SOCIAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, AND ACADEMIC IMPACTS OF NATIONAL LOCKDOWN AMONG GRADUATE STUDENTS OF WESTERN PHILIPPINES UNIVERSITY

Jergen Jel Cinco- Labaria Western Philippines University College of Education

Aprilyn B. Dimalaluan, Western Philippines University College of Education

Karen Salve M. Maute, Western Philippines University College of Education

Jinefer F. Butu Western Philippines University College of Education

ABSTRACT:

The national lockdown due to the global pandemic of the COVID-19 has affected all people in the world. The education sector particularly higher education has been impacted by the global crisis brought about by the COVID-19 socially, psychologically, and academically. According to Xiang et al., (2020), the COVID-19 is the greatest public emergency the world has experienced of global proportion. The study used a descriptive survey design involving graduate students of Western Philippines University, Rio Tuba, Palawan. A questionnaire was used to gather the needed data which was sent electronically through the email of the respondents. Frequency, percentage, and mean were used to analyze and interpret the data gathered from the respondents. Significant findings of the study revealed that the respondents experienced various social, psychological, and academic impacts due to the global effect of the COVID-19. Likewise, studv the recommends that teaching personnel may use relevant teaching strategies to continue education despite the

pandemic. This include, online modalities such as synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning. For the students who have problems in connectivity, modular learning and long-distance consultation are strongly recommended. More importantly, the COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity to design and develop teaching and learning pedagogies relevant to the new education normal.

Keywords: National Lockdown, COVID-19, Western Philippines University, New Normal, Graduate students

INTRODUCTION:

The unprecedented global impact of COVID-19 has wreaked havoc to the educational system of the Philippines and around the world. As a matter of fact, COVID-19 has greatly disrupted the health care system of the world that have resulted to suffering, anxiety, discrimination, and chaos, that is exposing all the problems besetting public health and political system of all countries in the world (David, 2020).

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic, pointing to over 118,000 cases of the coronavirus illness in over 110 countries and territories around the world and the sustained risk of further global spread. The WHO describes pandemic as global spread of a new disease, though the specific threshold for meeting that criteria is fuzzy.

In relation to this, COVID-19 has affected the entire world socially, psychologically, and academically. As a matter of fact, Brazil is causing the collapse of the national health service (Andrade, 2020). Other countries in Europe, Asia, and South America have also reported difficulties in handling the crisis which has affected their economies. As of the moment, no medicine or vaccine has been discovered yet manage the disease (Heymann & Shindo, 2020).

Education is a catalyst of change no matter how difficult the circumstances are, the processes of the world continues. Governments of the world, businesses big and small, health care system, and the educational system have been affected at a dizzying pace due to the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. By far, millions have been affected and close to a million have died worldwide. Undoubtedly, this phenomenon has created one of the most challenging and difficult situations the world has faced. In fact, world leaders, scientists, and deep thinkers are grappling for time to manage their organizations by making appropriate decision that embraces the new normal.

As acknowledged by Fleming & Millar (2019), organizations will eventually change due to the inevitable developments and an avalanche of unpredictable geopolitical developments affecting all organizations such as the education sector. The educator sector more than ever needs the active involvement, sacrifices, and commitment of education leaders. This is important so that colleges and universities can managed properly and appropriately with all the new policies from the educational leaders of the national government.

The Corona Virus Disease. COVID-19 is a disease caused by a new strain of coronavirus. The symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia or breathing difficulties (UNICEF, 2020). This disease presents both severe and acute public health emergency around the globe (Smith et al., 2020). Since, there is still no known and cure from scientific evidences, it is important to protect oneself from the infection. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2020) strongly suggests the best way to prevent the spread of the illness is to avoid being exposed to a person with the virus.

In managing the disease, there is no specific antiviral treatment recommended for COVID-19, and no vaccine is currently available (Cascella et al., 2020). The treatment is symptomatic, and the oxygen therapy represents the first step for addressing respiratory impairment. Non-invasive (NIV) and invasive mechanical ventilation (IMV) may be necessary in cases of respiratory failure refractory to oxygen therapy. Again, intensive care is needed to deal with complicated forms of the disease.

