public and the government. This contract has involved legal rules, social-ethical responsibilities, and obligations towards the public (Zack, 2009). The public can give up some freedoms in return for the health benefits. Therefore the government's duty is to prepare programs, plan, and facilities for all health issues, and so it can mitigate, respond, and recovery. In this context, it takes measures to prevent people from harming themselves and others by adopting a paternalistic attitude if necessary. The concept of responsibility and obligation has also determined in "The Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights" in Article 14 "Social responsibility and health": The promotion of health and social development for their people is a central purpose of governments that all sectors of society share" (UNESCO, 2005).

The social justice theory of John Rawls described social justice's main aim is fairness and egalitarian principle and prevent "the veil of ignorance" (all human persons are equal in fundamental worth or moral status) and convenient for democracy which based on human rights. In other words, to remove "veil of ignorance" is to protect human dignity, equal right for human beings, and societal peace. Correspondingly, PHE prioritizes the health problems of society as the salience of population health, safety, and welfare; fairness and equity in the distribution of services; and also respect for the human rights of individuals and public, (Daniels et al., 2000; Gostin, 2001)"; and "Justice is Good for Our Health" (Daniels N et al., 2000).

Therefore the main jobs of states and institutions is to have a two-kind of plan as a preparation plan and response plan. These plans may help produce peaceful and effective solutions to panic, fear, preventing disinformation with violation of human rights and conflicts. Firstly, the preparation plan aims to save the greatest number and restructure the conditions of response, so that, adequate responses mitigate ethical violations. And the second plan should be prepared as a response plan to save all people. Because pandemic usually created some societal justice problems because of limited resources in terms of numbers of hospital beds, tests, ventilators, antiviral medications, and the number of healthcare personals. These ethical approaches are important for public health because the actions of collective ethical responsibilities and obligations may occur in a society consisting of both external experiences and individuals performing internal evaluations. Preliminary preparations, plans, and practices made by taking into account science, legal and ethical theories also contribute to the awareness of the society about responsibilities and obligations of the individual, collective, and the state.

The COVID-19 pandemic has entailed responsibilities and obligations at a global level. Some measures include institutional, collective and individual responsibilities. These responsibilities and obligations have required some common restrictiveness in both individual and societal level in every nation. As a matter of fact, in the first months of the pandemic, countries around the world implemented not only quarantine/isolation but also lockdown and restricted travel (human mobility from in city to the whole country or beyond the country). However, as the economic problems deepened, these measures were loosened, and the new return to normal movement was initiated within the framework of the determined rules; (1) using of face masks;

(2) using hand sanitizers to be clean; (3) observing social distance (protection distance) between people; and (4) staying home as much as possible. However, the effectiveness of these border measures can only be possible with the participation of the individual, collective and state institutions. In short, these three responsibilities mentioned above have involved the eclectic combination of the four ethical approaches.

1. Individual ethical responsibility and obligations: Ethical responsibility is an indicator that the individual's ability to recognize, understand, interpret, and act autonomously on multiple principles and values, according to standards within a given field and/or context (Cemal, August 1 2016; Neves, 2005). Medical ethics includes the individual's fair use of medical services within the framework of their autonomy and their acceptance or refusal of treatment. However, since PHE aims to protect and maintain the health of society, it requires certain measures that restrict the autonomy of the individual (Giubilini, 2019). Therefore, PHE includes collective responsibilities and obligations.

2. Collective ethical responsibility and obligations: This ethical responsibility and obligations have included some restrictiveness of individual autonomy partially or completely (Giubilini, 2019). This situation occurs especially in extraordinary situations such as pandemics and disasters. When there are serious health problems such as a pandemic, PHE may require restrictive measures such as quarantine, isolation, and vaccination, as well as less restrictive measures such as protective equipment, social distancing (contagious protection distance), which include collective responsibility. However, these obligations do not mean that total removal of ethical values. Therefore these obligations should involve some ethical principles, called the principle of less restrictive alternative (PLRA) measures become more vital (Giubilini, 2019).

3. State and institutional ethical responsibilities and obligations: The implementation of public health policies and ethical values is only possible if the state, relevant institutions, public health workers and society fulfill their legal and ethical responsibilities. The state is obliged to protect and improve human rights, provide necessary assistance and proper management of institutions and services, according to clear and transparent eligibility criteria and rights. Relevant state institutions are obliged to take measures to protect the health of individuals, namely society. PHE does not ignore the ethical principles of medicine, but in extraordinary situations such as a pandemic, it may limit some individual rights (autonomy) such as quarantine/isolation, or lockdown and PLRA such as vaccine or using mask and so on.

The purpose of these obligations of public health science and related institutions has protected public health and has also maintained state public policy. Therefore public health policy should involve public health measures but also be careful with these restriction measures; while these restriction measures include principles such as non-harm, utility, and justice, they should not completely eliminate the principle of autonomy. The majority of restrictive measures taken within the framework of public health policies followed during the COVID-19 pandemic are in line with individual ethical responsibilities. Of these, only quarantine, isolation, and lockdown have put a serious restriction on individual autonomy. However, using protective items of clothing (mask, social distance, and hand washing, and stay at home as possible as etc.) is convenient with the principle of less restrictive alternative (PLRA) (Giubilini, 2019).

There needs to be implementation of two kinds of plans as short and long term. These may be detailed as: **first** adapted to the conditions involving various parameters and prepared clear intuitional policies; **second,** the maintenance obligation of healthcare professionals serving; **third**, resource allocation and priority setting during emergencies; **fourth** imposing restrictive measures; quarantine, lockdown/curfew, and up to PLRA (Giubilini, 2019) such as social distance, using protective equipment, hand washing and vaccine; **fifth,** consider international public health obligations; **sixth** calculate risk perception for each level and **seventh** is to inform the public to adapt to the existing conditions and ensuring good communication, and public health research.

In this study, I have found examples of the underestimation and even total lack of attention of PHE measures that less constrain people's democratic-social and economic life in Turkey. Turkey's government had loosened COVID-19's type of isolation measures to stimulate the economy, which was adversely affected by the first wave of the pandemic like other governments. However, while economic activities returned to normal with social and political meetings (e.g., weddings, engagements, condolences, funerals, political meetings, the opening of mosques and shopping centers, private Quran courses, restaurants, and education) the number of cases increased sharply in the whole country as a result of people not paying attention to specific pandemic measures. For these reasons and the aim of the study, the researcher collected some online reports and videos to evaluate in terms of PHE specific restrictive and less restrictive measures. And all reports were evaluated to explain why some measures are not followed by some people.

Research Questions
Why do people not pay enough attention to less restrictive measures that will protect and sustain their lives health-socially and economically? What are the factors of the non-fulfillment of personal, social, and corporate responsibilities here?

Method
This study was conducted as qualitative research on online media reports and interviews to explain public health ethics individual, collective responsibilities between 30 June to 16 November 2020. For this purpose, I then collected some related events from online reports and YouTube interview videos. The review reports and videos were assessed according to the pandemic, PHE and individual-collective,

and institutional responsibilities and obligations. I then determined keywords and searched on internet web sites and YouTube's into consideration. After that, pieces of reports were collected, associated, and separated according to their subjects.   And, all results were collated and evaluated with a framework of the values of public health ethics (PHE) and their individual, collective and institutional, responsibilities, and obligation.

Results and Discussion
The COVID-19 pandemic differs from other diseases in terms of the risks they pose for others, as well as its emergence processes due to the social determinants included in the concept of health. An effective response against the pandemic requires measures to be taken at the individual, collective and institutional levels.

This study is important because it includes cases, legal regulations, and emerging problems at the national level. Each country should put its issues to determine a common path around the world. In addition, it seems, organizations such as the World Health Organization, Control Disease Center, and Public health organizations and government need to study more to prepare more functional programs about the situation. The pandemic cannot be prevented only by healthcare professionals and facilities; in order to control and eliminate the pandemic problem, each individual should fulfill their ethical responsibilities and obligations; and therefore, collective participation and institutional support are required.

However, there is no specific case-based qualitative or quantitative study on this subject in Pub Med, Google, Google Scholar, and Science Direct studies, however, only a few studies were related to individual, social and institutional responsibility. For this reason, this study data were evaluated and discussed within these studies.

1. Individual ethical responsibilities and obligations:
This includes steps of protection of each individual (protective equipment, social distance, hygiene and stay home as much as possible), individuals applying these behaviors with the same meticulousness, that is, accepting them as a collective ethical responsibility. In this context, when we examine the news and interviews in the media, it is seen that there are serious problems regarding individual responsibility and obligations. Evaluating the reasons of those who do not want to fulfill individual responsibilities and obligations will make a significant contribution to the solution of the problem in question. For this reason, news and interviews including the reasons of those who do not comply with the existing measures were selected.

The **online media reports** collected as an example under 4 subheadings regarding these responsibilities and liabilities have not clearly understood the pandemic problem at the individual level (Appendix A). The cases are: **1**. Some Turkish customs such as hugs, condolences (take days), wedding ceremony, home visits (e.g., guests came to the house, we couldn't say no) hand or face kissing tradition

and practices of religious holidays contributed significantly to the increase of the pandemic. **2.** Some of the Covid-19 patients have tried to escape from the hospital or quarantine. **3.** The spoiled selfishness of famous people not to take precautions. **4.** Some people refuse to use masks and social distanc**e** for personal reasons (e.g., "I should attend political or social meeting", "I am not affected by the pandemic", "my working conditions, eating together in the job, and my transportation problems force me", or I have more serious problems than pandemics (e.g., hunger, bills to be paid, rent, children's needs and so on). **5**. Those who strongly respond to the doctor's mask warning.

Some **YouTube** Street Interview videos were analyzed (İlave TV, 2020; Media, 2020; Sarı mikrofon, 2020; Sor kaç, 2020; Street interviews, 2020; Tolga Taştemel, 2020). Topics from these interviews were: **1.** Some people do not believe in the presence of COVID-19, **2.** Some people put faith over the pandemic situation in thinking this sent by God/Allah, **3.** Some think that COVID-19 will not seriously affect them, **4.** Some indicated that the data show that the mortality rate is low; so, if they get infected they will be treated in the hospital, **5.** Some indicated that in any case, we will be infected by COVID-19, maybe it is a destiny, and there is no need for panic. However, all of these negative attitude **6.** Some of them think that pandemic is not only a governmental issue but also on individual, collective and state- institutional responsibility.

When we consider these events, it is seen that there is a serious problem regarding individual ethical responsibility and obligations; it is seen that people escape from quarantine, celebrities see themselves as special, strongly disagrees to doctors and people who warn of wearing masks, and not obeying the social distance rule, they do not hesitate to ignore both themselves and other people, and even endanger their health. However, health authorities have stated that protection from the short and long-term consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic is only possible if every individual in the society acts with a sense of responsibility towards others. In addition, they stated that despite their explanation that protection from the short and long-term consequences of the epidemic is possible only if every individual in society acts with a sense of responsibility towards others, and the messages emphasizing the understanding of total solidarity in the process, unfortunately, it has not been understood enough yet by people.

While evaluating these cases, we can accept that the state of fear and anxiety caused by being under threat of possible death is normal to a certain extent. People know only as much knowledge as they can understand, and make sense of it and apply it. However, we can only allow the uncertainty, confusion and despair brought about by the pandemic to dominate human life to a certain time. This period should be short; people must take into account the direction and management of institutions as a social entity and understand the importance of solidarity in order to protect their own existence. Otherwise, we cannot control and

mitigate the harm of the pandemic, individual ethical responsibilities, and obligations really play an important role. However, in this process, the feeling that security and health institutions can protect people from everything started to disappear, "With the COVID-19 pandemic, people have difficulties in being tested for COVID-19, the right to be diagnosed and treated from the state, and they have been disappointed on their thought and expectation that they cannot receive sufficient health, security and economic support (Üstün & Özçiftçi, 2020). Therefore, people also developed some feelings such as anger, anxiety and fear (Bozkurt, Zeybek, & Aşkın, 2020; Yıldırım, 2020).

In addition to all of this, another important reason is that health literacy, health news and health warnings are ignored. Sensational, tabloid-type news is in focus, while life issues are not. These show why a serious study is needed on health literacy and watching-listening to health news. Perhaps it would be beneficial for the media to present health news in a more striking way, to take part in this context, and to include in discussion programs. The inclusion of all institutions providing secular and religious education from kindergarten to health education programs (such as children's games, social activity planning games, and cartoons) and continuity in these programs can make this issue more effectively.

