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Assessment of General Education Teacher's Knowledge to Identify Pupils With Special Needs: Basis for Advocacy Program

Eve Monique Sabaricos, Twinkle Mie Rose G. Dinero, Linedele Joy D. Babar,
Cecilia F. Ronia, Leonardo Dorado, Rufina Francisco, Marieta Pagaduan

Adventist University of the Philippines

Abstract

This research discussed the knowledge of general education teachers regarding pupils with special needs. Using the quantitative descriptive survey research design, the researchers answered the following research questions: (a) What is the extent of knowledge of the general education teachers to identify pupils with special needs? (b) What is the significant difference of the general education teachers' knowledge to identify pupils with special needs according to sex, years of teaching experience, and educational attainment? For data gathering, the purposive sampling technique was employed to select participants that conformed to the criteria of having at least three years of teaching experience, having at least experienced handling pupils at-risk of disabilities or pupils diagnosed with disabilities, and being teachers in schools that have a record of accepting pupils at-risk or diagnosed with disabilities. Subsequently, 36 respondents from various private schools in Cavite answered a self-constructed survey questionnaire, with points ranging from 1 as the lowest and 13 as the highest to help determine their level of knowledge. Results showed that general education teachers have *high knowledge* in identifying pupils with special needs. There was no link between the respondents' knowledge and their years of teaching and educational attainment. However, sex manifested significant influence, as females' knowledge was statistically higher than the males'. With these results, the researchers recognized the prevailing need to train general education teachers in handling pupils with special needs or who are at-risk. To address this need, it is recommended to develop inclusive education strategies and training.

Keywords: *general education teachers, assessment, special education, knowledge, at-risk pupils, identification, disability, elementary*

Albeit the continuous rise in children with special needs, there remains various challenges in the current time. One of these challenges is that upon finding out about their child's special needs attention, parents often go into a state of denial. Alongside this, there are still several teachers or educators, another group of individuals whom children with special needs require support from, that do not have enough preparation and training that will help them in handling children with special needs (Brown et al., 2020; Mader, 2017). There is also the existing stigma around children with special needs, which puts them at a heightened risk of being victims of bullying (StopBullying, 2020).

According to Bitsko (2019, as cited in Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2019), there exists an identified increase in the diagnosis of developmental disabilities among children, some of which are in higher numbers than the others, as a result of changes in qualifications and easier diagnosis. According to the findings gathered from years 2009 to 2017, 1 in 6 in children with ages ranging from 3 to 17 years old received a diagnosis, as accounted by the parents. The percentage of diagnosis has heightened from 16.2% in 2009-2011 to 17.8% in 2015-2017, particularly, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) with a 1% percent, autism spectrum disorder (ASD) with 1.4%, and intellectual disabilities (ID) with 0.3%.

Meanwhile, in the Philippines, a report says that approximately one in seven children is living with disabilities, however, there remains a lack of information on such prevalence (UNICEF, 2018). In line with this problem in inadequate data, Filipino children with special needs are known to encounter many difficulties in their lives compared to ordinary Filipino children. These difficulties include, but are not limited to, the following: access to primary care, armed conflict, discrimination, and economic status (Jaucian, 2017).

A study conducted by Walsh (2018), about the inclusion of students with special needs in the general education classroom, shows that teachers want students with special needs in their classrooms; however, they are not prepared to fully address these students' educational needs.

As reported by the Delizo (2019), information from the Department of Education (DepEd) shows that there are already 5.49 million children who have a disability and out of the 5.49 million children with special needs (CSN), only 2% receive government support, and 97% of children aged 7 to 12 are unable to attend school. In addition, students drop out of the system because of insufficient facilities suited for their needs and a shortage of teachers who are trained to accommodate them.

Nevertheless, as noted by one teacher, educators are still lacking the right amount of instruction and training that allow them to be prepared to handle pupils with disabilities, leaving them to fend for themselves as they learn how to navigate through their classrooms. However, in the current time, there has been a crucial need for such instruction and training, considering several pupils with disabilities have become part of the general-education classrooms, as a result of the national urging them out of isolation (Mader, 2017).

Thus, the direction of the study was to assess general education teachers' knowledge about special education and their ability to identify students with special needs with which results be the basis for the 2nd Special Education Congress Advocacy Program.

This study answered the following research problems:

1. What is the extent of knowledge of the general education teachers to identify pupils with special needs?
2. Is there a significant difference in the general education teachers' knowledge to identify pupils with special needs in terms of:
   a. Sex
   b. Years of teaching experience
   c. educational attainment?
3. What advocacy program can be proposed based on the results of the study?

Theoretical Framework/Conceptual Framework

This study is based on the sociocultural theory (SCT). The work of the Russian psychologist Vygotsky is associated with SCT and was published in 1943. The main theme of the theoretical framework of Vygotsky is that social interactions play an important role in the development of cognition. Vygotsky believed that on multiple points, all is understood. First, through our interaction with others and by integrating what has been learned into the cognitive framework of an individual.

Second, the process of developing intellectually is restricted to a "zone of proximal development" (ZPD). This "zone" of exploration is one in which the learner is cognitively equipped but requires assistance and social contact to properly develop (UNESCO, 2000).

The sociocultural theory was applicable for this research because it recognizes that there is still a gap as to what a child with special needs can learn on their own and what they can learn with only the assistance of special educators or general education teachers through ZPD. Furthermore, the theory stresses that to be effective in learning, the evaluation must be carried out to determine the exact amount and type of program intervention essential for children with special educational needs to learn successfully. Scaffolding aids in the identification of children with special educational needs and their placement in academic contexts including special schools, comprehensive, and inclusive education.

Figure 1. *Research Paradigm for Descriptive Research Survey*
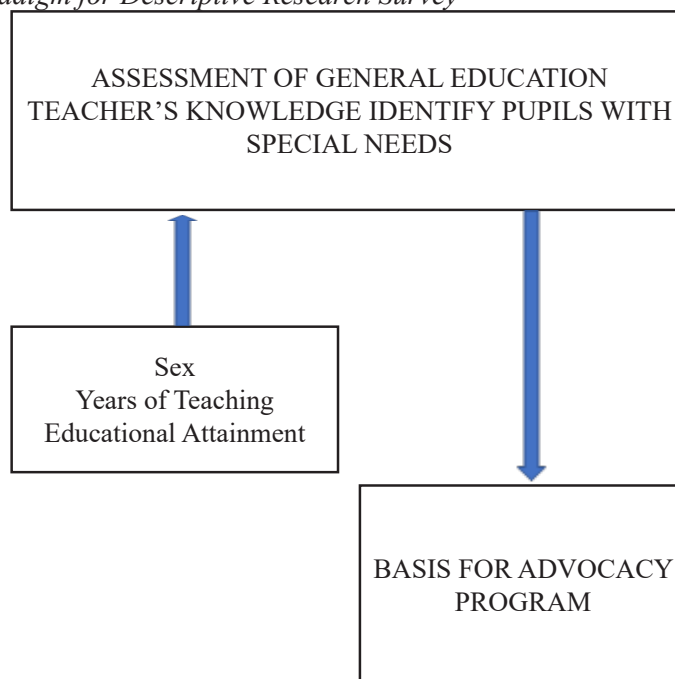
Methodology

Research Design

This study used the quantitative descriptive survey research design. The purpose of the descriptive survey research design is to take a snapshot of the current state of affairs by spending little or no effort on controlling foreign variables. This design was used to ascertain the level of identification of students with special needs of teachers in general education during this period for this particular study.

Population and Sampling

The study population is made up of 70 private schools in Cavite which accommodate students with special needs in their general education classes. The sampling procedure that was utilized is the purposive sampling technique. The sample comes from five different private elementary schools in Silang, Cavite

which were used in the study. Respondents were expected to have a minimum of 3 years of teaching experience; have at least experience in the management of students at risk of disability or students diagnosed with disabilities; and are school teachers who have a record of accepting students at risk or diagnosed with disabilities.

To further answer the research question number 2, the researchers included a demographic profile in the survey questionnaire. The sex, years of teacher, and educational attainment were the data asked in the demographic profile. A pilot test among 30 respondents from 5 private schools in Cavite was also made prior to the actual conduct of the study.

Profile of the Respondents

There were 36 respondents who have answered the survey. Figures 2, 3, and 4 present the number of respondents and its distribution according to sex, number of years of teaching, and educational attainment, respectively.

Figure 2. *Sex of the Respondents*
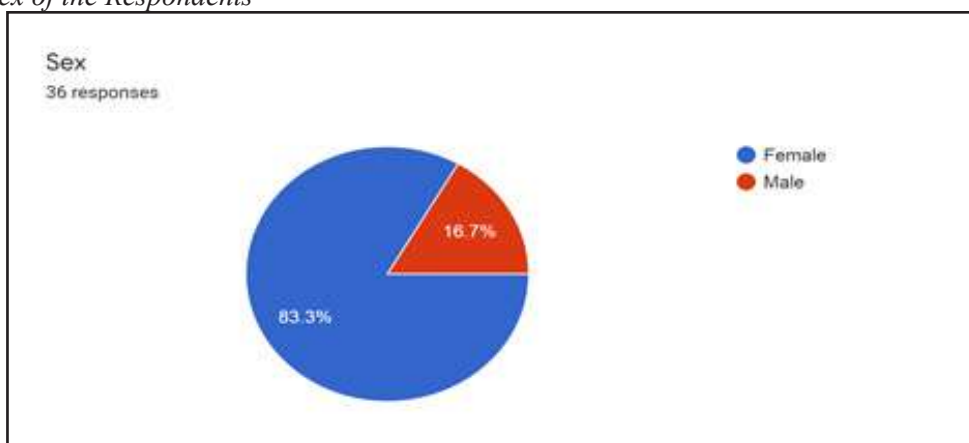
Figure 2 shows that 16.7% of the respondents were male and 83.3% were females. Figure 3, on the other hand, shows that 47.2% of the total number of respondents are teaching for 3 to 7 years, 38.9% of the respondents were teaching for 8 to 15 years already, while 13.9% were teaching for 16 years and above. Figure 4 shows that 52.8% of the respondents have bachelor's degrees. 33.3% have a master's degree, while 13% of the respondents were holders of doctoral degrees.

Figure 3. *Years of Teaching of the Respondents*
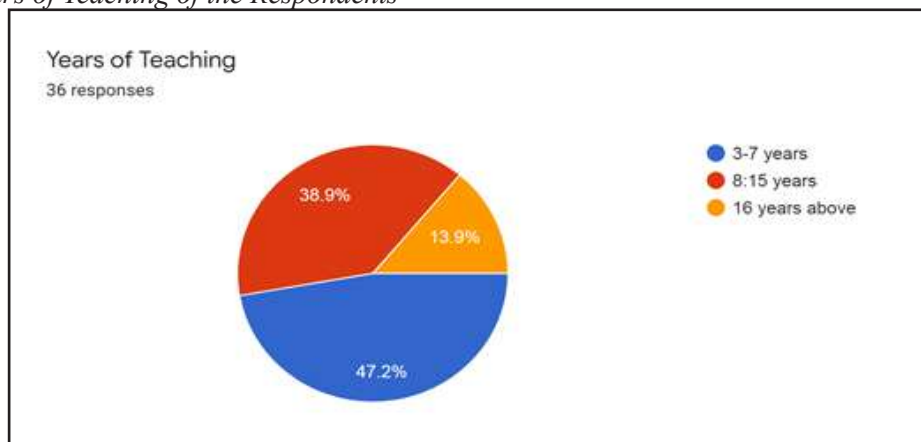
Figure 4. *Educational Attainment of the Respondents*
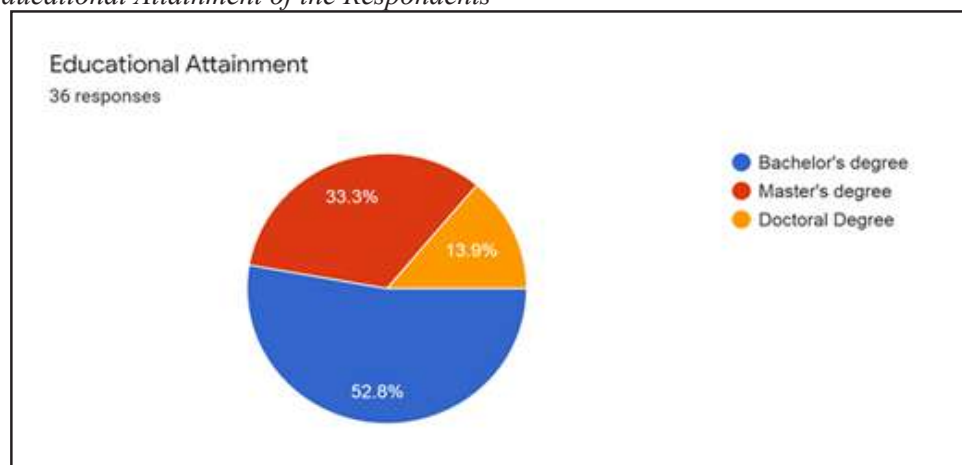
Instrumentation

The instrument for the quantitative part of the study is a survey questionnaire on the knowledge to identify general education teachers. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the researchers used an online platform which was the Google Survey Form in gathering the data. Identification type of questions was used to assess the knowledge of the general education teachers.

There were two parts in the instrument that were utilized in this study.

1. Respondent's Profile - This part sorted the information of the respondents as to their gender, years of experience, and educational attainment.
2. Knowledge on Different Disabilities - This part measured the knowledge and ability of a general education teacher on different disabilities.

The level of awareness was determined by the researchers using this guide: the respondent has a high level of knowledge if he or she was able to get 9 to 13 points, moderate level of knowledge if he or she was able to get 5 to 8 points, and low level of knowledge if he or she was able to get 1 to 4 points, these levels are self-constructed by the researchers based from the raw scores of the questionnaire.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers implemented the study as specified in the proposal after obtaining the approval to conduct the study from the thesis adviser and panel members. This quantitative study utilized the descriptive survey research design approach. Therefore, data collection happened in just one phase. The researchers secured an endorsement letter from the AUP Research Office, Ethics Review Board (AUP-ERB) with the code 2020-ERB-AUP-067.

The respondents were informed that the information will be treated with confidentiality and will be solely used for the study. After giving instructions, the respondents proceeded in answering the questions. Encoding of the data was done for a statistical treatment analysis.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure confidentiality and ethical concerns, respondents were briefed on the nature of the study. The objectives of the study were discussed in detail, and privacy was assumed that their answers are to be utilized for research purposes only. The respondents' identities are protected, and their responses and answers were kept confidential. To maintain the confidentiality of the data, the researchers used codes or acronyms instead of the real name of the of the respondents. The respondents were told that they can refuse or withdraw from participating in the research at any time that they feel uncomfortable or are not able to participate continually without losing their benefits and privileges. They were also assured that there will be no harm when they participate in the study.

Analysis of Data

The data collected were analyzed. The statistical treatment that was utilized for the first research question was descriptive statistics. Non-parametric statistical treatments were used for the second research question. The result of the analyzed data will be the basis and will be used for the third question. Mann-Whitney Test was used to develop the second research question considering sex, years of teaching, and educational attainment. This was used to due to the number of respondents per group are not proportionate. Kruskal-Wallis Test was the statistical treatment that was used for the research question to find out what the significant difference of respondent's knowledge is considering the years of teaching and educational attainment.

Results and Discussion

Extent of Knowledge of General Education Teachers

Table 1 shows that the highest score out of 13 items was 12 points. However, the lowest score among the respondents was 2. The mean is 9.97 (SD = 2.091) which is interpreted as high knowledge in identifying pupils with special needs.

Table 1. *Extent of Knowledge of General Education Teachers*

	Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Level of Knowledge	36	2.00	12.00	9.9722	2.09061
Valid N (listwise)	36				

This is considered an improvement as past researches had identified and presented the knowledge of general education teachers regarding students with special needs as lacking (Dapudong, 2014). However, with the huge gap between the minimum score of 2 and a maximum score of 12, the data gathered only implies that necessary improvements should be done to improve the education received by students with disabilities or special needs.

The field of education, with the help of community and government leaders, continues to assist general education teachers in their continuous preparation for educating students with disabilities or special needs. This includes learning to shift their attitudes and beliefs, engaging with school support, participating in collaborative practice with special education teachers, and adjusting their instructional methods to fit the needs of the learners (Hammon et al., 2019).

Ang-Manaig and Baguisa (2019) also conducted a study with a similar context in a Philippine setup, with results illustrating how the respondents possess high self-reported knowledge regarding inclusive education through items number 7 and 2 with 99.4% and 96%, respectively. According to the items, the self-reported knowledge was gained through collaboration with other professional service providers and adjustment of instructional methods. Additionally, 53.98% of the participants, which is the majority, showed an average level of knowledge in inclusive education, whereas 23.30% were categorized under low knowledge and 22.73% under a high level of knowledge. This illustrates a promising outcome as according to Landasan and Bourke (2017, 2010, as cited in Ang-Manaig and Baguisa, 2019), a country's success in inclusive education is primarily determined by the teachers' capacity for inclusive education skills and knowledge.

The findings of the current study illustrated the continuous development made in the field of education, particularly special education, to allow students with disabilities or special needs to receive the education they deserve. As a result, general education teachers now have a higher knowledge of students with special needs, thus, helping them become aware of the varying methods of how to deal with them and instruct them. Moreover, such improvement also signifies how the field of education learned from the findings of past studies and acknowledged the needed improvements.

Levels of Knowledge in Identifying Pupils with Special Needs Considering Sex

Table 2. *Levels of Knowledge in Identifying Pupils with Special Needs Considering Sex*

Group Statistics					
	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Level of Knowledge	Female	30	10.5333	1.10589	.20191
	Male	6	7.1667	3.48807	1.42400

Table 2 shows that the female respondents have a mean of 10.53 (*SD* = 1.106) and the male respondents have a mean of 7.167 (*SD* = 7.167). This shows that the knowledge of females in identifying pupils with special needs has higher average compared to the male's knowledge. This finding somewhat agrees with the study of Szymanowicz and Furnham (2013) which found that men are more logical so they excel best in Science and Mathematics while a female has high intelligence in terms of the social and emotional aspects, which made them socially sensitive and have more empathy toward other people.

Table 3. *Mann-Whitney Test for Levels of Knowledge in Identifying Pupils with Special Needs in Terms of Sex*

Ranks					
	Sex	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Std. Error Mean
Level of Knowledge	Female	30	20.73	622.00	.20191
	Male	6	7.33	44.00	1.42400
	Total	36			

To further analyze the result, the Mann-Whitney U statistical analysis was used. This test is a non-parametric test. This statistical test was utilized because the groups have a big difference in distribution. Through this test, equal distribution can be assumed. Instead of comparing the median, the mean ranks were compared. The mean rank of the female group is 20.73 which is higher than the mean rank of the male group (7.33).

Table 4. *Test Statistics for Levels of Knowledge in Identifying Pupils with Special Needs in Terms of Sex*

	Level of Knowledge
Mann-Whitney U	23.000
Wilcoxon W	44.000
Z	-2.992
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	.003b

a. *Grouping Variable: Sex*
b. *Not corrected for ties.*
EFFECT Size (Cohen's d) = 1.30 can be interpreted as large effect size.

From the data in Table 4, it can be concluded that the level of knowledge in identifying pupils with special needs of the female group is statistically significantly higher than the male group (U = 23, p = .003). Compared to the point of comparison which is .05, .003 is lower which implies that there was a significant difference in identifying pupils with special needs when the sex of the respondents is considered.

Levels of Knowledge in Identifying Pupils with Special Needs Considering Years of Teaching

Table 5. *Levels of Knowledge in Identifying Pupils with Special Needs considering Years of Teaching*

| | | | | | Level of Knowledge | | | |
| | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | | |
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
3 - 7 years	17	9.7059	2.36550	.57372	8.4897	10.9221	2.00	11.00
8 - 15 years	14	9.9286	1.97929	.52899	8.7858	11.0714	4.00	12.00
16 years and above	5	11.0000	1.22474	.54772	9.4793	12.5207	9.00	12.00
Total	36	9.9722	2.09061	.34843	9.2649	10.6796	2.00	12.00

There were three groups in the levels of knowledge according to years of teaching. In Table 5, 17 respondents had 3 to 7 years of teaching with a mean of 9.71 (SD = 2.366). There were 14 respondents with 8 to 15 years of teaching with a mean of 9.93 (SD = 1.979). The last group consisted of 5 respondents of 16 years and above of teaching experience with a mean of 11.00 (SD = 1.225) indicating the highest mean.

Table 6. *Kruskal-Wallis Test for Level of Knowledge in Identifying Pupils with Special Needs considering Years of Teaching*

Ranks			
	Years of Teaching	N	Mean Rank
	3 - 7 years	17	17.65
Level of Knowledge	8 - 15 years	14	17.14
	16 years and above	5	25.20
	Total	36	

According to the Kruskal Wallis test, the mean rank of the 3 to 7 years of teaching group is 17.65, while the mean rank of 8 to 15 years of teaching group is 17.14, and 25.20 for the respondents who have been teaching for 16 years or more.

Table 7. *Test Statistics for Level of Knowledge in Identifying Pupils with Special Needs Considering Years of Teaching*

	Level of Knowledge
Kruskal-Wallis H	2.619
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.270

a. Kruskal Wallis Test
b. Grouping Variable: Years of Teaching

Table 7 shows a significance value of .270 which is higher than the point of comparison of .05. Therefore, there was *no significant difference* in the knowledge of identifying pupils with special needs when years of teaching is considered. This result contradicts the study conducted by Offor and Akinlosotu (2017) regarding the attitude of teachers towards students with special education in Nigeria wherein the years of experience in teaching was found to have a significant difference of (H-value 24.270 ; p < 0.05).

There were teachers who went into training programs to improve their skills in dealing with students with special needs. It was shown that regardless of their years of experience in teaching, there was no significant difference in the effect of the program. They were brought to a new experience of dealing with pupils with special needs in regular class (Al-Taj & Al-Oweidi, 2017). Therefore, teachers may have a positive attitude as their years of teaching increase, yet they still need to increase their knowledge in identifying pupils with special needs.

Levels of Knowledge in Identifying Pupils With Special Needs Considering Educational Attainment

Table 8. *Level of Knowledge in Identifying Pupils With Special Needs in Terms of Educational Attainment*

| | | | | | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean | | | |
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Minimum	Maximum
Bachelor's Degree	19	9.4737	2.77626	.63692	8.1356	10.8118	2.00	12.00
Master's Degree	12	10.5000	.52223	.15076	10.1682	10.8318	10.00	11.00
Doctoral Degree	5	10.6000	.54772	.24495	9.9199	11.2801	10.00	11.00
Total	36	9.9722	2.09061	.34843	9.2649	10.6796	2.00	12.00

Table 8 shows the levels of knowledge in identifying pupils with special needs considering educational attainment. the respondents who have graduated with bachelor's degree have a mean of 9.47 (SD = 2.776), while those who have a Master's Degree have a mean of 10.50 (SD = .522), and the respondents who graduated with a doctoral degree have a mean of 10.60 (SD = .548).

A study conducted by Horn and Jang (2017) showed that early childhood, primary, middle, and junior high school educators with master's degree had no more impact on student reading success than teachers with just bachelor's degree. The impact on student math performance was not clear. The same study showed that results also vary depending on the specialization of the teachers. However, Table 8 shows that there is no significant difference in the level of knowledge in identifying pupils with special needs considering educational attainment.

Table 9. *Kruskal-Wallis Test for Level of Knowledge in Identifying Pupils with Special Needs Considering Educational Attainment*

Ranks

	Educational Attainment	N	Mean Rank
	Bachelor's Degree	19	17.71
Level of Knowledge	Master's Degree	12	19.00
	Doctoral Degree	5	20.30
	Total	36	

The Kruskal-Wallis test was used to further analyze the data. The bachelor's degree group got a mean rank of 17.71, while the group of master's degree got a mean rank of 19.00, and the doctoral degree group got a mean rank of 20.30.

Table 10. *Test Statistics for Level of Knowledge in Identifying Pupils with Special Needs Considering Educational Attainment*

	Level of Knowledge
Kruskal-Wallis H	.310
Df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.857

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Educational Attainment

A significance value of .857 was presented in Table 10 which is higher than the point of comparison of .05. Therefore, there was *no significant difference* in the knowledge of identifying pupils with special needs when educational attainment is considered.

These results agree with the study done by Al-Taj and Al-Oweidi (2017) which indicated that the teachers who have undergone the training program to increase the skill in dealing with students with special needs indicated that there was no significant difference in the effect of the training program according to their educational attainment. Same with the years of teaching, the teachers received the same level of benefits from the training program regardless of their educational attainment.

Proposed Advocacy Awareness Program for General Education Teachers

The results of this study revealed that the respondents demonstrated high knowledge in identifying pupils with special needs. However, further inclusive education training should be done to facilitate the learning of identified cases in their classes. Thus, together with AUP-COE majoring in Special Needs Education and AUP-COE administrators, this training will be facilitated during the next Special Education Congress. The congress is expected to transpire in November 2021. To achieve the objective of the program, the sessions will have its regular part in the congress.

Even with the number of children with special needs continuing to rise, it remains evident that there is not enough support for the development and provision of their needs, as observed in the lack of resources and knowledge on how to properly handle pupils with special needs in the classroom. According to Goldman (2020), advocacy has always taken a fundamental part in the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). For instance, in special education, there exists an expectation for parents to advocate on the behalf of their child. However, it is not always that parents have the desire or the capability to meet this expectation. As such, there exists special education advocates, who seek to provide assistance to families of children with special needs. Some of these children may already have their needs identified, while some do not. However, in both circumstances, parents are in need of advocacy support, most particularly when they feel overwhelmed with information, need help in searching for additional support, and/or need assistance when problems become challenging (National Association of Special Education Teachers, 2021).

Special education advocates are the form of assistance that parents find themselves in dire need of when they are denied services, treatments, or equipment for their children (Logsdon, 2020). In line with this, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) highlights the need for and importance of special education advocacy programs to facilitate and strengthen such advocacy, all the while building a system of accountability where both the children and their parents are made aware of their particular rights and can take certain actions should they find that the academic institution is not meeting the needs of the child appropriately (Guest, 2020).

Having male and female teachers, according to a study cited by the Australian Association for Research in Education (ARRE), contributes to children's gender knowledge. Men in the classroom are especially important because they allow students to "observe men who are nonviolent and have positive interactions with women" (McGrath et al., 2019).

Thus, this advocacy will focus on helping the General education Teachers by providing them knowledge and strategies to be applied inside their classroom in handling pupils at-risk with special needs, and provide strategies in approaching parents of pupils at-risk and educate them with the basic foundation of the Special Education. The targeted attendees will be the General Education Teachers.

Table 11. *Proposed Advocacy Program for General Education Teachers*

PROPOSED ADVOCACY PROGRAM			
Course Description	Special Education and Male Teachers Today	The School, the Family and the Pupils At-Risk	Inclusion and Basics in Teaching Pupils with Special Needs in the Mainstream Classroom
Topics	• Brief Introduction to the Contributions of Male SPED Advocates in the 1900s • Most common Disabilities and Disorders	• Approaching Parents Of Pupils At-Risk • Guiding The Class In Dealing With Pupils Who Are At-Risk	• Strategies in teaching pupils at-risk and with special needs
Target Attendees	Male General Education Teachers	General Education Teachers	General Education Teachers
Program/ Activities	• Breakout Session • Lecture • Question and Answer	• Breakout Session • Lecture • Question and Answer • Roleplaying	• Breakout Session • Lecture • Group sharing • Mock Demo Teaching by Group
Person-in-charge/ Resources	Speaker: Dr. Edilberto I. Dizon Assisted by: SNED major students	Speaker: Dr. Michelle T. Collado Assisted by: SNED major students	Speaker: Assisted by: SNED major students
Assessment	Short Quiz in Identifying Pupils with Special Needs	Roleplaying	• Mock Demo Teaching by Group

Every year, the field of education witnesses a rise in the number of children with special needs. Despite this known fact, not every child with special needs is provided with the ability or opportunity to go to school or attend a school that can meet their needs properly. As such, there has been recognized a crucial demand for educators, particularly general education teachers, to be constantly and considerably guided and provided with opportunities that will allow them to gain more experience and knowledge regarding educating students with special needs in the same class as mainstream students.

Accordingly, the results of the study have shown that while the respondents demonstrate a *high* knowledge in identifying pupils with special needs, and the difference between the minimum and maximum scores for selected respondents was significantly large. This only reveals that there still exists a significant need to further the efforts of both the government and the academic institutions to ensure that different activities and opportunities offered and provided are made accessible to most, if not all, general education teachers.

The result also revealed how the background, specifically sex, years of teaching, and highest educational attainment, of each respondent correlates with their knowledge in identifying pupils with special needs. There is need of male general education teachers have more training in the knowledge of identifying pupils with special needs or at-risk. Thus, this is a call for organizations such as teacher education colleges to conduct awareness programs for general education teachers.

Considering the study's scope and limitations as well as how constantly increasing number of children in need of special support, which turns the results into the crucial demand for inclusion education, it is necessary that further studies are taken in order to gather more varied data on the topic at hand. Teachers must also be provided with inclusive education training that will specifically advance their knowledge on strategies to facilitate the learning of identified cases in their classes.

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EDUCATION

Parents' Satisfaction on the AUP Elementary Program: A Survey Study

Miriam Endaya, Levy Fajanilan, Loida Morado, Maricel Ramirez, Ramil Ramirez,
Judith Rodelas, Alpha Rombaoa, Cecilia Ronia, Gedion Ronia, Meriam Torres

Adventist University of the Philippines, Elementary

Abstract

Parents are important co-stakeholders in the basic education program for they play an important role in the choice of school for their children. To increase the enrolment rate, it is essential to unfold what satisfies the expectation of the parents as co-stakeholders. This mixed methods study determined the satisfaction level of parents who sent all their children to AUPE and to uncover the real attributes of AUP Elementary as experienced by parents through their children based on the school's set of objectives. This study utilized a survey for the quantitative part and online open-ended question for the qualitative part which was participated by 112 parents whose children graduated from the year 2016 to year 2021. The study focused on the three research problems based on the school objectives: (a) What is the satisfaction level of parents with the quality of AUPE's program; (b) To what extent has the school contributed or participated to the development of its students; and (c) Why is AUPE your school of choice for your children? The quantitative results revealed that the majority of the parents were *highly satisfied* with the quality of AUPE's program in terms of relationship to God, responsible citizenship, and skills and knowledge. Also, most parents believed that the extent the school contributed or participated to the development of its students in terms of relationship to God, responsible citizenship, and skills and knowledge was *very high*. The qualitative results also unfolded that majority of the parents expressed that they chose AUPE for their children is to develop a relationship to God, develop responsible citizenship through learning service-oriented skills for to their community, and develop skills and knowledge. However, the findings recommend that programs pertaining to the development of culture appreciation, social and national interdependence through involvement in community programs, and programs pertaining to the development of computer-related may be enhanced for these received the greatest number of average satisfaction and not satisfied responses although it is very minimal. It also recommends the school to conduct massive school promotion highlighting its strengths through different media platforms to reach parents with elementary-aged children.

Keywords: *satisfaction, school program, Adventist education, parent's school choice, evaluation*

Choosing which school their child will go is one of the most important decisions parents make. Parents also are in the best position to decide what school program would best fit their children. Parents across ethnicities, income levels, and socioeconomic statuses – consider common factors when choosing schools. These factors include high academic results, curriculum offerings, teacher quality, small class sizes, and the availability of extracurricular activities (Carter, 2018). This tells that the increase in elementary schools' enrolment highly depends on parents' perception and satisfactory experience of a school.

The increase in enrolment turnover is favorable to desirable schools that offer quality programs and that satisfies the expectation of the parents as co-stakeholders. There is strong evidence that expansion of school enrolment contributes to economic growth (Espinoza et al., 2018). For those who believe in Adventist education think that Adventist education provides a quality academic foundation through a curriculum informed by biblical principles and infused with Christ's profound love and grace. They believe that such schools offer environments in which children can thrive wholistically, growing physically, mentally, and spiritually—a clear "win" for parents (Thayer et al., 2017).

However, in the last five years, there has been a decline in enrolment in the AUP Elementary. Many Adventist and non-Adventist parents are not choosing AUPE for their child's education anymore and that many are opting for a different educational system for their children. Thus, more research is needed to explain why parents choose specific schools and whether parents choose schools that satisfy specific qualities they have deemed important when choosing a new school (Rhinesmith, 2017).

This study is anchored on William Glasser's Choice Theory which explains that exercising choice, whether in relationships, education, marriage, or other aspects of life, can provide a platform for enhanced relationships, satisfaction, and self-efficacy thus everything people do is a result of choice (Glasser, 2010). Thus, the direction of this study is to determine the satisfaction level of parents who chose to send all their children to AUPE and to uncover the real attributes of AUPE as experienced by parents through their children based on the school's set of objectives which are relationship to God, citizenship, and skills and knowledge.