According to Nevinson et al., (2020), it is best that schools remain closed in or to stop the spread of the disease among its teachers and students. This must be supported by following strict health measures that is meant to prevent transmission of the disease. Likewise, hospital and medical facilities must continue to be vigilant to the changing patterns of the disease so that people in the community will not be affected.

Furthermore, as emphasized by Viner (2020), there are 188 countries who have implemented closures to all schools in order to curb infection of the COVID-19 as well as lessen the impact of the disease. This will significantly reduce the number of persons infected with the

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disease and help the health sector from fatigue and overwhelming. However, Mustafa (2020) added that with school closures, the disadvantaged children and their respective families have caused interrupted learning, nutrition is compromised, and problems were created on childcare, as well as subsequent loss of income due to members of the families unable to work.

As per the World Bank (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic could potentially cause in the loss of 0.6 years of schooling that is adjusted for quality, bringing down the effective years of basic schooling that children achieve during their schooling life from 7.9 years to 7.3 years. This can also cost the students a decrease in their yearly earning to US\$ 872, which is quite high for citizens from Third World countries. This can go a long way in improving the lives of the families.

The fight against the threats to COVID-19 crisis suffered profound effects and impacts on almost all sectors in the human race and in every part of the globe. These have resulted in the widespread disruption such travel as restrictions (Chinazzi et al., 2020) closure of schools (Viner et al., 2020), global economic recession (Fernandez, 2020), political conflicts (Barrios & Hochberg, 2020), racism (Habibi et al., 2020). and misinformation and controversies, to name a few. One of the most affected is the educational sectors. The COVID-19 pandemic is still existent today, and there are no specific vaccines or medicines to eradicate this disease. We need to live in the new normal; if not contained, we need to live with the disease as viruses are constantly evolving. However, scientists are still on their way in studying and developing vaccines and presently in clinical trials from various countries in the world.

New Normal. In this time of the pandemic, the new education normal exists. According to the Department of Health (2020) the new normal emerged as a new way of thinking about deciding on and doing usual affairs with an invigorated sense to remain healthy by means of (a) reducing vulnerability by keeping a healthy lifestyle, (b) reducing virus transmission by observing infection control, (c) reducing contact with a potential disease carrier, (d) reducing the duration of the infection by establishing effective disease management mechanisms, and (e) ensuring governance and accountability by putting in place strong health regulations and policies.

This paper is developed to determine the social, psychological, and academic impacts of the national lockdown and community quarantine amidst the COVID-19 crisis.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

The study described the social. psychological, and academic impacts among graduate students taking Master in Educational Management at Western Philippines University, Specifically, it Rio Tuba, Palawan. also determined the profile of the respondents. Likewise, the study determined the impact of the national lockdown due to COVID-19 on the social, psychological, and academic aspects to students. The the graduate studv also investigated the coping strategies that respondents used during the national lockdown due to COVID-19.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

The study used the descriptive-survey research design. It used a questionnaire (Google survey) to gather the data from 59 Master in Educational Management graduate students of Western Philippines University, Rio Tuba, Palawan.

Sampling:

The study included all 59 graduate students of Master in Educational Management of Western Philippines University, Rio Tuba, Palawan. These graduate students conformed to participate in the research study.

Analysis of Data:

To analyze the data, frequency, percentage, and mean were used by the researchers. Likewise, the five-point Likert scaling was used to interpret the academic impact of the national lockdown imposed by the government due to the COVID-19 crisis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

Profile of the Respondents. All of the respondents earn between 10-25 thousand pesos per month because they are still studying in the graduate school. All of them were in Palawan during the declaration of the national lockdown. The findings imply that the graduate students are earning a meager salary where based in Palawan, and they are not exempted from the deadly effect of COVID-19 disease.

Level of Knowledge Regarding the Lockdown. Most of the respondents (35 or 59.32%) possess adequate knowledge on the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there were some respondents (21 or 35.59%) who have confusing and disturbing knowledge about COVID-19. The rest (3 or 5.08%) have inadequate knowledge about the pandemic. According to Chesser et al., (2020), the increase knowledge on COVID-19 is important to educate people of its characteristics in order to avoid it and prevent its transmission. In addition, Rakhmanov & Dane (2020) lamented that knowledge on COVID-19 may result to lower levels of anxiety. This is very important because when citizens are aware of the disease, they would know what to do to prevent it from being infected. Iliyasu (2016) explained that infection is reduced when the level of knowledge is adequate in order to prevent the entry of an infection.

| | 0 | r |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Level of Knowledge | Frequency | Percentage |
| Adequate | 35 | 59.32% |
| Confusing & | 21 | 35.59% |
| Disturbing | | |
| Inadequate | 3 | 5.08 |
| knowledge | | |

In addition, while knowledge on COVID-19 is very important, Azlan et al., (2020) explained that the knowledge learned must be consistent with practicing the minimum health standards to prevent the increase of infection of the COVID-19 disease.