2. Collective ethical responsibilities and obligations: The organization and realization of collective movements are difficult, because people should share common aim and approaches. Therefore, for economic purposes, it is easy for people to come together and embrace joint action; we can easily see this in companies (Lewis, 1948). Business organizations do not ignore their ethical responsibilities in order to maintain their own existence and increase the rate of profit, and develop different standards by which members of the organization can be judged for personal faults. Ethical and legal responsibilities and obligations are clearly stated in these organizations (Smiley, 2005). Members are limited in their powers or judged due to their unethical and illegal behavior, and therefore they face serious material and moral damage (Smiley, 2005).

However, that situation is different in public health. Especially during a pandemic, the way to break the chain of contamination is to block the contact chain. For that reason, collective understanding-attitude is important to break the chain of contamination. The spread of the virus will be prevented by finding and isolating the contact. People should follow voluntary or compulsory determined pandemic restrictions for two reasons both for the benefit of the individual and the benefit of the community. This study evidence stated that the common consciousness in the continuation of the spread of the pandemic; the effect of PH and PHE awareness is not sufficiently developed in society (Appendix B).

These five themes described the results: **1.**People's failure to comply with COVID-19 new normalization rules with hugs and hand kissing where at funerals, weddings, engagement ceremonies, continuing home visits between friends/relatives, frequent home visits, religious holidays and soldiers' farewell ceremonies; **2.** Companies do not report cases due to economic concerns; **3.**Koran courses (private religious education courses ignored the pandemic); **4.** Official education institutions to start education (despite the measures taken, COVID-19 positive cases emerged); **5.** Unfortunately, the society does not take into account the new normal living conditions in the natural disasters and important opening or meeting (Hagia Sophia opening, political meetings, flood disasters in Giresun, and an earthquake in İzmir and its districts etc.).

In the light of the data in Appendix B, we can clearly say that public health requires each individual to be self-conscious about health and public health, and their actions should be in line with the existing measures and associate this with their individual ethics. For that reason, the public health ethics organization and realization of collective movements are not easy, because people should share common aims and approaches. Therefore, for economic purposes, it is easy for people to come together and embrace joint action; we see this in companies. Business organizations do not ignore their ethical responsibilities in order to maintain their own existence and increase the rate of profit and develop different standards by which members of the organization can be judged for personal faults (Lewis, 1948). Ethical and legal responsibilities and obligations are clearly stated in these organizations. Members are limited in their powers or judged due to their unethical and illegal behavior, and therefore they face serious material and moral damage. For that reason, if people don't tangible benefit is demonstrated, people don't care to act together and follow rules.

In this context, each individual is important, especially employees who are in contact with too many people for their job can spread COVID-19 without symptoms, children and teens should also be evaluated as a super-spreader group by authorities. Therefore, the authorities need to plan a serious child-adult education in order to increase public awareness and public consciousness about the knowledge and results that will enable joint action. In the program, individuals should be self-conscious about health and public health, and their actions should be in line with existing measures and associate this with their individuals' ethical responsibilities and obligations. Thus, it can be ensured that they stop the behaviors that are a part of society's traditions and customs and have now become a habit during a pandemic.

In this context, it is stated that in the study conducted with 533 villagers in China, the villagers collectively followed pandemic measures with inform, control, public health leaders, and its committee and legal reasons (with penalty fear). However, the study in question is about villagers and it is undoubtedly much easier to control the limited population and area (Yang & Ren, 2020). However, population and area size constitute two serious barriers in cities. Therefore, reports in the media about the village and the villagers in Turkey is quite limited and seems to be focused on the city of these problems.

As a conclusion, the shortcoming in this context became very evident in the COVID-19 pandemic, and some of the people ignored the new normalization rules and returned to their pre-pandemic behaviors and meetings. This attitude prevented the pandemic from being brought under control, causing serious damage to the whole country. Taking action to create collective awareness among people in the pandemic requires a special effort to ensure health literacy or media and health authorities should put extra effort to develop at least providing good listening and understanding of health-related information.

3. State and institutional ethical responsibilities and obligations: The responsibilities of the state and related institutions can be addressed from both an ethical and legal perspective. Because, taking into account the values of PE and PHE are possible by establishing strong, understandable, and traceable policies and clarifying the ethical and legal dimensions of these policies. The duty of the state is to improve the lives of people in every condition, and so, the ethical approaches, social contract, and social justice theory in the introduction part of the article, pandemic preparedness plan, and response plans are of vital importance. In this framework and specific to the pandemic necessary legal-ethical-social measures are; active case-finding studies by the application of screening tests of the relevant institutions of the state, definitive diagnosis, and treatment of suspicious cases, quarantine/lockdown practices, tracing of the contacts, and practices the less restrictive four measures: **1**.Legal precautions and its penalties**, 2.** Conflicting statements by government officials**, 3.** Lack of multi-sectoral organizations. **4.** Seasons in pandemic planning, and finally **5.** Preparation for natural disasters every time (before-during-after) to prevent pandemic disseminate.

1. Legal precautions; penalties and incentives (Violating the measures regarding infectious diseases): According to the justification of the crime of violating the measures regarding infectious diseases, the protected legal value is "protection of public health". The relevant sanctions are determined as "crimes against the public health" (Bayzit, 2020; Yenerer Çakmut, 2014).

In the event of entering or escaping a place under quarantine despite being unauthorized, or in case of other actions that may be contrary to the measures taken by the competent authority, the following penalties are given to persons (Appendix C) within the framework of the laws in detail. The fine to be applied according to the 282th article of the General Hygiene Law (789-3180 TL), the penalty to be applied according to the 32nd article of the Misdemeanor Law (100-392 TL) and the 195th article of the Turkish Penal Code. According to the opinion, imprisonment from two months to one year may be imposed (Bayzit, 2020). However, these legal rules do not involve or mention "using a mask", therefore, in the case titled "The court canceled the mask penalty! Striking 'social state' emphasis" in Appendix C, it was revealed that this issue could not be evaluated legally. This is undoubtedly due

to the fact that this pandemic has different characteristics than other pandemics. Therefore, legal regulation needs to be reevaluated.

Besides that, in accordance with these legal regulations, The Ministry of Interior issued various circulars to ensure controls during the pandemic process; on 11 September 2020 a circular regarding the Imposition of a Dormitory Charter to Avoid Isolation was issued and the relevant practices were provided by the security forces; on 12 September 2020, "Circular on HES Code Obligation in Intercity Buses with 81", on 15 August 2020 "Circular on Public Rest and Entertainment Places Sent to 81 Provincial Governorships; On 24 September 2020, a Circular on Correctly Informing the 81 Provincial Governorships was sent and; on the date 30 September 2020 "*Turkey Coronavirus General of the Comprehensive Audit to perform*", and the 81 Provincial Governors (Life is often home) HPP Code Theme 2 Circular (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti İç İşleri bakanlığı, 2020).

Although with these legal regulations and penalties some people still haven't followed the new normalization rules. The very high risk of transmission of COVID-19, people are still continuing to act within normal living customs and rules, and the lack of incentives as well as prohibitions have led to the pace of the pandemic.

Would incentives be more effective? Identifying low and high-risk professions in the pandemic and implementing financial incentives accordingly will make a serious contribution to the control of the pandemic. For example, the bus driver who is not allowed to take standing passengers will abide by this rule, because the government has prepared an incentive package to support his earnings. Hazard pay during a pandemic and providing incentives within new laws for essential workers such as significant financial incentives should be given to freelancers, tradesmen, unemployed people (including those who work in daily work) and those who disclose their duties such as collective flooding; rewarding the businesses-shop owners that obey the rules (Parkhurst and Faulkner., 2020; Hecker, 2020).

1. COVID-19 Turkey government aid; the government decided to provide social assistance for unemployed people or limited work allowance for those who are at risk of being unemployed or losing their jobs. In accordance with the Additional Article 2 of the Unemployment Insurance Law No.4447, it has been decided to pay premiums to those who meet their working periods and premium payment conditions at the start of the short-term employment of the workers. **2.** On the other hand, financial support should be provided for all healthcare workers due to the high-risk group and recognizing COVID-19 as an occupational disease and providing continuous financial support to the healthcare professionals and other hospital staffs, children and spouses of those who died from COVID-19. And healthcare workers all over the country took action with the cry "We are running out, we are dying". Because the disease and death caused by the COVID-19 makes working

conditions more oppressive and harder. Indeed, HCW felt this pressure the most. In addition, Turkish Medical Association and Turkish Mental Trauma and Disaster Psychiatry Working Unit had an explanation. "Coordinator Dr. K. Laçiner pointed out that the burden of healthcare professionals is increasing day by day: "Healthcare professionals caught Covid-19 disease 14 times more often than society" (Birgün/Ankara, 2020).

In summary, the importance of financial incentives for better execution of the pandemic process should not be overlooked by the authorities and incentives should also be evaluated more among the measures.

2. Conflicting statements by government officials, World Health Organization (WHO) and scientists: 1.This conflict is seen in both explanations and some applications. In this regard, the limitations made in the data announced daily by the Ministry of Health or not disclosing those diagnosed with Covid-19 positive, but disclosing those diagnosed with Covid-19 and having severe symptoms played an important role in not knowing the total number of COVID-19 positive cases. Scientists make different explanations. Conflicting statements of the WHO about masks and medicines used for treatment (Ashley Yeager, Feb 28, 2020; Bayram Altug, 2020; Editorials, 2020; Mark Sableman, 2020). 2. Lack of consensus on all meetings: While the meetings regarding weddings, condolences, engagements or national holidays were limited, political meetings such as party congresses or mosque openings seriously affected people's decisions regarding COVID-19.

Pneumonia rate of patients: 4.20%
Number of severe patients (red line): 3.439
Total number of healed patients (blue line): 414.278
Total death number: 11,507
(Türkiye Bilimsel ve Teknolojik Araştırma kurumu (TÜBİTAK), November 15, 2020.)

3. Lack thereof multi-institutional organizations: Turkey's health system, hospital and medical staff at the beginning of the pandemic quite successful because of employment. Besides it, the first important organization is the Coronavirus Scientific Advisory Board which is a group of medical scientists set up on 10 January 2020 by the Ministry of Health. A COVID-19 guide was prepared to collect information about the disease from a single source on January 14. However, as known that an open dialogue includes basic elements such as the right of all decision-makers to access information (transparency), enabling all scientists to take a more active role, and so on. This also plays an important role in the trust, love, compassion, understanding, solidarity, cooperation, and sharing of difficulties between the society and the institutions and therefore the state.

In a pandemic situation, continuous decisions are made at international-national, organizational/ institutional and individual levels. The sum of all these decisions constitutes the response to the epidemic. These decisions are based on scientific and correct information. Therefore to this

important and necessary board, the establishment of a committee consisting of professional organizations, ethicists, and social scientists, along with this council, could be a significant contribution to the development of social common understanding against the pandemic. Considering the country in general, it is seen that "a common understanding and common attitude" against the pandemic has not been realized yet. Unfortunately, there is a deficiency in this regard. Because creating public awareness of Turkey in taking these measures can provide the continuation of social and economic life. For this reason, with the participation of every professional, social, and art organizations, wider cooperation will make a very important difference. This team can evaluate risks from different angles and reach society by using many different resources such as pictures, movies, verbal narratives, drama, or understandable /simple scientific information of different people.

4. Seasons in pandemic planning: It is also important to evaluate seasonal factors in measures against pandemics (Academy of Medical Sciences, 2020). What kind of measures should be taken for this issue, especially the special conditions brought by the winter season, and winter pandemic measures are still not determined. Healthcare professionals expect Covid-19 infections to increase this winter, as the virus that causes corona comes from the coronavirus family and other types of coronaviruses spread more during the winter months. In winter, virus-carrying particles can stay in the air longer, even in less humid air due to cold weather. In this context, besides the flu vaccine, it is important to provide basic winter requirements (clothes, warm house-office, food and flu medicines etc.) ventilation, and economic support.