This study also aimed to use the results to benchmark on how the school should promote its strengths and improve its weaknesses to attract more parents to enroll their elementary aged children to AUPE. This study specifically focused on these three research problems:

1. What is the satisfaction level of parents with the quality of AUPE's program in terms of:
    A. Relationship to God
    B. Responsible Citizenship
    C. Skills and Knowledge
2. To what extent has the school contributed or participated to the development of its students in terms of:
    A. Relationship to God
    B. Responsible Citizenship
    C. Skills and Knowledge
3. Why is AUPE your school of choice for your children?

Methodology

This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative research design thus it is a mixed-methods study. This utilized a survey questionnaire for the quantitative part and an open-ended question for the qualitative part. The survey instrument is a four-part instrument which includes the profile of the respondents, the evaluation instruments, and an open-ended interview question that will require respondents to answer.

Descriptive survey study was utilized for the quantitative part of this study. Surveys are conducted for market surveys to obtain information by gathering data from a particular sample of a given population, through personal or impersonal means, to study its characteristics. The primary purpose is to identify what the customers specifically the parents think of the services and programs of AUPE. This is also to identify effective and ineffective components of AUP Elementary School Program based on its set of objectives.

Survey studies are common research tools for educational and training programs. The results of this will help schools identify the strengths and weaknesses of the programs they specifically measure. The results of this survey study will primarily improve education and training programs as well as enhance the learning experiences of AUPE's future learners.

The survey instrument was administered online taking advantage of the free Google Forms application which can be utilized for online research surveys such as this. It was sent via messenger which was the easiest form of data sharing and communication in this time of pandemic where face-to-face communication is highly discouraged.

The population of this study was the parents of elementary students who graduated from 2016 to 2021. The respondents for this survey study were purposively and conveniently chosen as there are already predetermined number of parents from specific school years covering the five-year period from 2016-2020. The contact addresses were derived from the school's registrar's office and parents were formally invited to participate in the study with the assurance that their responses and identity will not be revealed.

Collectively, there are about 300 parents who were invited to participate. Out of this, 37% or 112 parents participated in the study. The data gathering was properly launched, and the data responses were automatically encoded and manually monitored through the Google Survey platform.

Results and Discussion

To determine parents satisfaction with AUP Elementary program and to measure the extent of AUPE's contribution to their students development based on the objectives of the school, this study was launched which was participated by 112 parents from different religious affiliations such as Seventh-day Adventist (77 parents or 68%), Roman Catholic (22 parents or 19.6%), Born Again Christians (8 parents or 7.1%), Iglesia ni Cristo (1 parent or 0.9%) , Islam (2 parents or 1.8%), and other Christian Church affiliations (2 parents of 1.8%).

Figure 1. *Respondents' Religious Affiliation*
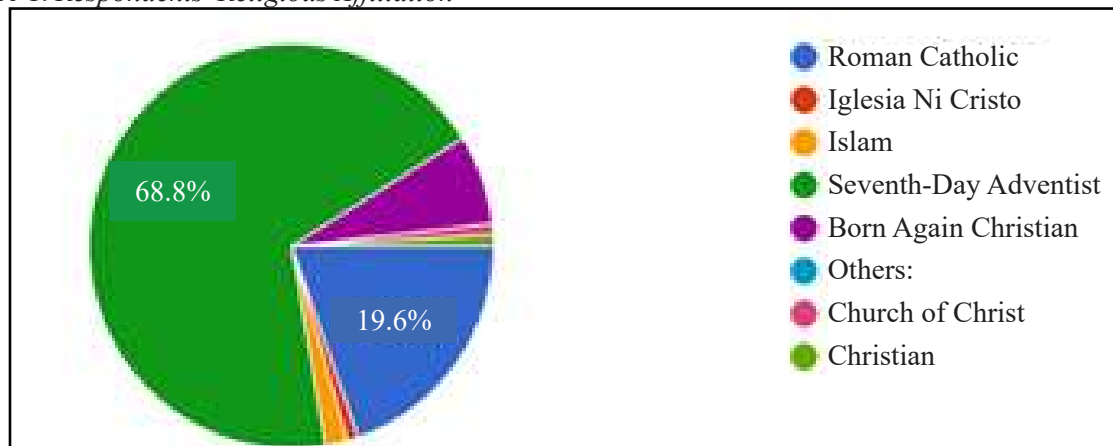
The first research question focuses on the satisfaction of parents with the quality of Adventist University of the Philippines Elementary program based on its school objectives which is categorized into three parts namely *relationship to God, Citizenship, and Skills and Knowledge.*

Parents' Satisfaction With the Quality of AUPE's Program in Terms of Relationship to God

Figure 2. NAME

1. Instilling a knowledge and love of God and of Jesus Christ who came into this world to be its Redeemer
112 responses

- Highly Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Netheir Satisfied nor
- Dissatisfied
- Highly Dissatisfied

34.8%

64.3%

Figure 3. NAME

2. Teaching the principles of the New Birth, Faith, and, Prayer which lead to a transformed life
112 responses

- Highly Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Netheir Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- Not Satisfied
- Highly Dissatisfied

43.8%

53.6%

     The figure above shows that 64.3% of the total 112 respondents answered that they were *highly satisfied*, while 34.8% of the total respondents were *satisfied*, and .9% were *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*. This result implies that majority AUPE parents are highly satisfied with the programs that concern the instilling of knowledge and love of God and of Jesus Christ who came into this world to be its Redeemer.

     The second item in the category of relationship to God is the teaching of principles of the new birth, faith, and prayer which lead to a transformed life. Out of 112 responses, 53.6% responded that they were *highly satisfied*, 43.8% were *satisfied*, and 2.7% were neither *satisfied nor dissatisfied* with the AUPE's program. These numbers implied that the majority of the parents are *highly satisfied*.

     The third item focuses on the awakening and developing the power of perception, reflection, and application in the study of nature as the handwriting of God revealing His thoughts. This resulted to 48.2 % of the total 112 respondents to answer that they were *highly satisfied*, 46.4% were *satisfied*, while there is an increasing response of *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied* at 5.4%, and 0.9% responded that they were *highly dissatisfied*. These numbers implied that the majority of the parents were *highly satisfied*.

Figure 4. <mark>NAME</mark>

3. Awakening and developing the power of perception, reflection and application in the study of nature as the hardwriting of God revealing His thoughts.
112 responses

- Highly Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Netheir Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- Not Satisfied
- Highly Dissatisfied

46.4%
48.2%
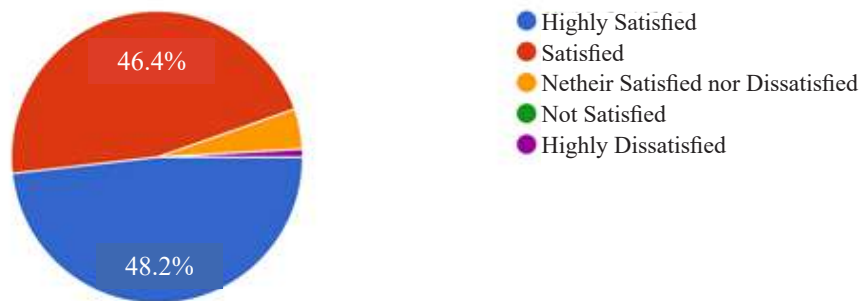
The fourth item shows a result of 48.2% for *highly satisfied*, which was outnumbered by a difference of one percent for those who responded satisfied at 49.1%. In addition, 1.8% responded *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied* while 0.9% responded that they were highly dissatisfied with AUPE's program in presenting the ideals of true culture with an appreciation of what is pure, true, noble, and beautiful as part of developing a *relationship with God*. These numbers implied that the majority of the parents are *satisfied*.

Figure 5. <mark>NAME</mark>

4. Presenting the ideals of true culture with an appreciation of what is pure, true, noble and beautiful
112 responses

- Highly Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Netheir Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- Not Satisfied
- Highly Dissatisfied

49.1%
48.2%
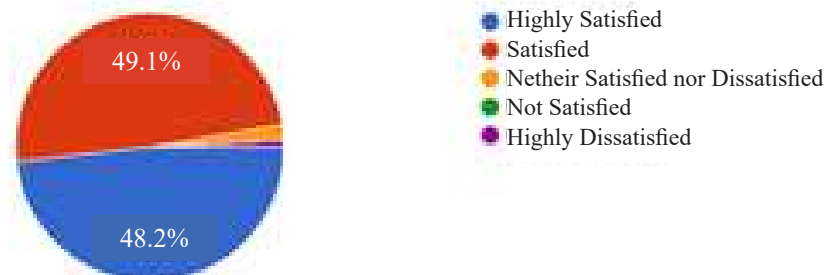
Figure 6. <mark>NAME</mark>

5. Developing an inward fortitude against evil and sense of personal responsibility in the application of social, moral, and physical laws which should govern individual conduct.
112 responses

- Highly Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Netheir Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- Not Satisfied
- Highly Dissatisfied

46.4%
50.9%
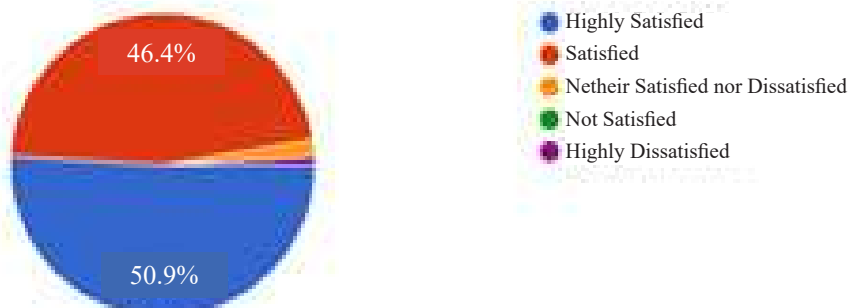
The last item for this category is AUPE's program in developing an inward fortitude against evil and sense of personal responsibility in the application of social, moral, and physical laws which should govern individual conduct. This item showed a result of 50.9% for *highly satisfied*, 46.4% *satisfied*, 1.8% were *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*, and 0.9% were *highly dissatisfied* among the parent respondents. These numbers implied that the majority of the parents were highly satisfied.

This results suggest that most parents were *highly satisfied* with AUPE's program in terms of developing a relationship to God. The primary reason for the existence of Adventist schools such as AUPE is to introduce to their students God as their Creator and loving Savior. Education in its broadest sense is a means of returning human beings to their original relationship with God.

Supporting these findings, Adventist schools' highest goal is for every student to surrender one's whole life to God; develop a relationship with Jesus Christ; and allow the Holy Spirit to work in one's life. The true education which was the only pattern of every Adventist school was penned more than a hundred years ago through Ellen G. White (1903). She was instructed to write "in the highest sense the work of education and the work of redemption are one, for in education, as in redemption, "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (p. 30).

Parents' Satisfaction With the Quality of AUPE's Program in Terms of Responsible Citizenship

Adventist school's philosophy of education is to restore in humanity the lost image of God through the harmonious development of the mental, physical, social, and spiritual faculties. Thus, it's mission is to provide quality Bible-based education, nurturing students for academic excellence, Christ-like character, and exemplary service. Social development and exemplary service pertains to the development of its students to become excellent citizens of the community they are affiliated with. This is realized through rich provision of programs to develop good citizenship.

There are four items in the category of developing responsible citizenship. The first item is inspiring love and loyalty for the country and respect for recognized authority. Based on the survey, parents' satisfaction resulted in 54.5% *highly satisfied*, 42% *satisfied*, 2.7% *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*, and 0.9% *highly dissatisfied*. These numbers implied that many of the parents are *highly satisfied*.

The second item in this category is emphasizing the value and dignity of labor in the development of character as part of the programs to develop responsible citizenship among the students. Parents' responses resulted in 55.4% *highly satisfied*, 42% *satisfied*, 1.8% *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*, and 0.9% *highly dissatisfied*. These numbers implied that majority of the parents are *highly satisfied*.

Figure 7. NAME

6. Inspiring love and loyalty for the country and respect for recognized authority.
112 responses

- Highly Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Netheir Satisfied nor Dissatisfied
- Not Satisfied
- Highly Dissatisfied

42%

54.5%

Figure 8. NAME

7. Emphasizing the value and dignity of labor in the development of character.
112 responses

Figure 9. NAME

8. Developing a sympathetic understanding of the world and its needs, with the interdependence of men and nations.
112 responses

Figure 10. NAME

9. Developing am aesthetic and intellectual appreciation for proper cultural values.
112 responses

The third item focused on developing a sympathetic understanding of the world and its needs, with the interdependence of men and nations. Parents' satisfaction on this resulted in 44.6% *highly satisfied*, 49.1% *satisfied*, 4.5% *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*, and 1.8% *highly dissatisfied*. The results showed that most of the parents are *satisfied*.

The fourth item pertains to programs developing an aesthetic and intellectual appreciation for proper cultural values. Parents' satisfaction resulted in 48.2% *highly satisfied*, 44.6% *satisfied*, 4.5% *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*, and 1.8% *highly dissatisfied*. The result implied that the majority of the parents are *satisfied*. However, these are the items with the most responses with neither satisfied nor dissatisfied but on the overall, the result shows that the parents are highly satisfied with the quality of AUPE's program in terms of responsible citizenship.

Adventist elementary school offers students a basic core of skills and knowledge for everyday living appropriate to their age, specifically a wholesome appreciation and respect for authorities in the home, the church, the school, and the community. The goal is for every student to manifest interpersonal skills and emotional growth necessary for healthy relationships with their peers, family, and community (General Conference Policy Manual, 2003).

Parents' Satisfaction with the Quality of AUPE's Program in Terms of Skills and Knowledge

Adventist schools should maintain high academic standards and to achieve academic excellence, there must be quality educational offerings, excellent teachers, adequate facilities, and a process of accountability for what the school delivers and what its students achieve. Mental development pertains to provision of quality programs that will produce students who are academically excellent which is the focus of the last category skills and knowledge.

This category has four items to determine the satisfaction of parents with the programs of AUPE in terms of developing skills and knowledge. The first item focuses on programs arousing interest and awakening thought as the pre-requisite of true learning, that every capability of body, mind, and spirit, might be exercised in the pursuit of knowledge. Parents' satisfaction on this resulted in 50.9% *highly satisfied*, 45.5% *satisfied*, 2.7% *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*, and 0.9% *highly dissatisfied*.

The second item, teaching the value and necessity of mental habits, application, and concentration resulted in 48.2% *highly satisfied*, 46.4% *satisfied*, 4.5% *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*, and 0.9% *highly dissatisfied*. The overall results for the first two items showed that the majority of the parents were *highly satisfied*.

Figure 11. <mark>NAME</mark>

Figure 12. *NAME*

11. Teaching the value and necessity of mental habots, application and concentration.
112 responses
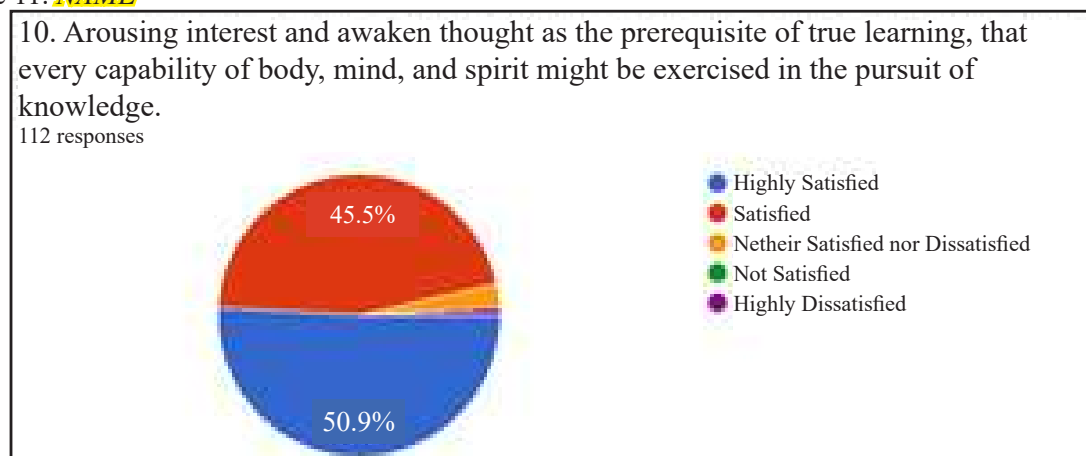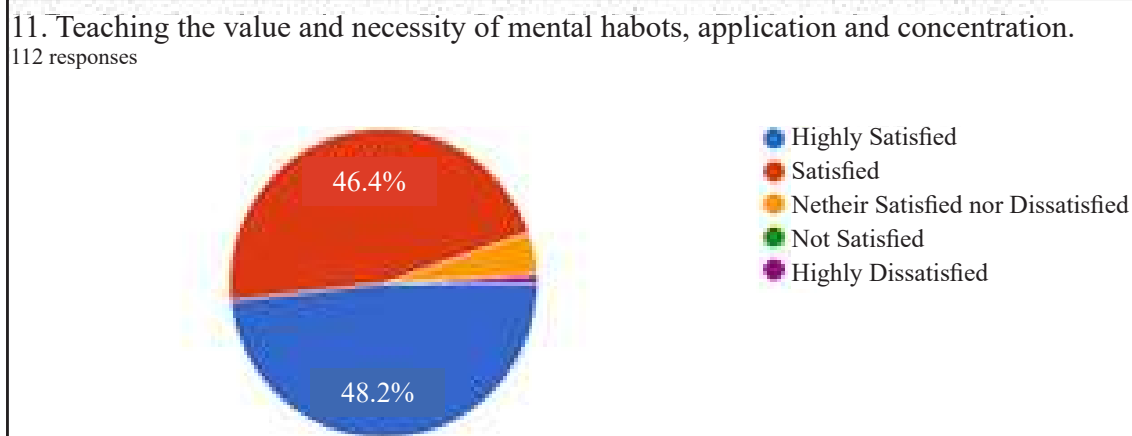
The third item on this category is acquiring common skills and knowledge essential to scholastic progress and economic independence. Parents' satisfaction on this resulted in 46.4% *highly satisfied*, 45.5% *satisfied*, 6.3% *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*, 0.9% *not satisfied*, and 0.9% *highly dissatisfied*. Although with a high response of neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, most of the parents were still highly satisfied.

Figure 13. *NAME*

12. Acquiring common skills and knowledge essential to scholastic progress and economic independence.
112 responses

Figure 14. *NAME*

13. Developing skills and confidence in working with computer and the application programs
112 responses
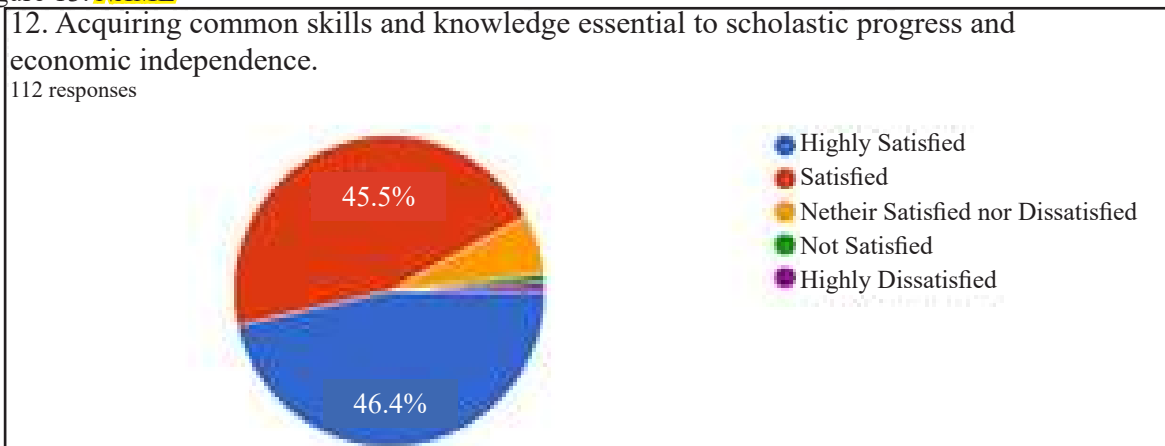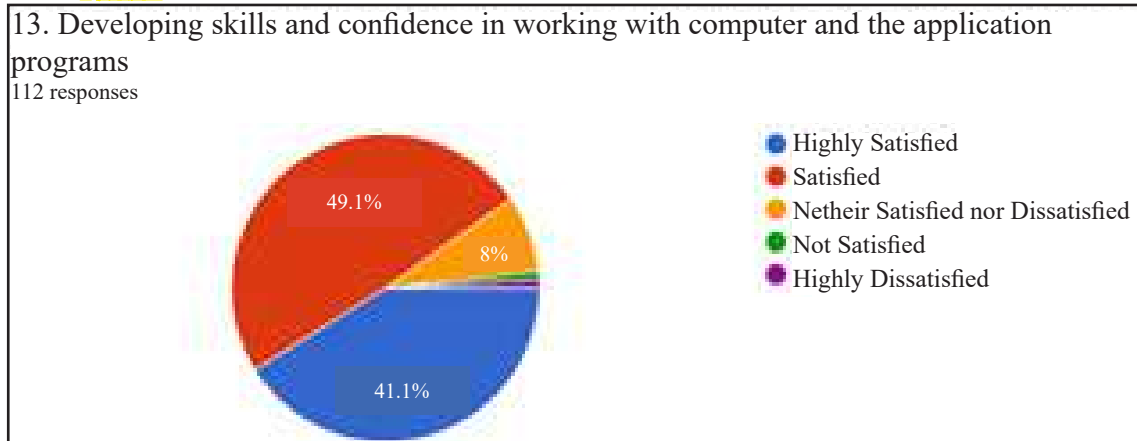
The fourth item dwells on developing skills and confidence in working with computers and the application programs. Parents' satisfaction on this resulted in 41.1% *highly satisfied*, 49.1% *satisfied*, 8% *neither satisfied nor dissatisfied*, 0.9% *not satisfied*, and 0.9% *highly dissatisfied*. The results of these two last items implies that the majority of the parents are satisfied. However, it is noticeable that these last two items have the highest responses on neither satisfied nor dissatisfied but on the overall, the result shows that parents' satisfaction is high with the quality of AUPE's program in terms of skills and knowledge.

The development of skills and knowledge for the application of life long skills is in the blueprint of Seventh-day Adventist education. As stated in Ecclesiastes 7:12, "for the mind and the soul, as well as for the body, it is God's law that strength is acquired by effort. It is exercise that develops. In harmony with this law, God has provided in His word the means for mental and spiritual development. Excellence in academics is one of the important goals for the students for "the excellency of knowledge is, that wisdom giveth life to them that have it." This is what Adventist schools worldwide stand true until this very day.

Extent of the School's Contribution to the Development of the Students in Terms of Relationship to God

During the 2021 Spring Council Meeting of the Seventh-Adventist Church which was attended by hundreds of EXCOM members from around the world. John Wesley Taylor reminded the attendees that "Adventist education is the longest and largest evangelistic event in the Seventh-day Adventist Church." He further explained that a child attending an Adventist primary school receives evangelistic instruction for a minimum of 800 hours. This can add up to more than 37,400 hours if a student completes every level of education in an Adventist educational institution (Paseggi, 2021).

The second research question is to determine the extent the school has contributed or participated to the development of the students based on their parents' perspectives in terms of the school objectives categorized as relationship to God, citizenship, and knowledge and skills.

The first item under the category of relationship to God is instilling a knowledge and love of God and of Jesus Christ who came into this world to be its Redeemer. In total, 58% of parents perceived a *very high* extent of school's contribution, 32.1% answered *high*, 8% answered *average*, 0.9% answered *low*, and 0.9% answered *very low*.

The second item focused on the programs that are teaching the principles of new birth, faith and prayer which led to students transformed life. A total of 49.1% responded *very high*, 41.1% responded *high*, 7.1% responded *average*, 1.8% responded *low*, and 0.9% responded *very low*. The results showed that parents' perceived AUPE's programs to contribute to their children's transformed life.

Figure 15. NAME

1. Instilling a knowledge and love of God and of Jesus Christ who came into this world to be its Redeemer
112 responses
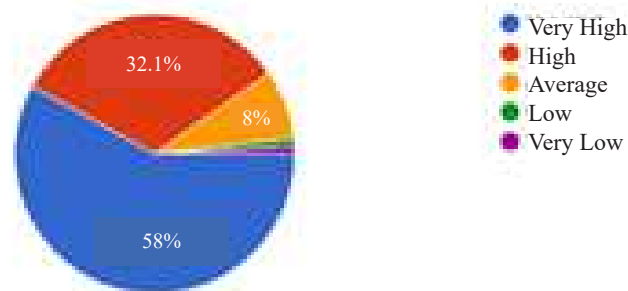
Figure 16. *NAME*

2. Teaching the principles of the New Birth, Faith, and Prayer which lead to a transformed life.
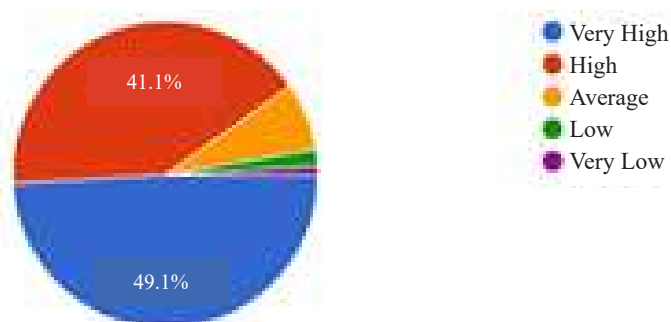
112 responses

Looking at the third item, from the 112 responses 49.1% responded *very high*, 40.2% responded *high*, 9.8% responded *average*, and 0.9% responded *very low*. This result showed that the majority of the parents who participated in the study believe that AUPE is providing programs that are highly contributing to their child's awakening and developing of the power of perception, reflection and application in the study of nature as the handwriting of God revealing His thoughts.

The fourth item in this category generated 43.6% from the total responses which is interpreted as *very high*, 42% answered *high*, 12.5% answered *average*, and 0.9% responded *low* and *very low*. This item received the most responses of average contribution however majority of the parents still believe that AUPE contributed very highly to their children's development of ideals of true culture with an appreciation of what is pure, true, noble, and beautiful.

Figure 17. *NAME*

3. Awakening and developing the power of perception, reflection and application in the study of nature as the handwriting of God revealing His thoughts.

112 responses

Figure 18. *NAME*

4. Presenting the ideas of true culture with an appreciation of what is pure, true, noble and beautiful

112 responses

- Very High
- High
- Average
- Low
- Very Low

42%
12.5%
43.8%
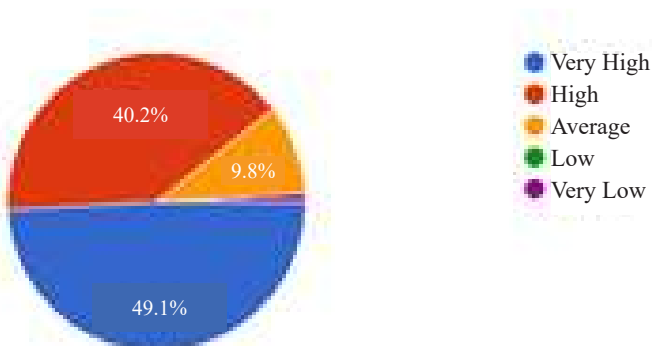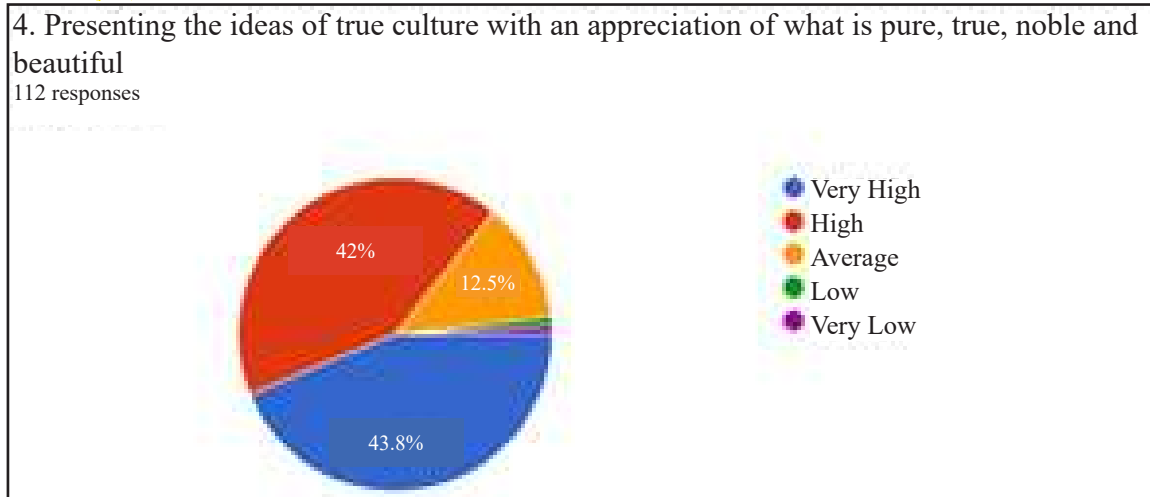
The last item pertains to the contribution on the development of inward fortitude against evil and sense of personal responsibility in the application of social, moral, and physical laws which should govern individual conduct among our students as perceived by their parents. The results showed that 42.9 % of the parents answered *very high*, 45.5 answered *high*, 9,6% answered *average*, and 0.9% answered *low* and *very low*.

Figure 18. *NAME*

5. Developing an inward fortitude againts evil and sense of personal responsibilty in the application of social, moral, and physical laws which should govern individual conduct.

112 responses

- Very High
- High
- Average
- Low
- Very Low

45.5%
9.8%
42.9%
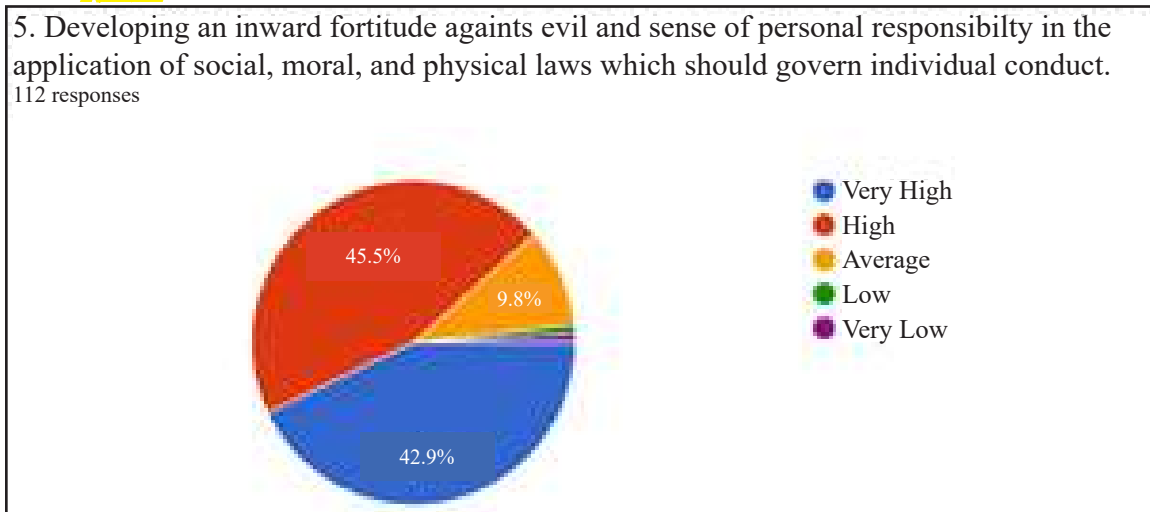
Overall, the result showed that the extent the school has contributed or participated to the development of students in terms of relationship to God based on their parents' responses is *very high*.

In a similar study conducted among parents by Barna Research Group (2017), it was found out that 82% of the respondents desired spiritual development for their children. They believe education is primarily for developing a child's character and spirituality. This is also similar to a survey conducted among Catholic parents, one of the five reasons they send their children to parish schools is for their children to have exposure to the Catholic faith is important to developing a strong religious foundation as daily lessons in the Catholic faith create a strong foundation for children. This study reinforced the findings showing how most current Christian school parents believe that character and spiritual development are among the ultimate purposes of education.

Extent of the School's Contribution to the Development of the Students
in Terms of Responsible Citizenship

This study also determined the extent of contribution to the development of responsible citizenship among its students based on the perception of their parents. Citizenship falls on the second objective is exemplary service which directly pertains to the contribution a former student is making to the community where they belong.

This category is inspired by the Adventist blueprint of education that the Adventist education system must reflect the heavenly "society" God intended His children. Adventist schools provide them tools and resources to become wiser and healthier. It provides them opportunities to look beyond themselves and to serve others. It connects them as friends, as partners and as a community. Most importantly, it helps them fulfill their potential of being "good" citizens, eagerly anticipating an eternity with the God who created them.

The first item under this category is obtained favorably since 44.6% of the parent-respondents confirmed that AUPE's contribution was *very high*, while there were 41.1% who answered *high*, 12.5% answered *average*, 9.8% answered *low*, and 0.9% answered *very low*. This result showed that AUPE is making a *very high* contribution among its students in terms of instilling love and loyalty for the country and respect for recognized authority as perceived by the parents.