Social Impact of the National Lockdown. The imposition of the national lockdown last March 2020 by the government caused various social impacts among graduate students of Master in Educational Management at Western Philippine University, Rio Tuba, Palawan.

| Table 1. Social and Psychological Impact | | | |
|--|-----------|------------|--|
| Types of Impact | Frequency | Percentage | |
| Social | | | |
| Adequate Income | 15 | 25.42% | |
| Inadequate Income | 44 | 74.57% | |
| Psychological | | | |
| Anxiety | 24 | 40.68% | |
| Frustration | 8 | 13.56% | |
| Relaxed | 16 | 27.12% | |

Table1 presents the social and psychological impact of the national lockdown. It can be inferred that respondents do not have adequate income to sustain their living during the national lockdown. This means that the day to day expenses of their families may be affected partly because, all citizens are not allowed to go out for work. This lockdown was imposed by the government to curb the impact of the infection.

Furthermore, the national lockdown has also caused anxiety due to its debilitating effect, most specifically, because of no medicine has been discovered as of late to manage it. Some have expressed that they are mostly relaxed during the pandemic. These are respondents who probably have high levels of coping during a particular crisis.

According to Nicola et al., (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact socially whereby schools are no longer able to provide free school meals for children from low-income families, social isolation, and school dropout rates. It has also had a significant impact on childcare costs for families with young children. In addition, there exists a wide disparity among the populations with those with lower income who are unable to use technology for digital or online education during social isolation or national lockdown.

Psychological Impact of the National Lockdown. In imposing the national lockdown, there were remnants of psychological impacts among teaching and non-teaching personnel. Most of the respondents are anxious of the potential consequences of being infected with the COVID-19 disease. As reported by Singhai (2020), the clinical features of disease COVID-19 are wide-ranging, from asymptomatic state to acute respiratory distress syndrome as well as multi-organ dysfunction. Most importantly, the common clinical features include fever (not in all), cough, sore throat, headache, fatigue, headache, myalgia and breathlessness. Likewise, conjunctivitis has also been described. Thus, indistinguishable thev are from other respiratory infections. In a subset of patients, by the end of the first week, the disease can progress to pneumonia, respiratory failure, and even death.

Moreover, the respondents are still feeling relaxed even in the face of threat of infection. These respondents are probably well aware of the consequences and they need not worry about anything because they are able to protect and care for them and their family. Apparently, these small group of respondents possess great amount of faith and confidence that all will be well and things will get better. As Colbourn (2020) said, it is important to maintain a robust mental health where citizens affecting with the pandemic can practice things that are relevant in times of crisis such as the pandemic of COVID-19.

However, there are still some respondents who are frustrated with the phenomenon that is happening. Wang (2020) said that aside from frustration, citizens who are experiencing lockdown may also have stressors such as boredom, lack of personal space at home, fears of infection, and financial loss.

Academic Impact of the National Lockdown. Aside from the social and psychological impact of the national lockdown, the respondents also experienced academic impact. (See Table 2). From the table, it showed that respondents consider the national lockdown due to the COVID-10 pandemic as an opportunity to offer new, relevant, and flexible teaching strategies because of the government's disallowing face-toface teaching and learning due to the threat of COVID transmission.

From the table, it appears that respondents strongly agree that the national lockdown due to the COVID-19 provides an opportunity to introduce new strategies of teaching that are relevant to the new normal. Graham (2019) explained that online teaching is also as effective as face-to-face teaching. This is echoed by the study of Davis et al., (2019) that online teaching is advantageous during times of lockdown where students are not allowed to go out to prevent transmission of infectious diseases.