5. Preparation for natural disasters: Indeed, natural-man-made disasters and pandemic processes have similar and different aspects. The sudden severity of natural disasters (e.g., earthquakes, tsunami, storms and floods. and so on) caused people to forget about the pandemic. Therefore, in any case, it is important to bring these extraordinary conditions under control and to find solutions to these problems. Otherwise, societal anxiety increases, insensitivity in society also appears as a problem, the struggle capacity of health workers decreases, problems in the use of resources increases and routine health services disrupted. Consideration of democracy and human rights has become one of the basic requirements while taking sharp measures to protect public health.

According to the data of the US Geological Research Center (USGS), a total of 105 earthquakes of 6 or higher magnitude occurred in the world in 2020. Furthermore, in the earthquakes that occurred in the world in 2020, a total of 198 people died and it is seen that 160 are Turkish. Turkey has experienced three natural disasters which were occurring in different parts of the city (e.g., 24 January 2020 6.8Mw Elazığ earthquake 41 people died and 1466 mild to moderate injuries, a flood occurred in Giresun on 22 August 2020 11 people died and 12 were injured and a 7.0 Mw earthquake and Tsunami occurred in Izmir on 2 November

2020, 114 people lost their lives, 1036 people were injured).

However, the main harm was not derived from earthquakes, tsunami and flood, that is, the main harm was derived from weak buildings or city ground control error or creeping and sand withdrawal from streams brought disaster'. It is because of the fact that the opening of these areas to construction has caused the current damage to be greatly increased. Due to the rescue efforts in these serious natural disasters and the panic in society, people have significantly ignored the pandemic protocols. In this case, the number of COVID-19 positives has increased significantly. These painful situations revealed that the prepared plan should not only be for pandemic but also for natural or human-induced disasters, taking into account all natural, social, and economic and number of population characteristics of the cities.

Conclusions

The pandemic is a global problem and requires some restrictive measures on a global level to protect and maintain health. A code of PHE which is evaluated from a very wide and high perspective in a multi-disciplinary area, for a pandemic is necessary because ethics generally considers human life, human dignity, and well-being, whereas a pandemic threatens life and these values. Therefore PHE involves all ethical approaches such as utilitarianism, duty ethics or deontological perspective, virtue ethics, social contract, and social justice theory.

Many pandemics have occurred throughout world history; these past experiences have pointed out that the pandemic can be controlled or eliminated with measures to be taken in all areas affected. For that reason having the pandemic under control is needed on individual, collective, and states, and related institutions and they should act in a framework of common understanding, common effort (i.e., policy and institutional plan and program on health, trade-economy, transportation, and education, etc.). All measures should also involve natural-man-made disasters, seasonal conditions, or some private conditions such as other socio-economic and health issues (e.g., chronic diseases, disabilities, refugees as special conditions as well as poverty, the unemployed, and those who have lost their job). Providing PH and PHE needs some restrictive measures' under four basic ethical approaches whose main aim is providing healthcare professionals with more effective healthcare, preventing the spread of the pandemic at the community, and maintain health at both national and international levels.

The basic principle of healthcare ethics is to determine the ethical responsibility and obligations aspects of decisions involving the whole society while improving, protecting, saving, and providing herd immunity for the health of the society, thereby protecting and maintaining human dignity, human rights, integrity, and legal-ethical rights of society. Correspondingly, public health precautions lead to a decrease or increase in the pandemic, namely the adequacy or insufficiency of the measures taken at the individual, collective, or state and institutional levels of people play an important role in controlling the pandemic. As known, in the pandemic, there are no good days for any of us unless each person takes their own responsibility as much as everyone else.

As seen in this study, Turkey has taken into account pandemic measures to protect public health convenient international rules. These measures are seen as quarantine/isolation/lockdown which is more restrictive measures and on the other side the less restrictive measures, tailored to the state of the pandemic. However, at the same time, violations of these rules have occurred in many countries like Turkey. This situation reveals that not only legal measures are sufficient regarding the pandemic, but also that efforts should be made to achieve a common understanding, common behavior, and therefore a common attitude within the framework of common values and including human rights. However, in this case, there may be a struggle in accordance with the framework of public health ethical values.

In short, the real struggle against the pandemic can be realized in a short time with the public health ethics values such as the importance and integrity of human dignity, human rights, responsibility, solidarity, herd immunity, and common rights. International ethics code and declarations should a part of education for all countries to develop a higher and holistic understanding, conscience, and attitude against a pandemic.

Limitations

This study is limited to the events and interviews that took place during the pandemic between 22 May 2020 and 16 November 2020 and were featured in newspapers and YouTube videos. In addition, the mentioned news is limited due to a large amount of news, and only a small part of the news is included in the Appendices. However, the news in question is a summary of the many events that happened. Also, there was a possibility of some unreachable incidents or resources. Another important circumstance is that only a few articles explaining the behavior of people during the pandemic could not be reached.

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Appendix A. PHE, Quarantine practices and Individual responsibilities and obligations

1.Some of the Covid-19 patients have tried to escape from the hospital or quarantine.

a.The person who tried to go to his wife in the hospital by violating the quarantine rules in Gümü?hane was caught at the police application point. Y.Ç, who was taken into custody at the application point and imposed an administrative fine of 3 thousand 150 TL, was taken to Ahmet Ziyaüddin Gümü?hanevi Dormitory, which was prepared for those in quarantine under the supervision of the 112 Emergency Service team. It was learned that Y.Ç. left his residence in Bayburt to go to his wife who was being treated at Trabzon Karadeniz Technical University (October 9, 2020).

https://www.trthaber.com/haber/turkiye/karantinadan-kacti-polise-yakalandi-522015.html

b. He escaped quarantine, went to have an eye examination. When the coronavirus test was positive in Beyo?lu, M.Ö., who decided to be quarantined at his home, went to the hospital because of the redness in his eyes. M.Ö. began to argue with the doctor who did not treat him because he saw that he was carrying the virus in the system. Thereupon, the police were informed. BC disappeared until the teams arrived. He was later caught at home and placed in a quarantine dormitory (October 06 2020).

https://www.milliyet.com.tr/gundem/karantinadan-kacti-goz-muayenesi-olmaya-gitti-6323079

c.The patient, who was infected with the virus in Zonguldak and should be in quarantine at home, was caught betting at the game of chance dealer (?HA September 06, 2020)

https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/bahis-oynamak-icin-karantinadan-kacti,VzLDBkBEBEuISQMURBM_6Q

d.A Covid-19 patient with corona virus contact in Denizli escaped in violation of the quarantine rule. The person who went to the bus station to change the province was caught by the police teams (DHA August 30, 2020).

https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/corona-hastasi-karantinadan-kacti-otogarda-yakalandi,jvP7MKfFIUSYgy3d18bLyQ

e.M.F. whose test was positive and yesterday's test turned negative in the recovery process. named party tickets to go to his city with the idea that the cut will be discharged escaped from quarantine grounds (September 12,2020).

http://www.yeniduzen.com/karantinadan-kacti-yakalandi-131417h.htm

f.It was determined that Osman S., who had a positive coronavirus test in Suhut district of Afyonkarahisar, violated the quarantine and went to the market. Police resettled Osman S. in the dormitory after criminal action (September 29,2020).

https://www.olay.com.tr/karantinadan-kacti-markette-yakalandi-628014

g. The person who got on the bus from Aksaray while he was supposed to be in quarantine and who was found to have pierced the quarantine in the inspections carried out by the teams in Sakarya became the first quarantine penalty in the city. The person who is placed in the KYK dormitory and will stay in the dormitory for 9 days will meet all his expenses(September 17,2020).

https://www.bizimsakarya.com.tr/guncel/karantinadan-kacti-sakarya-da-yakalandi-h124560.html

h. According to the information received, S.G. in Seyitgazi district was quarantined on the grounds that it was corona virus contact. Not waiting for the end of the quarantine period, S.G., who went out, was caught by the police teams. Legal action was taken against the citizen on the grounds that he did not comply with the ban (November 11,2020).

http://www.anadolugazetesi.com/eskisehir-de-karantinadan-kacti--139631.html

i. U.G. (37), who was taken to home quarantine by the filming teams for visiting her mother-in-law with coronavirus, left her home and went to Didim by failing to comply with the measures. U.G. caught by the police teams (September 15, 2020).

https://www.aydinkulis.com/genel/karantinadan-kacti-didim-de-yakalandi-h20900.html

j. ?.Y. had a positive record from the Covid-19 test and should be under home isolation. However, he did not, the police teams found him at the street, contacted with 112 teams. Taken to the ambulance by health teams, ?.Y. He was later taken to Malatya Training and Research Hospital (August 30, 2020).

https://www.haberler.com/karantinadan-kacti-denetimlerde-yakalandi-13554886-haberi/

k. Bursa Provincial Health Director Dr. Halim Ömer Ka?ıkçı stated that they encountered striking examples in the radiation studies during the pandemic process and said, "When we called a case whose coronavirus test was positive, we learned that he had his hair done at the hairdresser as part of the wedding preparations. Our teams immediately went to the hairdresser and we took the patient into isolation" (October 9, 2020).

https://ewww.mygazete.com/gundem/karantinadan-kacti-oyle-bir-yerde-yakalandi-ki-h49490.html

l. The woman should be under quarantine at Taksim First Aid Hospital , escaped from the hospital. The woman was caught by police teams in Taksim/?stanbul (March 23, 2020).

https://www.veryansintv.com/taksim-ilkyardim-hastanesinde-karantinadan-kacan-kadin-yakalandi

m. The person who should have been in quarantine at home due to the corona virus (Covid-19) in the Sandıklı district of Afyonkarahisar was caught by the gendarmerie teams while traveling with a tractor. He was placed in the KYK dormitory, where he was quarantined after he applied a fine of 3 thousand 180 TL (September 26,2020).

https://www.cnnturk.com/turkiye/karantinadan-kacti-traktorle-seyahat-ederken-yakalandi

2. The spoiled selfishness of famous people not to take precautions.

a. Korona EB. escaped from quarantine! He was closed to the quarantine dormitory with his lover (September 18, 2020). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6N5rlF8be5E

b It was noteworthy that actress M. Bolu?ur did not persistently wear a mask wherever she was seen. Upon this, Bolu?ur said, "I am a person who prefer distance. I am born as a socially distant person, therefore I shouldn't use a mask 29.9.2020.

https://www.internetgundem.com/merve-bolugur-ben-zaten-dogustan-sosyal-mesafeliyim-dedi-3557h.htm

3. Those who refuse to use masks and social distance

a.Salih Ergün, who runs a clothing store in Gölcük, warned Yunus E., who came to the store with his family for Eid shopping, about wearing a mask. However, Yunus E., who rejected this proposal, attacked the business owner Salih E., who warned him to wear a mask. Salih Ergün, who was hit on the head with a hanger iron, remained on the ground in blood (28.07.2020).

https://www.haberturk.com/son-dakika-haberler-maske-takmayi-reddedip-is-yeri-sahibini-darp-etti-2757499

b. A woman warned at the market for not wearing a Mask. She threatened market employees (August 5,2020). https://onedio.com/haber/maske-takmadigi-icin-gittigi-markette-uyarilan-kadin-bana-bak-lan-dort-goz-benim-canimi-sikma-kafani-gozunu-patlatirim-913314

4. Those who strongly respond to the doctor's mask warning

a.A doctor working at the Family Health Center in Karaba?lar district of Izmir was battered in an argument after he asked people who came for examination to wear a mask. Another doctor who was trying to break the fight by intervening was injured as a result of being hit on the head with a hard object 30.6.2020.

https://www.sabah.com.tr/yasam/2020/06/30/maske-takin-diyen-doktoru-darp-ettiler

b. After the treatment of G.B, who came to the emergency room of Bornova Türkan Özilhan State Hospital due to heart disease, doctor M.B warned of a mask. Two people, one of whom was a woman, beat the doctor who gave the warning and threatened with a knife on October 11, 2020.

https://www.medimagazin.com.tr/ozel-saglik//tr-maske-uyarisi-yapan-doktoru-once-bicakla-tehdit-etti-sonra-darp-etti-9-681-91731.html

c.At the Istanbul Çapa Medical Faculty Hospital, a person battered a health worker who told him to wear his mask correctly. It was stated that the health worker who was injured in his eye was operated (25.09.2020). https://www.birgun.net/haber/maske-uyarisinda-bulunan-saglik-calisanina-saldiri-ameliyata-alindi-316914

e.Violence to mask warning: A 10-year-old girl who played hide-and-seek with her friends in the gaming room of the site yesterday evening in Esenyurt, Istanbul. She first warned them for not wearing a mask, and then took videos on her mobile phone to inform the authorities about the Hayat Eve Sı?ar (HES). Therefore she was battered by foreign national women (30.09.2020). https://onedio.com/haber/istanbul-da-maske-uyarisi-yapan-10-yasindaki-cocugu-darp-ettiler-924679

Appendix B. Super-spreader events and collective responsibilities and obligations

1.People's failure to comply with COVID-19 new normalization rules at funerals, weddings, engagement ceremonies, and soldiers' farewell ceremonies.