Moreover, in terms of emphasizing the value and dignity of labor in the development of character, the results showed that 47.3% of parents perceived that AUPE is making a very high contribution, while 39.3% answered *high*, 11.6% answered *average*, and 0.9% answered *low* and *very low*. These results showed that AUPE is making a *very high* contribution on this particular item.

Figure 18. <mark>NAME</mark>

6. Inspiring love and loyalty for the country and respect for recognized authority.
112 responses

Figure 19. <mark>NAME</mark>

7. Emphasizing the value and dignity of labor in the development of character.
112 responses
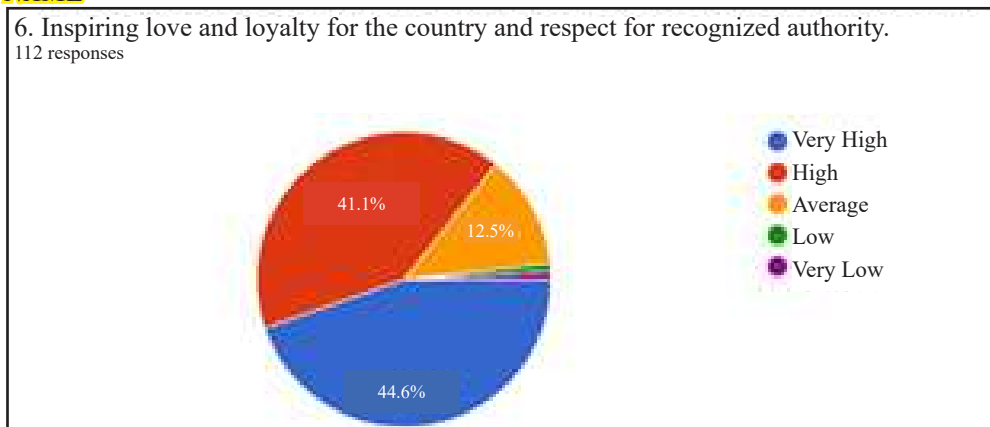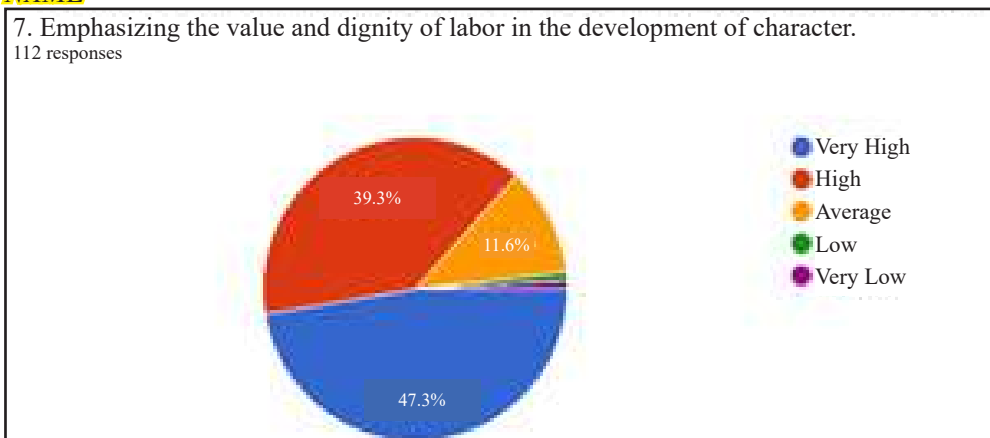
Looking at the third item on this category, 40.2% of the parent-respondents answered *very high*, while there are 42.9% who responded *high*, 14.3% answered *average*, 0.9% answered *low*, and 1.8% answered *very low*. This result showed that in terms of developing a sympathetic understanding of the world and its needs, with the interdependence of men and nations, parents rated AUPE's contribution to their children favorably *high*.

The last item resulted favorably based on the parents' perception for 42.9% of them answered *very high*, while there 42% also who answered *high*, 12.5% answered *average*, 0.95% answered *low*, and 1.8% answered *very low*. This item pertains to the development of aesthetic and intellectual appreciation for proper culture values among AUPE's students based on the parent perception which majority answered *very high*.

Figure 20. NAME

8. Developing a symphathetic understanding of the world and its needs, with the independence of men and nations.
112 responses

Very High
High
Average
Low
Very Low

42.9% 14.3% 40.2%

Figure 21. NAME

9. Developing an aesthetic and intellectual appreciation for proper cultural values.
112 responses

Very High
High
Average
Low
Very Low

42% 12.5% 42.9%
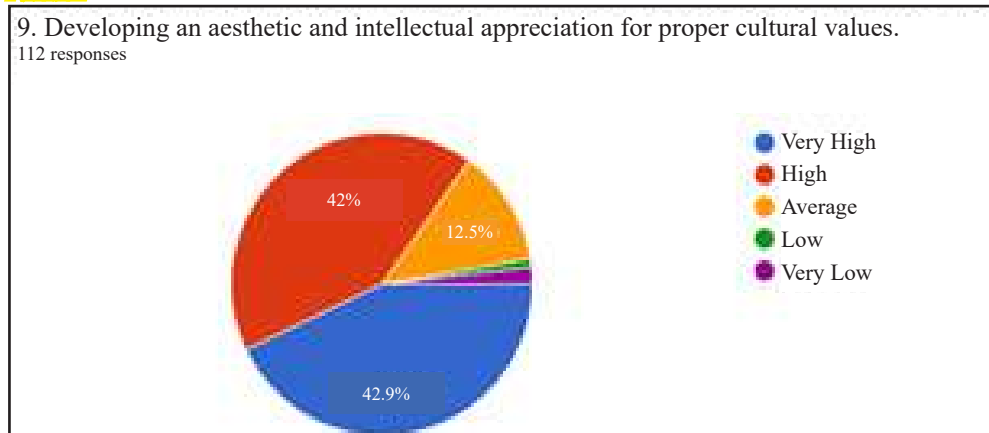
Overall, the result shows that the extent the school has contributed or participated to the development of students in terms of Responsible Citizenship based on their parents' responses is *very high*.

Adventist education is about preparing learners for responsible citizenship in this world and in the world to come. Responsible citizenship entails one to become culturally competent and to become socially and politically aware. Adventist schools must inspire students to counter injustice even within and beyond the classroom with culturally responsive teaching that provides the framework to help faith-based institutions translate Scripture into action by advocating the education of the head, the heart, and the hand (Rowland, 2018).

The result verifies that homes where parents lead, believe that education must also look into preparing learners, their children for responsible citizenship in this world and in the world to come.

**Extent of the School's Contribution to the Development of the Students
in Terms of Skills and Knowledge**

One of the top factors parents choose for their children is academics. Academic characteristics are those that impact the learning and teaching program of the school and are the top priority for parents. They want their children to realize their potential and parents perceive that the academic program of the school plays a key role in this process (Ozmantar & Karatasoglu, 2019).   In a survey study conducted in Indiana, 70% of the parent respondents revealed that they wanted to switch schools in search of better academic programs for their children (Catt et al., 2017).

The third category of this study is the aspect of developing skills and knowledge among8 students in the Adventist schools such as AUPE. There are five items included to determine the extent AUPE's programs contribute to the development of this aspect among our students based on their parents' responses.

Figure 22. NAME

10. Arousing interest and awaken thought as the prerequisite of true learning, that every capability of body, mind, and spirit might be exercised in the pursuit of knowledge.
112 responses

Figure 23. NAME

11. Teaching the value and necessity of mental habits, application and conception.
112 responses
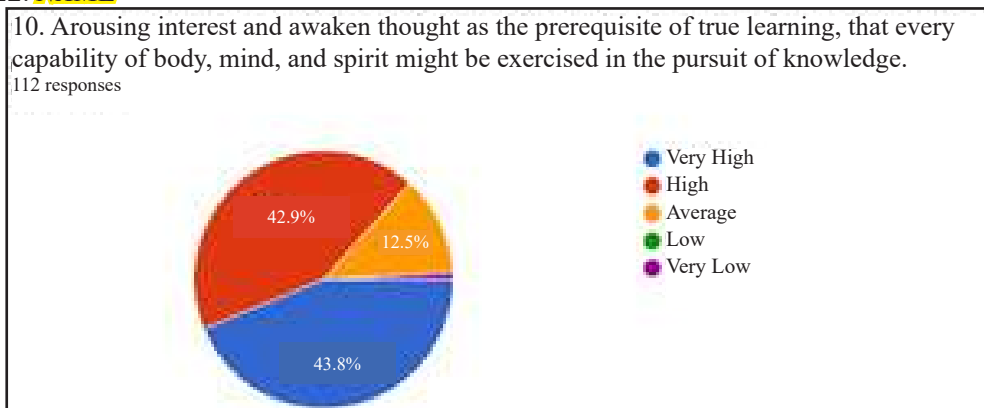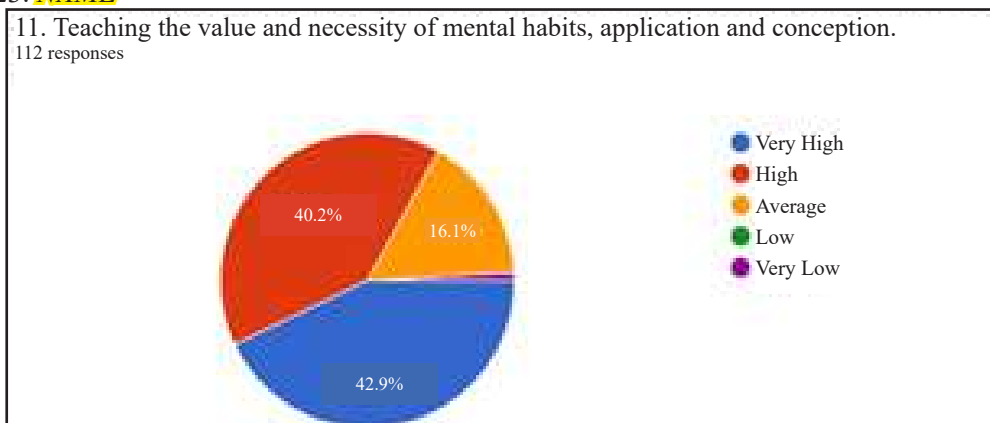
The first item on this category pertains to arousing interest and awakening thought as the prerequisite of true learning, that every capability of body, mind, and spirit might be exercised in the pursuit of knowledge. The results showed that 43.7% of the parent-respondents answered *very high*, while there were 45.5% who answered *high*, 12.5% answered *average*, and 0.9% answered *very low*. This result showed that majority of the parents believed that AUPE is making *very high* contribution on their children's development of skills and knowledge on this aspect.

Moreover, the second item pertains to AUPE's programs on teaching the value of necessity of mental habits, application and concentration and its extent of contribution to its students based on the responses of their parents. The results showed that out of 112 parent-respondents, 42.9% answered *very high*, while

there 40.2% who answered high, 16.1% answered average, and 0.9% answered very low contribution. The results showed that most of the parents responded that AUPE is providing programs that are making very high contribution on the development of their students mental habits.

Figure 24. <mark>*NAME*</mark>

12. Acquiring common skills and knowledge essential to scholastic progress and economic independence.
112 responses

Very High
High
Average
Low
Very Low

44.6%
16.1%
37.5%
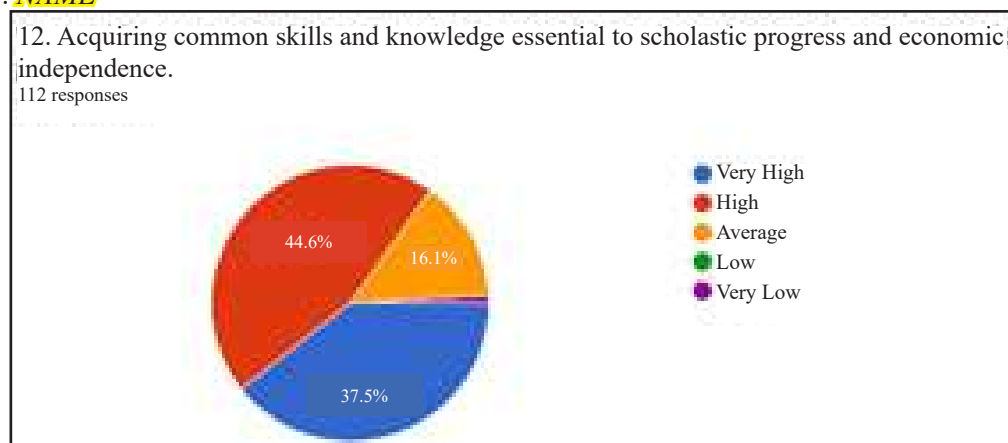
The third item on this category which is acquiring common skills and knowledge essential to scholastic progress and economic independence, parents rated AUPE's contribution on their children's development. The results showed that 39.3% of the parents responded *very high*, 45.5% responded *high*, 14.3% *average*, and 0.9% answered *very low* contribution. This means that many parents rated AUPE's programs *high* in terms of its contribution to their children's' development of knowledge and scholastic progress.

Furthermore, parents also rated AUPE's contribution on the development of skills and confidence in working with computers and the application programs. Their responses resulted in 37.5% who answered *very high*, 44.6% answered *high*, 16.1% answered *average*, and 0.9% answered *low* and *very low*. This result showed that the majority of the parents perceived that AUPE is making a *high* contribution, however comparing this result it also shows that it has to improve its computer-related skills development programs to achieve the highest parent-satisfaction. Overall, the result shows that the extent to which the school contributed or participated to the development of students in terms of skills and knowledge based on their parents' responses is *high*.

Adventist schools remain to be one among the providers of quality Christian education in terms of academics also known as *skills and knowledge*. In a longitudinal study Cognitive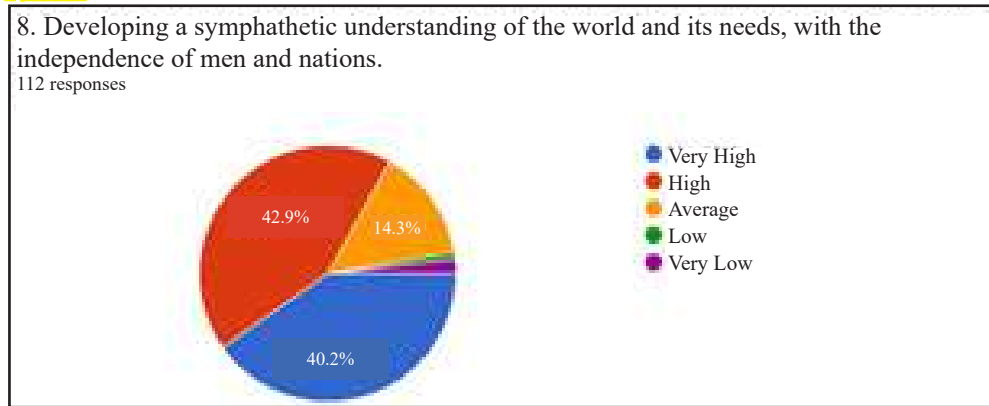 Genesis conducted by La Sierra University and the North American Division Office of Education from 2006 to 2009, which was participated by more than 51, 000 students they found out that students in all grades, in Adventist schools of all sizes, outperformed the national average in all subjects. Another is that students in Adventist schools had higher-than-expected academic achievement based on an assessment of individual ability. Also, the longer students stayed in the Adventist school system, the more they gained in achievement and ability (Thayer & Kido, 2012).

AUPE as a School Choice for the Respondents' Children

It is important for school administrators and teachers to identify the factors of parents' choice of school for their children. The third research question for this study was to determine the reasons parents choose AUP Elementary for their children. The open-ended interview question generated tangible responses from the parent participants. Out of 112 participants, 109 submitted their responses, these were utilized as data and were categorized into themes namely to develop a relationship to God, to develop citizenship, and to develop skills and knowledge.

Develop a Relationship to God. Out of the 109 responses 67 revealed that they choose AUP because of the quality Christian education it offers. Their responses revealed that majority of parents prioritizes the development of Christ-like character among their children on top of any academic training. The following are some of the responses of the parents:

P10: Because AUPE is a Christian School and I want my child to excel in values and in knowledge about God.

P13: Train children and equipping children for His character and His coming.

P16: We were led by the Holy Spirit to send all of them to this institution to be educated and nurtured to prepare them for heavenly citizenship.

P17: So there will be a reinforcement about the religion and about god that they learn at home.

P26: Because it is a Christian school that develops every child to be Christ-like.

P31: It teaches God's love, making our children close to Him and prepares them for service to God and humanity.

P36: Because as Christian we believed that AUPE is well trained school in educating our child especially in spiritual life as well as transforming true values to be a true Christian and citizen.

P43: Because teachers are applying IFVL in their teaching field of specialization.

P44: We are choosing AUPE because of the Adventist Christian values it provides.

P47: As a parent, it's our commitment and dedication to provide excellent quality-based learning and also a healthy spiritual growth to our children. AUPE helps us to achieve this goal through nourishing our children's welfare and instilling a bible based education in to their learning, molding and preparing them to be excellent worker in the community and an instrument of Christ in the ministry.

P95: Choosing AUP for my children is good, we know that they are in a good school, especially when it comes in building their character and knowing more about our Creator. Second is for my children's career in the future.

The responses unfold that parents' value Christian education among other reasons. Developing a relationship with the God whom they believed is what they wanted their children to learn in AUPE elementary as part of their basic education training. Waterman (2020) mentioned in an article that Adventist Education, at its best and most productive, can and should lead young people to a deeper relationship with God first, followed closely by success in academics, preparing them for life and careers, while shaping each student holistically in character and personality development.

In another article published through the Journal of Adventist Education, the authors concluded that they strongly believe that Adventist schools have a unique role to play in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its future. They have the opportunity to provide children with a quality education alongside lessons in growing a deep relationship with their Savior (Thayer et al.,2017).

Develop Responsible Citizenship. The long-established goal of schooling is to prepare a responsible citizenry who strive for the benefit of the community, also assisting students to become global citizens, equipped to deal with global issues (Reynolds et al., 2019). The second theme created falls on developing students to become responsible citizens of the community they belong to.

Based on the open-ended interview question facilitated online, Out of the 109 responses, 12 revealed that they choose AUP Elementary for their trust that it will help their children develop skills that will help them work with people and do service when they grow up, developing them as responsible citizens as they study and are exposed to character building and Bible-based lessons. Their responses were themed as *to develop responsible citizenship*. The following are some of the responses of the parents:

P6: AUP instill in them the value of hardwork, respect, love, camaraderie and awareness of God.

P31: It teaches God's love, making our children close to Him and prepares them for service to God and humanity.

P32: The school offers quality teaching and helps my children develop behavior and attitude, living being respectful to elders and parents.

P41: AUPE helps in enhancing social, spiritual and intellectual skills, moral values and personality of their students.

P47: As a parent, it's our commitment and dedication to provide excellent quality-based learning and also a healthy spiritual growth to our children. AUPE helps us to achieve this goal through nourishing our children's welfare and instilling a bible based education in to their learning, molding and preparing them to be *excellent worker in the community and an instrument of Christ in the ministry*.

P59: Because we know, AUPE can provide the basic education for our children to be a better person in the future.

P91: It is a school that trains for service and helps in improving their relationship to God.

The responses showed the desire of many parent-respondents that their children who are students of AUP may be taught to become citizens who respect adults and authorities and citizens who will have the mission to serve.

In a study conducted in Turkey among primary and secondary students, research findings suggest that the school should focus on factors relating to students' emotional and social development which may successfully set the stage for improved academic performance and a responsible, democratic role towards society. This points the importance of developing responsible citizenship among students as part of their school training (Lithoxoidou et al., 2021).

Moreover, in the report conducted by the American Enterprise Institute in 2020, they pointed out major key points and some are (a) national citizenship curriculum must ensure that all students are taught basic civics, such as how the government works and who we are as a nation, and (b) the curriculum should be comprised of the vital concepts all students must learn to be ready for active, engaged citizenship (Finn, 2020).

These studies support the findings of this study that parents chose to send their children to receive basic education from AUPE, desiring them to develop relationship to God and to develop responsible citizenship.

To Develop Skills and Knowledge. Out of the 109 responses 22 answered that they chose AUPE for their children for they trust its quality and its academic standards. Their responses were themed as to develop skills and knowledge. The following are some of the responses of the parents:

P34: The school has high standards when it comes to teaching and honing skills among its learners.

P40: Because I know my children will learn a lot from AUPE.

P52: Because of its high standard of education.

P55: It is an Adventist school with good curriculum and faculty

P57: (Because of the) quality of education and (it is a) Christ-centered school.

P92: Very good scholastic standings and I like that they instill Bible on their subjects too.

P94: We chose to send our children to AUP for my children because it is a a good school to help them continue to learn skills.

P74: Best school in the area.

P64: Good quality in teaching academics.

P67: The best school I've known in the Philippines.

P86: Practices good teaching and teachers are great.

P93: high quality of education.

P102: Qualified pool of teachers.

P101: This is the best school for our children.

These responses showed that school quality that can be described as good teaching, qualified teachers, high standard, and the things mentioned above were the reasons parents choose AUPE for their children. They believed that the school's academic program provides for the development of their children's knowledge and skills. The findings revealed that the development of knowledge and skills of students is an important factor for their choice of school may be true to other parents around the globe based on the similar students conducted.

Similar studies explored on factors affecting parents' choice of schools for their children. In Malaysia, the result showed that one of Chinese parent's concerns was with the quality of teachers (Siah et al., 2018). In Tanzania, results revealed that parents' choices were driven by learning quality and proximity (Solomon & Zaitlin, 2019). Furthermore, in Saudi Arabia, parents also revealed that overall school quality was the most important factor affecting their choice of school (Alfaraidy, 2020).

This study determined the satisfaction level of parents with the AUP Elementary program based on its objectives and the extent of its contribution to the development of the students in terms of relationship to God, responsible citizenship and skills and knowledge. Based on the results of this study the following recommendations were derived:

1. Maintain and enhance the programs that pertains to the development of character and religious awareness and also its quality academic programs as these are the strongest reasons parents choose AUP as the school for their children.
2. Enhanced the programs pertaining to the development of culture appreciation, social and national interdependence by involving the students in community programs for these items received the greatest number of average satisfaction and not satisfied responses although it is very minimal.
3. Enhanced the programs pertaining to the development of computer-related skills. This also received the greatest number of average satisfaction and not satisfied responses although it is very minimal.
4. Conduct massive school promotion highlighting its strengths through different media platforms to reach parents with elementary-aged children from all walks of life.
5. Conduct local research exploring on the factors they choose school involving SDA and non-SDA parents in the community with elementary-aged children.

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PSYCHOLOGY

The Effects of Music and Tasks on Cognitive Abilities Among College Students: A Factorial Experiment

Jhun Marc Beniga, Donloiuse Shem Lavisto, Roen Gay Remotin,
Ehsher Talledo, Cutie Canesares

Adventist University of the Philippines
cbcanesares@aup.edu.ph

Abstract

Music has been around for a long time, and it has both positive and negative effects. This study aimed to investigate the effect of different music presentations on the different tasks on the cognitive abilities among college students. This study utilized an experimental within-subject 4x3 factorial design. The participants are 21 college students. They undergo three tasks: memory, verbal, and arithmetic tasks while exposed to four different music conditions: no music, instrumental music, English lyric music, and foreign lyric music. The researchers performed a two-way analysis of variance for repeated measures. Results showed *no significant treatment main effect* for music, $F(3, 60) = 1.649$, $p < .188$, $\eta p^2 = .076$ but has a *significant treatment main effect* of cognitive tasks, $F(2,40) = 118.448$, $p < .000$, $\eta p^2 = .86$, and a *significant interaction effect* between music and tasks $F(5.35,105) = 2.629$, $p < .036$, $\eta p^2 = .12$. The significant interaction showed increase in scores across different types of music in memory and verbal tasks but decrease scores in arithmetic tasks except with English lyric music and the no music conditions. Furthermore, simple main effects showed that English lyric and foreign lyric music are best for memory and verbal abilities, respectively.

Keywords: *music, cognitive tasks, instrumental, English lyrics, foreign lyrics*

Music has been around for a long time and it has been used in many occasions. However, in our present technological day and age, music comes with the gadgets. Music is always readily available whether it be through the internet, mobile phones, laptops, computers, television, radio, cassette tapes, or vintage record players. In particular, music is very accessible to students of online learning. Most of their learning and studying time are in gadgets with music. With its right use, music improves performance however, it also distracts attention and decrease performance of students studying online.

Students commonly listen to music for relaxation while performing stressful learning activities to reduce stress and anxiety. Music has been shown to improve cognitive function in some studies. Music training is associated with intelligence (Swaminathan et al., 2017) and music improves reading comprehension of preadolescents with ADHD (Madjar et al., 2020). Among surgeon trainees, preferred music played in the operating room during surgeries improves their performance significantly (Shakir et al., 2017).

Studies showed that preferred music and relaxing music helped change the emotional state of individuals towards the positive state. Music-making which is often synchronized or tightly coordinated, in activities such as group drumming, communal singing (Weinstein et al., 2016), and dance (Tarr et al., 2016), shows an influence towards forming social bonding. Music has proven to be an effective method of therapy and has been proven to boost mood significantly. Moreover, music is better to be used prior to cognitive task performance to decrease cognitive and somatic anxiety, while increasing self confidence (Farmer, 2020).

Many studies have proven the effects of music to performance. It can either affect positively or negatively the performance. Thus, identifying what type of music presentation can increase or decrease performance is important. Most of the previous studies dealt on the effect of music genre, however this study focused on the same music genre presented in different ways – instrumental, with English lyrics, and with foreign (French) lyrics. Although few studies conducted on the different music presentations, the effect of foreign lyrics was not included. Thus, this study explored the interaction effect and simple main effects of no music, instrumental, English lyric, and foreign lyric music on three cognitive tasks, namely, memory, verbal, and arithmetic tasks. The following were the specific questions answered in the study:

- Are there main effects of music and tasks to cognitive abilities?
- Is there an interaction effect between the different types of music and tasks?
- Are there simple effects of music and cognitive tasks?

Methodology

Research Design

An experimental within-subject 4x3 factorial design was implemented in this study. In a within-subject factorial design, all of the independent variables (factors) are manipulated within subjects. Each participant is tested in all conditions (Price et al., 2017). In this study, a group of participants underwent four music conditions (no music, instrumental music, English lyric music, and foreign lyric music) and did three tasks (memory, verbal, and arithmetic) for each condition.

Population and Sampling Technique

Twenty-one college students from Adventist University of the Philippines, Malayan Colleges Laguna, and other college institutions in the Philippines enlisted. All the 21 participants underwent the four conditions. Based on a guideline, to run analysis of variance for 2-9 groups, each group should have at least 15 sample size, thus this study qualifies for a parametric procedure.

Data Gathering Procedure

This study was conducted via online. Participants were given informed consent to read and agree to participate in the experiment. Then, they were required to download Discord, a Voice over Internet Protocol, instant messaging, and digital distribution which is dedicated for creating communities which served as the researchers' virtual laboratory room. The participants then took the test for four consecutive

days synchronously together with the researchers to monitor and supervise the participants. Different musical bots such as Rhythm and Groovy were utilized in playing the necessary music needed for each specific treatment. The participants were exposed to the four music conditions per day (no music for first day, instrumental music for second day, English lyric music on the third day, and foreign lyric music on the fourth day) while taking the three tasks (memory, verbal, and arithmetic). After the participants have finished the different treatments, the researchers debriefed the participants.

Instrumentation

This study utilized one music/song presented in different ways (instrumental, English version, and the foreign/French version) as the treatment conditions. Furthermore, online websites that measures cognitive abilities (memory, verbal, and arithmetic) were also utilized to test the participants abilities with the influence of the different presentations of music.

To control the music genre, only one song was used in this study. A pop music sang by Camille, a soundtrack of the Ratatouille movie entitled Le Festin (The Feast). The study utilized three versions of this song: the instrumental version, English lyric version, and the foreign lyric version (French). A no music condition was added as the pre-test condition. A total of four treatment conditions were employed.

The Chimp Test was used to test the participants' memory levels with a highest score of 16 points. Exam English (n.d.) was used to test the verbal task with the highest score of 15 points. The participants retook the same set of test for this task, however, right answers were not revealed by the website, instead only the scores. Finally, arithmetic test from Varsity Tutor (n.d.) was utilized with the highest score of 10 points. These cognitive tests were used as the measurements. There were four different sets with the same difficulty level given to the participants. The participants took one set of cognitive test (memory, verbal, and arithmetic) for each music condition with a 24-hour interval per condition to control the carry over effect and practice effect. Thus, a total of 4 consecutive days to execute the whole experiment.

Data Analysis

The data gathered in this study were encoded and interpreted using SPSS. Two way repeated ANOVA was utilized in measuring and identifying whether the presence of music and task has a significant effects on the participants' cognitive abilities. This statistical analysis is employed when the same or matched cases take part in all of the conditions. Tables and line graph were used to present the results.

Results and Discussion

To answer the research questions on the main effects and the interaction effect, a two-way ANOVA for repeated measures was conducted. Table 1 shows the main effects and interaction effect among variables.

Table 1. *Main and Interaction Effects Among Variables*

Variables	SS	df	MS	F	p
Music	12.361	3	4.120	1.649	0.188
Tasks	1895.738	2	947.869	118.448	.000
Music*Tasks	28.294	6	6.942	2.629	0.039

The main effect of music on the scores was *not significant* [$F(3, 60) = 1.649$, $p < .188$, $\eta p^2 = .076$]. This is predictable since this experiment controlled the music genre and thus utilized only one pop music, Le Festin, but presented in different ways – instrumental, with English lyrics, and with foreign lyrics. This only proves that different presentations of one song does not have any significant effect on a cognitive performance. Considering Figure 1, the scores are *not significantly different* in memory, verbal, and arithmetic tasks.

Figure 1. *Main Effect of Music to Cognitive Abilities*
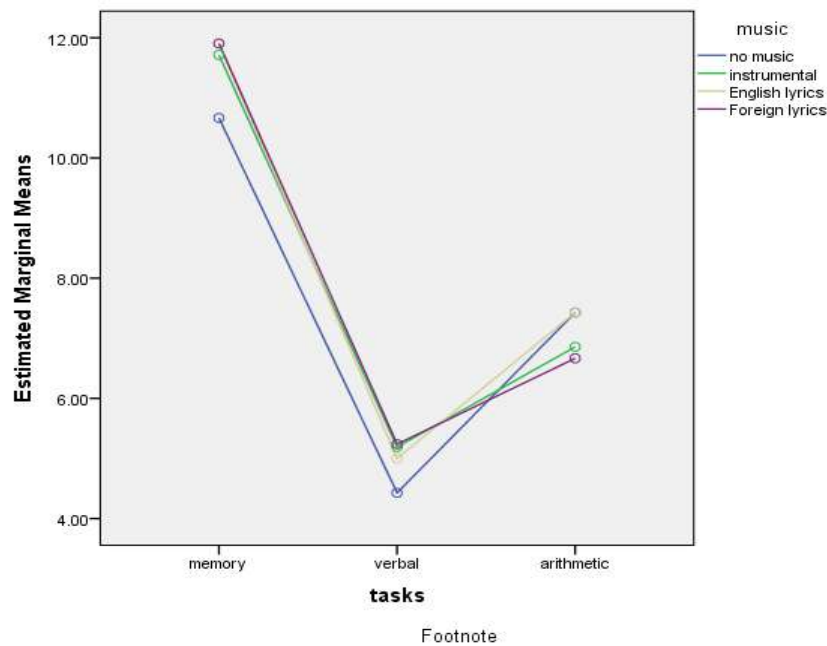
On the other hand, the main effect of tasks on the scores is *significant* [$F(2,40)$ = 118.448, $p < .000$, ηp^2= .86]. This is also predictable since the tasks employed measures different cognitive abilities and the nature of the tests are different from each other (memory tasks, verbal tasks, and arithmetic tasks). A memory task is *significantly different* from a verbal task and to arithmetic tasks. As shown in Figure 2, tasks have marked differences in scores across the different music presentations (no music, instrumental, English lyrics, and foreign lyrics).