Moreover, the respondents strongly agree that educators' loss of academic time was due to the national lockdown. As early as March 2020, there was already a community quarantine which prevented citizens from going out of their homes to avoid the transmission of the infection from person to person. The schools and universities were closed which resulted in the loss of academic time for instruction, extension, and research, the tri-function of high education.

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| Table 2. Academic Impact of the National |
|--|
| Lockdown |

| Lockdown | | | | | |
|---|------|----------------|--|--|--|
| Academic Impact | Mean | Meaning | | | |
| 1. Decrease instructional time | 4.34 | Strongly Agree | | | |
| 2. Missing of calendar year. | 4.01 | Agree | | | |
| 3. No improvement of KSA. | 3.76 | Agree | | | |
| 4. Closure of colleges and universities | 3.96 | Agree | | | |
| 5. Long-term negative effect among students | 4.23 | Strongly Agree | | | |
| 6. Poor academic progress | 4.43 | Strongly Agree | | | |
| Introduction of new strategies of teaching. | 4.65 | Strongly Agree | | | |
| 8. Universities, lost its appeal to students | 4.05 | Agree | | | |
| 9. Decrease in academic performance | 4.37 | Strongly Agree | | | |
| 10. Loss of academic time for educators. | 4.54 | Strongly Agree | | | |
| 11.Loss opportunities for academic improvement | 4.38 | Strongly Agree | | | |
| 12. Interruptions in assessments, instructions and research | 3.87 | Agree | | | |

Likewise, the respondents strongly agree that due to the national lockdown, there was a poor academic progress among students. The time spent to lockdown schools prevented faceto-face teaching which prevented students to advance in their learning. Kapasia et al., (2020) said that because of the national lockdown, there were marginalized students who faced very challenging moments of difficulty in studying because of the abrupt implementation of the lockdown.

Likewise, the respondent also strongly agrees that the national lockdown due to the COVID-19 resulted in loss opportunities for academic improvement among students. The five-months of national lockdown among graduate students of the Master in Educational Management caused damaged to the academic progress such as they were not exposed to the usual routine in the school such as daily instructions, feedback with the professors as well as assessments and evaluation that sharpen their minds. This impact must be taken positively as to improve further their acumen in dealing with difficult problems affecting the nation. Coping in the National Lockdown. The respondents enumerated various measures that they carried out during the lockdown to contain the endless boredom and negative consequences. Table 3 presents the coping strategies carried out by the respondents.

Table 3. List of Coping Strategies

| | 0 0 | | |
|---|-----------|------------|--|
| Coping Strategies | Frequency | Percentage | |
| Long periods of sleep | 59 | 100% | |
| 2. Movie marathon | 57 | 96.61% | |
| 3. Social networking sites | 52 | 88.13% | |
| 4. Online short courses | 46 | 77.97% | |
| 5. Cooking and baking | 42 | 71.19% | |
| 6. Workout | 39 | 66.10% | |
| 7. Eating with family | 38 | 64.40% | |
| 8. Gardening | 36 | 61.01% | |
| 9. Cleaning the house | 35 | 59.32% | |
| 10. Reading | 32 | 50.84% | |
| | | | |

From Table 3, it can be seen that respondents have a great time staying at home. They have listed ten (10) coping strategies that were done at the duration of the national lockdown. These coping strategies are simple yet meaningful because they are done in close contact with the members of the family promoting bonding and camaraderie. In fact, the list provides an opportunity to do things that were not able to do without a lockdown. In fact, the lockdown can be a blessing in disguise that brought the members of the family to come together for the sake of unity and solidarity amidst the threat of COVID-19. Apparently, through these strategies, the members of the family are healthy and well, and prevented from being infected with the COVID-19.

Baloran (2020) discussed in his study that during the COVID-19 pandemic, students avoided going out in order to minimize their exposure to the disease. But the number one coping strategies of the students in the study is the use of social media and social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION:

The study concludes that the national lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic has caused irreparable damages with regards to

social, psychological, and academic aspects. The study also strongly recommends that teaching personnel may use relevant teaching strategies that can use to continue education despite the pandemic. This may include, online modalities such as synchronous and asynchronous teaching and learning. For the students who have problems in connectivity, modular learning and long-distance consultation are strongly suggested. But more importantly, the COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity to design and develop teaching and learning pedagogies that are relevant to the new education normal. This is to ensure that despite the situation, education survives and will continue.

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