Failure to comply with the bans imposed on weddings, engagement ceremonies, and condolence tents within the scope of the Coronavirus epidemic in many cities such as Diyarbakır, Gaziantep, ?anlıurfa, Adıyaman, Mardin, ?ırnak, Batman, Elazı? caused an increase in the number of cases. Finally, in Diyarbakır, a coronavirus patient who attended a Mevlit dinner infected 37 people with the virus. In the normalization process that started on June 1, it is worried that such gatherings may increase the number of cases. Dicle University Infectious Diseases and Clinical Microbiology Department Lecturer and Covid-19 Intensive Care Coordinator Prof. Dr. Recep Tekin pointed out that the new normalization is mixed with the old normalization. Prof. Dr. Tekin said the following:

Our people perceive this process as the old normalization process. It was perceived that we would not use masks, we would make contact at close range, we would go to mass meals. Since we did not pay attention to these, our number of cases increased. We definitely need to know that what we mean by normalization must be the new normalization. The new normalization also has certain standards, masks, social distancing, and cleanliness. (03 June 2020).
https://www.milliyet.com.tr/gundem/son-dakika-i-dugun-ve-taziyeler-corona-virus-vakalarini-artirdi-6225932

2. Companies do not report cases due to economic concerns

a.Governor of Kırklareli, Osman Bilgin, announced the big mistake made in the corona Kırklareli Governor Osman Bilgin invited all institutions and citizens to comply with the measures taken against the corona virus and announced that they detected 30 new cases due to the hiding of the case (October14, 2020).
Kaynak Yeniça?: Governor of Kırklareli, Osman Bilgin, announced the big mistake made in the corona.
b.Living in the district of Emet, ?.E. Covid-19 test was applied to Ç.E. The pair, whose test results were positive, were taken to home treatment. The radiation teams of the District Health Directorate also identified the people with whom 2 patients were in contact. However, ?.E. and Ç.E. did not report the names of some of their contacts to the filming team. Emet District Governorship also filed a criminal complaint to the prosecutor's office. The Prosecutor's Office launched an investigation against the couple for "making false statements to a public official who has the authority to issue an official document" (October 16, 2020).

3. Private Quran courses

a. Cases are increasing in children attending Quran boarding courses. When the capacities were increased in the Koran courses, where education has been allowed since June, coronavirus cases started to be seen. Dr. M. Yıldırım, from the mobile medical team, stated that although the children should spend the quarantine in the dormitory, positive cases were sent to homes by public transport with the decision of the mufti and the provincial health director (by A. Özbek, September 29, 2020)
https://bianet.org/bianet/toplum/231763-yatili-kuran-kurslarindaki-cocuklarda-vakalar-artiyor.
b. It was learned that the coronavirus test of a mosque imam who worked as a temporary instructor in the Central Male Quran Course affiliated to the district mufti in Camikebir District of Mente?e District was positive. While the imam, whose coronavirus test was positive, was hospitalized, the Quran course was quarantined (September 15, 2020).
http://www.mugladevrim.com.tr/haberler/mugla-haberleri/mentese-de-kuran-kursunda-koronavirus-soku
c. The corona virus test of the female teacher and two students in the Kaynarca Central Girls' Quran Course was positive. While the teacher and the students were quarantined at home, the course suspended education until a second order (September 28, 2020).
https://t54.com.tr/haber/5517023/kuran-kursunda-korona-panigi
d. Scandal in the Koran course: 40 children who continued to stay in bed were caught with coronavirus. In the Koran Course, where they continued to study despite the coronavirus epidemic, coronavirus were detected in 9 children. After the children were quarantined in the course, the number of cases increased to 40 (October14,2020).
https://www.birgun.net/haber/kuran-kursunda-skandal-yatili-kalmaya-devam-eden-40-cocuk-koronaviruse-yakalandi-319187

4.Official Education

Samsun Governorship announced that the test results of 2 teachers and 3 students in Baruthane Secondary School located in first step district were positive. The Governorship stated that it was decided to quarantine students and teachers who may be in contact and that distance education was started (October 18, 20209).
https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/2-ogretmen-ve-3-ogrenci-pozitif-cikti-1774231

5. COVID-19 is forgotten in special openings and natural disaster

a.Hagia Sophia has been a museum for 86 years; it will be converted into a mosque in 24.07. 2020. 350 thousand people attended the prayers in Hagia Sophia. Unfortunately, the crowd in question did not pay attention to the pandemic rules with the excitement of praying (July 25, 2020).
https://tr.euronews.com/2020/07/24/ayasofya-n-n-ibadete-ac-lmas-n-dunya-medyas-nas-l-gordu.
b. Flood disaster in Giresun: Loss of life increased to 8. Floods occurred in Giresun, Samsun, Rize and Trabzon. Vehicles drifted along the roads, retaining walls collapsed. The number of people who lost their lives in the flood rose to 8. Secretary of State for Home Affairs Minister Soylu stated that the search for 8 people continues. According to the statement made by AFAD, 157 citizens were rescued in the ongoing intervention works with a team of 988 people and 288 vehicles after the flood in Giresun (August 24, 2020).
https://www.ntv.com.tr/galeri/turkiye/giresunda-sel-felaketi-7-kisi-hayatini-kaybetti,7WvlFT_7p0u63Oc
c. As seen in the video, attention was not paid to covid-19 measures at the political meeting held later (August 31,2020).
https://www.msn.com/tr-tr/video/unluler/erdo%C4%9Fan-corona-salg%C4%B1n%C4%B1na-ra%C4%9Fmen-giresunda-miting-yapt%C4%B1-%C3%A7ay-da%C4%9F%C4%B1tt%C4%B1/vp-BB18yKvC

Appendix C. State and institutional ethical responsibilities and obligations

1.Legal sanctions: Regulations on communicable diseases are generally included in the Public Health Law [7] and TCK numbered 5237, article 195.

a.Article 195 of the TCK: the purpose of the Criminal Code

ARTICLE 1- (1) Purpose of the Criminal Code is to protect the rights and freedoms of individuals, public order and security, the rule of law, public health and the environment, public peace, and to prevent crime. The law regulates the basic principles of criminal responsibility, crimes, punishments, and types of security measures in order to achieve this goal. Within the framework of this legal regulation, those who do not comply with the quarantine measure are punished (October 20, 2020).

https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5237.pdf

b. Public Health Law (UMUMI HIFZISSIHHA LAW)

 Law Number: 1593; Acceptance Date: 24/4/1930;Published in Official Gazette: 6/5/1930 Issue: 1489; Code of Publication: Series: 3 Volume: 11 Page: 143

Aim: Improving the sanitary conditions of the country and struggle against all diseases or other harmful agents that harm the health of the nation, ensuring the healthy upbringing of the future generation, and making the people receive medical and social assistance are among the general government services.

https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.3.1593.pdf

c.Law on Misdemeanors:

Law Number: 5326; Acceptance Date: 30/3/2005; Published in the Official Gazette: Date: 31/3/2005 Number: 25772 (Duplicate): Code of Publication: Series: 5 Volume: 44

Purpose Article 1- (1) In this Law; to protect the social order, general morality, general health, environment, and economic order.

https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5326.pdf

d. Turkish Criminal Law

Article 138 related that intentional manslaughter and so, people who don't follow the pandemic rules can be trial with this article.

e. The court canceled the mask penalty! Striking 'social state' emphasis

The administrative fine of 392 TL imposed on E.N. ? for traveling without a mask in Bolu was canceled by the court. The reason for the decision was that "both the principle of being a social state and the imposed obligation bring financial burden, the state is obliged to provide 3 masks per person every day (13.07.2020).

* Article 19 of Turkey Constitution - it is regulated that nobody's freedom and security can be restricted without a court decision, and that they should be submitted to the approval of a judge within 24 hours, even if restricted in case of necessity.

* Article 23 of our Constitution stipulates that the freedom of residence and travel can only be restricted by law.

The 64th article of the General Hygiene Law regulates the measures regarding epidemic diseases. There is no obligation to wear a mask in any of these measures.

* Moreover, even while we agree that such a requirement, Turkey Constitution Article 2 of the Republic of Turkey is envisaged that the social state of law, when you bring economic as a liability if the principle of the social state, it was clear that should be borne by the state's obligations.

* It has been decided to abolish the administrative fines, which do not comply with the law, because of the principle of being a social state and the necessity of being a financial burden, that the state is obliged to provide 3 masks per person every day, as required by the above-mentioned Constitution and laws. DHA

https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2020/gundem/mahkeme-maske-cezasini-iptal-etti-dikkat-ceken-sosyal-devlet-vurgusu-5928646/

2.Conflicting statements by government officials

a. Turkish Medical Association "If we do not show the picture clearly, we cannot run the process well. Due to the epidemic, our 26 physician friends lost their lives by paying serious costs. We are concerned that these efforts will go to waste. Why is there a difference between the figures announced by the governors and the figures of the Ministry of Health, the Minister of Health should explain this? (August 7,2020) https://www.enpolitik.com/guncel/turk-tabipleri-birligin-den-bakan-koca-ya-cagri-celiskinin-nedenini-aciklayin-h323185.html

Health Minister Fahrettin Koca made a statement after the Coronavirus Scientific Committee meeting held today. Stating that the number of healthcare workers who tested positive for Kovid-19 has exceeded 40 thousand, Koca explained that the number of healthcare professionals who died due to coronavirus reached 107. Explaining that there was a 50 percent increase in coronavirus cases in the last month in Istanbul. However, Minister Koca said that they did not think of restrictions in the city (October 14,2020). https://www.evrensel.net/haber/416516/fahrettin-koca-testi-pozitif-olan-saglik-calisani-sayisi-40-bini-gecti

Among the number of coronavirus cases, the data announced by the ministry and by independent health professional organizations are generally inconsistent. In the press release made on September 30, Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said that not all cases are considered patients and that only people with Covid-19 symptoms are included in the coronavirus data announced daily. While Koca's statement caused reactions, the former president of the Turkish Medical Association, Prof. Dr. S. Adıyaman said, "Every case is a Covid-19 patient (October 10 2020 by E.Akgül). https://www.sozcu.com.tr/2020/saglik /prof-dr-adiyaman-her-vaka-bir-covid-19-hastasidir-6062416/

b.Health Minister Dr. Fahrettin Koca's announcement that the patient-case distinction has been made to the public since July 29 2020, people who do not show symptoms even though the COVID-19 tests are positive, are not included in the tables, and only those who show symptoms are explained under the title of 'patients', which created a new situation. This situation has increased the anxiety in the society because not all figures are disclosed.

https://www.enpolitik.com/guncel/turk-tabipleri-birligin-den-bakan-koca-ya-cagri-celiskinin-nedenini-aciklayin-h323185.html

c. Prof. Dr. A.Saltık stated that approximately 40 thousand beds allocated for the pandemic in Istanbul are full, intensive care units are even more full. How is our hospital beds filled with so few daily new diagnoses? (November 16, 2020)

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The untold stories of front-liners working under threat during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Bases for policy and program formulations

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a worldwide public health crisis causing additional burden to poor countries in terms of health programs and services, especially to their poor and vulnerable populace. While medical health experts and scientists in different countries have been studying how to treat people and to uncover more information on the virus, it has become more evident that nobody is immune to this virus. However, some groups such as the poor and vulnerable front-liners who continue to work despite the threat carry a bigger risk of infection and even an increased chance of dying from COVID-19. Thus, it is crucial to identify these vulnerable groups to better protect them from this virus. This study aims to present the different stories, experiences and challenges of frontline workers in Southern Mindanao, Philippines who continue to work and to ensure that their families will live despite the threat to their lives because of COVID-19. The ultimate goal of this paper is to present firsthand data from these ordinary but essential workers on what policies and programs government must consider for supporting them, while they continue to provide vital services to the society.