Figure 2. *Main Effect of Tasks to Cognitive Abilities*
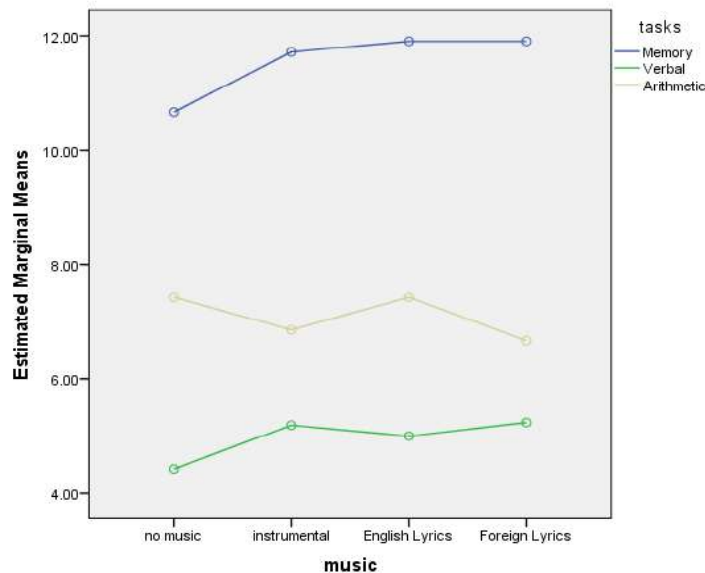
Table 1 also shows an interaction effect between the factors music and tasks with F(5.35,105) = 2.629, $p < .036$, ηp²=.12. As shown in Figure 1, there is a crossover interaction between the no music, instrumental, and foreign lyrics. This implies that no music and English lyric music yields better performance in arithmetic task than with instrumental and foreign lyric music. To further understand the interaction effect, simple main effects were determined through pairwise comparison. In memory task, no music ($M = 10.67$) and the English lyrics ($M = 11.91$) yields a *significant difference* ($p < .05$). In verbal task, no music ($M = 4.429$) and the foreign lyrics ($M = 5.238$) have *significant differences* ($p < .011$). However, in arithmetic tasks, it has *no significant difference* across the different music presentations. The results implies that in doing memory tasks, its best to have English lyric than having no music at all. Similarly, in verbal task, it is best to have foreign lyric music than having no music at all. In arithmetic task, although it does not matter what kind of music presentation will be used but it is better (as shown in Figure 2) to either have no music or English lyric music.

The purpose of this experimental research was to provide evidence of the main effects, interaction, and simple main effects of different music presentations and tasks to cognitive abilites. This study contributes to the body of knowledge specifically on the positive effect of foreign lyric music. In the 21st century, students are exposed to various languages in movies and music.

Despite playing the same song (Le Festin [piano cover], Le Festin [English cover], Le Festin [Original/French]), they have different impacts on cognitive abilities. English lyric music and foreign lyrics are effective on students' memory and verbal tasks respectively. This contradicts with the study of Flores (2021) wherein instrumental and no music was found to have no significant difference on spatial ability and reading comprehension. The discrepancy may be explained by the design used. This present study utilized a within subject design while Flores (2021) utilized between subject design. Furthermore, the instrumental used is a Mozart's classical music while in this present study was a pop music. The genre could also have caused the difference.

Foreign lyric music, as this study found, is best use for verbal tasks. This also contradicts with the study of Threadgold et al. (2019) wherein foreign (unfamiliar) lyrics impaired creativity. In the same way, the result of this study on the effectiveness of English lyric music contradics with Oliver et al. (2020). The study found that music with lyrics impairs cognition in adults. The study further explained that the musical lyrics worsen performance by either interfering with selective attention processing of goal-relevant information or altering working memory capacity resulting in decreases in processing efficiency and performance effectiveness (Oliver et al., 2020).

In this study, English lyric music showed a *significant effect* on memory ability and it did not worsen the participants' performance on other cognitive abilities (i.e., verbal and arithmetic). Also, this study revealed an interesting effect of English lyric music on the arithmetic ability. Participants have better performance in arithmetic task in English lyric music and no music conditions than the instrumental and foreign lyric music, although *not significantly*. A study of Proverbio et al. (2018) found that rain sound is associated with better performance compared with no music in difficult arithmetic operations that may be due to enhanced cerebral alertness level induced by the auditory stimulation. This present study suggests that the English song lyrics may stimulate the brain. Similar study with Oliver et al. (2020) above, another study agreed that music has negative impact on cognitive abilities (e.g, Moise & Adler, 2019) because it would interfere the selective attention. However, people who have better ability to control attention is protected from music-related distraction when completing academic-related tasks (Christopher & Shelton, 2017). Likewise, a study on neuroimaging may explain the discrepancy between the previous studies and this present study. Fedorenko and Varley (2016) reported that the brain's area for language are not that active when performig a nonlinguistic task like arithmetic and thus, a linguistic music (English lyric music) does not necessarily interfere with an arithmetic task. Furthermore, in the study of Cockerham et al. (2019), different musical background while performing a task with higher cognitive load such as arithmetic did not yield significant effect as this present study also shows.

As college students enter a paradigm shift from face-to-face classes to virtual classes, students are encountering different problems; some that can only be encountered on virtual classes. Music has proven to have significant effects on college students' task though there are many unexplored factors and variables that have not been tested. This study has established the effects of music and tasks on cognitive abilities among college students. Different presentation of music have its different effects on college students' abilities. Specifically, English lyric music and foreign lyric music can positively impact memory and verbal taks respectively. Arithmetic task is better with English lyric music or no music at all. Students may use this information to improve their performance on their academic tasks.

Effects of music on the previous studies were inconclusive. There are many factors to be considered. Future research associated with music may explore different variables such as the beats per minute (BPM), genre of music, and other subject variables may be considered such as learning styles, music preference, gender, mood, and the generation where participants belong. Moreover, future research that involves foreign lyrics or movies of foreign language on the verbal comprehension and grammar is recommended. Finally, the researchers realized that one experimental study is far different from another studies with the variables being considered such as differences of the music used and the differences of the tasks performed are not comparable. Thus, it is recommended to replicate this study in different culture and ages of students with English as secondary language to identify factors of similarities and differences.

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PSYCHOLOGY

Online Health Information Seeking Behavior and Thriving Quotient in the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Mediating Role of Mental Toughness

Rhalf Jayson Guanco
Adventist University of the Philippines

Abstract

Accurate and dependable health information has been shown to support students' thriving capacity and overall well-being, especially during a pandemic, when students' well-being is critical. The issue is unclear as to what truly supports the established link between students' ability to thrive in the event of a COVID-19 pandemic. This study looks at the correlation between online health information seeking behavior (OHSIB) and thriving quotient (TQ) and the role of a positive construct known as mental toughness (MT). Researchers enrolled 830 males and females from universities in the Philippines. Online Health Seeking Information Behavior (OHSIB-12), the modified and adapted Mental Toughness Questionnaire (MTQ-18), and the Thriving Quotient (TQ-30) were used as accurate and legitimate research instruments. We discovered meager levels of MT and TQ subcomponents and a high level of OHSIB in most university students. Correlation analyses revealed a positive relationship between online health information seeking behavior, mental toughness, and the thriving quotient. Mediation analysis revealed a significant mediation effect, but only on a partial scale. Developing a healthy online information search can assist students in making healthier choices, which in turn helps them feel better, thrive in an uncertain world, and achieve academic success. Mental toughness is also critical for students to access reliable health information online and thus achieve their goals even in the event of a pandemic. Proper guidance from education and health authorities was recommended for students' OHSIB. The implications of Athe findings for future research were discussed.

Keywords: *thriving quotient, mental toughness, online health information, pandemic*

For a large number of students, the COVID-19 pandemic created an unprecedented level of concern. Fear and anxiety about the new disease and what might happen have impacted them in a variety of ways (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). With the psychological difficulties and pressures they are currently experiencing, it is reasonable to expect that their academic performance will suffer in varying degrees (Iglesias-Pradas et al., 2021; Mahdy, 2020). Being able to thrive rather than simply survive during a period of vulnerability to one's mental and physical health is a significant task that every student should undertake. The literatures emphasize that when an individual is thriving, he or she has an advantage over numerous obstacles and abrupt changes (Richardson et al., 2012; Siegel & Siegel, 2014). Thriving was even emphasized as a critical component of college students' success (Lloyd, 2019). As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, more people are conducting accelerated online health searches for symptoms of physical or mental illnesses. While physical and mental health concerns are not new in higher education, the pandemic increased students' vulnerability to feelings of sadness, demotivation, and even anxiety as a result of the isolation and university closures, which impacted their academic performance and overall well-being (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020; Elmer et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2021). Under these conditions, their capacity to thrive is expected to dwindle.

Because health is one of the most vital aspects of life, it is reasonable for each individual to be concerned about their health and value the ability to take care of themselves through access to health information (Shehata, 2020). Online health information seeking has been shown to aid in informed decision making, increased knowledge, increased trust in medical experts, increased self-care ability, increased quality of life, increased hope and empowerment, and decreased fears and anxiety (Chu et al., 2017a; Finset et al., 2020; Lambert & Loiselle, 2007; Singh & Brown, 2014). However, unreliable online health information proliferates on the internet, particularly during pandemics. Unfortunately, when students lack access to reliable health information, their academic success suffers (Ashkanani et al., 2019; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2019). Thus, it is prudent to verify the website first in order to access reliable information, particularly during a pandemic (Joshi et al., 2020). When a student searches for information on unverified websites, such as some unverified posts on social media, and is presented with unreliable information, the potential for an improvement in his or her overall health and well-being is palpable (Ahmad & Murad, 2020; Maftei & Holman, 2020). Given the implied negative and positive effects from the recently published studies of online health information access on students' academic success or ability to thrive during a pandemic, an imperative trait may be strengthening the association. Recent studies presented the theoretical underpinnings for the relationship between online health information seeking behavior and thriving quotient.

As a result, the current study hypothesizes that mental toughness may be a specific personality trait that would enable students to access reliable health information and thrive in the event of a pandemic. Hypothetically, they can control their thoughts, manage their emotions, and remain functional in times of distress if they exhibit mental toughness traits (Clough et al., 2002), and thus carefully evaluate what is happening to them. Mental toughness has also been shown to have a beneficial effect on students' academic performance, interpersonal relationships, and overall academic success (St Clair-Thompson et al., 2015; Stock et al., 2018). However, research on the application of mental toughness in health and academic settings is scarce. Two general hypotheses are put forward: (a) online health information seeking behavior, mental toughness and thriving quotient are positively related (b) mental toughness has a mediating role between online health information seeking behavior and thriving quotient.

Methods

Research Design

This study is primarily quantitative in nature, and it makes extensive use of a mediational design, which seeks to explain 'how' or 'why' an effect occurs (Figgou & Pavlopoulos, 2015). Additionally, a descriptive-correlational design was used to determine the relationship between the variables that was sought after.

Population and Sampling Technique

The participants were university students enrolled in higher educational institutions in the Philippines between the ages of 18 and 35 during the academic year 2020-2021. There were 146 males and 667 females who took part in the study (*n*=830). The participants were selected from public and private universities in the Philippines in order to ensure a representative sample of respondents from across the country. According to the Sage Handbook of Online Research Methods (Fielding et al., 2016; Fricker, 2016), a non-probability sampling was used to incorporate the volunteer (opt in) panel, which can be conducted either online or via e-mail. Volunteer (opt-in) panels are initiated when participants choose to participate as a result of an invitation posted on a Facebook page created by the corresponding author. Respondents to the Facebook ads are redirected to a specific panel portal, which is in the form of a Google form, where they are asked to fill out the necessary information and complete the questionnaires. Responses were gathered through the use of a Google Form.

Research Instruments

In this study, questionnaires and validated research instruments were used. The instruments were validated by ten experts in psychology and research (psychology professors, assessment psychologists, test developers, social science experts). And it was ensured that these experts had at least master's degree. Cronbach's Alpha was used to specifically determine the internal consistency of the three research instruments, allowing us to know the applicability of the items for the study.

The Online Health-Seeking Information Behavior Scale (OHSIB) was used to assess the respondents' online health seeking behavior. OHSIB is a unidimensional self-report survey designed to assess the acceptability of college students' online health information seeking behavior. It is scored on a 5-point scale (ranging from 1 to 5). In terms of OHSIB's psychometric property, Cronbach's alpha revealed a good internal consistency (r =.70). OHISB 12 items (e.g. the health information I find online helps me to practice positive health habits, I search over the internet for health information because I know it can prevent what could go wrong about my health) are all based on a systematic review of literatures that demonstrate coping with a bad health situation, involvement in medical decision making, and preventive health behaviors (Chu et al., 2017b; Nangsangna & Da-Costa Vroom, 2019; Shehata, 2020; Singh et al., 2016).

In addition, the Mental Toughness Questionnaire (MTQ-18) was used to assess students' mental toughness. The original MTQ-18 items were used, but they were all modified based on the characteristics of the participants (Dagnall et al., 2019). In terms of the modified mental toughness questionnaire's psychometric properties, the results revealed that it has good internal consistency for all components such as control (e.g. I remain calm even when under great pressure) (r = .71), commitment (e.g. I remain interested for the tasks I have to do) (r = .71), challenge (e.g. I can handle well with any problem that occurs in my life) (r = .81), and confidence (i.e. I speak my mind when I have something to say in online class) (r = .70).

Finally, Schreneir's original Thriving Quotient (TQ) instrument was used to understand student thriving (Schreiner, 2015). All items were used, but they were modified based on the characteristics of the participants. This metric employs a 5-point Likert-type scale. The psychometric properties revealed high internal consistency for engaged learning with five items (e.g. I feel energized by the ideas I am learning in most of my online classes) (r = 0.82), academic determination (e.g. I find a way to keep working on my assignments until they are done well) with six items (r = 0.87), positive perspective with five items (e.g. I am positive about my future) (r = 0.76), diverse citizenship with six items (e.g. I spend time making a difference in other people's lives) (r = 0.76), and social connectedness (e.g. I feel content with the kinds of friendships I have despite our distance from each other).

Ethical Considerations

In accordance with ethical standards, all processes and activities associated with this study have received approval from authors' institution, which has issued an approved certificate. Furthermore, as mandated by Republic Act 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012 of the Republic of the Philippines, the students' personal information is protected.

Data Analysis

The mean, standard deviation, and relationship between online health information seeking behavior, mental toughness, and Thriving Quotient were calculated using descriptive-correlational analyses performed on the constructs using IBM SPSS v26.0. Additionally, a mediation analysis using the partial least squares (PLS) path modeling method was performed in SmartPLS.

Limitations

This study restricted its coverage to first-year to fifth-year College students only enrolled in private and public higher educational institutions that used an online flexible learning approach during the academic year 2020-2021 in randomly selected locations in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. Men's underrepresentation in the current study is also a constraint. Another limitation is a bias that could be explained by the fact that the questionnaires were administered online, and most college students had internet access.

Results

Demographic analysis

There were a total of 884 responses to the survey. 830 responses were used for statistical analysis after the data was analyzed. 54 responses were discarded because there were more than ten missing items in the answered questionnaires. Table 1 depicts the projected demographic characteristics of the respondents based on their answers. Eighty-two percent ($n = 146$) of the 830 respondents were male, compared to 18 percent ($n = 667$) of the female respondents. 61 percent ($n = 495$) came from private higher educational institutions, while 39 percent ($n = 318$) came from public higher educational institutions in the Philippines, according to the type of school they attended. All of the students who participated in this study were enrolled in a university that utilized an online, flexible learning strategy.

Table 1. *Results by students' gender and academic year level*

Sociodemographics		N	%
Gender	Male	146	18%
	Female	667	82%
Type of School	Private	495	61%
	Public	318	39%

Descriptive results

As shown in Table 2, majority of the participants' online health information seeking behavior was deemed to be high, implying that their online health searches were conducted solely for preventive health purposes. This indicates that they accessed health information only from reputable and trustworthy websites and relied on medical doctors' advice rather than conducting their own online research. Additionally, typical college students exhibited moderate levels of mental toughness traits such as control, commitment, challenge, and confidence. Finally, descriptive analysis revealed that most students lacked engaged learning, academic determination, and social connectedness, but possessed a more positive outlook and diverse citizenship.

Table 2. *Descriptive results of students' COVID-19 related anxiety, mental toughness and thriving quotient*

Variables	Total		
	x	sd	Verbal Interpretation
Online Health Information Seeking Behavior	3.70	0.49	High
Mental Toughness			
Control	2.52	0.76	Moderate
Commitment	2.80	0.55	Moderate

{table continues on the next page}

Challenge	3.29	0.93	Moderate
Confidence	2.58	0.62	Moderate
Thriving Quotient			
Engaged Learning	2.97	0.73	Moderate
Academic Determination	3.42	0.86	Moderate
Positive Perspective	3.80	1.11	High
Social Connectedness	3.15	0.86	Moderate
Diverse Citizenship	3.97	0.97	High

Relationship between Online Health Information Seeking (OHSIB) and Mental Toughness (MT)

As demonstrated in Table 3, OHSIB is positively correlated with all MT dimensions, including control ($r = 0.23$, $p = .00$), commitment ($r = 0.25$, $p = .00$), challenge ($r = .28$, $p = .00$), and confidence ($r = 0.12$, $p = .00$). The findings indicate that the higher the level of OHSIB, the better the participants' MT. As a result of this finding, it can be deduced that browsing the internet for information about their health and then clarifying this information with medical professionals demonstrates mental toughness as well.

Table 3. *Correlation analysis Between OHSIB and Mental Toughness Dimensions*

	Mental Toughness (MT)				
	Control	Commitment	Challenge	Confidence	Mental Toughness
	r	*r*	*r*	*r*	*r*
OHSIB	0.23**	0.25**	0.28**	0.12**	0.30**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)   *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed)*
Legend: + .29 and below = Low Degree, ± 0.30 and ± 0.49 = Moderate Degree, ± 0.50 and ± 1 = High Degree

Relationship between Online Health Information Seeking (OHSIB) and Thriving Quotient (TQ)

Table 4 demonstrates a positive correlation between OHSIB and dimensions of thriving quotient, with an overall correlation coefficient of 0.38 and a p-value 0.00 at the alpha.05 level of significance. This demonstrates that the frequency with which students engage in OHSIB may have a beneficial effect on their ability to thrive during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Table 4. *Correlation analysis of OHSIB and thriving quotient dimension*

	Thriving Quotient (TQ)					
	Engaged Learning	Academic Determination	Positive Perspective	Diverse Citizenship	Social Connectedness	
	r	*r*	*r*	*r*	*r*	
OHSIB	0.29**	0.33**	0.30**	0.36**	0.11**	0.38**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)   *. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed)*
Legend: + .29 and below = Low Degree, ± 0.30 and ± 0.49 = Moderate Degree, ± 0.50 and ± 1 = High Degree

Relationship between Mental toughness (MT) and Thriving Quotient (TQ)

As shown in Table 5, mental toughness had a positive correlation with the thriving quotient in college students, with a correlation coefficient of 0.71 that was statistically significant at the alpha.05 level. This implies that a higher level of mental toughness correlates with an increase in students' thriving quotient in the event of a pandemic.

Table 5. *Correlation analysis of the dimensions of mental toughness and thriving quotient*

	Thriving Quotient (TQ)					
	Engaged Learning	Academic Determination	Positive Perspective	Diverse Citizenship	Social Connectedness	TQ
	r	r	r	r	r	r
MT						0.71**
Control	0.38**	0.46**	0.43**	0.33**	0.29**	
Comm.	0.47**	0.57**	0.49*	0.33*	0.20**	
Chall.	0.47**	0.62**	0.57**	0.55**	0.26**	
Confd.	0.23**	0.32**	0.33**	0.21**	0.20**	

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)   **. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2 tailed)*
Legend: + .29 and below = Low Degree, ± 0.30 and ± 0.49 = Moderate Degree, ± 0.50 and ± 1 = High Degree

Mediation Role of Mental Toughness on the Relationship between Online Health Information Seeking Behavior(OHSIB) and Thriving Quotient (TQ)

       A mediation analysis was conducted in order to determine whether mental toughness played a mediating role in the association between online health information seeking behavior (OHSIB) and thriving quotient (TQ). The partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) method was used to test the path coefficients, specific indirect effects, and total effects. The findings revealed that the overall effect of OHSIB on TQ was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.408$, $t = 13.25,.00000$). With the inclusion of the mediating variable mental toughness (MT), it was discovered that the impact of OHSIB on TQ was statistically significant ($\beta = .191$, $t = 6.69$, $p = .000$). Furthermore, the indirect effect of OHSIB on TQ through MT was found to be statistically significant ($\beta = .217$, $t = 11.50$, $p = .000$). Moreover, the findings indicate that the relationship between OHSIB and TQ was partially mediated by MT, indicating that OHSIB may have a direct impact on students' thriving quotient whether or not MT is present.

Table 6. *Mediation analysis of the role of mental toughness between OHSIB and TQ*

	Total Effect			Direct Effect			Indirect Effect		
Path Name	Coefficient	t	p-value	Coefficient	t	p-value	Coefficient	t	p-value
OHISB -> MT -> TQ	0.408	13.25	.000	0.191	6.69	.000	0.217*	11.50	.000

*.Mediation effect is significant at the 0.05 level
Legend: COV-19=COVID-19 Related Anxiety , OHSIB=Online Health Information Seeking Behavior, IU= Intolerance of Uncertainty, MT=Mental Toughness, , TQ=Thriving Quotient

Figure 1. *Mediation model on the mediating role of mental toughness between online health information seeking behavior, and thriving quotient*
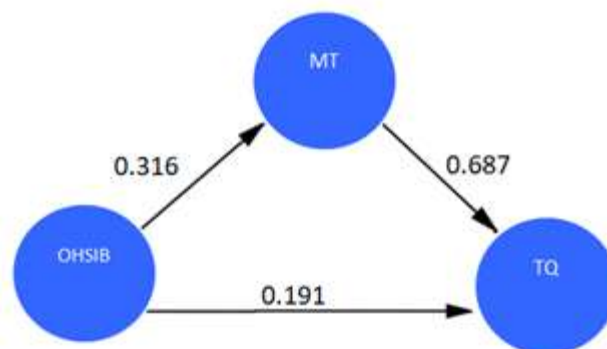
The final model of the current study is depicted in Figure 1. It demonstrates that mental toughness has a partial mediating effect in the relationship between online health information seeking behavior and thriving quotient.

Discussion

The primary aim of the study is to examine the effect of mental toughness on the relationship between online health information seeking behavior and the thriving quotient of college students during a pandemic. The hypothesis that online health information seeking behavior, mental toughness, and thriving quotient were all associated was completely confirmed. Correlation analyses revealed a moderate correlation between the variables. This demonstrates the beneficial and direct effect of very good levels of online health information seeking on students' mental toughness and thriving quotient.

Recent scientific publications point in the same direction. According to previous research, following OHSIB results in an increased sense of control, improved stress and self-management, a commitment to preventive strategies, and confidence regarding their health condition (Beck et al., 2014; Bolle et al., 2015; Kyriacou & Sherratt, 2019; Linn et al., 2019). These findings indicate that OHSIB may have a beneficial effect on students' mental toughness during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The opportunity to seek face-to-face consultation for health concerns is known to be harmed by a number of barriers, including stigma, lockdown policies, and strict quarantine protocols, resulting in inefficient health care (Goyal et al., 2021; Maqbool & Khan, 2020). And online health-seeking may represent an area of support because it allows students to confidently seek assistance for their health problems without being burdened by these same help-seeking obstacles (Gulliver et al., 2010; Pretorius et al., 2019). Students were perceived to seek health information more frequently than others, which is supported by the fact that they used it as an opportunity to obtain resources to improve their lifestyles or avoid potential health concerns (Kalankesh et al., 2019). During the COVID-19 pandemic, university students frequently seek health information online (Dadaczynski et al., 2021). It is believed that their increased awareness of health concerns will result from their use of online health information. Thereby, increasing their level of health literacy (Hassan & Masoud, 2020).

Additionally, studies have established a direct and linear relationship between OHSIB and thriving quotient dimensions. For instance, according to Myrick and colleagues' study, OHSIB is positively associated with increased social connectedness and academic self-efficacy or determination (Myrick & Willoughby, 2019), implying that exercising OHSIB may have a beneficial effect on the relationships or interactions between students and their academic success. This corroborates the findings of Vamos and colleagues, who concluded that OHSIB is critical to students' academic success, affecting their level of academic determination and engagement (Vamos et al., 2020). Additionally, Kyriacou and colleagues discovered that OHISB promotes positive life changes or perspectives (Kyriacou & Sherratt, 2019), implying that the more people exercise OHISB, the more positive changes they will experience. The studies linking OHSIB to mental toughness and thriving quotient demonstrate the importance of online health information seeking behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The second hypothesis, which examines the role of mental toughness in mediating the relationship between online health information seeking behavior and the thriving quotient, was partially confirmed. There are currently no studies examining the effect of mental toughness on the constructs under consideration. Thus, it is worth noting that the current study's findings may add to the body of knowledge regarding the specific role of mental toughness in online health information seeking and thriving during a pandemic. The current result indicates that students' online health information searches had a direct positive effect on their thriving quotient, with the exception of mental toughness. Understanding OHSIB as a significant variable in a pandemic context may help to reinforce the notion that it can have a direct effect on students' thriving quotients. Many students are isolated during the pandemic due to university closures and quarantine protocols (Zaccoletti et al., 2020), which causes them to feel anxious or distressed (Li et al., 2020; Marelli et al., 2021).

When students' OHSIB is contextualized in a pandemic context, many of them will be concerned about their current psychological functioning. According to a report, college students' mental health has

deteriorated as a result of the pandemic (Galea et al., 2020; Khoshaim et al., 2020). Given that the Google search engine is capable of answering numerous questions about health and medical information every day (Strzelecki, 2020), students during the pandemic have grown accustomed to searching for information about their mental health and general well-being, with negative terms such as boredom, loneliness, worry, sadness, insomnia, depression, and suicide being the most frequently searched words (Brodeur et al., 2021; Misiak et al., 2020). Students, motivated by their desire to thrive in a troubled world, turned to online health information searches in order to maintain academic success.

Additionally, mental toughness may demonstrate its value in terms of students' online health information seeking behavior and thriving quotient. It has been suggested that online health information seeking behavior may serve as a coping mechanism for stress, ambiguity, and increased confidence regarding health concerns, as well as a means of preventing the spread of physical or mental health complications, thereby improving overall wellbeing (Oh & Song, 2017; Singh & Brown, 2014). When individuals develop mental toughness traits, they may develop a greater awareness of the negative consequences of their illness and complications. As a result, they are more likely to overcome their fears, act on available information, and survive the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusion

The current findings unequivocally establish a positive relationship between online health information seeking behavior, mental toughness and thriving quotients among university students in the Philippines. Simultaneously, mental toughness served as a partial mediator between the two constructs in the current study. Although the results indicated a partial mediation, it can be concluded that mental toughness can have a significant impact on students' online health information seeking behavior and thriving quotient, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, it is critical to advocate for the inclusion of mental toughness in online health search that promote healthy personal growth and development. Additionally, this study demonstrates how having a healthy online information search has a direct effect on students' ability to thrive during the COVID-19 pandemic. The current findings may motivate future researchers to conduct additional research on the value of mental toughness and healthy online behavior in health and academic contexts.

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The Lows and Highs of African Diasporic Characters in Americanah

Hazel Valencia, Nishimwe Ange Victoire, Remai Cubay, Michael Naidas,
Kathleen Flores, Eunice Aclan, Arjem Noryn Agum

Adventist University of the Philippines

Abstract

Literature says little about *Americanah's* similarities to the 21st-century life of real-life diasporic characters; hence, this study was conducted. This study sought to highlight the struggles of Africans in America as reflected in the novel *Americanah*. The study utilized the qualitative research design by using Post-Colonial Criticism Theory. It also used the purposive sampling method in choosing the novel and thematic analysis in identifying themes to answer the objectives. The research revealed that the struggles faced by the diasporic characters in their homeland are economic struggles (lack of job opportunities and inequality) and political struggles (military power). Furthermore, the novel also revealed that the diasporic characters faced the following issues in the new land: difficulty in adjusting to the new land (the natural/braided hair of African women), racism, and identity crisis. The novel also identified ways on how to adapt in a foreign culture, such as making friends/ acquaintances and dealing with culture shock. Moreover, the novel shows how the struggles experienced by the African diasporic characters are not only fictional but are experienced by people in the real world who find themselves in a foreign land. It is suggested that an evaluation of the novel using different lens or perspective be done.

Since the beginning of time people have moved from one place to another for reasons of getting a better life and escape war or famines. These days the people who find themselves in a different country or continent are part of a diaspora. The term diaspora is based on the Greek terms *speiro*, to sow, and the preposition *dia*, over. The Greeks understood the term to mean migration and colonization. In Hebrew, the term is generally *galut*, which initially referred to the settling of scattered colonies of Jews outside Palestine after the Babylonian exile and has assumed a more general connotation of people settled away from their ancestral homelands. The term has acquired a broad semantic domain and now encompasses a motley array of groups such as political refugees, alien residents, guest workers, immigrants, expellees, ethnic and racial minorities, and overseas communities (Shuval, 2000).

Naidas et al. (2018) suggests:

Many authors have posited that diaspora can result to a loss of nostalgia from the memories or even images of home as people "re-root" in a number of displacements. With this said, individuals may have multiple representations of "home" their displacement with various reasons for keeping some form of connectivity to each. However diverse the reasons for going to a new land, the unconscious motivations were one and the same. It was all part of the quest for a lost paradise and the better life that it symbolized. The new land was to be the end, or the means to the end. People flock into the new land to realize their dreams (p. 73).

Being diasporic characters in another country is common to many Africans, since most African countries were colonized except Ethiopia. African authors have always found a way to reflect who they are in their literature despite colonization. After colonization, African countries have been working hard to get over the state in which colonizers left them in, hence sending their people to learn and hopefully come back and make a change in their homelands.

Migrants' dislocation from their homelands and the attempts to belong in international spaces in modern times have become a significant aspect of Nigerian migrant prose fiction. These narratives have gained prominence following the re-invention of the socio-political realities of homeland irrespective of the migrant status of their writers (Nwiyi, 2016).

Frontward of Africa 's literary journey and growth has been the Scramble for Africa and the political control of the continent of Africa by Europe which started little by little, culminated in a large portion of African territories being an annex to European empires as colonies by the 19th and 20th century. The mix up which began simply from Europe 's experience with previous years of exploration and adventure culminated in a complex relationship between the two continents and what is still known today as the empire and its colonies (Nwiyi, 2016).

According to Ziankhan (2012), following the period from 1957-1960, when most countries in West Africa broke loose from colonialism and became independent, the need for an integrated and classless society was one of paramount concern to most, if not all, West Africans. Up to date, the impact of colonialism is still being felt at every stratum of the sub-region. As former colonies of European powers began to gain independence from their colonial masters, the educated class eventually dominated and controlled the political landscape of their respective countries. The educated elites representing their countries' leadership with inherent authority over the military rarely used the armed forces for the intended purpose for which they were created. As the results of the military being used by politicians as an instrument of fear against their own citizens coupled with political misrule, the military soon began to seize and control state power through military coup d'états.

According to Amonyeze's *Writing a New Reputation* (2017), Adichie tells the story of Nigerian immigrants with idealized notions of America and the United Kingdom who struggle diligently to realize their dreams but return to their home country largely wised up. Americanah humanizes the story of the undocumented immigrant and empathizes with his economic frustration and resort to such criminality as identity theft. Adichie's redemptive narrative of Obinze's failure overseas and feat of success in the backwaters of Nigeria highlights the possibility that marginalized persons can defy the racist master narrative and write their own success story.

Historically immigrants have enhanced the American experience by contributing meaningfully to the industry and culture of their new society. America's immigrant constituency has been largely diverse with each having its own peculiar historical experience. The public perception of immigrants and their mother countries is most times prone to the manipulative rhetoric of powerful political forces of the host country who neglect the pitiful story of the immigrant culturally relocated from a socially-absorbed state to a self-absorbed one (Amonyeze, 2017).

Recently, Mexicans, Muslims, African immigrants, and other minorities have been targeted by crowd-pleasing American politicians whose racial stained speeches have pushed for a wall on the U.S./Mexico border and called for the eviction of documented and undocumented immigrants to make America "great" again. Referring specifically to Mexico, president in waiting, Donald Trump declared that "they weren't sending the good ones," presuming there is a selection process wherein the Mexican government chooses representatives for Mexico in the American race Olympics. The partiality view of anti-immigration flourishes on dangerous beliefs of racial purity and notions of colored immigrants as lazy, fraudulent, and never do wells (Amonyeze, 2017).

There are two types of migrants in diasporic wiriting: (a) the traditionalists who believe that even though they are living in a foreign country, they should not give up their customs and habits because these give them their sense of identity; (b) assimilationists who believe that it is not only important but also necessary, for foreigners to immerse themselves into the local cultures, to accept and adopt the norms and behaviors of the local population in order to gain equality, recognition, and acceptance. In both cases, the situation is filled with tension and conflict because it also means giving up socio-cultural values, which are closely linked with religion (Sarala, 2013).

As discussions and debates emerge from the just-released World Happiness Report 2017, it is great to look at factors that have restrained the general wellbeing of the African people. In the African case, unlike many developed countries or other continents, there is a shared theme going across countries with many individuals believing most of the problems facing the continent largely lie or can be resolved by the upper class. According to the citizens in the 44 countries surveyed in the World Happiness Report 2017, poor leadership, corruption, and unemployment are the major problems facing the continent (Lepapa, 2017).

After World War II, as Africans started asking for their independence, more African writers were published: works such as novels, essays, and plays. All were written in European languages, and often they shared the same themes: the clash between indigenous and colonial cultures, condemnation of European conquest, pride in the African past, and hope for the continent's independent future (Literature, 2013).