Introduction

As the COVID-19 cases in the Philippines continue to rise, the government is doing its mandate to prevent the further increase of the infected by the virus. The more people who will be hospitalized, the more budget it needs from the government which is already suffering financially because of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic as well as other calamities that have hit the Philippines.

Based on World Health Organization 2020, the Philippine government mounted a multi-sectoral response to the COVID-19, through the Interagency Task Force (IATF) on Emerging Infectious Diseases chaired by the Department of Health (DOH). Through the National Action Plan (NAP) on COVID-19, the government aims to contain the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate its socioeconomic impacts. It is more difficult if the ones affected by the virus, hospitalized and/ or isolated, are front liners such as medical doctors, nurses and other medical practitioners because it will result in loss of manpower in the medical field to take care of patients. Indeed, COVID-19 has revealed that some essential jobs such as medical doctors, nurses, medical technicians and other hospital staff are needed in the time of pandemic. Thus, they are called the front-liners in the country's battle against the virus. However, workers outside of the healthcare sector like tricycle drivers, food vendors, food laborers, security guards are also on the front lines in the country's fight against COVID-19. While the medical front-liners have health insurance and hazard pays, most other essential workers do not have health insurance and do not receive any hazard pays.

According to Abellanosa, (2020), people's responses to the government's policies varied depending on their social and economic location. It is easy for some to stay at home but not for those whose consumption depends on daily earning of an income. Lack of savings is a reason why wholesale shopping of groceries is not a practice among households in slums or poor urban areas. This is the main reason why the so called "front-liners" have no choice other than to work to earn a living. Income-poverty thinking can lead to neglect vulnerability when seeking to raise income as stressed by Abellanosa (2020). Families' sustenance may be more important than the danger the Covid19 pandemic poses, which is due to their highly exposed nature of jobs specifically going out to earn money to buy basic needs.

Hence, humanitarian partners providing cash interventions help that cash transfer programs are designed in cognizance with government protocols for the ECQ and other COVID-19 measures, including avoidance of mass gathering, physical distancing and disease prevention. The following measures will be considered in planning for Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA): a) Coordinate plans and activities with the barangay and municipal authorities to avoid people being confused by different activities. If possible, the local government should be given the list of beneficiaries of the implementing organization; b) For cash grants, organizations will apply government rates as the basis for the amount. If the cash grant amount is lower than the government cash grant rate in the area, organizations are encouraged to discuss with the concerned local governments to arrive at options that will not marginalize the organizations' beneficiaries; c) Whenever possible, complement CVA activities with appropriate information and education products and services that promote key COVID-19 messages; d) Organizations will explore CVA activities that lessen face-to face interaction, promote physical distancing, and decentralize markets to avoid crowding (COVID-19 Humanitarian Response Plan Philippines, 2020).

The aim of this paper is to present and expose the different challenges that these ordinary but essential workers or front-liners have been experiencing as well as their desires in terms of government support. It is our hope that through this study, we can bring the voice of these workers who are at the margins of the society but have been rendering essential services to all during the crises.

Study participants and the research questions

In this research project, we chose the following essential workers or front-liners: tricycle drivers, food vendors, laborers in the market, and security guards. We chose them on the basis of the following criteria: that their works are much needed during the pandemic, that they have to work in order to sustain their needs and the needs of their families and that they belong to the category of "no work, no pay or no money".

We were able to do an interview, following the prescribed health protocols, with four security guards, five tricycle drivers, six food vendors, three food servers, two laborers, one housekeeper and one working student who works as an assistant to the fish vendor who delivers fish to different barangays and houses. The place of our study is Digos City, the capital city or center in Davao del Sur and Malita, the capital town or center in Davao Occidental. All in all, we had twenty-two participants for this study. We conducted one-on-one interviews with these persons after they agreed to be part of this study. In our interview with them, we were guided by the following research questions: *1. What are your stories and experiences as front-liners working under threat during the covid-19 pandemic, 2. How did you manage the many challenges you encountered in your work as front-liners during the covid-19 pandemic, and 3. What actions in terms of policies and programs you need from the government as front-liners during health emergency situations?*

Stories and challenges of non-medical front-liners

This study gave us the opportunity to listen to the stories and experiences of front-liners who continue to work despite the threat of COVID-19. The stories and challenges of these front-liners are mostly on the following: *they chose to work in order for them and for their families to live, they have mingled with different groups of people which might have been infected by the virus, they have braved the virus and negotiated with authorities to allow them to operate even during lockdowns and community quarantine.*

Indeed, despite the imminent threat of COVID-19 virus, these workers have no other option but to continue their work so that they can provide for the basic needs of their families. They are aware that there is a deadly virus, but they would rather brave the virus than allowing them and their family members to die from hunger.

In the case of the tricycle drivers, they said that they continue to drive and bring different passengers to their destination so that they will have money to buy food for their families. A tricycle driver from Malita, Davao Occidental said: "*I continue to drive my tricycle even if there is a pandemic in our place because it is very difficult to have food if I won't drive*".

The same comment was shared by many tricycle drivers in Digos City. They said that they just have to be careful but have no other choice but to continue their work because that is their only means of having money to buy food. A tricycle driver in Digos City said: "*It's really scary but I don't*

have any other choice if got swayed by fear, I am sure that we will all die in hunger. What will happen to my family and my children if I will not drive. They said that if you have a strong immune system, you cannot be easily infected by the virus that is why I just make sure that I have a strong immune system by drinking calamansi juice and eating vegetables and then I also sleep well during nighttime because we have curfew by 8:00PM and I cannot be driving after that."

On the part of the poor: (1) being exposed to a greater probability or chance of infection, and (2) stressful experiences due to the impositions of the government such as but not limited to monetary fines and imprisonment for probable violations should be considered. Survival may overpower the fear of getting sick; after all, death is a consequence of both hunger and disease. The elderly (senior citizens) had to risk lining up in barangay centers just to get their subsidies; and vendors have to sell their goods every day because for the marginalized members of the society, there is a trade-off between income and security. Income-poverty thinking can neglect vulnerability in seeking to raise income (Chambers, n.d). It is like the race of life and survival of the fittest at the same time. It is common for these "front-liners" to say that their families' basic needs matter more than thinking about safety and home quarantine.

In the case of fish vendors and those who work in the food industry, they shared the same sentiment that despite fear, they have no choice but to continue working in order to live and survive. For instance, a female fish vendor shared: "*what I experienced with the arrival of COVID-19 is that the situation is very difficult, but I need to work to find food for my family.*" Our participant who works as a food server, shared that her challenges involve people who are hardheaded and do not follow the health protocols: "*For me it is really between life and death experience because I am serving food and there are customers who are hardheaded, they still come inside without wearing masks despite the announcement that "no mask no entry". It's us who have to wear the masks instead.*"

A working student who also works as a fish vendor in different barangays and houses shared his unforgettable experience during the pandemic: "*an unforgettable moment for me is when we went to one village and then the one who bought our fish was the father of a person who was positive of COVID-19. We were so anxious for the whole week with my uncle. I am afraid to have the virus because we do not have money, I just worked so hard together with my uncle so that I can buy the need stuff for my schooling and also the needs of my family. What will happen to us if I get sick? We do not have money. We even do not have Philhealth insurance and SSS and others*".

When people are confronted with a pandemic which is new and untreatable as of the moment, they are often gripped with fear and anxiety (DeJean et al., 2013). The presence of fear and the thought of not being secure if contaminated with the virus are shared feelings of these marginalized people. If they get sick, it means they would

stop working which would mean no income and no food to eat in their households. Among other reasons, the fear was being driven by the absence of treatment and no clear strategies to protect them from COVID-19 (Ho, Chee and Ho, 2020).

The security guards also shared their fear because every day they are facing people who are really hardheaded. This is beautifully captured by the sharing of this security guard: *"I work as a security guard in a money remittance agency, we closed our agency in a while, yet we are needed to open for people need to claim money sent to them, but my work is very scary since I am really the one who faces first the clients. I really need to work so that I can feed my family. My daily work is very risky specially that we accommodate more that 50 clients every day. I can really say this is risky since I cannot control the client to approach me even though we have the logbook and alcohol for them to sanitize still it is very difficult, I just pray a lot, since I don't have a choice because if I will not work all of us in the family will die of hunger".*

It is obvious that these ordinary workers under the "no work no pay or no money" category have no other choice but to work despite the threat. For rich people who have the luxury to stay in their airconditioned houses and gated communities, these people who continue to go out despite the government's call to stay at home, are troublemakers who continue to be threats to public safety (Bayod, 2020). But they fail to realize that these people are also afraid of the virus and afraid to die but because of their situation they choose to gamble in order to have a chance to live.

In fact, as mentioned by the Philippine President on his State of the National Address, dated July 27, 2020: *"when the pandemic struck, I decided to prioritize life over other considerations. According to experts, the interventions that the government had put in place prevented as much as 1.3 to 3.5 million infections. To me, even if the numbers were much lower, it would still be and would have been worth the sacrifice[s] we made."* The government will intensify its efforts to help businesses, especially our micro, small and medium enterprises or MSMEs, by providing responsive government assistance and services, capitalization, and business operations support as we adapt to the next normal. It is important that health and social care workplaces follow viable pandemic control and management policies to protect both workers and individuals they look after (Roberts et al., 2007). This is very important not only in hospitals and health institutions but also to the poor people who rely on blue collar jobs to get through life on a daily basis.

Their ways of managing their challenges
It is also important to note that these people have followed strict health guidelines and protocols while they work such as wearing face masks and face shields, following social distancing and washing their hands with alcohol. However, on top of these standard guidelines, they have their own way of managing their challenges like staying positive, praying to god and boosting their immune system. A tricycle driver shared: *"I put cellophane in the vehicle sir, it is the*

ordinance in our municipality, and we should wear mask and face shield. I am really following the law sir, what is the ordinance of the municipality specially in putting cellophane, face mask, face shield, I am really following it, because I have a child, it is difficult, yet I just pray that the almighty protects me from the virus and I think always positive ideas, since if we have stress it will make our resistance weaker."

Having a sense of connectedness with the superpower promotes a feeling of bonding. In this case many people believe that faith makes them part of something greater than themselves. It can happen by prayer or meditation, or by engaging in religious activities or simply doing things like listening and brisk walking (Park, 2017). When human beings are put in a difficult situation and it seems like there is no hope, tendency to an ever loving and merciful god is an immediate resort. Our spirituality is tested especially in times of trials and difficulties. But the spirituality and belief systems of the people can also be an important resource to keep them going despite pains, challenges and uncertainties (Bayod, 2020).

Since they work basically for their families, they also make sure that their families are safe when they arrive home. Measures for protecting workers from exposure to infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, depend on the type of work and the exposure risk, including potential for interaction with people with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and contamination of the work environment. Employers should adopt infection control strategies based on a thorough hazard assessment, using appropriate combinations of engineering and administrative controls, safe work practices, and personal protective equipment (PPE) to prevent worker exposure. Some OSHA standards that apply to preventing occupational exposure to SARS-CoV-2 require employers to train workers on elements of infection prevention, including PPE, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 2020. A security guard shared: *"I do not enter the house automatically since I have a child, I have to take a bath outside and my wife prepares my new cloths. At work I wear mask, face-shield and social distancing. But aside from that, I am praying to our heavenly father for he is the only one who can solve this problem."*

These people are not really hard-headed. In fact, they are following the strict health protocols of the government. They might have defied the 'stay at home' call because of necessities and even negotiated with the authorities to allow them to operate and work despite the pandemic, but they have followed the healthy standards of the government. Since they are aware of the risks, they even go beyond the minimum health standards. In fact, a fish vendor shared: *"I always buy vitamins and wear face mask, that is the law here sir. No Facemask No Entry, I just wonder why some can enter, that it is the ordinance here. We have to follow what is mandated by the government, we should not be hardheaded on the process, we should not be too stubborn. In this time, we need to help each other."*

Indeed, this person shared many valuable data. Aside from ensuring that the immune system is strong by taking

vitamins, he talked about following government protocols and a sense of cooperation for the common good. In times of any infectious pandemic, social distancing is important in preventing infection in the population (Fong et al., 2020). Social distancing is especially important in preventing infections in enclosed spaces like buildings and workplaces. Taking part by being sensitive to the welfare of others is very important in this pandemic. The informant stressed on the importance of the fairness and equity, saying that if all people just help each other, there will be no one who will experience difficult times. But sad to say, some people take advantage of the situation through hoarding goods and profiteering. News spread about certain officials who took advantage of the situation. There were reports that some barangays would require a voter's identification (ID) card as requirement for government assistance. This is an example of the poor being used to further political advantage (Chambers, 2006). This is where the government must work to ensure that people have equal access and opportunities to basic goods and services.

Government policies and programs for the essential, non-medical front-liners

We asked them directly what actions they need from the government as support while they continue work during the pandemic; all of them shared that the government could help them by giving them health insurance and hazard pays as essential workers/front-liners. Some shared that the government must have a program to support them by training, cash assistance and even free hospitalization. Here are some of their wishes and desires from the government:

"I am just hoping that there is a program in the government that could be free like Philhealth specially that we are working here in the public market, because even though they give free rice and canned goods it will be consumed fast, and also SAP the money will be gone, but god forbid if ever someone gets sick, we are hoping that we have Philhealth."

"We the poor people, are hoping that the government will assist us if ever we get sick, we don't have Philhealth and SSS here in the public market. There should also be personal assigned in the barangay to look into people, not that it is very difficult for them to be located, like in the barangay health center there should be someone assigned or shifting 24 hours so that in terms of emergency we have faster help."

"Hoping that there is a program like SSS or Philhealth is of very big help among us tricycle drivers and our family, this is a great help if ever we get sick due with covid, and not just all about food packs like rice and canned goods but also vitamins."

"The help that our barangay gave was disinfecting the houses and giving help to the community especially those who had lost their jobs, life is so difficult now. The government gave us in time of pandemic food pack and the DSWD gave us Php 6,000 which we call amelioration but hoping that they will also look for some benefits like Philhealth or SSS to those poor people."

"Hoping that Philhealth and SSS are free for the Filipino People. They give SAP and food packs but hoping they will help if we or our family member gets sick like other places having a health insurance."

Indeed, aside from the food packs and the cash subsidy during the pandemic, these people wanted that the government have a long-term program for the health of the Filipinos especially the poor. They are more prone to abuse due to lack of information or low level of literacy, joblessness, and even poor health. Their lack of self-esteem would be a form of disability for them to assert their rights (Abellanosa, 2011). Since they are not working in the government or private companies, they do not have Philhealth and SSS insurance. Thus, they want that the government will have programs for them. If they have enough money, maybe some of them will consider buying health insurance for their families. However, they have barely enough to support the basic needs of their families such as food and others. This is where the government must come to craft proactive health programs for Filipino people. According to Bayod, Forosuelo and Sanchez (2020), Filipinos have experienced the care and concern of the government and that is why they are happy. The SAP or the Social Amelioration Program of the government for instance that provides cash assistance to the poorest of the poor in the Philippines, is indeed very helpful to combat the economic drawback brought about by the pandemic, however, this cannot last for a long period of time. Government should have long term initiatives to assist the less fortunate become independent in times of pandemic.

Conclusion

The pandemic has highlighted how the Philippine government concretely exercised its initiatives for the purpose of providing assistance especially in the aspect of social and economic rights of every Filipino. In terms of basic services needed by people, it is not only flawed but also lacking or not enough to sustain them in the long run. The so-called front-liners like tricycle drivers, food vendors, food servers, laborers, security guards who are working under the threat of Covid19 pandemic need protection while they are battling for survival.

It is true that these people are left with no choice other than to expose themselves to the danger of contamination with the virus or else there is no food on their tables. It is fair to say that there were efforts and to some extent help for people over difficult times in the current situation, however, it is not enough to help them sustain and enable them to be independent from assistance every time there is a pandemic. Their challenges result from choosing *to work in order for them and for their families to live, mingling with different groups of people which be infected by the virus, and having the initiative to fight the virus by negotiating with authorities to allow them to operate even during lockdowns and community quarantine.* Their way of managing the challenges are staying positive, praying to god and also boosting their immune system. These are clear

manifestations that these non-medical front-liners have the desire to thrive in the community where they are living. Without resources it is true that the poor become even more powerless. If these low-income earners are displaced, they could no longer feed their family and thus, largely they will rely on the assistance from the government. In a trickle-down economy as emphasized by Chambers (2006), any crisis that would hit the main economic drivers would automatically sacrifice the poor including low-income daily wagers, or seasonal earners.

The ECQ due to COVID-19 has hit hardest the vendors, tricycle and motor-cab drivers, and security guards. In effect their powerlessness has been highlighted in the face of income-less citizens who would be dependent on government subsidies. In this time of crisis, it is the hope and aspiration of these essential non-medical front-liners to be given the assistance that they have been requesting from the government such as health insurance and hazard pay; some shared that the government must have a program to support them by capacity building, cash assistance and even free hospitalization. The Philippine government should have holistic and proactive healthcare programs for all citizens with special focus on the poor and vulnerable sectors. The experiences of vulnerability and hopelessness of some of our fellow Filipinos in the face of crisis should be given utmost attention and priority through crafting of policies and programs so they may feel that they too are truly essential in the battle against the Covid19 pandemic.

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Social gathering in pandemic: A blessing or menace for Pakistan

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic is a global health crisis which has brought streams of morbidity and mortality across the world. The unprecedented outbreak has forced people towards self-isolation and social distancing from their loved ones, which has inflicted detrimental physical, psychological, and economic challenges in people's life. The second spell of COVID-19 has started in Pakistan, so far taking the national tally to 544,813 infected cases and 11,657 lives (Government of Pakistan, 2020; updated 30 Jan 2021). The burden of mental health implication due to COVID-19 also rages across Pakistan, where anxiety, depression, fear, sense of insecurity, and suicide are highly prevalent. The sudden outbreak of COVID-19 has raised key ethical challenges for stakeholders after imposing stringent

lockdown and restricting people's movement for several months. This paper aims to explore the ethics of restriction on individual movement and social distancing, provide arguments and counterarguments supported by ethical principles and theories, to justify our stance and list recommendations to address ethical challenges.

Case scenario

A 22-year-old girl presented to the clinic with a complaint of loss of appetite, feeling of hopelessness, and loss of interest in daily activity and was getting treatment for depression. On further inquiry, her mother stated that she was eagerly waiting for the convocation day, which was canceled due to the implementation of stringent public health measures; soon after hearing this news, she was profoundly depressed and self-isolated herself from friends and immediate family members.

This scenario raises several key ethical questions:

1. Is it ethically justified to limit the freedom of movement of people?
2. Is a limitation in a social gathering a blessing or a threat to vulnerable people in the community?
3. In this unprecedented crisis, should social gatherings be allowed in Pakistan?

Our position

In our viewpoint, social gatherings should not be allowed in Pakistan to limit the surge and spread of the fatal infection; the worth of maximizing the benefits for the community is highly essential in an unprecedented crisis. Mass gatherings entail substantial health risks for the local community in which a vulnerable population is at higher risk of becoming victim to COVID-19. Moreover, participation in social gatherings can aggravate stress and disease burden on the already crumbling healthcare industries of Pakistan, which further inflict detrimental physical, psychological, and financial consequences on people, and violate the ethical principle of beneficence and non-maleficence. Thus, social gatherings should not be allowed in order to overcome the raging morbidity and mortality rate in Pakistan.

Analysis of the ethical dilemma: liberal individualism vs. authoritarian communitarianism

Liberalism endorses the core concept of personal autonomy, uploads individual right to freedom of expression, thought, and fosters liberal actions and practices without any coercion (Wissenburg, 2019). In a pandemic, the liberal outlook favors the idea that individuals have the autonomy to freely move and savor their life without following any proper social distancing and self-isolation guidelines exacted by the governing bodies, which may override the ethical principle of beneficence and Non-maleficence. Moreover, the liberalism approach promotes the notion of "International Human Rights Law" for privacy, freedom of movement and expression with protection of fundamental individual rights (Bredenoord, 2016). According to the constitution of Pakistan Section 2d, the law "provides

freedom of internal movement and uninhibited foreign travel, emigration, and repatriation" to Pakistani citizens (Pakistan 2019 Human Rights Report, 2019). Conversely, a restriction on freedom of movement is a morally wrong act as it violates the human right of autonomy and liberty.

In contrast, the communitarian approach is centered on the core concept of social goals, cooperative virtue, and the common good of the society, and the emphasis is given more on community benefit rather than an individual (Callahan, 2003). It conveys the thought that in a pandemic, individuals as members of society, are morally obliged to follow the stringent guideline of social distancing and isolation to protect the health of the community. Moreover, stringent lockdown and limitations on social gathering are ethically justified, which can curtail morbidity and mortality rate and guarded the vulnerable population against dying early due to the virus (Bredenoord, 2016). Furthermore, it is a moral duty of every citizen to exercise virtue of ethics by religiously adhering to standard operating measures, which promote the safety and health of the community (Bellazzi and Boyneburgk, 2020). Thus, social gathering is not a viable option that could risk the lives of millions of innocent souls.

Consequences of our position

Humans are social beings, shaped by social connections and physical environment. Social gatherings such as the commemoration of religious ceremonies and life events such as birthday celebration, marriage, and convocation ceremonies inflict a sense of inner happiness, excitement, social connectedness, and optimism, as well as nurture resilience and positivity in people's life (Tewari et al., 2012). The unprecedented pandemic has already wreaked havoc in people's mental health due to its devastating physical implications and economic fallout. Marroquin et al. (2020) reported that the stringent mitigation measures were significantly and independently associated with extreme psychological symptoms like higher depression rate, stress, and insomnia, and generalized anxiety disorders. In Pakistan, most of the suicide cases were linked to the stringent lockdown measures and economic recession (Mamun and Ullah, 2020). Moreover, loneliness, decrease social interaction, and chronic stress also heighten the risk of suicide, emotional imbalance, and substance abuse among high-risk groups (Thakur and Jain, 2020). Thus, the limitation on social gathering in Pakistan poses an immense threat to the mental health of an individual and can increase the suicidal rate and mental health problems in the country.

Counterargument for justification

One of the core principles of bioethics is non-maleficence, which means do not harm (Smith, 2017). Allowing social gathering may violate the ethical principle of "non-maleficence" by increasing the risks of developing COVID-19 disease in the vulnerable population. In Pakistan, the non-serious attitude, low socioeconomic status, and literacy rate push people towards non-adoption of mitigation measures

like hand washing, wearing a mask, and maintenance of six feet distance, which can augment the risks of raging contagious infection across the country and cause an overwhelming burden on the already crumbling healthcare industries of Pakistan (Noreen et al., 2020). Moreover, the exponential disease burden and mortality rate in Pakistan would further provoke neuropsychiatric illnesses in people like post-traumatic stress, fear, anxiety, and depression (Hashmi and Saleem, 2020). Thus, permitting social gathering can also significantly amplify the overall morbidity and mortality rate across the country.

Autonomy vs. paternalism

In biomedical ethics, autonomy stands for individual liberty to choose and implement their own decision, which is the dominant ethical principle and the most fundamental right of the human being (Rathor et al., 2011). In a pandemic, individuals have the autonomy to make their own independent decisions, without any coercion and oppression by governing bodies, where the limitation on freedom of movement such as travel ban, quarantine, and restriction on social gathering is considered as an unethical and morally wrong act. However, literature has suggested that countries that dealt with pandemics in a liberal manner had confronted more mortality and morbidity than countries that chose the paternalistic approach (Hartmann, 2020).

On contrary, paternalism broadly is defined as selecting an action, which limits a person's autonomy and liberty to decide for their own (Drolet and White, 2012). Nations that implemented a paternalistic approach in the pandemic have resulted in successful containment of the COVID-19 virus. For example, China, the epicenter of the outbreak, had responded to the pandemic with a paternalistic approach by enforcing stringent mitigation measures like the travel ban, prohibition on social gathering, and self-quarantine to curb the spread of the contagious virus, which have resulted in decreased infection rate in the country (Feng and Cheng, 2020). Simultaneously, by paternalistic approach, the government is also fulfilling the principle of beneficence (doing good to others) and non-maleficence (do not harm). According to the international human rights law, restriction on individual liberty should only be executed if it would have evidence to show a reduction in the spread of the virus (WHO, 2007). It conveys the notion that in response to the raging outbreak of the disease, the paternalistic approach should be exacted by the government to gain maximum benefits for the community and save millions of innocent lives in this emerging crisis.