What post-colonial literature has in common beyond their special and distinctive regional characteristics is that they arose in their present form out of the experience of colonization and affirmed themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by highlighting their differences from the assumptions of the royal headquarters. It is this which makes them distinctively post-colonial (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2002).

In literature, postcolonialism is the characters' struggling with their identities in the wake of colonization, or the establishment of colonies in another nation. *Americanah* is an example of postcolonial literature, a new genre of contemporary fiction that thrived after the 1970s. The main purpose of postcolonial writings is to reveal and weaken the superiority of those who value and prioritize what is western or European, and reject and marginalize what is not (Deni, 2016).

In the essay 'Correcting Africans' misconceptions about America in *Americanah*, Alebrahim (2019) tackled the Africans' misconceptions about America by examining the Americans' racial prejudice, low level of education, lack of employment, and financial struggle as negative characteristic of the American life through the theory of displacement, otherness, and belonging. Related studies focused on the love story, others examined misconceptions that Africans have about America. This study however, delved into the similarities between fictional society and the 21st century society, specifically the experiences of diasporic characters.

The multi locality of the environment in contemporary African literature is creating a distinct identity for writers and their literary subjects of the same ancestry in the diaspora or those who have had migrant experience. Globalization is a cultural reality that may present any of these three scenarios: homogenization, heterogeneity and hybridization. In the case of African writers and their subjects who are in the diaspora or are writing about migrant experience, there is a leaning towards hybridization of culture, identity and literature itself.

This study highlighted the struggles of Africans in America through the novel *Americanah*. Further, it answered the following questions:

1. What are the struggles the diasporic characters in the novel faced in their home country that pushed them to leave?
2. What are the struggles the diasporic characters in the novel faced in the new land?
3. How did the diasporic characters in the novel adapt in the new land?

Theoretical Framework
Post-Colonialism

Post-colonialism (Said, 1994) is concerned with literature written in English in countries that were or still are colonies of other countries. For the most part, postcolonial studies exclude literature that represents either British or American viewpoints and concentrates on writings from colonized or formerly colonized cultures in Australia, New Zealand, Africa, South America, and other places that were once dominated by, but remained outside of, the white, male, European cultural, political, and philosophical tradition (Guerin et al., 2010). Said's theory relates to the analysis of *Americanah*, since it deals with characters who are from the East and have found themselves in the west as diaspora. The writer is also a diaspora in the west therefore making Said's theory of orientalism relevant to the analysis of the novel *Americanah* as a postcolonial and diaspora literature.

Methodology

In this research, the researchers used the qualitative research design to trace the journey of Blacks in a world of Whites as shown in *Americanah* using post-colonial criticism theory by Edward Said. The researchers utilized content analysis on the fifty-five chapters during the research work. Content analysis is a research device utilized to find out the stance of given words or concepts within texts or sets of texts. This study used the purposive sampling method, a type of non-probability sampling technique which is also used as a judgment or as selective or subjecting sampling. Non-probability sampling focuses on the judgment of the researchers on the elements or units that are relevant to the study. This sampling method is appropriate for this study as the novel is chosen based on the following criteria:

1. It is a novel that shows the struggles faced by the Diasporic Characters in their homeland.
2. It discusses the struggles faced by the Diasporic Characters in the new land.
3. It shows ways of adapting in a new land.

This study aimed to analyze the novel *Americanah* which was published in May of 2013. The researchers focused on the fifty-five chapters of the novel to examine the elements needed for the research by analyzing the lows and highs of the diasporic characters and how their experiences in the novel reflects the 21st century diaspora. Even though there is a film adaptation, it was not included in this study. Therefore, the researchers mainly examined the diasporic characters mentioned in the novel who experienced living as a diaspora.

Results and Discussion
The Novel

Americanah is a book written by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and was published in 2013. The novel is among the best-known contemporary works of African literature. It tells the story of Ifemelu, a modern

young woman from Nigeria who decides to escape her home country that was under a military dictatorship. She immigrates to the United States hoping to complete her degree and find an economically better life. She soon, and for the first time, experience racism in a globalized world. Being black in America gives her a new and different view of America and the world. To share her struggles and hardships, Ifemelu decides to begin a blog "Raceteenth or various observation about American Black (Those formerly known as Negros) by a non-American Black." After thirteen years of strangeness and homesickness, Ifemelu discovers that she is burdened by "cement in her soul," so she decides to return and settle in a newly democratic Nigeria (Deni, 2016).

The fiction story takes place in three different places; United States of America, Britain and Nigeria. The main characters in the story are Ifemelu and Obinze. The novel was written in the third person omniscient point of view, and told the story of both Ifemelu, Obinze the rest of the characters respectively.

Adichie wrote Americanah after observing the way Nigerian diaspora lived, the writer herself experienced living in America and when she went back to Nigerian she was called an *Americanah.* *Americanah* is story about love, middle class immigrant experience, and race. According to Adichie race is something she discovered in America. When Adichie was in Nigeria she identified as Igbo and a Christian but when she went to America she was black and she had to learn what it meant to be black. And this can be seen in the novel *Americanah.*

Struggles of the Diasporic Characters in Their Home Country That Pushed Them to Leave

Americanah tells the story of characters who experienced leaving Nigeria in search of an ideal life. The author has lived in America for four years before she went back to Nigeria, the character Ifemelu has something in common with the real-life experience of the author. The novel is a reflection of the struggles immigrants experience in the new place. This is based on the notion that the literary text is a product of race, and diaspora experience. The first question in the study then seeks to examine the struggles faced by the African diasporic characters in the novel that pushed them to leave their homeland which led to two themes: economic struggles and political struggles.

Economic Struggles

The issue of scarcity but unlimited wants is termed as economic struggles (Pettinger, 2019). According to the World Bank, the recovery in Nigeria, Angola, and South Africa; the region's three largest economies, has remained fragile and is bringing down the regional average. In Nigeria, growth in the non-oil sector has been sluggish. Africa today accounts for around 17% of the world's population, but only about 3% of global GDP. These statistics not only attest to a failure to tap the continent's developmental potential, but also highlight the tremendous opportunities and risks ahead (Coleman, 2020). Economic struggles can be seen through the following:

Lack of Job Opportunities/Unemployment. Unemployment occurs when a person who is actively searching for employment is unable to find work (Chappelow, 2020). Merriam Webster dictionary defines this as the condition in which people in a labor force are employed at less than full-time or regular jobs or at jobs inadequate with respect to their training or economic needs. In Africa, the biggest threat to poverty reduction is an imminent shortage of jobs. The World Bank estimates that Africa's working-age population will grow by 70% (450 million) between 2015 and 2035 (Page, 2019).

In the novel, Obinze who just came back from England meets with his cousin Nneoma. He told her of what happened to him there and was still reeling from it when his cousin told him that, he had to look for work for he could not just sit at home and do nothing. Nneoma told him he was not the first person to experience such a situation in a foreign land, and Obinze agreed to that and realized he wouldn't be the last. He began applying for jobs listed in newspapers, but nobody called him for an interview, and his friends from school, who were now working at banks and mobile phone companies, began to "*avoid him, worried that he would thrust yet another CV into their hands*" (p. 23).

It looked like nothing was working for him until he met up with Nneoma again, she told him that she would introduce him to a rich man she knew. They called him Chief and he had connections with the rich people in the country. A solution was found for Obinze's unemployment. The connection Nneoma had, was able to secure a job for Obinze. Connections are not a bad thing, but it is not fair to everyone. In this century a diploma does not guarantee work instead good connections and a diploma secures a job. While for those in the Christian world they rely on God to provide for them.

Inequality. United Nations (2015) explains that economic inequality refers to how economic variables are distribute among individuals in a group, among groups in a population, or among countries. Poverty subsequently fell in many African countries experiencing economic growth. Yet despite generally robust growth, nearly half the continent's people still live on less than $1.25 a day. Although gender inequalities exist in all countries and are particularly severe in Africa, they are generally underestimated in most standard measures, which rely on household income or consumption data (Harsch, 2017-2018).

In the novel, amidst the state the country was in, cars being on a line to get petrol for long, those who were in pension asking for their pay, and lecturers gathering to announce a strike, Aunty Uju was hopeful that one day her dream would be reality. While she went to a wedding, she met The General, who was a married man and Aunty Uju became his mistress. And Aunty Uju life had changed drastically from being a girl from the village she now had a driver, a gardener, and two house helps. She came from rags to riches.

Aunty Uju benefited from having the general since he gave her the money she needed but for people who do not have such luck like Ifemelu's father who was fired from work have a hard time paying for their livelihood. Good thing Aunty Uju was able to help them pay their rent for a year through the money she asked from the General. The general was a sponsor though Aunty Uju being a mistress to him, there was something that came out of it. And later when the general dies Aunty Uju has to join the people who struggle to find a job. When Ifemelu commented on how the salon people were treating Aunty Uju because she had money. Aunty Uju said it was because everyone was looking for money anyhow and anywhere, even in the dirtiest way.

Political Struggles

Politics is the activity through which people make, preserve and amend the general rules under which they live (Heywood, 2013), while the world political is of or relating to government, a government, or the conduct of government. Democracy in Africa has been badly hindered by the state's control of the economy; this has meant that the only way to get rich has been through political office, intensifying the problem of corruption, and inducing leaders to cling to political power (The National Academies, 1992). The political struggles are manifested in the novel through the following:

Military Power. Nigeria is part of West Africa and it is among the countries that has had a military led government. According to Ziankhan (2012), following the period from 1957-1960, when most countries in West Africa broke loose from colonialism and became independent, the need for an integrated and classless society was one of paramount concern to most, if not all, West Africans. Up to date, the impact of colonialism is still being felt at every stratum of the sub-region. As former colonies of European powers began to gain independence from their colonial masters, the educated class eventually dominated and controlled the political landscape of their respective countries. The educated elites representing their countries' leadership with inherent authority over the military rarely used the armed forces for the intended purpose for which they were created. As the results of the military being used by politicians as an instrument of fear against their own citizens coupled with political misrule, the military soon began to seize and control state power through military coup d'états. There were, however, disagreements and dissatisfactions within the ranks and file of the military which led to countercoups and more often than not civil wars. As the results of these and many more, the sub-region's social-economic and political institutions have been devastated for the past three to four decades from which they are yet to recover (p. 4)

In the novel, When Ifemelu and Obinze were in university at Nsukka teachers would go on strike which led to students getting annoyed with the administrators of the school. This is further highlighted with Obinze's mother saying: "*I understand the students' grievances, but we are not the enemy. The military is the enemy. They have not paid our salary in months. How can we teach if we cannot eat?*" (p.91). This was even amplified when later that day, the news spread around campus of a "*strike by lecturers, and students gathered in the hostel foyer, bristling with the known and the unknown*" (p. 91).

Since the military was leading the country there were the ones to pay the teachers. The teachers would complain but their complaints would fall on closed ears, since the government people had their children studying abroad. That led to Ifemelu applying for a visa to go study in America and she got it, while she was saying goodbye to Obinze's mother, she was told her that Nigeria was throwing away their best resources. Ifemelu went in search of a better education system.

The General was part of the big people in the government at that time, he was a well-respected man. later Aunty Uju receives a call telling her that The General died in a military plane crash. After his family came to kick Aunty Uju out of the house. She was able to escape after telling them that if they did not leave her alone, she would call the military people she knew through the General to take them away. At that time, the military had a say in what was being done in their lives and Aunty Uju goes to America to find a new life. The bad politics pushed them to go find better opportunities.

Struggles the Diasporic Characters in the Novel Faced in the New Land

Americanah points to the different struggles the African diasporic characters in the novel faced and the researchers were able to analyze and see the relationship between the novel and the issues the society in the 21st century faces. The Africa of the end of the first decade of the 21st century is not exactly the same as the Africa of the early sixties which had just got freedom from colonial rule. The challenges the continent faces today are not exactly the same as those of the sixties. The weight of the past is a major handicap for Africa. The effects of the slave trade, colonization and neo-colonialism that Africa has suffered from are still being felt, as they have each and together resulted in the suppression of freedoms, the violation of human rights and dignity of the peoples of the continent, as well as the looting of human, natural and intellectual resources and what the Pan-Africanist historian Walter Rodney called the "underdevelopment" of Africa (Codesria , 2011).while in the new land the characters experienced these struggles

Difficulty in Adjusting to the New Land

Based on the article by Britannica Editors (2018) in psychology, Adjustment is the behavioral process by which humans and other animals maintain an equilibrium among their various needs or between their needs and the obstacles of their environments. A sequence of adjustment begins when a need is felt and ends when it is satisfied. Adjusting to a new land takes a while and in the novel some characters had a hard time adjusting to their Natural hair.

Struggle in Keeping the Natural/Braided Hair of African Women. For black women and girls, identity is inextricably linked to their relationship to and presentation of their hair. Hair is important in many cultures and its meaning and symbolism vary depending on social and cultural context. For African people, hair is deeply symbolic, and its meaning extends into multiple dimensions of Black culture and life. Historically, hair has held significant roles in traditional African societies, including being a part of the language and communication system. For instance, during the 15th century, African people such as the Wolof, Mende, Mandingo, and Yoruba used hairstyles as means to carry messages. One of the unique features of African textured hair is its ability to be sculpted and molded into various shapes and forms. Hence, while hair may play an important role in the lives of people of all races, for people of African descent, this role is amplified due to the unique nature and texture of Black hair (Johnson & Bankhead, 2014).

In the novel, when Ifemelu was about to leave Nigeria, Aunty Uju who was already in America, told her: "*make small-small braids that will last long, it's very expensive to make hair here*" (p. 100).

When in America there was no place near to get her hair braided, for the place she lived in had few people like her. She did not like traveling all the way to Trenton to get her hair braided. Also, she realized it was unreasonable to find a braiding salon where she lived. The few black locals she had seen were so "*light-skinned and lank-haired she could not imagine them wearing braids*" (p. 3).

One day her hair had started falling out at the temples, she tried putting creams and to no avail her hairline kept heading backward. Then one day her friend Wambui told her it was the chemicals in relaxers, and that it would do her good if she cut her hair and started over with purely natural hair. Wambui told her that relaxing her hair was like a prison for she was not able to do the activities she wanted with her boyfriend without worrying that her relaxed hair will be messed up. Ifemelu's hair started to be an inconvenience to her since it was not in its natural state, and for her to start all over she had to do the big chop, her friend Wambui helped cut her hair. Ifemelu looked in the mirror. She was all big eyes and big head. At best she looked like a boy; at worst, like an insect. She said to herself: "*I look so ugly I'm scared of myself*" (p. 208).

Ifemelu did not appreciate the way she looked after getting her hair chopped off, she was not used to seeing herself like that, Wambui assured her that she would eventually get used to it. Ifemelu did not want to go to work for a few days, for she was not ready to face them with her new look. Society had put her in a place where women with short hair looked like boys or were ugly. When she went back to work Miss Margaret who was the only other black person at the company apart from the two security guards, asked her if she was a lesbian and she responded not yet. Years later when Ifemelu resigned Miss Margaret asked her if her hair was part of the problem. When a dark person wore their natural hair, it became a problem. This one example of how the west had made people think that dark black people hair was not good enough that's why most people in the 21st century think having straight hair is more professional.

Eurocentric beauty standards seem to be so ingrained in Western societies that they are, in various instances, institutionalized to the point where the way a black woman wears her hair can determine what kind of job she can have and whether or not she can keep the job (Thompson, 2009). In most enterprises in the Western world, straight hair is considered more professional and presentable while natural hair is considered unkempt.

Racism

Racism is any action, practice, or belief that reflects the racial worldview; the ideology that humans may be divided into separate and exclusive biological entities called "races" (Smedley, 2017). The struggles to belong in a dominant racist American society have not only been particular to African migrants; African Americans too have had their fair share of the destructiveness of selfhood that comes with radicalized beauty ideals. Morrison's 1994 novel depicts Pecola Breedlove, a little black girl, who falls prey to the dominant standards of blue eyes, fair skin and blonde hair as measurements for beauty.

Unfortunately, these cannot be attained given the natural disposition and body morphology of black people; however, the desire is sometimes so strong due to the overwhelming presence of constant reminders on billboards and beauty pageants. Racial classification schemes place the black people at the bottom of the civilization ladder thus pressuring them to strive to transcend this racial barrier by adopting make-shift strategies. The factors that lead to poverty among people of African descent are mainly structural. Discrimination is apparent in the unequal access these groups have to basic services. People of African descent are often disadvantaged. For example, in access to education, healthcare, markets, loans and technology (Dasi, 2019).

In the novel *Americanah*, Ifemelu experiences racism when she steps in America. She realized that in America dark skinned people were black and it did not matter where she came from. Race became apparent when in America. In her blog titled to my fellow non- American Blacks: in America you are black, she blurted out:

> *Dear Non-American Black, when you make the choice to come to America, you become*
> *black. Stop arguing. Stop saying I'm Jamaican or I'm Ghanaian. America doesn't care. So*
> *what if you weren't "black" in your country? You're in America now* (p. 220).

Ifemelu wrote to convince those who found themselves trying to prove that they are not black, to those who seemed to not understand that, since their skin color said otherwise. They had to accept it and move on, for America had people who were set in their ways which didn't mean those ways were right.

While in England Obinze received subtle sings of racism, where people would make jokes, but they were offending. The time he got injured and he was limping then one of the guys at the warehouse told other "his knee is bad because he's a knee- grow!" (p. 252) While he thought it was a good play on words but calling Obinze something else when he had a name. Recalling the experience of black people and how they've fought to get called their right names not a common name which carried bad memories of the past.

The substandard job of the Africans is a migrant tragedy and dismisses the dream of "paradise" in the Diaspora which is always a pull factor of migration. The privilege and wealth of Curt and Kimberly can thus be linked to their race (white) whereas the second-class status of Ifemelu, Aunt Uju and Obinze is because they are blacks. The coexistence of the whites and blacks implies cultural diversity which is a plus to a multicultural society. As noted above Ifemelu posits that whites will argue that a relationship between a black and a white was taboo forty years which is no longer the case today (Fonyuy, 2019). It did not help that although she might be a pretty black girl, she was not the kind of black that they could, with an effort, imagine him with: "*she was not light-skinned, she was not biracial*". (p. 293)

In the novel, America is the steaming pot of racism. Later Ifemelu decides to change her blog title into Raceteenth or various observations about American blacks (those formerly known as Negroes) by a non-American black. After the conversation she had with her father in which she told her father that American blacks were no longer called Negroes. She wrote on how in America, racism did not exist according to them. If a person did not get another lynched or was mean it was attributed to the civil right era. In the modern America racists were people with loving families, regular people who payed taxes. She goes on to write that somebody ought to take the job and decide who was racist and what category they could be put in. according to Ifemelu it was time to remove the word racist and find something new. She realized later on that "*like racial disorder syndrome, we could have different categories for sufferers of this syndrome: mild, medium, and acute*" (p. 315).

In the 21st century no one admits that they are racists and some people try defending themselves by saying not everything is racism or racism does not exist. Black people or Asian people need to get over themselves yet according to what they say and how they say it. Racism is loud and clear. According to Szwarc (2001), Racism is an ideological construct that assigns a certain race and/or ethnic group to a position of power over others on the basis of physical and cultural attributes, as well as economic wealth, involving hierarchical relations where the 'superior' race exercises domination and control over others. Racial discrimination is any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life. In today's society, racism can be seen and experienced anywhere there is a people who think they are superior from other according to their skin.

Identity crisis. Erikson posits that identity crisis is a time of intensive analysis and exploration of different ways of looking at oneself. The concept originates in the work of developmental psychologist Erik Erikson, who believed that the formation of identity was one of the most important parts of a person's life. While developing a sense of identity is an important part of the teenage years, Erikson did not believe that the formation and growth of identity were just confined to adolescence. Instead, identity is something that shifts and grows throughout life as people confront new challenges and tackle different experiences (Cherry, 2019).

The Africans have been brainwashed into thinking that their cultures and nature are not worth exposing to the world. Adichie, in Americanah, opens up a conversation on how Africans can overcome the psychological and physical pressures from dominant culture and at the same time, build both individual and collective cultural identities. This is achieved through a questioning of dominant Eurocentric and Anglo-American discourses, while speaking from specified locales that are considered reference points (Dasi, 2019).

In the novel different characters experienced losing one identity. When Ifemelu was just new and was staying with Aunty Uju, she was told that if she wanted to be successful, she had to do what to be done since she was in a country that wasn't hers. So, she got social security card which had someone else's name on it and she was told to embrace that new identity if she wanted to get a job. Later she meets her old friend Ginika who looked thin according to Ifemelu, yet Ginika informed her that in America thin a complement while back in Nigeria it was bad. Then ifemelu started struggling with getting a job. She had done everything they've recommended her but came up with nothing. She got depressed after she found herself doing something she was didn't like and wasn't supposed to do yet because she needed the money, she ended up getting the job. Which was a hit to her dignity and after that situation she shut Obinze out of her life, she was ashamed and thought she had failed and that led to her cutting Obinze out of her life as she struggled to find footing in the new land she was in.

One day ifemelu decides to stop faking an American accent after she was told by a telemarketer that she sounded totally American. She was tired of pretending. Then there was Aunty Uju who go to America and did everything to blend in. when Ifemelu was staying with her and Dike she realized Aunty Uju was no longer the same person. The fight for survival had pushed her to put away everything that she liked and she bought things which were on sale instead of what they needed, observed Ifemelu, she even changed the spelling of her name to make it easier for the people in America, but she reached a point where she was tired and left her boyfriend and went to leave with Dike in another place as she was working already as a family doctor.

Dike experiences an identity crisis he did not know who his father was and Aunty Uju refused to tell him. She told Ifemelu that identity was something they learned in American schools and she did not understand why Dike would feel that way but Ifemelu convinced her not to dismiss his feelings because that was his truth. Later Dike tried to kill himself by overdosing on Tylenol and it shattered Ifemelu she wondered how she did not see it in his face, but Dike was a happy kid. Losing one's identity is a bad experience and leads to problems like mental issues.

The Ways African Diasporic Characters Adapt in a New Land

While African immigrants and the organization that serve them face many challenges, they are resilient and resourceful. African Immigrants can draw on their own special advantages in their struggle for inclusion in American society. (Rahiminezhad & Arabian, 2018).

When a person travels from their home country and go to another country, they experience change. For they get to be in a place they have never been before, with people they do not know and if they want to stay in that place, they have to find a way to adjust in the new space. Adapting to a new culture can be difficult, especially when moving abroad. Most people who live in a foreign country for some time go through an adjustment period during which "Culture Shock" is experienced. Living in a foreign country is hard enough as it is, with all the issues they have to deal with. They have to make so many adjustments to their daily routine as well as to their preconceived notions about life abroad and their personal beliefs. Balancing these adjustments can be tricky, and sometimes they find themselves overwhelmed by so much change at once. But if they would like to avoid getting stuck in the expat bubble, they need to learn to adjust to life in a foreign country. The African diasporic characters adapted by:

Making Friends

Vaccarino and Dresler-Hawke (2011) argues that when trying to define a friend it is important to remember that there are many differences in notions of friendships. For some people, a friend is someone they talk to every now and again; for others a friend is someone they do things together with, like going to movies; whilst for others a friend is someone with whom they can share their problems and concerns. Different people assign different meanings to friendships.

Despite a shift from a rather pessimistic to a more optimistic assessment of the role of migration in development processes, current research suggests that global migration, only in some cases and under

certain circumstances, sets in motion processes that engage people in global, diasporic or transnational networks (Sørensen, 2007). With Africa at its root, members of the Diaspora developed multifaceted religious, cultural, and socio-political characteristics to adapt and survive in their new environments (Rotimi, Tekola-Ayele, Baker, & Shriner, 2016).

According to the novel for the characters to adapt they had to make friends or find someone they know who could orient them on what can and cannot be done. When Ifemelu got in America she stayed with Aunty Uju while staying there she met Jane who was from Grenada. And they found common ground in sharing the way they were brought up and how similar their childhood was. "*If you are not careful in this country, your children become what you don't know. It's different back home because you can control them. Here, no.*" (p. 112)

Jane warns Ifemelu on how America was different from her Home, she had to find a way to settle in though it was going to take longer. As Ifemelu went to school he joined the African Student Association she found that she could be herself in the company of Nigerians, Ugandans, Kenyans, Ghanaians, South Africans, Tanzanians, Zimbabweans and one Congolese and one Guineans. She did not have to explain herself (p. 139).

There as comfort in finding a place she could belong to, and she even met Wambui, who was the president of ASA at her school, Wambui helped Ifemelu in getting acquainted with the new culture as she invited her to join ASA and later get gave her and the other new students an orientation. Reminding them that the struggle of finding a visa was a struggle they shared and that led to a start of friendships. For a person to adapt to a new land, having friends does help in knowing about the culture of the new place.

Dealing with "Culture Shock"

Culture shock is brought about by the anxiety that results from losing all a person's familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse (Oberg, 1960). In 1914, Nigeria, when British ran into the brick walls of culture, they brought in the indirect rule system, which neglected the importance of various cultural practices in African community. The African culture, therefore, underwent a forced transformation of values. The British investigated several taboos and took an ethnocentric approach where the British culture was used as a yardstick to assess and evaluate the African societies. This, along with a large-scale migration led to a cultural shock and trauma among the Indigenous African community and subsequently, it had a negative impact on the emergence of a new African identity. As human beings interact with other individuals belonging to divergent cultural groups, it often results in some cultural transference and thereby influencing the cultural identity of the individual. The social convergence on distinct cultures is not been adequately discussed in a wider aspect in the world. It has created cultural pressures in different parts of the world. The emergence of umbrella terms like "indigenous people" "subalterns" and "ethnic minorities" which attempts to bring together multiple divergent communities together have been the result of the rampant globalization and the international desire to voice the voiceless.

While adapting to a new culture finding allies helps people who just moved to a new place. Adapting to a new culture can be difficult, especially when moving abroad. Most people who live in a foreign country for some time go through an adjustment period during which "Culture Shock" is experienced. Once culture shock is understood, its effects can be minimized dramatically (AGS Worldwide Movers , 2018).

Ifemelu was able to adapt to the new culture once she had new friends and integrated herself in the new society she found herself in. it was easy for her that when she went back home what she once knew had changed and Ranyinudo would call her "*Americanah!*" teasing her "*You are looking at things with American eyes. But the problem is that you are not even a real Americanah. At least if you had an American accent we would tolerate your complaining*" (p. 385)!

Ifemelu found everything different. It had been a long time since she went home, thirteen years to be exact. Within that time, all the change she did not expect happened. As people migrate they learn new things adopt new ways of living that when they go back to their homeland what was once familiar becomes

strange and they have to relearn how to live in the society they are in. life is about learning and relearning, a person stops learning when they are no longer seeking for new ways to improve their life.

Through this study, the researchers found that the African diasporic characters' struggles experienced in the homeland traces its roots in the postcolonial conventions and can be seen and experienced by the people in the 21st century. The novel shows how the struggles experienced by the African diasporic characters is not only fictional but is experienced by people in the real world who find themselves in a foreign land. Further, the ways of adapting in a new land as seen in the novel is helpful for today's society. In consideration to the findings and conclusions the following recommendations were offered: (a) Students who are locals should help students who come from other places to adjust to the new culture. And those who are new to the new culture should keep an open mind and respect the culture of the new place; (b) School administrators should make sure that students who are new to the culture of the place are well adjusted and guided accordingly; (c) Parents and guardian should be open to communicate with their children and help them in adjusting to the new culture; (d) Future researchers should do a further study on the research and conduct surveys to observe how people adapt to a new culture.

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ARTS & HUMANITIES

Bittersweet Innocence of the Children of Holocaust in John Boyne's *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*

Alnie D. Ludovico, Arjem Noryn C. Agum, Michael S. Naidas,
Kathleen B. Flores, Eunice M. Aclan
Adventist University of the Philippines

Abstract

John Boyne's novel The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas mirrors the innocent children's condition during the Holocaust in Nazi Germany (1941-1945). Children struggled more than the other victims for they were targeted and persecuted without them knowing the grounds and consequences of being a Jew. Grounded on New Historicism, this qualitative research was conducted utilizing descriptive-analytical design. Although this topic has political issues which caused the war to happen, it focuses more on the innocence of children. Themes were conceptualized through thematic analysis. Results revealed that the main characters of the novel are naive/innocent and world-weary. Moreover, the symbolisms that reflect bittersweet innocence of children are big house and small flat, symbolize opposing lifestyle between the Germans and the Jews; barbed wire fence, symbolizes forbidden friendship of Germans and Jews; striped pyjamas which symbolizes discrimination between the powerful Germans and submissive Jewish prisoners. Sweet innocence portrays Bruno's delightful childhood. Bitter innocence portrays Shmuel's miserable state by experiencing brutality and living in fear. Bittersweet innocence is when the two boys from different sides of the fence met and formed a forbidden friendship. The emerging themes are innocence, friendship, brutality, and fear. The innocent world of Jewish children changed during the Holocaust; forbidden friendship was formed between the German boy and the Jewish boy as portrayed in the novel. At a young age, the Jewish boy experienced brutality from the hands of the Nazi soldiers making him live in fear. It is concluded that in any kind of war, innocent children suffer the most. It is therefore recommended to do a further study on the research and should raise awareness on one of the most brutal events in history.

Keywords: *holocaust, Nazi Germany, innocence*

Holocaust

The term "holocaust" was derived from the French word "holocauste" which means "complete" and "burnt". In literature, holocaust was often synonymous with the Jewish exterminations under the Nazi regime dated back to 1940-1945. It was the mass slaughter of European civilians especially the Jews by the Nazis during World War II. A systematic and vicious event that was sponsored by the Nazi Party in the Europe continent that approximately took away 6 million lives of Jews (Theodor, 2008). In the sense of mass murder of the Jews by the Nazis, the specific application of the term was first introduced by the historians during the 1950s as an equivalent to Hebrews *hurbah* and *shoah* catastrophe, but it had been foreshadowed by the contemporary references of the Nazi atrocities as "holocaust" (Paternoster & Frager-Stone, 1998).

Holocaust literature discusses a form of literary piece that defined by its subject – the extermination of the European Jews by Nazi Germany. Eliezer Wiesel, noble laureate, political activist, and a holocaust survivor states that, "a novel about Auschwitz is not a novel, or else it is not about Auschwitz." The pattern of this literary work after the second world war through diaries and journals of the holocaust survivors; notably, Anne Frank, Emmanuel Ringelhaum, Chaim Kaplan, and other known writers of the holocaust (Levin, 1982).

Holocaust's devastating effects last long after the killing has ended. It carried out on the European continent during the Second World War and still affect people and societies today in many ways. When the war ended, some people understood how important knowledge and reflection about the twelve-year period between 1933 and 1945 was – particularly about Nazi extermination policies. Hugo Valentin (1936) wrote that the Holocaust was "an unprecedented event in the history of European civilization", which was of concern to an individual.

Innocence

Innocence is the quality of being free from guilt, sin or moral wrong, lack of knowledge and experience. Innocence refers to children, their lack of awareness of what is happening around them, their simplicity and purity not yet spoiled by human affairs.

John Boyne's novel, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* mirrors the innocent children's condition during the Holocaust in Nazi Germany. Children struggled more than the other victims for they were targeted and persecuted without them knowing the grounds and consequences of being a Jew.

Bittersweet

Combining sadness and happiness. In full definition, it is being at once bitter and sweet, pleasant but including or marked by elements of suffering or regret. Children are supposed to view life as all cupcakes and rainbows, for at a young age they should be basking under the sun, enjoying their sweet childhood instead of running away and hiding for their lives. Innocent children of the holocaust experienced bitterness and abuse when the Nazi Germans came to rule.

Galiardo (2019), a columnist in the *Independent* wrote that children were especially vulnerable to Nazi persecutors. Some were targeted due to their racial grounds, such as Jewish youngsters. Others for biological reasons, such as parents with physical and mental disabilities, or due to their alleged resistance and political activities. As many as 1.5 million children, 1 million of them Jewish, were killed by the Nazi troops.

This study shows the images of innocent children of the holocaust, particularly their characteristics as reflected in main characters of John Boyne's novel *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*. This paper discusses the aspect of children and how their rights were abused. Thus, with the use of New Historical approach, the researcher attempts to focus on a single and specific event and element of the history: the bittersweet innocence of the children of Holocaust.

New Historicism is an approach to literary criticism and literary theory based on the premise that a literary work should be considered a product of time, place, and historical circumstances of its composition

rather than as an isolated work of art or text. It has its roots in a reaction to the New Criticism of formal analysis of works of literature, which was seen by a new generation of professional critics as ignoring the greater social and political consequences of the production of literary texts. New Historicism developed in the 1980s, primarily through the work of the critic Stephen Greenblatt, gaining widespread influence in the 1990s and beyond (New World Encyclopedia, 1993).

New Historicism was situated in a literary text to conceptualize the issues about a historical phenomenon such as John Boyne's novel, The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas which gave life to the story of children's innocence during the Holocaust in Germany dated back 1941-1945. New Historicism by Stephen Greenblatt was employed as a theoretical basis for this study to discuss the issues in Germany that is mirrored from the novel.

The study raised awareness of how war, bloodshed, and brutality affect the lives and well-being of children. It aimed the readers to be familiar with the laws and rights of every child, especially those that experience abuse. Also, this paper showed the images of children during the holocaust and to identify the traumatic experiences that happened to them. However, the main reason of this study was to enlighten the readers about the lives that are at stake whenever a war happens. The fear and confusion it inflicts to the minds of innocent children.

Research like this differs from many others for it focuses more on the innocence of the children, either Jewish or German, during the Holocaust. Nazi Germans didn't want their race to be "impure" and be mixed with another bloodline. They wanted authority over others, especially to Jews. This research differs from other research for it propounds and focuses on the innocence and purity of children's minds rather than political issues which caused the war to happen. The novel *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* propounds the children's oblivion and purity, and how their race led them to their deaths.

Adults may have lost their lives during the holocaust, but innocent children lost both their lives and their parents. Which is more hurtful because children are known to be very dependent to their parents.

The researcher used John Boyne's *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* and will use New Historicism to answer the conflicts portrayed in the novel. This study identified the hideous condition of the children during the holocaust.

Specifically, the study answered the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics of the main children's characters in the novel, *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*?
2. What symbolisms were in the novel that reflect bittersweet innocence of children?
3. How is the bittersweet innocence of the children during the Holocaust portrayed in the novel?

Methodology

Research Design

This research is based on the directed approach of qualitative content analysis to interpret the gathered data and conceptualize the theoretical framework or the theory. This study will also use *descriptive-analytical approach*. Descriptive Analytics is a method used to search and summarize historical data to identify patterns or meaning (McLeod, 2017). This approach presents the struggle of the Jewish people, especially the innocent children's condition in Nazi-Occupied Europe during the World War II through the looking glass of John Boyne's novel *The Boy in Striped Pyjamas*. The primary data of this research will come from the novel itself.

Sampling Method

This study utilized the purposive sampling method, a type of non-probability sampling technique which is also used as a judgement or as selective or subjecting sampling. Non-probability sampling focuses on the judgment of the researcher on the elements or units that are relevant to the study.

To determine the sample for this study, the researcher used the following criteria:
1. The literary text must have a child protagonist.
2. The text must contain New Historicism principles.
3. Ideologies of superiority and inferiority must be present in the text.
4. The text must be true to life.
5. The text must contain innocent children during the Holocaust.
6. The novel must contain themes such as brutality, fear, innocence, and friendship.

The text was chosen because the topic is all about the Holocaust and the text itself is a Holocaust-themed novel wherein the innocent children experienced tragic circumstances. The novel was analyzed and themes were derived through content analysis.

Results and Discussion

The novel *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* was written by John Boyne, an Irish novelist. It is a fable with a hint of the Holocaust and still has an impact on the reader's emotions until today. The story was written from a nine-year-old boy's perspective who lived during the World War II. The story begins when a nine-year-old Bruno, together with his family, move from Berlin to Poland because his father got a promotion. His father is a Nazi officer and is appointed to be a Commandant. With that, they are sent to stay to an isolated area near the "Out With" (as he called it) concentration camp. (In reality, "Out With" or "Auschwitz" concentration camp in Poland is the largest and deadliest camp during the Holocaust).

Bruno and his sister Gretel are home-schooled, and with that he always feels lonely all the time because he has no friends to play with unlike in Berlin. As a boy, he is an adventurous explorer and starts to explore the house until he sees a back door. One day, he sneaks from it and runs through the forest where he finds a boy near a barbed-wire fence. The boy, whose name is Shmuel, is Jewish. They have the same birthday and of the same age. Bruno is so happy knowing that he, at least, made one friend to play with. Everyday, after his classes, he sneaks out from the back door to meet his new friend near the barbed-wire fence.

Even though Bruno is taught to hate the Jews and treat them as mortal enemies, and his parent's constant warnings, it never prevented him from forming a forbidden friendship (Boyne, 2006).

Characteristics of the Main Children Characters

The novel has two main children characters: Shmuel and Bruno. These two children have uniqueness on their own, yet they also share common characteristics. In this novel, the two main children characters have the same birthday, except that Shmuel is Jewish and Bruno is German. Both have different lives, yet both symbolize the victims of the Holocaust.

Naive/ Innocent

Bruno is one of the main characters in the story. He is a naive nine-year-old German boy. In the book, Bruno does not have a clue of what his father does for a living. And even though he does not know who the Fuhrer (Fury, a German word which means leader, a title for the Nazi dictator, Adolf Hitler) is, he knows that the Fuhrer is good for his father. This can be seen when Bruno asked who Fury and his father stared at him, astonished and said: "*You know perfectly well who the Fury is.*" Bruno answered that he does not know to which his sister blurted out that Fury runs the country and even called Bruno "*idiot*" (p. 117).

The year was 1942, and his father was a member of the Nazi Party. The Nazis are widely feared because of their power and authority, Jews are their primary victims. The Fuhrer is obsessed to power and superiority of the pure German race (Theodor, 2008) Bruno's parents never explained to him exactly what his father's job is, all he knows is that it is important.

He is completely unaware to the fact that he befriended a prisoner. He loves Shmuel and treats him like his own brother, when Bruno said "*We're like twins,*" Shmuel agreed with a little hesitation, "*A little bit,*" (p. 110). It is evident that Bruno is fond of the Jewish boy. Bruno can see that he and Shmuel are almost alike, they have the same birthdate and age. But Shmuel's reply with "a little bit", is because he can see the big difference between them as he is a prisoner.

Bruno is so naive and innocent not just about the war and Nazism, but even about the existence of poor people around him. He wants to become a soldier like his father when he's older although he never really knows what's really happening in the war. He did not understand his father's remark that he is "correcting history". When his father said, "*If it wasn't for history, none of us would be sitting around this table now. We are correcting history here*" (p. 144).

That remark is in reference to the Nazi party's goal of exterminating Jews, Romani people, homosexuals, and other minorities, inferior to the German Aryan "race". For them, expelling those people is the solution to their economic problems in Germany. They view them as an alien threat to German racial purity and community. At a young age, he and his sister are taught to believe that Germany is superior to all other nations. And that the Jewish people are nothing but useless eaters and dirty vermin, evident in his father's words, "*Ah, those people,*" "*Those people... well, they're not people at all, Bruno.*" (p. 53).

Everything is filtered through a nine-year-old Bruno and his naive perception of things. Due to his childhood innocence, he has no comprehension about people living the worst life. His father sees prisoners as animals being prepared for the slaughter. To him, the Jews are not human that is why he finds it so easy to pen them up and cast aside their lives. For the Nazis, their plan was to wipe out Jewish people, children were doomed to be destroyed (Sorell, 1998).

Bruno's extraordinary innocence fails to connect the dots, despite his budding relationship with Shmuel, he still fails to grasp the fact that Shmuel is a prisoner whose life is incredibly difficult. Although he has a lot of questions in his mind, what father tells him, he must agree and abide, "*Accept the situation in which you find yourself and everything will be so much easier.*" His Father told him with authority. "*Yes, Father,*" Bruno replied, unsatisfied by the response (p. 53).

It is very important for his father that the children should maintain discipline and that they are forbidden to question their parents' authority in decisions. Bruno's innocence of what is happening in Germany during the Holocaust comes to represent the German soldiers and citizens who for whatever reason, complies with, do not interfere with, and do not even think about the realities of the Nazi Party's actions. If Bruno represents innocence, Shmuel is much more of a grown-up for he knows and experiences fear, starvation, and brutality.

World-Weary

Born on the same day as Bruno, Shmuel is a Jewish boy prisoner from Poland where his father had a watch repair shop. He is very small, and very thin, his skin appeared grayish. Bruno described him having a strange face, large eyes and they were the colour of caramel sweets; the whites were very white, and all Bruno could see was an enormous pair of sad eyes staring back (pp. 106-107).

His eyes seem wide and large because he is severely malnourished. The people in the camp especially the children are kept in starvation conditions. The existence of the boy, Shmuel, shows that in the concentration camps, children that are too young to work are killed immediately. In ghetto settings, most of them died from starvation (McVay, 1999).

Some who were healthy enough are forced to work until they die from exhaustion and disease. After liberation, a forensic medical commission of the Polish Red Cross reported that the children were suffering from diseases acquired in the camp. 60% shows vitamin deficiency and overall weakening of the organism. 40% had tuberculosis and were underweight. (Marks, 1993).

Shmuel is already world-weary after being taken away from their home and being imprisoned in the concentration camp. He is hungry most of the time. He eats the chicken Bruno has given him and is punished roughly by Lieutenant Kotler. He doesn't speak of certain things that he knows may affect his punishment, when Lieutenant Kotler accused him of stealing food from the fridge. "*Did you steal something from the fridge?*" Shmuel stayed quiet as the lieutenant was insisting that he stole food. He looked at Bruno as if he was pleading for help.

He returns to the camp after that and is beaten by the Lieutenant. He got a black eye but doesn't want to talk about it with Bruno. Because he knows that speaking about the horrors he encounter everyday will only cause him further pain. For him, the few hours he talks with Bruno everyday, he can distract himself from the terrors of the camp.

The ruthlessness of the Nazi rule and the barbarities of the war forced some children to mature beyond their years. One child survivor described them as "*old people with children's faces, without a trace of joy, happiness, or childish innocence*" (Jacobs, 2006).

The Holocaust forced the children to confront things far beyond their years, even though they were still children. Bruno was sure that he had never seen skinnier or sadder boy in his life but decided that he had better talk to him. Shmuel, like other Jewish victims of the Holocaust, is forced to wear the "Star of David" (symbol of Judaism, named after King David) to denote his religion, and to be identified as a Jew.

Bruno asks Shmuel if there are other boys over the fence and he replies with a hundred. Upon hearing that, he [Bruno] said that it is unfair because there is no one he could play with on the other side of the fence, Shmuel said they do not play.

Bruno views that the people on the other side of the fence were lucky and fortunate for having friends. Because he sees himself as alone, he does not understand that they are prisoners without choices in life. Bruno is unable to understand because he has not experienced it.

Bruno then asks Shmuel if he likes exploring and he replies saying he has never really done any. Bruno can wander around as he pleases, compared to Shmuel's confinement to the camp, shows the big difference between the two despite their identical ages. He told Bruno that they are not allowed to rest and sit while doing the camp's chores, and if the soldiers see him, he will be in big trouble, "I have to go back, he said. I'm not supposed to be here. If they catch me, I'll be in big trouble" (p. 132).

Shmuel's quiet remark about soldiers shows that he has none of Bruno's naiveté. "There aren't any good soldiers," said Shmuel. "You don't know what it's like here," (p. 140). He does not describe any of the camp's horrors when talking to Bruno, it is because he wanted to enjoy a few hours of not thinking and talking about the camp or out of fear of getting into trouble. Bruno and Shmuel may have the same birthdate, but they have different lives which shows the horrors of the Holocaust. Although both are nine-year-old boys, Shmuel is imprisoned while Bruno is not, it is simply because Shmuel is a Jew. Even though human beings must be equal, they are still separated by nationality, class, and religion.

Symbolisms That Reflect Bittersweet Innocence of Children

Bruno and Shmuel, two children on opposite sides of the fence during the Holocaust developed a touching friendship, demonstrated the essence of it despite their contrasting lifestyle.

The Big House and the Small Flat

The big house and the small flat symbolize contrasting lifestyle between Nazi Germans and Jew prisoners. The big house shows that Bruno came from a wealthy family while the small flat shows that Shmuel came from middle class. When Bruno's father got the promotion, he arrives home to his big house in Berlin one day to find his mother with their maid and butler packing their things, for they are moving to a new house. Saddened by the news because he would have to leave his friends, he kept quiet because mother said that it is the end of the matter.

Clearly, Bruno's family is rich as they have both a maid and a butler. The Nazis emphasized traditional family structures, with the "man of the house" making all the decisions, and the women and children remaining submissive.

Now Bruno, very upset and trying to hold back his tears, he went to ask Maria, their servant, what she thinks about their new house in a desolate place with no neighboring homes, "*Coming to a place like this, don't you think we've made a big mistake?*" asked Bruno. "*That's not for me to say, Master Bruno,*" said Maria (p. 17).

The servants are subordinate to Bruno's family, that is why when he asked Maria what she thinks of the new house, she has much to say on the topic but held back due to her place as a servant. Bruno grew up in a wealthy household of Berlin and is very upset when his father chose to move them from the happiness he has back home to a horrible new location. But as the patriarch of the family and a high-ranking Nazi officer, Bruno is somewhat afraid of his father and his authority. His father is a menacing figure, he channels his anger towards Bruno in a kind of quiet, forbidding disappointment. "*Bruno, sometimes there are things we need to do in life that we don't have a choice in. This is my work, important to our country*" (p.48).

"*Do you think that I would have made such a success of my life if I hadn't learned when to argue and when to keep my mouth shut and follow orders?*" (p.49).

Hitler is idealized and almost deified in Nazi Germany, he was Germany's supreme ruler (Vashem, 2019). That is why Bruno's father is nervous about making everything perfect. This includes stricter rules for the children, family's discipline, and traditional roles. Mother as the cook and housekeeper, Father as the leader and breadwinner. Bruno and his sister as well-behaved children who are to be seen but not heard. Father had the final say in any decisions and mother, she only must go along with him.

The Jewish boy explains to Bruno how he got into the concentration camp. He said that he used to live with his parents and brother in a small flat above his father's watchmaking shop. Even before he came to Auschwitz (concentration camp), Shmuel grew up less rich and sheltered unlike Bruno. Even before his life became truly terrible, his life is nothing compared to Bruno. His mother was a teacher. One day his mother made them wear armbands with a special star on it. (Star of David to denote his religion). "*We wore armbands for a few months,*", "*And then things changed again. I came home one day and Mama said we couldn't live in our house anymore*" (p.128).

After a few months of wearing the armband, soldiers made him and his family live behind a big wall. They lived in one room with other families, eleven people in total. The armbands are associated with the Jewish imprisonment, and Shmuel points out that Bruno has never been forced to wear one against his will, "*No one's ever given me an armband,*" said Bruno. "*But I never asked to wear one*," said Shmuel (p. 127).

Shmuel then told Bruno that a train has taken them out to Auschwitz. A train that has no room to breathe on. Bruno loudly said that he and his family have taken a car, and that he does not see any difference of Shmuel's situation from him being forced to live away from Berlin. For Bruno, Shmuel's story is an adventure, but for Shmuel, it is traumatic. If Bruno is forced to move away from his friends, Shmuel and all the other Jewish children are forced to live in ghettos and concentration camps, that is why he is always sad. He is a prisoner whose life is difficult. Bruno eats much of the food and is used to always having more than enough unlike Shmuel who's hungry all the time, is evident in their conversation. "*Chocolate*," said Shmuel very slowly. "*I've only ever had chocolate once*". Bruno replied with utter confusion, "*Only once? I love chocolate. I can't get enough of it although mother says it'll rot my teeth*" (p. 131).

Bruno offers to cut him some and he eats it quickly. Shmuel likely receives little to no food in the camp, which is why he is so thin and naturally asks Bruno if he has any food with him. Most of the children were exterminated through starvation (Bernard, 2017). Although he knows the consequences he might face when caught eating, he is hungry. And hunger always win.

If there is one thing Jews knew that time, it is to never dare go against the Nazi Germans. They feared them because of their power and their authority. Shmuel lives in fear that is why he is hesitant to disobey their orders. Nazi Germans are very cruel and brutal as they show no mercy to their prisoners, the Jews. Back to the early times, we can see the contrast living between the slave owners and slaves. Just like what the Germans did to the Jews by confiscating their belongings, taking their stuff and destroying them. In slave society, the slave owner takes what his slaves produce by force, returning only what he wishes. He is considered as a property of another and is completely under his control. On one occasion, a Roman senator was murdered by a slave, his death was revenged by the slaying of all the 400 slaves of his household (Sutherland, 1903).

The Holocaust and slavery have some common elements regarding the way in which painful episodes in history have been remembered. Racial hate not from the heart but from the system. Despite Bruno was taught to hate the Jews, it never prevented him to be friends with Shmuel. In today's time that we are experiencing a pandemic, we can clearly see opposing lifestyle between rich and poor families. Well off families can buy and even hoard food and things they need and want while others especially those who belong to lower class need to plead for food and struggled immensely.

Barbed-Wire Fence

Barbed-wire fence symbolizes forbidden friendship. The two boys grew up during the war of the Nazi Germans and the Jews. Bruno is a German and Shmuel is a Jew, they came from different sides of the barbed wire fence that's why friendship between them is forbidden. *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* is a touching story of friendship that should never have happened. The reality is divided into two parts. There is a barbed-wire fence, a boundary which is impossible for grown-ups to pass, but not for a little boy. The author of the novel knew that the experience of Holocaust was something undefinable that's why he described it from a child's perspective. Bruno's question of "why do you wear pyjamas all day?" to Shmuel is a metaphor of being unable to understand the mass murders of Nazi Germans. Racial hate not from the heart but from the system is obvious during the Holocaust. Because Bruno is a naive boy, he can not understand why Shmuel would want to live in a concentration camp. Shmuel starves a lot and Bruno would always provide food for his new friend, "*I'm sorry, Shmuel*,", "*I should have given you some chicken too. Are you hungry?*" Shmuel replied, "*That's a question you never have to ask me*," (p. 169).

Bruno then looks for something to eat on their refrigerator, cut a few pieces of cold chicken sausage to give Shmuel. He offered food out of politeness. It shows that even though Bruno is taught to hate Jews, he is kind and well-meaning, but naive.

Unfortunately, his father's lieutenant catches them talking to each other and Shmuel is eating. The lieutenant insisted that the prisoner boy stole food and Shmuel replied that it was Bruno who gave him the piece of chicken. Out of fright and horror, Bruno blurted out that he never knew Shmuel.

What Shmuel said is true but because he is still a kid, he forgets that Bruno won't back him that moment out of fear. For all his maturity, he still trusts the German boy who knows nothing about the war, because he too is still just a boy. Bruno failed to defend his "friend" at that crucial moment simply because he is afraid of Lieutenant Kotler. He has seen him shooting a dog that is barking. It made him think that he is a sociopath, a kind of person who becomes brutal and cruel when angry. He feels horrible but because he is naive, he still does not understand the possible consequences of his actions. He should realize that his "friend" could just be beaten or killed easily by the lieutenant.

A year passed since Bruno came from Berlin to Auschwitz, his forbidden and secret friendship with Shmuel continues. His father summons him and his sister to his office one day to tell them that they may return to Berlin with their mother but without his father since he must stay in Out-With due to the commands of the Fury. His father makes that decision clearly because he notices Bruno's extraordinary innocence and naiveté and wants to preserve that.

Bruno is not happy anymore at the thought of going back to Berlin because he has become accustomed to his afternoon talks with Shmuel who is his "best friend". He will miss him if they move away. His innocent mind thinks that Shmuel might be able to cross that fence one day and that they can play together. But because they need to abide to his father's decision, he goes to Shmuel and told him he is going back to Berlin. Shmuel is upset that Bruno is leaving and his father goes missing.

Shmuel knows that like other people from the camp who goes missing, his father won't come back too. But as a child in the face of trauma, he still clings to an unrealistic hope that he might see him again. Bruno offers help to go look for Shmuel's father. For him, it's a kind of adventure. He is excited to finally see what life is like on the other side of the fence, but the only problem was getting a spare striped pyjamas so he could sneak inside the camp. Shmuel said that there's a hut where they kept all the striped pyjamas and promised to get Bruno a spare of his size and once inside, they can look for Shmuel's papa.

Bruno goes under the fence as one great final adventure to enjoy with his secret friend. They search but cannot find Shmuel's father. At that moment, the soldiers round up the people to "march" and the two boys found themselves swept into the crowd and then into a long, warm room. Frightened, the two boys held hands, Bruno apologized to Shmuel for not finding his papa. But Shmuel assured that it was alright. Right before their deaths, Bruno confessed that Shmuel is his best friend for life. Then the room went very dark.

This is a metaphor for the great tragedy of the Holocaust. Prisoners are victims of hatred and genocide. Although the ending is not good, and their friendship is forbidden between them, the two boys have each other. Their friendship demonstrates that one of the basic human needs is companionship; the two boys do not have a peer until they find another. If Bruno do not offer help to his friend, Shmuel would have died alone and frightened. Bruno could have run and leave the camp immediately, but his love for Shmuel gives him the courage to stay and to help him look for his friend's father. When they are rounded up in a "march", they are led to a gas chamber. That is how millions of people lost their lives during the Holocaust, and the two boys' death represents all the children who died during the Holocaust without understanding what is going on. In war, adults lose their lives, but children lose their parents. And what greater fear does a child have than that (Boyne, 2006).

In the Bible times, Jesus told a parable in the book of Luke that shows two different races who considered each other as enemies. During those times, Jews were forbidden to talk or even to go near the Samaritans. They despised each other. A Jew traveller happened to be travelling one day, unfortunately a group of robbers robbed him. He was beaten and left half dead alongside the road. It happened also that a Samaritan was passing that way too, upon seeing the Jew, he did not hesitate to help the poor man. He brought him to the nearest inn and paid all the expenses for the poor Jew recover. This parable shows that even those considered as enemy can be a friend. This is an example that people should love everyone, including their enemies. Discriminating is never good. During the Holocaust, many races were being discriminated, but the Jews were targeted the most.

Striped Pyjamas

Striped pyjamas symbolized discrimination. When Bruno first saw Shmuel, he wears the same striped pyjamas that all the people on the other side of the fence wore. The striped pyjamas symbolized racial discrimination, Jews that time were "segregated" and were treated differently. The Germans can wear any clothing they wanted to, unlike the Jews who were to wear the striped pyjamas only to be distinguished as prisoners. The term "segregated" (to separate trash) was used because the Nazi Germans described the Jews as not people but lower than dirt.

Discrimination is when a person is treated differently because of your religion or belief (Parenti, 2008). During the Holocaust, Jews faced vast discrimination. One of those instances is when Bruno and his family were travelling to Auschwitz. Shmuel said that the train was awful, and it smelled horrible. They travel by a train where there are still plenty of seats. Whilst on the other train are tightly packed Jews with

almost no room to breathe on. Men are separated from women; they are treated in an inhumane way even though both trains are headed to the same destination. Jews live in misery, but Germans have choices to live.

Holocaust is history's most extreme example of discrimination and prejudice against Jewish people. It is history's oldest hatred. Jewish people are forced to live in concentration camps, killed in gas chambers or are starved to death. Young, innocent children suffered the most.

Adolf Hitler and other German soldiers viewed Jews as an inferior race, a threat to German racial purity and community. For them, expelling those people was the solution to their economic problems in Germany as the country experienced crisis in the 1920s and early 1930s. Hitler's obsession to power and superiority of the German race caused him to come up with the idea of exterminating Jews (Theodor, 2008).

Along with elderly people, innocent children had the lowest rate of survival in concentration camps. Six million Jews were killed in the Holocaust, more than one million of the victims were children (Blech, 2004).

In today's time, Muslims were also subject to some discrimination. They were treated with suspicion, singled out by airport security or called offensive names. Christianity and Islam differ in how they understand God. Muslims were believed to be bullied in school than children of other faiths. Muslim children and women face difficulty in getting jobs or were not allowed to practice their faith freely at workplace by being told to remove their hijabs. Some Christians and Non-Muslim Filipinos considered Muslim Filipinos violent, trustworthy, and must be avoided.

Vatican pleaded that people (Muslims and Christians) were to strive for mutual understanding and stand together for what is right and against what is wrong (George, 2019). People needed to realize that all were more alike than different, and that everyone only desires a peaceful society, freedom, and peace toward fellow citizens.

Portrayal of the Bittersweet Innocence of Children During the Holocaust

War affects children like it affects adults but in different ways. If some are not affected because they live their lives in comfortable situations amidst chaos, many suffer because they are exposed to terror and horror during war. Experiences that may leave enduring impacts in their lives.

Sweet Innocence Portrays Childhood Innocence

Sweet innocence portrays Bruno's childhood that is full of adventure and discovery. In Bruno's innocent mind, what he sees and does are all true, simply because those things are what he is used to and always known. German children were taught that war was something they must be proud of because it meant that Germany has great power. Bruno's character showed how some German civilians were naive and ignorant of what was happening around them. His innocence made him unaware of what Shmuel is experiencing in the concentration camp. He is not aware that he even befriended a prisoner. Their forbidden friendship is something he thought he could cherish.

Bruno's sweet innocence was not affected by the war. He has no knowledge of what the Jewish children were going through because he was tucked under his parents' wings. He sees the war as a reflection of how it impacts him. He does not see his father's promotion as something he could be proud of but the inconvenience it causes him. He is only focused on his childhood games, friends to play with, and has no idea of what is going on. His lack of understanding about the war makes it difficult for him to understand why they need to move from Berlin to "Out-With". Bruno disdained the house, "*This isn't home and it will never be,*" he muttered (p. 16).

He tells his sister then that he does not like their new house, and he misses his friends. Out of boredom, he starts to roam inside their house. He noticed that there is a small window. He peeped through it and was amazed that there is a forest, and that other people live near them. He called his sister, Gretel, and

upon further inspection, they noticed that there is a very high fence surrounding the buildings where people are in. The top of the fence has barbed wire, evident from the two children's lines. "*I don't understand*," said Gretel. "*Who would build such a nasty-looking place?*" And Bruno agreed (p. 32).

Bruno and his sister know that the place is a very uncomfortable environment for people to live in but because they are both young, they thought that those people just chose to live there. They have no idea what kind of place "Auschwitz" is and of course it is not a good idea to describe what a death camp is to an innocent child.

The next day, Bruno continued to wonder who the people they saw yesterday were. From the small window he can see people marching, soldiers shouting, and some are pushing wheelbarrows. He wonders that maybe it is rehearsal even though some children are crying. He guesses that those people don't have hot water for baths (p. 37).

That night before bed, Bruno asked his father who the people outside are and he replied with "they are not people" (that is how Nazi describe the Jews, somehow less human). Before Bruno leaves, his father looked at him like he has forgotten something, words he needs to say before leaving a soldier's presence. He pushes his feet together and shoots his right arm into the air, and the words "Heil Hitler," (p. 54).

Bruno does the salute everytime he talks to his father without knowing and understanding why he is doing it and what does it mean. "*Heil Hitler*" (a greeting in Nazi Germany to show inferiority to Adolf Hitler and to glorify the country) (Rothman, 2018).

Apparently, some children are far removed from violence. A child who does not understand the facts or realizes that war is because parents teach them kindness occurs, actually occurs respect and compassion. Some little ones are not interested in talking about war for they are not concerned about it yet (Morin, 2019).

Bitter Innocence Portrays Fear of the War

Bitter innocence was portrayed in Shmuel's state. He experienced brutality and lived his life in fear. As a Jewish boy prisoner, Shmuel had seen and experienced horrific things in the concentration camp. He saw war as a destructive thing when the soldiers forced him and his family to move out from their house. A meek child who experienced such dilemma, Shmuel was much more of a grown-up than Bruno because he had undergone what a child shouldn't endure. At a young age, he experienced brutality when Lieutenant Kotler caught him eating. And for that, he was beaten mercilessly. He was helpless and yet, the lieutenant didn't show any pity nor mercy on him. His small body had a lot of bruises when Bruno visited him in the camp. Shmuel said that he doesn't feel anything anymore.

When the Lieutenant caught him eating, he told him that they would have a "discussion about what happens to boys who steal", it meant that he was about to face a horrible punishment.

And Bruno didn't tell the lieutenant that it was he who gave Shmuel the piece of chicken because he was too afraid of him and did not have the courage to stand up for his friend by telling the truth. Like Bruno, Shmuel was also too scared for he knew how the soldiers treated them. The fear and brutality he experienced in the camp, the fearful life he was into had an escape every time Bruno visited him and gave him food. He saw that Bruno was different from the cruel soldiers in the camp even though his father was the Nazi Commandant, it can be seen from these lines when Shmuel said, "*There aren't any good soldiers,*" (p. 141). He said that the soldiers hate them, but it is alright for he hates them too.

Shmuel uttered those words because at a young age, he was supposed to enjoy his childhood, to study and to play with his friends; his youth and purity was stripped off of him. Instead, he was separated from his mother, he and his father and brother and grandfather were imprisoned. In the concentration camp, he was always hungry, he had no freedom and always get beaten by the soldiers.

War will always have devastating effects. Happenings like that would always have negative impacts especially to children. There would never be a positive effect of war. A war could result to a long

term physical and psychological harm to children, destruction to people and to the environment. War messes up the supply of basic necessities of children, and if this happens, it may deprive children of their development.

Physical damage from war can be visible, one child survivor in Syria remembers how war changed everything. Food is scarce and when they go out to look for food, they would see dead bodies (Dube, 2014). Even if the war is over, there will always be the threat of the past. During World War II, innocent children were massively affected. Around 1.9 million children gathered at rail stations not knowing where they were going (Theodor. 2008).

War would always cause confusion to children. They wonder why adults are fighting. At a young age, children are taught not to hit others, instead to say and show what they feel. Hitting other people is bad, that is what parents taught their children.

War is traumatic to children, can cause nightmares and can transform outlook in life. *The Diary of Anne Frank*, a famous novel about how a child's viewpoint on war, unfolds a unique story of how war brought them drastic changes. A child is defenseless to the ruins of war. When they are exposed to this kind of violence, their world shatters. War weakens the foundation of a child's life and breaks down trust to adults.

Psychological damage is difficult to measure. One child survivor from WWII said that during those days of war, there were no nights that he did not feel frightened. Those were dark, blood-smelly nights and what was more traumatic is being separated from parents. The war years were a time of anxiety, trauma, and separation. Innocence was lost and their childhood was taken away from them. Children depicted war in their eyes through drawings which shows the impact war had on them. At a young age, most of them lost their lives because of it.

Bittersweet Innocence Portrays Forbidden Friendship

Bittersweet innocence was portrayed in the friendship that was formed between children of two different race and culture which are considered as enemies. But because of their innocence, the barrier between them couldn't hinder their friendship. Although German children were taught that they are the superior race and that the Jews are enemies, Bruno continued being friends with Shmuel. Bruno's innocence disregarded the fact that he befriended a prisoner, a person by whom his father considered as garbage.

In any kind of war, innocent children suffer the most. Some may live, many die. Holocaust is one of the worst things that has ever happened in human history. Bruno's parents participated in the Nazi Regime and were responsible for countless deaths. Apparently, they shielded him from the harshest realities of war. The innocence of Bruno makes it difficult for him to know and understand what is happening around them. His parents especially his father only felt the brutality of the gas chambers when their own son was killed by it. Like Bruno, some children still do not understand and know that war occurs because their parents try to shield their children for as long as possible from difficult topics, to avoid confusion and trauma and to preserve their innocence. Because children are innocent, they will believe everything their parents tell them. Unfortunately, other children like Shmuel are aware of war for at a young age, they had experienced trauma and fear. Had seen destructive and horrific things. Racial hate not from the heart but from the system is obvious during the Holocaust. Prisoners were treated inhumanely; children suffered the most despite the fact that there is no difference between a Jew and a Nazi German except for the differences society put upon them. The forbidden friendship of the two boys demonstrates that one of the basic human needs is companionship. Children are supposed to view life as all cupcakes and rainbows. At a young age they should be basking under the sun, enjoying their sweet childhood instead of experiencing traumatic and horrific things, running away and hiding for their lives. They are supposed to enjoy everything. War can make an innocent child experience bitterness. In any war, innocent children suffer the most. People must realize that we are more alike than different, and what everyone wants is peace and freedom.

The most affected during a war are the innocent young ones. Instead of basking under the sun and playing with other children, they must endure such terror, grief, and bitterness without even knowing the reason why. Surely, adults may lose their properties, their loved ones, even their lives, but the innocent children, though they may have survived, lose both their parents and their hope. The loss and separation from parents may cause trauma and affect relationships with others. One of the effects of war to children besides emotional stress is discouragement to continue living and studying. As we all know, education is the best weapon against poverty, but war only makes their lives worse. War causes poverty, destruction, and death, but ironic as it is, war can only be solved by another war. War is what gave Adolf Hitler the authority to take over Europe, but it was also war who defeated him. After a war, a peace treaty is signed by both warring parties to prevail peace.

Though written in a child's point-of-view, the book was written for both children and students to read and to know what life was like for children during the Holocaust. School administrators should make sure that students know history, even the most horrific events. Parents and guardians should be open-minded about certain topics, and how war could affect children. Future researchers should do a further study on the research to raise awareness on one of the most brutal events in history by looking at the political and economic aspects of the novel.