Consequences of this position

Although literature suggested that stringent mitigation measures are significantly efficient in containing a surge of infection, it also heightens the unemployment rate, poverty, and economic crisis across the world. Shafi et al. (2020) reported in their study that the COVID-19 pandemic has severely affected national and global economies. In Pakistan, the pandemic has devastatingly impacted the urban and rural area business and employment rate due to strict lockdown measures and ban on social gathering, which is a huge source of employment and income generation in a country. Amid COVID-19 pandemic, loss of jobs, poverty, and financial constraint due to strict lockdown increased fear, anxiety, and emotional toll among people, which is significantly associated with negative psychological behaviors and psychiatric suffering like substance abuse, suicide, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder (Usher et al., 2020). Thus, the mental health burden and increasing death rate would further aggravate the already collapsing economic and healthcare industries of the country.

Counterargument for justification

Implementation of effective mitigation measures is highly essential to limit the spread of contagious infections and end the emerging pandemic earlier in the most effective manner. Moreover, the resurgence of fatal diseases needs to be restrained through stringent public health measures like physical distancing and social isolation (WHO, 2020). The government must place stern public health measures to reduce disease transmission and lower the mortality rate in the country, which is the highest priority and need of the hour (Anderson et al., 2020).

Recommendations

Historically, pandemics last for several decades and inflict detrimental long-term physical, psychological and financial crises on the people (Gelband et al., 2017). To achieve a win-win situation, social gathering would be allowed with stringent mitigation measures and standard guidelines to restrict disease transmission. Moreover, it would also provide an opportunity for people to commemorate significant life events with immediate family members, which will ultimately curtail the mental health implications among people.

Firstly, on an individual level, each member of the community has the moral obligation to religiously comply with standard operating procedures like hand washing, wearing masks, and physical distancing for six feet in the social gathering. Moreover, it is also a moral responsibility of an individual to self-isolate him/herself if suffering from any symptoms of COVID-19 infection and to not participate in a social gathering. Furthermore, the individual is subjected to a limited number of gathering with only immediate family members in the functions to minimize the risk of disease transmission on a larger scale in the community.

Secondly, at the community level, stakeholders should ensure the social gathering programs be arranged with strict standard operating procedures and surveillance systems, to detect COVID-19 infected persons with the help of temperature checks. Moreover, the availability and utilization of sanitizer and masks in social gatherings should be mandatory to stop disease transmission among people. Online and open-air small distance-based seminars could be organized at the community level to build resilience and enhance the sense of social connectedness

and optimism in the people, which will significantly lessen the disease burden in the community. Awareness sessions could be organized to inflict insight in people about the common mental health implications faced by COVID-19 infected patients and educate them about the strategies to overcome psychological and psychiatric illness with more resilience and inner strength. Furthermore, designated area police and other officials should be assigned to enforce, strengthen, and observe the implementation of strict mitigation measures in social gatherings.

Lastly, at the national level, the government should issue stringent guidelines and protocols for executing social gatherings, and rigorous law enforcement should be enforced on the violation of SOP during public gatherings. Moreover, public functions should be allowed in outdoor spaces with the limitation of guest number and number of hours. Surveillance teams could be formulated to spot check implementation of SOP during social gatherings, which can significantly improve the utility of mitigation measures in public functions. The government could impose mandatory regulations and employ the WHO risk assessment tools before executing public gathering, which helps to assess the risk of transmission of the virus in gatherings and provides an essential recommendation to improve the mitigation measures. For this risk-based approach, training programs could be organized to assist health authorities and event organizers in their planning and executing upcoming mass public events with minimal risk of disease transmission.

Surveillance software could be developed to track people to analyze their health status and level of risk for contracting COVID-19 virus, and designated color codes which categorize people according to the health risk. This strategy can also serve to provide recommendations to the high-risk groups to make them refrain from activities which further enhance the risk of COVID-19 infection in them. Moreover, this application also allows governing bodies to impose a ban on social gatherings in particular areas, where there is a relatively higher risk for spreading disease and can also classify specific communities, which can execute public gatherings with strict SOP. Furthermore, awareness programs could be broadcast on television, radio, and all digital forums to increase the insight in people about the intensity and severity of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country and the importance of observing mitigation measures in a social gathering.

Conclusions

A global health crisis has devastatingly hit every realm of life and has enhanced the physical, psychological, and financial suffering of the people. Due to its calamitous effects on the health and economic sectors of the country, it is very challenging for the stakeholders and national leaders to deal with the unprecedented crisis in an effective manner. Thus, a continuous multifactorial and comprehensive approach at the individual, community, and national level is required to end human misery and pain swiftly and efficiently.

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The Philippine tax reform law for acceleration and inclusion (TRAIN): The surrounding factual, legal and ethical issues of the state's taxing power

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Abstract

Aside from its effort to rectify historical injustices done to the poor and those at the peripheries, the Philippine government under the Duterte Administration, aims to level-off the playing field for people to pursue their desired good life. Among the many programs it created to uplift the conditions of the worst-off in the country, the congress is becoming pro-active in the passage of bills and enactment of laws. With the attempt to elevate the state to a higher level of independence, global competence and social and economic amelioration of Filipinos, statutes were passed, and old laws were amended. One noted law that gained public support as well as criticism from different sectors and industries, is the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) as Republic Act (RA) No. 10963 which took effect on January 1, 2018. This paper will attempt to investigate the ethical underpinnings, advantages and disadvantages of TRAIN law. Further, this paper identifies salient features of the new law amending the old tax laws. Moreover, the question of constitutionality and morality of the TRAIN Law is discussed in this paper with a case in point in the implementation of the Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) and the Social Amelioration Program (SAP) during the outbreak COVID-19 in the country.

Introduction

According to Oliver Wendell Holmes: *"I hate paying taxes, but I love the civilizations they give me."* This statement speaks a lot on the attitude of people when left on their own without government intervention. Thomas Hobbes says that man is a beast, is barbaric and will do everything to outshine others. Thus, it is important to have a governing body that will decide on the laws and processes on how to distribute the benefits and burdens when people come to agree and cooperate among themselves while living in the same society. John Rawls used this concept in his theory of justice which will be the main theory to base our arguments especially when we discuss in this paper the ethical underpinnings of the TRAIN Law in the Philippines.

Rawls argues that a society is just when its basic structure is regulated by principles that would be selected in the original position. The original position is a just starting point where the contracting party is constrained by the "veil of ignorance," which denies them information that could bias their selection of principles in ways that we would normally regard as inappropriate, such as drawing on one's social, educational and economic status. The principles of justice so selected will form the rules for distributing what Rawls calls "primary goods". These are goods that any person with a rational plan of life would want, such as rights, liberties, income, and wealth. These goods include basic rights and liberties, freedom of movement and free choice among a wide range of occupations, the powers of offices and positions of responsibility, and income and wealth (Rawls, 2001).

To reconcile human freedom and equality, Rawls proposes that each individual should be allowed to pursue the good life while at the same time, the worst off or the poor can benefit from those goods produced on the basis of a property-owning socio-economic arrangement (Maboloc, 2018). What is the relation discussing John Rawls' theory of justice in our attempt to explain the factual, legal and ethical issues of state's taxing power especially in implementation

of the TRAIN law? This is very relevant in the sense that John Rawls believes that the first and most important duty of social institutions is to promote justice. In fact, for him justice is the first virtue of social institutions (Rawls, 1971). For John Rawls, the state plays a crucial role to ensuring that each individual will have equal rights and opportunities. Thus, the state has the power and the mandate to craft and implement laws and policies to ensure that people's rights and opportunities will be protected and also fairly distributed.

There are three inherent powers of government by which the state interferes with the property rights, namely- (1) police power, (2) eminent domain, and (3) taxation. These are said to exist independently of the Constitution as necessary attributes of sovereignty (*City Government of Quezon City v. Hon. Judge Ericta).*

The power to tax is an incident of sovereignty and is unlimited in its range, acknowledging in its very nature no limits, so that security against its abuse is to be found only in the responsibility of the legislature which imposes the tax on the constituency that is to pay it (Mactan Cebu Int'l. Airport Authority v. Marcos, 330 Phil. 392, 1996). It is based on the principle that taxes are the lifeblood of the government, and their prompt and certain availability is an imperious need (Proton Pilipinas Corp. v. Republic of the Philippines, G.R. No. 165027, October 16, 2006, citing Province of Tarlac v. Alcantara, 216 SCRA 790, 798,1992). Thus, the theory behind the exercise of the power to tax emanates from necessity; without taxes, government cannot fulfill its mandate of promoting the general welfare and well-being of the people. (NPC v. City of Cabanatuan, 449 Phil. 233 ,2003). The welfare and the well-being of the disadvantaged members of the society are the main concern why the state has to impose taxes on people. In the TRAIN law, those who have more income have higher tax to pay. Some may call it unjust, especially if they have higher income after starting from the bottom and through hard work, talent, dedication and sacrifices, having elevated their economic status, and it would be unfair to just take away something from the people who have worked so hard in their lives and give it to the poor and those who may be considered lazy and free riders in the society. Rawls' response to that argument is that there are factors that are morally like our natural talents, skills and abilities. We do not deserve all of those. Thus, at the very start, the distribution of natural talents and skills and even family membership is already unjust. But for Rawls, injustice is allowed as long as there is equality of opportunity and especially if the worst-off in the society will have the greatest benefit in this kind of arrangement. The worst-off refers to the poor, the disadvantaged members in the society and that they should be considered as a priority in terms of the programs and services rendered by the state (Maboloc, 2018). What about the rich and those who are born with rich natural endowments or those who inherited wealth and other social advantages because of family membership? They can of course continue to pursue their

dreams and enjoy their lot, but they must contribute something through taxes to serve the poor so that they can have the opportunity to also improve their lives.

Tax laws are legislative in nature, legislature enacts these statutes to meet the continuing necessity of the state in raising revenue to defray the necessary expense (lifeblood theory). To meet such revenue raising objectives, tax laws were continuously evaluated and amended to progressively favor the taxpayer without prejudicing state's source of income. Part of the evaluation should be how the tax is being spent. Do the taxes increase the chance of the poor to pursue their life plans? Are the tax laws fair to all concerned?

The National Internal Revenue Code of 1997 (Tax Code) emanates from Republic Act (RA) No. 8424, otherwise known as the Tax Reform Act of 1997, which was enacted on December 11, 1997. From the Act's effectivity on January 1, 1998, a series of laws have been passed to amend it. Considering the significance of the amendments made, there are laws such as those introduced by RA 9337 (Reformed VAT Law), RA 9243 (Revised Documentary Stamp Tax law), RA 9334 (Amended Excise Tax Law), and RA 9504 dated June 17, 2008 (amending Title II - Income Tax). On December 19, 2017, President Rodrigo R. Duterte signed into law Package 1 of the Comprehensive Tax Reform Program (CTRP) also known as the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) as Republic Act (RA) No. 10963 which took effect on January 1, 2018.

The TRAIN aims to make the Philippine Tax System simpler, fairer and more efficient to promote investments, create jobs and reduce inequality and injustice. Along with this objective, the CTRP also aims to raise revenues that will fund the President's Build Project to sustain high and inclusive growth of the country, and finance investments in people through enhanced education, health and social services.

Tax reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) or the Republic Act (RA) No. 10963
The Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) Act, officially cited as Republic Act No. 10963, is the initial package of the Comprehensive Tax Reform Program (CTRP) signed into law by President Rodrigo Duterte on December 19, 2017. The TRAIN Act is the first of four packages of tax reforms to the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997, or the Tax Code, as amended. This package has introduced changes in personal income tax (PIT), estate tax, donor's tax, value added tax (VAT), documentary stamp tax (DST) and the excise tax of tobacco products, petroleum products, mineral products, automobiles, sweetened beverages, and cosmetic procedures.