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ARTS & HUMANITIES

Going Global: A Glimpse Into the Language Identity and Experiences of Filipino English Teachers Abroad

Kathleen B. Flores

Adventist University of the Philippines
Puting Kahoy, Silang, 4118 Cavite
KBFlores@aup.edu.ph

Abstract

The past two decades brought increased interest in the study of identity in the field of language education. Numerous studies on language teacher identity mostly center on professional identity and are concentrated to participants from the expanding circle. Studies on English teachers' language identity from the outer circle like the Philippines are scarce, even more so among those residing and teaching abroad. Drawing on the relatively new theoretical frameworks of Norton (Peirce, 1995) and Bucholtz and Hall (2005) on identity, investment, and interaction, this study investigated the language identity and experiences of Filipino English teachers working abroad. Eight English teachers living and working abroad were purposively selected to take part in the study. Five English teachers met the selection criteria. Narrative inquiry through interviews and stories is utilized to gather data, and thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework is employed to analyze the data collected. The results revealed participants' perceptions on English and nativeness, their language identity, and language experiences that include opportunities, challenges, and coping strategies. Moreover, participants' exposure to and interaction with other English speakers influence how they view themselves as language speakers, and their language-related experiences continue to [re]shape their language identities. It is therefore recommended that English education majors are provided with opportunities to [re]construct and analyze their language identities while still in school.

Keywords: *teaching English, nativeness, English ownership, language education*

One of the more pressing issues in higher education around the world is internationalization (Abraham & von Brömssen, 2018; Larsen, 2016; Manakul, 2007). It is defined as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of postsecondary education" (Knight, 2003, p. 2). With the world fast becoming a global village due to rapid developments in technology and globalization, higher educational institutions (HEIs) have no choice but to internationalize if they want their existence to remain significant and relevant. This is because internationalization is a "response to and an agent of globalisation" (Larsen, 2016, p. 2).

The Philippines is not exempt from carrying out initiatives in internationalizing higher education (Commission on Higher Education, 2016; Madula, 2018; Rosaroso, Yap, & Gador, 2015). Internationalization initiatives must go beyond having international presence in the institution through foreign students and teachers, or student and faculty mobility. It must aim to "ensure students are better prepared to live and work in a more interconnected world" (Knight, 2012, p. 3). With the ASEAN integration and the establishment of ASEAN Economic Community, it is expected that the Philippines will be viewed favorably as an educational hub in the region (British Council, 2015). The major reason for this is English as the medium of instruction in the country's HEIs. Moreover, the Philippines is also believed to be one of the top countries in Asia for English proficiency (Asian Scientist, 2011, Education First, 2018), and in the world for Business English (Lee, 2012). It is also a producer of the "world's budget English teacher" (McGeown, 2012) as evident in the influx of English language learners, especially those from South Korea (Learning English, 2015).

Considering these attributions given to the Philippines, it is vital that the English teacher education in the country should be strengthened. In fact, concerns were raised on the need to improve the teaching and learning of English in the country despite of the seemingly high English competency of Filipinos (Cabigon, 2019). This point of concern only serves to ensure that Philippine HEIs produce globally competitive and locally responsive English teachers. The question that needs to be addressed then is, what is important in the language learning and teaching processes?

Language learning and teaching, to some extent, depend on the skills and expertise of language teachers. Yet, more important than the language teaching knowledge and expertise of language teachers is the teachers' language identity. The fast-paced development and demands brought about by globalization makes it challenging for teachers to keep abreast with language teaching trends (Kramsch, 2014); hence, the acquisition of language teaching knowledge may not be as important as the development of teacher identity (Kanno & Stuart, as cited in De Costa & Norton, 2017; Yazan, 2018). This statement holds true because both language learning and language teaching "is identity work" (De Costa & Norton, 2017, pp. 7-8). In other words, language teachers' identities serve as framework that guides their teaching practices (De Costa & Norton 2017; Yazan, 2017).

The topic of teacher identity has continued to receive strong interest in language education research since the past two decades (Kayi-Aydar, 2019; Norton, 2013). It is even said that there is an "urgent need for more research and closer examination on nonnative teachers' identity" (Zhang, 2016, p. 330). However, numerous studies on language teacher identity mostly center on professional identity and are concentrated to participants from the expanding circle. Studies on English teachers' language identity from the outer circle like the Philippines are scarce, even more so among those residing and teaching abroad.

To bridge the gap, the main purpose of this study is to explore the language identity and experiences of Filipino English teachers abroad to draw implications for the internationalization of English Education. Specifically, this study aimed to answer the following questions: (1) How do Filipino English teachers abroad view themselves as English speakers? (2) What are their language experiences while residing and teaching abroad?

This study is anchored on the theories of Norton-Peirce (1995) and Bucholtz and Hall (2005). Norton-Peirce (1995) opines that the learning of a second language can be attributed to investment instead of motivation as motivation, whether instrumental or integrative, "do not capture the complex relationship between relations of power, identity, and language learning (p. 17). On the other hand, if language learners invest in a second language, such process is done "with the understanding that they will acquire a wider

range of symbolic and material resources" (p. 17). Additionally, learners' social identity continues to remain complex as it is a site of struggle. It can also take multiple forms and is subject to change.

The other theory by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) posits that "identity is the social positioning of self and other" (p. 586). It views identity as emergent, positional, indexical, relational, and partial as "the process of identity construction does not reside within the individual" (p. 608).

Methodology

To achieve the purpose of this study, a qualitative study is more appropriate to generate in-depth discussion. The following section presents the specific research design, selection of research participants, and research setting. Discussion on data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations follows as well.

Research Design

The specific research design utilized for this study is narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry is the "study of experience understood narratively" (Clandinin & Huber, n.d., p. 1). It mainly utilizes narratives which may be oral or written (McAlpine, 2016). In particular, it may also take the form of "a short topical story about a particular event and specific characters" (Chase, 2010, p. 209). Since this study explores the language identity and experiences of selected participants, it is more apt to have them tell their stories. This is because people take part in [re]constructing selves when engaged in story telling (Chase, 2010; Cheng, 2016; McAlpine, 2016; Morgan 2017).

Selection of Participants

Purposive sampling was used in the selection of participants for this study. This sampling method is most suited for this study, which requires participants who can provide the best information needed for the topic under exploration (Creswell, 2014; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008). In other words, respondents of this study were chosen with the assumption that such individuals are "information-rich cases" (Wiersman & Jurs, 2009, p. 342).

The participants in this study are Filipino English teachers abroad. At first, eight Filipino English teachers were invited to take part in the study. Seven responded positively, but only five of them met the criteria. The selection criteria are as follows: (1) must be a Filipino English teacher currently residing and teaching abroad; (2) must be a BSEd English graduate in the Philippines; (3) must have lived abroad for at least two years; and, (4) must have taught English abroad for at least one year. The table that follows shows the profile of the respondents who took part in this study.

Table 1. *Participants' Profile*

Participant	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5
Sex	Female	Female	Female	Male	Male
Age	31	32	40	35	41
No. of Years Abroad	3	10	11	10	10
No. of Years Teaching English Abroad	3	10	8	10	2
Countries Resided	Japan	Ukraine, Poland, USA, France	South Korea, Thailand, Canada	Thailand	Thailand, UAE
Current Location	Japan	Poland	Canada	Thailand	UAE
Current Job Description	Asst. Language Teacher	6th Class General English Teacher	ELL Specialist	ESL and Tourism Teacher	Aviation Instructor

Research Setting

The five participants in the study come from three different continents—Asia (Southeast, East, Middle East), North America, and Europe—in the world. Due to geographical distance, asynchronous time, and full-time jobs of both participants and researcher, the study took place in the comfort of our own homes and/or living spaces in different parts of the world.

Data Collection

The data gathering, collection, and follow-up emails for clarifications and reminders mainly took place in the early months of 2019. Prior to the data gathering, a message explaining the nature of the study with an invitation to participate was sent to prospective participants. All, but one, responded and accepted the request to participate. Respondents were then screened based on the mentioned selection criteria. Once the participants in this study were finalized, they decided on their preferred method of data collection. Although one was amenable to a phone call, finding a common time to conduct the interview became a challenge. In the end, all agreed that email would be more practical and feasible. So, interview questions, and story and drawing prompts were sent through email. Once participants sent in their responses, their questionnaires and prompts were returned for follow-up questions and/or clarifications. This process was repeated until all answers were clarified and explained in-depth. It is worth noting that participants responded to the interview and story prompt as soon as they can, but the drawing prompt was disregarded. Although they did not outright express their discomfort in doing the drawing, their non-response was assumed as hesitance to tell their stories through the said medium. Hence, a journey log was given to replace the drawing prompt. Three of the participants sent their completed journey logs. The other two, however, no longer showed interest in completing their journey logs even after numerous reminders and follow-up messages were sent.

Data Analysis

Analysis of the written interviews and stories began as soon as participants sent their responses. Only the data gathered from the interviews and story prompt were included in the analysis since not all participants completed their journey log tasks. To analyze the data collected, a thematic analysis based on Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework was employed. The six recursive phases are familiarizing with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report.

Ethical Considerations

The respondents in this study were fully informed of the nature and purpose of the study prior to the commencement of data gathering and collection. Since the participants are either friends or acquaintances of the researcher, they readily accepted the opportunity to take part in the study, but they did so with the knowledge that they are free to withdraw from the study without prejudice. Some of them were not too keen about keeping their identities a secret when they were asked of their preferred pseudonyms. However, not everyone provided a pseudonym so a code (P1, P2, P3, P4, P5) was assigned to each of them based on the sequence of their responses. This is to ensure confidentiality and maintain anonymity. Moreover, their preferences (i.e., medium of data gathering), whether expressed explicitly or implicitly, were considered during the process of data collection.

Results and Discussion

This section presents the results of the analysis of data gathered from written interviews and stories sent via email and/or messenger. For referencing and confidentiality purposes, each participant was assigned a code based on the order of when their responses were received. Analyses were done considering existing related literature and previous studies conducted. Three major themes, with at least two sub-themes and categories, emerged from the data analysis. They are perceptions on English and nativeness, language identity, and language experiences.

Perceptions on English and Nativeness

To find out the language identity of Filipino English teachers abroad, their perceptions on the English language and who are the native speakers of the said language are relevant. Such perceptions would provide the context as to how these participants view themselves as speakers and teachers of English.

Perceptions on English

Two prevalent ideas emerged on how the participants view English: English as a language and English as a tool. The participants' view of English as a language is expected because after all, English is one of the many languages spoken around the world. Their idea of English as a language describes it as a "very important language" (P1), "one of the many languages" (P2), a common language (P4, P5), and a "lingua franca in tourism and business" (P4). It is also viewed as a language that is simple and easy to learn (P2, P3), to the point that it can be perceived as "quite boring and less challenging once you learn other languages" (P2). Nevertheless, it is a language that "continues to evolve and grow" due to globalization (P3).

English is also perceived as a tool. In particular, it is a "tool for communication" (P2), which has the propensity to "unif[y] people" (P1). Moreover, as a tool, it "gives [people the] opportunity to discover . . . the world" (P1). This idea is even taken further by one participant when he explained that English "would eventually dominate the world . . . [due] to its impact on better opportunities and quality of life" (P4).

Perceptions on Nativeness

Participants in this study are divided on their perceptions on nativeness. Some perceive nativeness by virtue of birth and others by virtue of proficiency. One participant who believes that nativeness is by virtue of birth explains that a native English speaker is "someone who grew up in an English-speaking country and uses English as a primary means of concept formation and communication" (P3). Another sees it in a similar way but further explains that the country where a person was born is not a main determinant of that speaker's nativeness. Native speakers are the "ones who are born and first learn or utter the English language irrespective of their country of birth" (P4).

Another perception on nativeness is by virtue of proficiency. Anyone who can "use [the] language anytime of the day with fluency and efficiency" (P2) is a native speaker. This idea is affirmed by another participant when he explained that "when one thinks and speaks the language . . . that qualifies him/her to be a native language user" (P5).

The first category of participants' perception about who the native speaker is, is a common folk definition of a native speaker. Such definition can even be found in Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics by Richards and Schmidt (2011), in which the first criterion given for the native speaker is that the person learned the language as a child. In as much as many would seem to agree with this notion, such criterion becomes problematic when one encounters an individual who exhibits high level of proficiency in a language but did not learn such language as a child. In addition, it has been argued that the concept of "the 'native speaker' [be viewed] as a "social construct" (Lowe, 2020, p. 22). Hence, the perception on nativeness by virtue of proficiency allows for a more inclusive perspective of who a native speaker is.

Language Identity

The theme language identity mainly answers the first research question of this study. How the participants see themselves as English speakers is reflected on how they own the English language and how closely tied they are to the English language.

English Ownership

Participants in this study either view themselves as non-native or native English speakers. Almost all the respondents (four out of five) see themselves as non-native English speakers. This stems from the

idea that native English speakers, in this case, Western English speakers, have superior English language ability than theirs. One explained that "although I have used the [English] language since I was a child . . . I don't think I am as fluent as them" (P1). Another clarified that she "only started learning English in high school and [her] English fluency and proficiency is not [up to] par with that of a native English speaker" (P3). These ideas on native speakerism are summed up in one participant's sentiment: "I do not consider myself an equal [to Western English speakers]" (P5). Despite these perceived inequalities between native and non-native English speakers, one participant attributes his being a non-native speaker based on his circumstances at birth and not on his perceived English proficiency. He explained that he "wasn't born [to] English-speaking parents and not surrounded that time with NES community" (P4). Further, "I believe that one can be fluent . . . and not necessarily be a native speaker" (P4).

Surprisingly, one of the participants view herself as a native English speaker. This view confirms their perception on nativeness by virtue of proficiency. Additionally, her view of herself as a native English speaker seems to be her self-affirmation of what others thought of her and her English language skills. She says,

> I consider myself a native speaker. Here in Europe, I am also considered as one wherever I work as an English teacher. . . . My job position . . . has always been 'native speaker.' I have developed a good sense of neutral accent that when I speak to English native speakers . . . they admitted I sound like one. (P2)

English Affinity

Another subtheme that reflected the participants' language identity is their affinity to the English language. Consistent to the pattern of the previous subthemes, participants are divided into two differing ideas. Some view English as their second language, while some see English as their primary language. These two ideas may not seem too different from each other, but in essence, those who declared that English is their second language seem to uphold their native language or mother tongue as a language that still play a major role in their lives. On the other hand, those who see English as their primary language have accepted that their current living situation requires them to heavily rely on and use English in their day-to-day functions.

Three participants (P1, P2, P4) agree that English is their second language. One explained that he "still consider[s] English as [his] second language even if [he] is using it everyday" (P4). Another explicitly affirmed her mother tongue as her first language, and English as her second. "Filipino is my mother tongue… I just can't think of any other language [aside from English] that could be my second" (P2).

As for the group who considers English as their primary language, one reasoned that this is because "I currently live in an English-speaking country" (P3). Another participant has the same sentiment even though he does not necessarily live in an English-speaking country. He wrote, "I consider it as my primary language because I think and reflect in English" (P5).

From the participants' accounts, it can be deduced that their language-related experiences, exposure to, and interaction with other speakers of English impact their confidence as speakers and users of English. Such assumption only serves to support Norton's theory on investment (Norton-Peirce, 1995; Norton, 2013) in that, participants who have stayed and worked longer abroad, seemed to have expended more effort in investing for their language learning and development. It is also worth noting that participants' language identity is revealed from how they view themselves as English speakers. Their experience and interactions with others contributed to how they see themselves as English speakers. Their ownership of English and their affinity to the language are best understood through the positional, indexical, and relational principles of identity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Basically, they identify themselves as speakers based on how they position other speakers in their immediate community.

Language Experiences

Participants in this study came from various parts of the globe. It is not, therefore, surprising to receive a wide range of language experiences while they stay and work abroad. Their stories about their language experiences abroad can be divided into three themes: language opportunities, language challenges, and coping strategies). These themes also consist of three subthemes each and answer the second research question.

Language Opportunities

Living and working abroad as teachers have provided the participants ample language opportunities. Such opportunities can be categorized as employment; socialization and friendship; and cultural, social, and intellectual enrichment.

Employment. Since all the participants in this study have, for some time, lived and gained employment abroad, most of them cited employment as one of the language opportunities an individual can gain abroad. One stated that "the demand to teach [English] is overwhelming" (P2). As a matter of fact, this participant professed that for the past nine years of her life abroad, she has been "living a rat race life teaching" for 12 hours a day during weekdays, and even on weekends. The other two (P3, P4) explained that with the English language, they were able to apply for and land a job. To expound, "English is the language I used when I applied for a job and had my job interviews. I teach English literacy to both Canadian and ELL students at school" (P3).

Another participant shared that "in a non-English speaking country like Thailand, there are always plenty of opportunities for English speakers. In my case, I was able to apply and got accepted in many prestigious and established English learning agencies. . . . I was also asked to do a short review on business English with government workers and engineers" (P4). From what they have shared, it is obvious that the ability to speak English well and the capacity to teach it brings employment opportunities.

Socialization and Friendship. As English teachers and fluent English speakers, participants recalled that locals and/or students seek them out outside their classrooms to spend time with them and practice their English at the same time. One elucidated that "being fluent in English gives [her] a passport to know people" (P1). In fact, this participant was invited to spend time with her friend's family over the weekend so "they can speak English with me during my time with them" (P1).

Another participant agreed that in places where people "are driven to learn English, most people . . . would love to have you around. They like to practice the language with you and learn your culture, or just plainly hang out" (P2). However, she was also quick to explain that the locals do not just befriend English teachers just because they are proficient with the English language. "Your ability to communicate well with them and understand them" (P2) factors in the socialization and friendship equation.

Cultural, Social, and Intellectual Enrichment. Another opportunity teaching English abroad brings is the chance to enhance one's cultural, social, and intellectual skills. For some, this chance takes in the form of doing missionary work or participating in outreach programs (P2, P4). One participant did not only have the privilege to teach students in the classroom but "in the midst of nature" (P2) when she went to India for mission work. She not only helped in the manual labor of building the school for the local children and youth, but also handled a few classes as a guest teacher. She described the experience as a humbling one as she got to experience firsthand the students' "eagerness to learn" despite the sacrifices they must make like crossing rivers or trekking for an hour to reach the school (P2).

For some participants, living and working abroad opened avenues for them to better themselves through their English language skills. One accepts speaking engagements (P5), while another "take courses and attend professional development sessions in English" (P3).

Indeed, English language related opportunities are limitless if one is ready to embrace the many chances for self-improvement that come their way. As one respondent aptly declared, "we get the privilege to move from one country to another, adopt the local lifestyle, get to learn the different cultures, and [gain] friends from everywhere" (P3).

Language Challenges

Teaching English abroad is an experience that is not exempt from challenges. The challenges participants encountered are incomprehensibility, feelings of inadequacy, and fluency atrophy.

Incomprehensibility. One major challenge that was mentioned is the problem with understanding others. It is common to face difficulty "understanding and comprehending the heavy accents from non-native English speakers" (P5). Basically, this participant struggle with comprehensibility with other speakers' use of English.

On the other hand, another participant's struggle with incomprehensibility is with herself not knowing other languages, particularly the local language (P2). From her account, she does not seem to view English as an answer to all her communication needs as her difficulty lies with her inability to speak the language of the locals where she is currently at.

Feelings of Inadequacy. Another difficulty participants encountered in their stay abroad is their feelings of inadequacy. One participant shared that she often encounters situations when she has "difficulty expressing [her] deep thoughts in English" (P3). She felt that native speakers communicate too fast for her to keep up with, and that she could have communicated her ideas much better and contribute more weighty thoughts if she had more time and that the conversation is conducted in a slower pace. Moreover, she admitted that she lacks "knowledge on the cultural reference when a native speaker uses slangs or jargons in their speeches" (P3).

For the other participant, her feelings of inadequacy stemmed from her inability to communicate in the local language. She expressed the necessity of learning even just the "basic of each language wherever [she is]" (P2). She learned this important lesson when she got stranded waiting for a train in the station because she could not understand the announcement. She felt mad that no consideration was given to foreigners, but later conceded that it is part of her responsibility to "learn the local language" to avoid similar incidents such as freezing in the cold late at night while waiting for a train to get home.

Fluency Atrophy. It is worth noting that only one participant voiced out this specific language-related difficulty, but it warrants a discussion because of how it was repeated in the participants' recounting of her experience. This participant shared that in her teaching work abroad, she had to use simpler English coupled with a lot of gestures. She explained that she had to "break down [her] English to bits and pieces so [her] colleagues, friends, and students can understand [her]" (P1). This communication practice, although helpful in her teaching work and social relations, makes her feel that she is steadily losing her English fluency. "I feel like I've lost my English fluency here [Japan] to be honest" (P1).

Coping Strategies

Living and working abroad has its opportunities and challenges. Nevertheless, if one has to thrive both in personal and professional life, they must learn how to cope. From what the participants shared about their experiences living and teaching abroad, learning the local language; practice, exposure, and integration; and self-awareness and open-mindedness emerged as subthemes under their coping strategies which helped made their work effective and their overall experience meaningful while living abroad.

Learning the Local Language. The participants are English teachers, but they have underscored the importance of learning the local language. One shared that despite the challenges of learning Nihongo, specifically with its language structure and characters, it is an important skill to acquire not just to get by when shopping, but also to understand correspondents and documents. She also quipped that Google Translate is her best friend as she "always have to use Google Translate" (P1).

Learning the local language is also important in avoiding situations that make one feel helpless. One participant shared that she uses the train for her daily commute. But when the management added one more train track, the schedule got changed and she was left standing in the cold. "Many nights, I stood in the freezing open station. I couldn't understand the announcement nor read the notices on the board. There were no trains for me for two hours! I was literally freezing at 10pm" (P3). Such experience taught her the invaluable lesson of learning even just the basic of the local language and not just to rely on English to get by.

Practice, Exposure, and Integration. For participants staying in a non-English speaking country, they find the practice of and constant exposure to the English language helpful (P1, P5). P3 takes this English practice and exposure strategy further by "take[ing] every opportunity to practice and learn the cultural integration of the English language." Additionally, she also "participate[s] in meaningful interactions with native speakers to improve [her] listening skills and advance [her] knowledge in lexical phrases or expressions" (P3).

If cultural integration for P3 means engaging in meaningful discourse with native speakers, for another participant, integration takes in the form of speaking the local language of the place where she is at (P2). Both accounts make sense as the native language of the place where P3 is at is English, while for P2, it is something else. As a matter of fact, English does not hold as much importance for P2 as it does for P3. For the former, "English becomes just a means of general language for everyone to communicate," but she "honestly find[s] English boring after encountering Russian, Polish, French, German, Norsk" and other European languages. Such declaration reveals her appreciation of the native language of the places she has lived and worked in. It also helps explain her idea of integration through learning the local language.

Self-Awareness and Open-Mindedness. Another important strategy for coping is self-awareness and open-mindedness. By being self-aware, one can better understand their difficulties and challenges. As a result, they can pursue steps to tackle the challenges they face (P3). For P4, working abroad naturally provides one with the avenue to widen their perspectives. He believes that meeting different people from various cultural background enhances one's cross-cultural IQ. He also believes that the "higher your cross-cultural IQ, the more open-minded you become" (P4). For this participant, then, open-mindedness seems to be a natural consequence of being exposed to different people of diverse background. He also emphasized that despite the challenges one experiences while living and working abroad, it is best to realize that "it is the heart that connects everyone effectively" (P4).

In general, it can be said that Filipino English teachers' experiences while working abroad may vary, but they are all similar in the way they contribute to the participants' language identities. For example, the participant (P2) who is constantly surrounded by English speakers tend to view English as a necessity and continually desires to improve her language skills to be considered up to par with her 'native speaker' counterparts. Thus, her appointment as an ELL specialist and her recognition as a literacy teacher to native English-speaking children brought her a "profound sense of success" (P2). In contrast, someone (P3) who has been surrounded by English speaking 'non-native speakers' and lived in countries where they seem to hold foreigners responsible for learning the local language tend to view English as simply a language for communication but does not necessarily appoint it much power over their overall success. It can then be implied that one's identity is an emergent outcome of their experience and environment. Additionally, their declared language identities are still bound to change as they gain more exposure and different experiences. Therefore, it can also be understood that their expressed identities are still partial accounts, and that it is normal, even expected, to have multiple identities. Finally, it is likely for participants to struggle with their identities if they encounter situations that present "inequitable social forces" (Norton-Peirce, 1995, p. 20).

Based on the result and analyses of the study, the following conclusion are drawn:
- The length of time spent residing and teaching abroad determines teachers' confidence in their ability as an English speaker.
- Exposure to and interaction with other English speakers influence how teachers' view themselves as language speakers.
- Teachers' language-related experiences continue to [re]shape their language identities.

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn, the following are recommended as part of the initiative to internationalize English education:
- Incorporate narratives in English Education courses.
- Provide English education students learning opportunities to [re]construct and analyze their language identities in class.

- Introduce critical analysis of issues like language and power and native speaker ideology in TESL/TESOL courses.
- Integrate lessons that promote appreciation for different varieties of English (World Englishes, Global English).

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Beauty and the Patriarchal Beast: Men and their Roles in Women Want(h)ing(s) in Colleen Hoover's *It Ends With Us*

Camille Abegail R. Riva, Michael S. Naidas, Kathleen B. Flores,
Arjem Noryn C. Agum, Eunice M. Aclan
Adventist University of the Philippines

Abstract

This paper aimed to examine the themes of domestic violence and the roles of men and their treatment of women in a household context as seen through Colleen Hoover's bestselling novel *It Ends With Us*. Descriptive-analytical approach was employed in interpreting the novel's underpinnings. Elements of the novel were delved through the lenses of Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytic approach, Biographical Criticism, and Ainsworth and Bowlby's Attachment Theory. Thorough analysis of the novel's elements reflects both the positive (provider and protector) and negative (abuser, controller, and possessor) roles of men and their treatment of women. Furthermore, the novel revealed that women dealt with the treatment they received from men through the following stages: denying the acts of abuse, fathoming the occurrence of abuse, creating an outlet to curtail abuse, and breaking the pattern of abuse. It can be concluded that *It Ends With Us* echoes the voice of a female author who witnessed domestic violence and reflects the events through a written work. Through this study, contemporary literature is not only viewed as a form of entertainment among young people, but also as a reflection of the concealed reality that lies beyond closed doors, not only in the contemporary Philippine culture, but anywhere in the world.

Keywords: *contemporary literature, patriarchy, biographical literature, abusive relationship, domestic violence*

Literature can precisely depict an ideal or undesirable relationship than other types of pop culture, as the features of a novel show more vivid variations of discourse and character development. Giroux (2013) added that violence is universal, and it is not just reflected in pop culture; it is produced through it, too. Authors especially women, are composing narratives that urge readers to ponder about domestic violence and mental health issues, which are on-going contemporary social justice issues that are still frequently taboo (Brantmeier, 2007). Domestic violence is a repeating theme among fictional men, and frequently their horrors are the essence of the story (Mullins, 2016). Thus, this study pointed out the issue of domestic violence using Colleen Hoover's contemporary novel, *It Ends With Us*. In this discourse, the connection between social conduct – domestic and intimate partner violence – and creative expressions through the analysis of a novel, in contributing methodologies on addressing the issue was investigated. The importance of this research to the role of women in the society was also explored.

This paper considered how popular literature can make arguments and points in connection with the issue of domestic violence. Individuals consider literature to be as giving an impetus to readers to intervene upon oneself by utilizing the narrative content to admit the maltreatment to themselves and possibly others as a step to seeking for help and healing (Nestor, 2016). To justify the title of this study, the words Beauty and *Patriarchal Beast* represent women and men in the household context. Patriarchal Beast are men who perpetrate the abusive treatment on women. On the other hand, *Beauty* is used to encapsulate women in an abusive home. The word *want(h)ing(s)* in the title of this study stands for women's wants which are being affected by men's roles as traced in the novel.

No known investigation or discussion was done about the novel. In relation to the novel and its theme of domestic violence, other related studies which highlights the issue of intimate partner violence were also considered. Studies about the aforementioned issue can be found on the context of research but not in the field of literature. Moreover, studies which pertain to this genre was still scarce during the conduct of the study which makes it a potential area for investigation particularly those in the field of literature. Through this study, the the association among the social and psychological factors and the characters' representations that contribute to the novel's underpinnings were strengthened. Colleen Hoover's *It Ends with Us* shows the characters' development through a series of psychological phenomena that delivers empirical facts presented in the study.

This study answered the following research questions:

1. How do the novel's elements reflect men's roles and their treatment of women?
2. How do women in the novel deal with the treatment they received?
3. How are the author's personal experiences reflected in the principal characters life?

Methodology

This research was based on the directed approach of qualitative content analysis to interpret the gathered data. Descriptive-analytical approach was utilized to present men and their roles in women's "wants" through the looking glass of Colleen Hoover's, It Ends With Us, which is the primary source of data for this study. This study used three approaches: (a) Freud's Psychoanalytic Criticism (Freud, 2014), (b) Ainsworth and Bowlby's Attachment Theory (Scharfe, 2017), and (c) Johnson's Biographical Criticism (Griffith, 2004). Freud's Psychoanalysis was used to study the novel's elements specifically the male and female primary characters. Biographical criticism helped the researcher to further delve in the life of the author, Colleen Hoover. This approach was also used to analyze the impetuses of the author and how these impetuses are related to the novel's main character, Lily. The author and the main character were linked using Ainsworth and Bowlby's Attachment Theory which discussed how the subjects' relationships contribute to the underpinning of the novel and how men's roles affect women in the novel. Another source of data gathered by the researcher was a statement coming from the author herself through electronic mail claiming that, "the author's note at the end of the book encompasses everything in full on how it (the novel) relates to my (Hoover's) life" (Personal Communication, Hoover, 2019).

Results and Discussion

After a close reading and analysis of Colleen Hoover's *It Ends With Us* (2016), the researcher found numbers of psychological and biographical underpinnings of the novel through men's roles and how these roles affect women in the novel. The following findings were drawn:

Men's Roles and Their Treatment of Women as Mirrored Through the Novel's Elements

In the novel, men figures portray roles and behaviors that foregrounds the socially constructed façade of men being dominant over women. These roles brought conspiracy on how men treat women positively and negatively as presented in the novel. Through the novel's elements and Freud's Concept of the Id, Ego, and Superego, three primary men characters in the novel to analyze their portrayed roles were examined. These three men characters--- Andrew Bloom (Lily's father), Ryle Kincaid (Lily's husband), and Atlas Corrigan (Lily's ex-boyfriend), depict positive and negative roles that prompt the development of the protagonist throughout the novel. The roles of men in the novel were cited as follows:

Positive Role: Men as Provider and Protector

Provider. In the novel, two men figures play the role of a provider or financial support to women which is highlighted in this study. First, the novel discloses the protagonist's father, Andrew Bloom, as a *respectable man who brings honor to his family*. Lily describes his father as an "*adored mayor of my hometown of Plethora, Maine*" and "*owner of the most successful real-estate agency*" (p. 4). In line with the protagonist's description of her father, men, as proposed by Aina (1998), are classed as having the following characteristics: strong, vigorous, confident, and having the capacity to meet the outside world through leadership. Working as a mayor, Andrew is being regarded by the people for being a dedicated leader. Andrew Bloom's figure being head of his household (as father) and head of the society (as a mayor), emphasizes his role of being a provider. Second is the protagonist's husband, Ryle Kincaid, who is perceived as the parallel character of Lily's father, Andrew Bloom. Ryle is a successful neurosurgeon, and Lily has similar description of her father to Ryle; "*He is compassionate. He is caring. He is smart. He is charismatic. He is driven.*" (p. 357). The description Lily has for the two men figures fits their roles as a provider, having the best jobs in Boston.

Protector. Society and literature consider men as individuals having the capability to protect women and children. As Burlingham (1973) pointed out, Freud saw patriarchy more positively–as a protector. Atlas Corrigan plays a significant role in the protagonist's life as her childhood ex-boyfriend. As initially labelled in page 21, he was a "homeless guy" whom Lily helped secretly for several months for Atlas to survive. It is mentioned how Lily recounts Atlas in one of her diary entries this way:

"*Dear Ellen…some people just have a calming presence about them and he's one of those people. Completely opposite of my father*" (p. 65).

In Lily's old diary (which she calls Ellen Diaries since she addressed the entries to Ellen DeGeneres), she writes how Atlas used to comfort her whenever her father is being obnoxious to her mother (p. 154). She runs to Atlas just to tell him how mad and depressed she is. Atlas calms Lily with rational thoughts by telling her negative situations and how moral demands guides a person's impulses on the right thing to do. According to Freud, this is the work of the Superego. The Superego works to suppress the urges of the id and tries to make the ego behave morally, rather than realistically. Because Ryle portrays abusive role in the novel, Atlas, in contrast, has been Lily's protector from Ryle. Atlas assured Lily that he (Atlas) "*would never apologize for defending you* (Lily)" (p. 206). One time when Ryle loses his sanity, Lily frantically looks for help turning out that she memorized Atlas' contact number and dials it. There, Atlas came and helped Lily escape from Ryle.