Important features of the tax reform are lower personal income tax and higher consumption tax. Individual taxpayers with taxable income not exceeding ₱250,000 annually are exempted from the payment of income tax. The exemption for minimum wage earners is retained in the revised tax system; thus, these earners are likewise not

liable for the payment of income taxes. Tax rates for individual taxpayers still follow the progressive tax system with the maximum rate of 35%, and minimum rates of 20% (taxable years 2018 to 2022) and 15% (2023 onwards). On the other hand, consumption taxes, in the form of higher excise tax on tobacco products, automobiles, petroleum products, tobacco, and additional excise tax on sweetened beverages and non-essential, and invasive cosmetic procedures were introduced.

The TRAIN Act is aimed to generate government revenue to achieve the 2022 and 2040 vision of the President Duterte administration, to eradicate extreme poverty, to create inclusive institutions that will offer equal opportunities to all, and to achieve a higher income country status. It is also aimed at making the tax system simpler, fairer and more efficient and effective to administer. Regardless, contentions about the passing of this law have been present since the beginning and the subsequent reception by the people since its ratification has been controversial. In the first quarter of 2018, both positive and negative outcomes have been observed. The economy saw an increase in tax revenues, government expenditure and an incremental growth in GDP. On the other hand, unprecedented inflation rates that exceeded projected calculations, have been the cause for much uproar and objections. There have been petitions to suspend and amend the law, or even to declare it unconstitutional, so as to safeguard particular sectors from soaring prices.

TRAIN Law and John Rawls' redistributive justice
John Rawls advances his two principles of justice and asserts that his two principles of justice are what the contracting parties in the original position would choose. The first principle says that "each person has the same indefeasible claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme of liberties for all" (Rawls, 1971, p. 61). The first principle is the autonomy principle and suggests that the liberty of people is supreme and cannot be violated even for the sake of greater economic benefit.

The second principle states that social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that, a) offices and positions must be open to everyone under the conditions of fair equality of opportunity and b) they are to be of the greatest benefit to the least-advantaged members of society (Rawls, 1971, p. 61). The second principle has two components. One is the fair opportunity principle and the second is the difference principle. These two components of the second principle suggest that primary social goods like income, wealth, opportunity, and social bases of self-respect should be redistributed. It should be the worst-off in the society who must be favored primarily to make the sharing of social primary goods fair (Maboloc, 2018). The second principle ensures redistributive justice. On the one hand, fair equality of opportunity ensures the poor their freedom and autonomy to take advantage of the different programs and services of the government for people to achieve the good life. It also protects the poor and the weak against the

rich and powerful who want to dominate and control the social arrangement. On the other hand, the difference principle ensures that even the poorest and those at the margins of society have access to the primary goods necessary for their pursuit of the good life.

Here, we can say that Rawls's theory of justice is egalitarian. For Maboloc (2018), egalitarianism is a doctrine which says that persons must be respected as moral units. He further asserts that no person can be sacrificed for the sake of another since each person has value in itself. Thus, Rawls protects a great many liberties as strongly as he can. But his list of liberties includes only two economic liberties: the right to freely choose one's occupation and the right to own personal property. That means that the state may not force or order persons to perform jobs; neither may it expropriate the personal or the non-capital goods of persons. Therefore, in principle, Rawls can support different schemes of government redistribution, regulation, and even socialist economic production (Vallier, 2017).

Under the fair equality of opportunity principle, the only reason the state may allow one to become wealthy, influential or powerful is that they do so under a system of rules that promotes equal opportunity for everyone. Thus, one's unequal wealth, influence, and power—no matter how nobly and virtuously achieved or deserved—can be eliminated, even if it arises within a social system that provides great but unequal opportunities to everyone (Vallier, 2017).

The difference principle requires that inequalities of primary goods maximize the position of the least advantaged members of society. This must occur within a system of rules that maximi*z*e the position of the least advantaged members of society (Vallier, 2017). The TRAIN law is basically inspired or grounded by this principle of justice. The government arranges rules so that those who have more in life are given the freedom to continue pursuing their dreams and even benefit from them. But they have to contribute something to the government through taxes and the government will redistribute this benefit to the poor through different social services like the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT), Unconditional Cash Transfer (UCT) and Social Amelioration Program (SAP) to the poor when there is a calamity or pandemic like this COVID-19. The Philippines was beset by plenty of natural disasters last year that affected the lives of the poor. This year, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a lot of its budget for SAP and UCT to help the poor. Without taxes, the government cannot really fulfill its mandate to provide the needed social services to the people. Thus, the TRAIN law is just and ethical in the sense that it helps the least advantaged in the society without curtailing the freedom of people to pursue their life plans.

Criticism of the TRAIN law
Laban Konsyumer Inc., Makabayan bloc and other political parties filed a motion to the supreme court questioning the passage and the implementation of the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion law. "*The continuing imposition*

and increases of the fuel excise taxes exacerbates the adverse effects to all consumers, more particularly to Filipinos from low-income and poor consumers, who hardly have the resources to pay the excise taxes as prescribed by the Train law and more so will pay more excise taxes in 2019 and 2020 but whose resources do not increase to be able to pay the higher taxes in 2019 and 2020," the group said in the motion.

Bayana Muna Party-list officials are calling on the Highest Court to rule favorably on their petition to declare the controversial Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) law unconstitutional. Included in the arguments raised by the petitioners is the procedural defect, questioning the process in the passage of law. Accordingly, TRAIN law had not been properly ratified by the Lower House of Congress. They said the deliberations on the then TRAIN bill had no quorum, and that the majority did not give other members of the Congress the chance to question the proposal.

Petitioners were citing procedural lapses, its harsh impact on the public, and violation of the constitution's provision on progressive taxation. petitioners said that instead of benefiting from the low prices of oil in the global market, Filipinos would be burdened with artificially high prices. Critics likewise contend that the reduction in income tax is rendered meaningless by the tremendous increase in the taxes to be imposed on consumer goods, prime commodities, medicines, electricity, and fuel. In particular, the prices of gasoline and fuel products are expected to substantially increase.

In turn, the marked increase in fuel prices will trigger a corresponding increase in the cost of transporting people and goods, which will inevitably increase the prices of practically everything else. Moreover, the labor sector will demand an increase in wages, which will also add to the cost of manufacturing goods and the delivery of services. Since the additional tax will increase the selling price of every consumer product, the twelve percent value added tax (VAT) currently imposed on all sale of consumer products will be computed against a higher selling price, which will necessarily mean a larger VAT on the sale of what is already very expensive, such as prime commodities to begin with.

Critics of the TRAIN Act lament that the new tax legislation not only increases taxes on prime commodities, but also reduces the tax on the import of luxury vehicles. The rationale for this manifestly pro-rich provision of the TRAIN Act is a mystery.

Is TRAIN on the right trail?
The tax reform program attempts to improve the lives of Filipinos, especially the poor. It promotes equity such that *those who have higher incomes will shoulder more of the burden compared to those with lower incomes.* Thus, Filipinos will contribute based on their capacity to pay.

TRAIN corrects and simplifies the current tax system, as well as make it fairer by lowering the PIT, reducing VAT exemptions, and adjusting excise tax rates on petroleum products and automobiles. Through this tax reform, government will continue to increase spending in public investment, such as by constructing school buildings, roads, and bridges, and funding basic social services and social protection. All these will stimulate the economy more and benefit the poor. This is a more inclusive way of spending our shared resources, rather than merely boosting individual consumption spending by lowering all taxes.

The proposed tax reform program will simplify compliance through a single rate of 8% (in lieu of the income tax and percentage tax) for small businesses, the self-employed, and professionals. To ensure compliance, tax administration measures are included in the passage of the law such as relaxation of bank secrecy laws for fraud cases, use of electronic receipts and connecting cash registers/ point of sale machines to BIR servers for simultaneous reporting of sales and purchase data

The tax reform program is pro-poor and progressive. It simplifies the system and makes it fairer and more equitable by restructuring the Personal Income Tax (PIT), removing unnecessary Value Added Tax (VAT) exemptions, and adjusting the excise tax rates on petroleum products and automobiles.

Through the reform**,** 83% of individual taxpayers including minimum wage earners (P250k and below) will be exempted from paying income tax. The revenues generated from this reform will fund infrastructure, health, education, and social services for the poor which is basically supporting the Difference Principle of Rawls. Although the overall goal of the tax reform is to address the inequity of the current tax system, it will also help achieve this administration's vision through additional investments in social services, health, education, and infrastructure which are believed to provide benefit to the worst-off in the country.

The government through the solicitor general claimed that the petitioners of TRAIN law failed to make a case of unconstitutionality or invalidity strong enough to overcome the presumption of validity of the TRAIN law. Furthermore, it complies with the legal requirements set forth by the constitution for it to be valid.

Below are some of the salient features of TRAIN LAW, which are not present under the old tax laws:
1. Lowering personal income tax
2. Simplified estate and donor's tax
3. Expanding value added tax (VAT) base
4. Increased excise tax on petroleum products
5. Increased excise tax on automobiles
6. Increased tax on sugar-sweetened beverages

Jurisprudence
In *Estrada v. Sandiganbayan 421 Phil. 290 (2001),* the courts must assume that the legislature is ever conscious of the borders and edges of its plenary powers and has passed the law with full knowledge of the facts and for the purpose of promoting what is right and advancing the welfare of the majority. Hence in determining whether the acts of the

legislature are in tune with the fundamental law, courts should proceed with judicial restraint and act with caution and forbearance.

Furthermore, in the case o*f Gregorio Sarasola, plaintiff-appellant, vs. Wenceslao Trinidad, Collector of Internal Revenue of the Philippine Islands, defendant-appellee, GR No. L-14595 (1919)* the Supreme Court ruled that since the prompt collection of revenue depends on the very existence of government itself, whatever determination shall be arrived at by the Legislature, public policy decrees should not be interfered with unless there be a clear violation of some constitutional inhibition.

On the other hand, courts, although zealous guardians of individual liberty and right, have nevertheless evinced a reluctance to interfere with the exercise of the legislative prerogative. They have done so early where there has been a clear, patent or palpable arbitrary and unreasonable abuse of the legislative prerogative.

To validate the exercise of the Supreme Court's power to judicial review, the words of Justice Laurel in the case of *Angara v. Electoral Commission*, 63 Phil. 139, 158 (1936) would be a good source of enlightenment, to wit: "And when the judiciary mediates to allocate constitutional boundaries, it does not assert any superiority over the other departments; it does not in reality nullify or invalidate an act of the legislature, but only asserts the solemn and sacred obligation assigned to it by the Constitution to determine conflicting claims of authority under the Constitution and to establish for the parties in an actual controversy the rights which that instrument secures and guarantees to them."

The courts cannot just turn a blind eye and simply let it pass. It will continue to uphold the constitution and its enshrined principles. Furthermore, as cited in the case of Biraogo v. Philippine Truth Commissions of 2010, GR No. 192935, December 7, 2010, the court held: "*The Constitution must ever remain supreme. All must bow to the mandate of this law. Expediency must not be allowed to sap its strength nor greed for power debase its rectitude.*"

Conclusion

At present, the TRAIN law is already effective and income wage earners are already experiencing the benefits of an increase in take home pay while the poorest of the poor who are also non-wage earners have already received the unconditional cash transfer which will assist them in the price increase of commodities. Many employees earning compensation income are now enjoying immunity from tax, so long as their income does not exceed P250,000 or approximately P20,833.33 a month. This is much more advantageous than the old tax law, where only minimum wage earners were granted tax exemption. The exemption granted by the government intangibly benefits the low and middle-income earners as they will receive the net pay almost equal to the computed gross.

The TRAIN law is not arbitrary, oppressive, and confiscatory, and does not result in the deprivation of life, liberty or property without due process of law. It does not violate the equal protection clause since it impacts mostly middle to higher-income Filipinos.

Furthermore, it is settled that the law enjoys the presumption of constitutionality. To overthrow this presumption, there must be a clear and unequivocal breach of the constitution, not merely a doubtful or argumentative contradiction. In short, the conflict with the constitution must be shown beyond doubt. Where doubt exists, even if well-founded, there can be no finding of unconstitutionality. To doubt is to sustain. Thus, the *TRAIN law should remain valid unless otherwise declared by the Courts of Justice;* as such, everyone must uphold and respect the same, even how prejudicial it may seem to one's perspective.

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