Atlas' ego acts, according to Freud in his concept of Ego, as the decision-making component of personality (Freud, 2004). It is the component that deals with the demands of reality. Lily's case situates Atlas in the dilemma of leaving Lily alone with Ryle or helping her escape from Ryle. Ideally, the ego

works by reason. In Lily's case, Atlas must make a rational and realistic decision to solve the conflict, which is Lily being abused by her husband. Atlas then ends up helping Lily as what the situation demands him to do. Atlas' decision to help Lily is his ego, telling him what seems right to do as dictated by the reality. As discussed, men's positive roles, being the provider and protector in the story contributed to women's journey specifically to women's wants and needs.

Negative Roles: Men as Possessor, Controller, and Abuser

Some events in the novel that shows negative roles of men based on Freud's concept of the Id which was traced in the novel's men figures and how these men treat women were also cited. The symbolisms in the novel rendered by Ryle's and Andrew's characters, in one way or another, relates to their roles and their treatment of women. Ryle, being a surgeon, is a significant symbolism which may be associated with the concept of life and death- threatening as it is termed. Moreover, Andrew's character being a Mayor of Plethora, and owner of real-estate agency, are symbolisms that highlights his role of being dominant (mayor) and possessive (businessman). These roles symbolized and foreshadowed the superiority and abusive acts that Andrew performs in the novel. The following are the cited findings:

Possessor. The novel first displays the character of Ryle Kincaid with a possessive personality. Ryle expresses this behavior when he mentioned that the only thing he wants in life was success and that he does not want to have children. Lily asked him whether he was talking about "*professional success? Or social Success?*", Ryle replied with "Both" (p. 22). This motivation of men as represented by Ryle's character is explained in Freud's concept of the Id, as the most primitive part of the human mind, acts according to the "pleasure principle" – the psychic force that motivates the tendency to seek immediate gratification of any impulse (Freud, 1908). Success brings gratification towards oneself and the society. Characterizing other man figure in the novel, Lily's father, Andrew Bloom, who shows similar traits as well, which according to Lily is "selfish and greed" (p. 118).

Andrew Bloom is a mayor who is expected to be compassionate to his people, yet one incident in the novel reveals his domineering trait. Lily narrated how his father refused to help an old man and as stated in her Ellen Diary, she narrates: "*I asked my dad if we could give him (old man) some money and he told me no, that he works hard for his money and he wasn't about to let me give it away…and people like my father are the problem*" (p. 118). Through this event in the novel, the character shows how Andrew's desire for his own takes over him. The Id, according to Freud, is the most selfish part of our mind. Freud stated that the Id knows no judgements of value: no good and evil, no morality – only the fulfillment of immediate desires (Freud, 1908).

Controller. A controlling person usually stems from deep-rooted insecurity that the person attempts to deny or suppress. Instead of reflecting and working on this self-doubt, one tries to gain control over others to make themselves feel the power they lack (Mazur & Booth, 1998). With this definition, the novel demonstrated how Ryle's character changes from being abusive to a sweet, gentle husband to Lily. There was one incident when Ryle found out Atlas' contact number inside Lily's phone case. When Lily tried to chase the furious Ryle, he pushed Lily down the stairs, and she went unconscious. When Lily finally gained consciousness and was able to confront Ryle, she asked him to leave her apartment, but Ryle told her, in a "*now calm and gentle voice*" that "*Lily, you fell down the stairs, about five minutes ago…You're hurt, Lily. I'm not leaving you alone*" (p. s234). This manner displayed by Ryle according to psychology, is a kind of manipulation called gaslighting, a dominant behavior found in an abuser who deceitfully uses manipulative strategies such as making the victim feel confused about herself, such as making the victim imagine things and giving them "crazy-making" statements (Dorpat, 1996).

Explaining the connection between two individuals in gaslight setting, Stern (2007) categorizes it into a gaslighter and a gaslightee. The novel depicts this kind of connection between the characters of Andrew Bloom and Jenny Bloom (Lily's parents). Lily explained how her father would hit her mother and then spend the next two weeks making up for it. Lily recalls her childhood, witnessing her parents as she imparts on how her father make it up for them; "*he would do things like buy her (Jenny) flowers or take*

us out for a nice dinner…he would buy me stuff because he knew I hated it when they fought" (p. 17). This makes Andrew Bloom the gaslighter, and Jenny Bloom and Lily as the gaslightees in this novel.

Abuser. An abuser may perform the act through a pattern of physical, emotional, or psychological abuse. As stated by Graham and Rawlings (1991), the abused and abuser might be dating, living together, wedded, divorced, or separated. The novel foregrounds the abusive relationship of the principal character, Lily, and her mother with their husbands which portrays numerous incidents that showed how Andrew (Lily's father) abused Jenny (Lily's mother). Lily brings back the readers to how Andrew perpetrated Jenny, by reading Lily's Ellen Diaries as flashbacks of her childhood. There, Lily recounts the first incident where Andrew backhanded Jenny and knocked her straight to the floor (p. 64). Another entry from Lily's diary was the above-mentioned incident which takes place in the garage where Andrew hurt Jenny for occupying his parking space.

These occurrences convey how women in the guise of Jenny and Lily in the novel are being battered by the head of their household. The same physical abuse is also evident in Ryle's behavior towards Lily where Ryle pushed Lily in the kitchen which left an injury on Lily's eyes (p. 230). Given that psychological abuse helps the abuser to take control of every situation, as pictured in the novel, both Andrew and Ryle came up to a severe act of abuse which involves physical, emotional, psychological maltreatment, and sexual abuse. This negative roles of Ryle and Andrew being a possessor, controller, and abuser, represents the patriarchal culture's role of showing dominance and authority over women.

Table 1 depicts the positive and negative roles of men and their treatment of women. The table presents men figures and their portrayed roles as mirrored through the novel's elements--- characterization, dialogues, symbolism/significations, and the protagonist's point of view. Such underpinnings are also product of the analysis and interpretation of the novel and its primary characters through Freud's Psychoanalysis.

Table 1. *Analysis of Men's Role Through Characterization, Dialogues, Symbolisms, and Protagonist's Point of View*

	Andrew Bloom	Ryle Kincaid	Atlas Corrigan
Characterization	- Father of the protagonist. - Head of the household (father) and his community (Mayor).	- Husband of the protagonist. - Superior in his field (neurosurgeon). - Has psychological trauma. - Parallel to Andrew Bloom	- Ex-boyfriend of the protagonist. - Calm - From "homeless" to a successful man.
Dialogues	*N/A	"You married a neurosurgeon. You are not necessarily strapped for cash".	"I would not apologize for defending you".
Symbolism/signification	- Mayor of plethora. - Owner of real-estate agency. **Power and possession.**	- neurosurgeon **Threatening; Life and Death.**	- Chef/went to military. Care and protection
Protagonist's point of view	- "he said he works hard for his money and he wasn't about to let me give it away". - "my father is abusive."	- "I'm in love with a man who physically hurts me."	- "some people have a calming presence and he's one of those people. Opposite of my father".

Characters	Andrew Bloom	Ryle Kincaid	Atlas Corrigan
Rendered Roles	Provider Abuser Possessor Controller	Provider Abuser Possessor Controller	Protector

Andrew Bloom, Lily's father does not have any dialogue in the novel.

How Women Dealt With the Treatment They Received From Men

This area of this study discussed its relevance in the society on how women cope with domestic violence. The study also presents awareness among society on why some women stay in an abusive relationship as reflected in the women characters in the novel. Freud's psychoanalytic aspects emphasizes the understanding of an individual's personality and how one deals with the impulses around. Under the pressure of anxiety, the human's ego is sometimes forced to make extreme measures to relieve the pressure (Freud, 2004). These measures are called defense mechanism which function is to deny and falsify reality that may be too hard and painful to accept (Tyson, 2006). Hence, along this area of study, the researcher organized women's coping through the following stages which are based on Health Talk Organization's *Women's coping strategies for domestic violence and abuse* (2020). Results may or may not include defense mechanisms:

First Stage: Denying the Acts of Abuse

Denying and rationalizing are ways for women to believe that what is happening to them is a 'normal' part of life and relationships. As defense mechanisms, denial and rationalization happen side by side when one does not accept the truth of a situation, satisfying the id through rationalizing their behavior or other's behavior (Rajeevan, 2011). The protagonist, Lily Bloom, and her mother, Jenny Bloom, displayed these defense mechanisms over the abuse they experienced. For instance, Jenny Bloom, would cover up most of the injuries she gets to hide the wrong doings of her husband to most people. In an incident where Andrew raped Jenny with Lily watching at the kitchen, Jenny told Lily not to call the police since Andrew has a reputation to their town as a mayor. Instead, Jenny told Lily that, "*he's* (Andrew) *drunk…Just let him sleep it off and it'll be better tomorrow*" (p. 155). Jenny, justifying Andrew's behavior, is a known kind of defense mechanism---rationalization. According to Freud, rationalization is a reasonable opinion that is used by people to reduce anxiety brought by their unacceptable reality (Boeree, 2006). Alongside rationalization is denial. This can be seen in an episode where Lily and Jenny both deny Andrew's abusive conduct on the scene in their garage wherein Andrew threw Lily off which caused a cut on her forehead. Jenny told Lily to "*tell them you slipped on the ice*" (p. 110), to cover up the incident. On Lily's Ellen Diaries, she recounts that "*things that hurt her* (Jenny) *just get swept under the rug, never to be brought up again*" (p. 156).

Second Stage: Fathoming the Occurrence of Abuse

Abusers often try to influence the senses of what is real for the victim (McKee & Payne, 2013), known as gaslighting. One will further realize the abuse if the perpetrator shows constant possessiveness and controlling attitude. This will later lead to a repetitive physical, emotional, sexual, or psychological maltreatment showing the signs of abusive relationship. It can be inferred in the novel that Lily understood that Ryle was being abusive to her when Ryle pushed her down the stairs. This can be pictured from her line: "*…here I am with bruises and cuts on my body at the hands of the man who is supposed to love me. At the hands of my own husband*" (p. 243). Lily then completely realized that she was in an unhealthy relationship after receiving a cycle of abuse from her husband. Any woman like Lily and her mother, can be a victim of domestic violence, and hide this truth from people. However, if the abuse becomes a norm, the victim then realizes that the relationship could be a detrimental one. Once a victim accepts the reality, one will try to minimize the abuse through building channels and diverting one's focus away from the abuse.

Third Stage: Creating an Outlet to Curtail Abuse

An abused woman's outlet and the social support she has may reduce the impact of abuse on mental health. Building an outlet that will make the victim less stressed and more relieved about her surroundings will benefit the mental health of abused women. Experience of domestic violence is moderated by perceived social support and affects mental health outcomes of the victim (Lortkipanidze & Javakhishvili, 2012).

At the first part of the story where Lily was reminiscing her childhood, she mentioned that, "*my* (her) *outlet used to be gardening. Anytime I was stressed, I'd just go out to the backyard and pull every single weed I could find*" (p. 6). As gardening used to be Lily's outlet during her childhood when they were still residing at Maine, this outlet develops to a more than just a "small garden" into a now "Flower Shop" which she owns as she moved to Boston. This could also be a representation of how she grows from a teen girl represented by her small garden, into a woman, represented by a flower shop---as her name "Lily Bloom" suggests. These two related images (small garden and flower shop) were also suggesting a transition on how she moved from a cycle of her life being a "girl" to a "married woman" (just as how she moved from Maine to Boston). This turn in the story evoked how Lily used outlets to vent her emotions into something that is not harmful to anyone. In psychology, this is termed as sublimation, which was proposed by Anna Freud, daughter of Sigmund Freud. Through sublimation, people can transform unwanted impulses into something just like an outlet that is harmless and often n helpful. In a research done in Jakarta, Indonesia by Feist & Feiit (2014), it is specified that people like Lily drop their anxious feeling to another person or object to reduce their anxious feeling. In Lily's case it is her Ellen Diaries that serves as the object and Ellen DeGeneres as the person wherein Lily releases her anxiety. This type of defense mechanism is called displacement. Displacement runs by redirecting unacceptable urges onto a variety people or objects so that the original impulse is disguised or concealed (Feist & Feist, 2014).

Fourth Stage: Breaking the Pattern of Abuse

As women stay in an abusive home, circumstances and situations bring them to anxiety which causes them to question the legitimacy of what is happening around including the people as well. A psychologist writer, McLeod (2009), claimed that some defense mechanisms are considered more "mature." Two such "mature" strategies are sublimation and intellectualization.

Intellectualization as defense mechanism is employed for a range of reasons mainly to minimize one's anxiety. It is when a person avoids emotional aspects and focuses on quantitative facts of the situation that affects a person's reasoning. As for the characters in the novel, intellectualization was seen in Lily's behavior when she chose to disregard her yearning for Ryle to be their baby's father by staying together as a complete family, and for Ryle to stay as her husband. These logics allowed Lily to ignore her emotional viewpoints towards Ryle--- her desire for him to be a good father, and her desire for him as her husband, to come up to a more rational decision. Analyzing Jenny Bloom's (Lily's mother) response on her abusive relationship with her husband, Andrew Bloom, can also be inferred that intellectualization which is mentioned as a "matured" defense mechanism, yet has its characteristic of being unhealthy when employed. Though it is revealed that Jenny chose to stay with Andrew for Lily's sake, Lily realized the difference between the choice she made and her mother's choice in her line:

"*...the difference between the two of us (Lily and Jenny) is that she had more to worry about. She didn't have the financial stability that I have. She didn't have the resources to leave and give me what she thought was a decent shelter. She didn't want to take me away from my father when I was used to living with both parents. I have a feeling reasoning kicked her a time or two*" (p. 282).

By deciding to stay with the abuser, Jenny ignored her own feelings and endured the emotional maltreatment for Lily to get a better life she thought she cannot provide. Thus, making Jenny deny that her husband was abusive despite understanding the purpose of staying with him. This type of intellectualization Jenny had shown was explained as an unhealthy one since it harms the victim rather than saving them from the abuse. With the use of Freud's psychoanalysis and the concept of defense

mechanism, the researcher comes up with the conclusion that women deal with men's treatment gradually through stages as while staying in an abusive relationship. Table 2 highlights how women deal with men's abusive treatment.

Table 2. *Women's Defense Mechanism on Dealing with Men's Treatment*

Defense Mechanism	Definition	Event
Denial	Occurs when you refuse to accept reality or facts.	Both Lily and Jenny deny the abuse from their husbands.
Sublimation	Redirects anxiety or strong feelings into an object or activity that is appropriate and safe.	Gardening as Lily's outlet whenever she is stressed.
Displacement	Directs strong emotions and frustrations toward a person or object that doesn't feel threatening	The *Ellen Diaries* of Lily addressed to Ellen DeGeneres as if Lily is talking to Ellen.
Rationalization	Justifies the behavior of self or other people in order for a person to move to believe in.	Both Lily and Jenny justifies the abusive behavior of their husbands.
Intellectualization	Removes all emotion from one's responses and instead focus on quantitative facts.	• Lily decides to ignore the emotional aspects which tells her to forgive Ryle. She focuses on Ryle's abusive behavior and led her to end their relationship. • Jenny ignores her own safety and decides to stay with her abusive husband in order to give her daughter (Lily) a better life. Jenny

Principal Character's Life as Reflected in the Author's Personal Experiences

Biographical literary piece as an account of person's life is usually published in the form of a book, essay, or films. A work is biographical if it covers all about a person's life. As such, biographical works are usually nonfiction, but fiction can also be used to portray a person's life. In this case, biography of the author in his or her literary work was reflected in the story (Griffith, 2004). In this study, Colleen Hoover's *It Ends With Us* shows how Hoover's personal experiences are reflected in the text inside a character—an individual fictionalized persona. There are glimmers of Hoover's life that exist in the texts, and when are compiled together, the evidence is revealed.

To show the parallelism between Hoover's experiences and the main character's life portrayal in the novel *It Ends With Us*, the researcher evaluates the events and themes in the novel and compares it to the author's note page 368 of the book. Henceforth, the information given by the author herself through electronic mail with the researcher are utilized in this study. Through thorough reading and analysis of the gathered sources, the following results are obtained:

Parallel Encounter: Experience of Abuse as the Novel's Central Theme

The novel highlights the theme of abuse as seen in both the life of the main character, Lily, and her mother, Jenny. As discussed above, it can therefore be depicted that both characters suffered from an abusive relationship. This theme of the novel gives way on the fact that the author herself came from an abusive home as well.

Upon writing the novel, Hoover mentions in the author's note that "It (the novel) was the most grueling thing I have ever written. At times, I wanted to hit the Delete button and take back the way Ryle treated Lily" (p. 372). Considering this statement, it can be realized from the previous discussions that Ryle is an abusive husband to Lily, yet Hoover thought of changing the protagonist's character with a "more resilient woman—who made all the right decisions at all the right times". However, Hoover continues with "But those weren't the story I was telling. I wanted to write something realistic to the situation my mother was in." This affirmation from the author is supported by the author's personal response to the researcher, saying that "I was very young when my parents were together, but I remember the abuse" (Personal Communication, Hoover, 2019). Hoover also mentioned that "I (She) relate to Lily personally more in her childhood than adulthood". The previous discussions showed that during Lily's childhood, she witnessed the abuse between her mother and her father. Consequently, Hoover also witnessed the same point between her parents when she was two years old (Author's note, p. 368). With these primary sources, it can therefore be safe to say that the story covers two portions of the author's life: first, Hoover's experience as a witness of abuse, as reflected in the character of a young-Lily; and second, the abuse which Hoover's mother, Vannoy, experienced as reflected in the character of the adult-Lily.

Parallel Characters: Real Person's Experiences as Represented by Fictitious Characters

Biographical criticism states that to comprehend the content of a literary text, a critic would have to decipher certain allusions or references based on the writer's life account. These allusions include characters from the novel (Olsen, 2009). Thus, the researcher cited and analyzed the novel's characters which may be parallel as from the author's life story.

The first and the most vivid character allusion is the protagonist, Lily, which is mentioned above as reference to two people--- the young-Lily as a reflection of the author's childhood and the adult Lily as the author's mother. Supporting this inquiry, the author proclaims that "*I (Hoover) fashioned Lily after my (her) mother in many ways. They are both caring, intelligent, strong women who simply fell in love with men who didn't deserve to fall in love at all*" (p. 371). The young Lily which alludes to Hoover's childhood is mentioned previously as a witness of abuse between her mother and father. Whereas the author's description of her mother being "*intelligent, strong woman*" makes reflection to Lily for deciding on leaving Ryle and being a strong-independent mother. The author also highlights the fact about her mother, Vannoy, leaving Eddie, the author's father as written on the author's note, "*...she (Hoover's mother) took the necessary steps to break the pattern before it broke us*" (p. 370). With the women characters alluding to the author and her mother, men character allusions are also analyzed. Character allusions help in deciphering the content of a literary piece with the available information about the author. Hossain (2017) also added that Psychoanalysis is the theory that views character association and the elements of character to aid psychoanalytic critics. Its interpretations have turned out to be one of the instruments to discover the concealed meaning of a literary piece. With this method, the fictional characters that refers to individual from the author's psyche. These character allusions are crucial aids to fathoming a biographical literary work.

Parallel Coping Strategy: Use of Matured Defense Mechanism

As remarked on the prior investigation in this paper, some defense mechanisms are considered more "matured." Two such "matured" strategies are sublimation and intellectualization (McLeod, 2009). The protagonist's (Lily) way of utilizing sublimation as defense mechanism analyzed from the novel is by putting up a small garden which later grew into her own business--- a successful flower shop. Sublimation as defined by Anna Freud is the use of outlets to vent one's emotions into something that isn't harmful to anyone.

With regards to the Hoover's use of sublimation, writing stories just like this novel is one way for her to release repressed emotions. In the author's personal blog titled *A Raw Blog Post*, she wrote "*I wasn't writing for a paycheck, I was writing because I had to, I wanted to, and I longed to…I hope these feelings will always be the foundation of every book I complete*" (Hoover, 2014). Another defense mechanism from

the novel which has an equivalent to the author's personal account is intellectualization. This defense mechanism was observed in the character of Lily's mother, who may also be parallel to Hoover's mother. It was said that Jenny, protagonist's mother, utilized intellectualization by staying in an abusive relationship so as for Lily to grow up with a complete family. Another reason was to secure that Lily will get all her needs since Jenny is economically incapable compared to her husband Andrew, who is capable of providing for Lily. This picture of Jenny in the novel is the exact mechanism Hoover's mother used. In the author's note, Hoover mentioned that "she (Hoover's mother) was a mother of two daughters by then and had no money. And unlike Lily, my mother didn't have a lot of support" (p. 370). This situation similar to Jenny's portrayal in the novel leads both women to ignore unnecessary feeling like sympathy for themselves. In this instance, Hoover and Jenny's anxiety both came from their concerns towards their daughters. By deciding to stay in an abusive relationship for the sake of their daughters, their anxieties are lessened. In this discussion implied the use of sublimation and intellectualization, the termed "matured" defense mechanism, are herewith proven evident in both the women in the novel and in the author's personal account.

Parallel Connection: Mother-Daughter Relationship in an Abusive Home

To explain the parallel connection of the mother-daughter relationship between the novel and the author's personal account, the researcher looked separately on the type of attachment the protagonist established in the novel, and the author's attachment using the information gathered about the author. This method is based on the psychological fact that attachment with the primary caregivers, specifically the maternal caregiver, impact one's relationship with others. A child forms expectation of reliability and accessibility of their caregivers, as well as the safety and security that these attachment figures provide. The said attachment may be a secure attachment or an insecure attachment (Ainsworth & Bowlby,1956).

There were people who are only capable of forming insecure attachments. In basic terms, insecure attachment is a relationship style where the bond is contaminated by fear (Bowlby, 1944). These first few bonds were the foundation of the type of relationships one forms later in life (McDonald et al., 2006). As the novel unveils Lily's development throughout the novel, it is shown how Lily compares herself to her mother, as Lily also experienced being in an abusive relationship just like her mother. In psychology, this phenomenon of redirecting similar emotions or may be a familiar situation that were originally experienced in childhood, into one's reality is called transference (Kramer,1994). Lily's transference was closely related to a Father-Oedipal Complex: subconsciously being attracted to someone who reminds one of his/her father or the opposite of it (Freud, 2004). Both of these features of Father-Oedipal Complex were seen in Lily's character development. Since, Lily sees Atlas as a complete opposite of her father, she became attracted to him, though Atlas left for a long time. Transference parallel to Lily and her mother's is the consequence of the type of attachment which Lily established with her mother during her childhood. While Lily is witnessing how her mother deals with the abusive relationship her mother was involved, Lily is subconsciously recreating the representation her mother showed during Lily's childhood.

Furthermore, one's traumatic childhood does not always mean having an insecure attachment. Research has found differences between individuals according to their attachment pattern. In contrast with insecure attachment, secure attachments report more positive self-esteem and regard for others, greater maturity, and feel comfortable engaging in friendship and intimate relationships with others without fear of closeness or distance (Sharpsteen & Kirkpatrick, 1997). The author clarifies that she relates to Lily during her childhood--- a witness of violence in their home at the age of two. Though unlike Lily, Hoover didn't mention having difficulty with her intimate relationship. The abuse she had witnessed in her parents was never repeated or seen in her own relationship with others. In fact, Hoover is happily married to her husband, Heath, with their 3 sons. In the novel's acknowledgement, Hoover mentioned that she "*couldn't have chosen a better person to father her my (her) children and spend the rest of my (her) life with*" (p. 376).

This fact shows that despite of the numerous researches showing how witnessing IPV leads to one person's insecure attachment on future relationship, one may still use the traumatic experiences in building a secure attachment towards others. Though there were possibilities that Hoover could have developed

an insecure attachment, one factor made Hoover build a secure attachment. This is her mother's effort to serve as an example among her daughters for leaving their father earlier than Lily's mother in the novel. Another factor is the presence of Hoover's stepfather, Vance, who attends to their family's emotional and psychological needs, playing the role of a father figure epitome. These factors reduced the exposure of children to IPV and made them closer to their maternal caregiver, allowing the children to still develop a secure attachment through their mother's positive mechanisms (Fonagy & Target, 2003). Clearly, one's childhood attachment affects his/her future relationship. Though as discussed, the effects are not always negative. This area of the study shows that Lily's character is closely related to Hoover's childhood, yet the attachment they built with their maternal caregivers differ. These different attachments show that a positive attachment still depends on how one complies with the given situation, whether to use a positive or a negative mechanism in order to cope up with the anxiety brought by the past experiences.

To clearly understand the similarities between the novel's theme and the author's personal account, the researcher provides a summary of the parallelism between the author and the novel's main character below:

Table 3. *Summary of Parallelism Between the Experiences of the Author and the Novel's Primary Character*

	Encounter		Characters		Strategy		Connection
Lily (Primary Character)	-	Abuse as the novel's theme depicted in Lily's character portrayal	-	Young Lily's childhood as a witness of IPV.	-	Sublimation through gardening turning into a flower shop.	-	mother-daughter relationship: Insecure attachment built with the maternal caregiver
			-	Adult Lily experiencing an IPV and leaving the abusive relationship.	-	Intellectualization as seen in Lily's character leaving an abusive relationship.		
Author (Personal Account)	-	Abuse between intimate partner as witnessed by the author during her childhood.	-	Author's childhood witnessing an IPV.	-	Sublimation through writing.	-	mother-daughter relationship: Secure attachment brought by the maternal caregiver.
			-	Author's parents demonstrating an IPV: author's mother leaving the abusive marriage.	-	Intellectualization as seen in the author's mother staying in an abusive relationship for the sake of her daughter and later on leaving an abusive relationship.		

The themes of the novel and the gathered information about the author were utilized to help with the underpinning of this area of the study. With the employment of biographical approach and attachment theory, the results revealed the parallel motifs of the novel alongside the author's personal account. With this analysis, it can therefore be assumed that the novel's plotline is based on the author's personal experiences.

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Foreign University Students' Acculturation in the Philippines: A Phenomenological Study

Grezaida Ledesma, Joseph Ledesma, Feliciano Ytang, Jesse Songcayawon,
Edmund Acquioben, Jeruel Ibanez, and Arjem Noryn Agum

Adventist University of the Philippines

Abstract

Many foreign students go to the Philippines to study. However, studies on foreign students' adjustment and acculturation were mostly done in non-faith-based institutions prior to the pandemic. Therefore, this qualitative study aimed to explore the acculturation of foreign students in a faith-based institution in Cavite, Philippines during the pandemic. Through purposive and snowball sampling techniques, 12 participants were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide, and the data were analyzed using Collaizi's method. The results showed that there were similarities and differences in the food and manner of eating and the various practices in the Philippines and their home countries. During the pandemic, the participants were challenged by the online classes, access to basic necessities, and feelings of isolation. They coped with these acculturation challenges through the University's spiritual programs, personal devotions and initiatives, personnel's care for students, and care groups. This study found that awareness of the similarities and differences of practices gave students an idea where to start off in acculturating. The programs of the university, Since personnel's care for students, and care groups helped in foreign students' successful acculturation during the pandemic. Thus, it is recommended that universities include in their plan spiritual and social programs, and care groups for foreign students.

Keywords: *acculturation, foreign students, pandemic, COVID-19*

The Philippines is one of the countries that interest international students to pursue higher education and it remains so even during this COVID-19 pandemic. Aning (2011) reported that in 2011 the Bureau of Immigration claimed that "more than 26K are currently studying in various schools throughout the country" (para.1). Immigration Commissioner, Ricardo David Jr., disclosed that more than 17,000 college enrollees accounted for the bulk of foreign students. This was attested by CNN Philippines (2021) when Immigration commissioner Jaime Morente said that "pre-pandemic, the country has been a top destination for international students wanting to take English language courses, as well as study in the field of medicine" (para. 7). Moreover, Philstar (2020) reported that in 2020, 1.5 Million (foreigners) arrived in the country while 2 million left. This trend is expected to continue while there is a pandemic.

Even though many are leaving, large numbers are still unequivocally coming over adding to those who remain in the country. Sualog (2018) cited the reasons for Philippines' attractiveness to foreign students as follows: Philippines is very enticing to international students in a thousand ways. Among others is the fact that Pearson's Business English Index has ranked the Philippines as the top country for Business English and third in the world as the English-speaking country as of 2015 record. English is the language of instruction in Philippine HEI's which is aligned to the official language of the ASEAN Economic Community. Another reason is the Philippines adapted the US System of Education. It has quality medical education recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO). In addition, there are world renowned universities in the country and the most recent educational reform, the implementation of K-12 which made our educational system at par with the world standards which facilitates mutual recognition of Filipino graduates and professionals following the Washington Accord and the Bologna Accord.

The citation of Sualog (2018) could be the reason that despite the COVID-19 condition in the Philippines, new foreign students continue to come. This noumenon is beneficial to the Philippines in a variety of ways. However, attention on foreign students' acculturation stirred concerns particularly among sectors in education who have been directly in contact with them through their years in higher education institutions. For similar concern, this study about the acculturation of foreign students particularly of Adventist University of the Philippines was conducted. Common Experience of foreign students coming over to the host country is their excitement and optimistic expectations, a feeling of euphoria—the first phase of culture shock called honeymoon stage—which are foiled as they proceed to its next three phases—negotiation, adjustment, and adaptation stages— (McCluskey, 2020). The crucial and critical stage foreign students go through is the negotiation stage also called in an article of International Students and Scholars Office of University of California as a hostility stage where the differences that were once interesting have now become obstacles for foreign students to get things done or communicate effectively. They may begin experiencing any of the following feelings or behaviors: disorientation and confusion, acute homesickness for family, friends and places, loneliness, helplessness, irritability, sadness and depression, frequent frustration, being easily angered, fatigue, withdrawing from friends or other people, self-doubt, sense of failure, recurrent sickness, and desire to go home.

Foreign students may either fail or acculturate successfully to the socio-cultural environment they are exposed to as they pass through this process. Acculturation is a process of cultural contact and exchange through which a person or group comes to adopt certain values and practices of a culture that is not originally their own, to a greater or lesser extent. The result is that the original culture of the person or group remains, but it is changed by this process (Cole, 2019). On the account of the difficult experiences that foreigners go through in the adjustment and acculturation process, studies have been made for different purposes in the Philippines and abroad.

The study of Sicat (2011) analyzed the cultural adjustment and coping strategies of Timorese, Nepalese and Indians, and Koreans enrolled at Tarlac State University (TSU) during the school year 2007-09 in Tarlac. Through thorough interviews of foreign subjects, problems in the cultural adjustment were identified. The cultural adjustments that were dealt with by the students from East Timor, Nepal, and Korea were eating habits (these groups are fond of extremely spicy food), hygiene practices (like frequent bathing and changing of clothes). In academics, the most common problem was language barrier. Their religious

beliefs were sometimes compromised by their host country's beliefs. Homesickness was a paramount source of sadness. The Timorese, Nepalese and Indians' body odor hindered Filipinos from mingling with them. The Koreans' pressing problem is the hot climate. The coping strategies used by the students were: adaptation to the conditions at Tarlac State University, compromise, prayerfulness, constant communication with family and friends, and intermingling with the students by sports activities. The Koreans used their economic advantage to enjoy their stay in the country, while the Timorese had better conditions here than at home.

In the study of Sam and Berry (2010) on acculturation, they had the premise that contact between cultural populations brought cultural and psychological changes. At the cultural level, collective activities and social institutions were altered and at the psychological level, there were changes in an individual's daily behavioral repertoire and sometimes in experienced stress. Their findings at an individual level were that there is a large variation in how people acculturate and in how well they adapt to the process. Two variations in adaptation they identified are related to psychological well-being and socio-cultural competence. The significant finding is that there is a relationship between how individuals acculturate and how they adapt.

Sullivan and Kashubeck-West (2015) examined among international students in the U.S. the relationship between international students' level of acculturative stress as related their acculturation mode and source of social support. They found that students in the integration category have lower level of acculturative stress than those in the separation and marginalization categories and those with broad base social support, particularly including host national reported lower level of acculturative stress while those with lowest levels of social support revealed statistically significant higher levels of acculturative stress. Their study partially confirmed that acculturation mode is associated with specific sources of support. Their findings suggested that both assimilation and integration modes were associated with higher levels of support from host nationals and that integration was associated with higher levels of support from other international students.

The findings of Sualog (2018) in her study of the cultural adjustments of foreign students in the Philippines showed that foreign students are having adjustments in understanding local dialects, unavailability of their preferred food, hot climate and coping with homesickness. In this study the focus was the specific difficulty foreign students encountered in the Philippines. An investigation was made by Maguddayao (2018) on the Social lived experiences and coping mechanisms of foreign students in the Philippines in the following phases—pre-sojourn, sojourn, and post-sojourn using the qualitative method. The findings revealed that the social lived expectation of students was attributed to communication barrier and language issues, academic adjustments, personal and support concerns, and social and non-academic life.

Sicat (2011) researched on the foreign students' cultural adjustments and coping strategies. Local literature focused on the identification of specific adjustment and acculturation difficulties experienced by foreign students in the Philippines. Sicat (2011) and Maguddayao (2018), however, delved as well in the coping mechanisms foreign students employed to overcome the difficulties and thus acculturate to their environment. Sullivan and Kashubeck-West (2015), on the other hand, dug out the relationship between international students' level of acculturative stress as related to their acculturation mode and source of social support. Sam and Berry (2010) focused on the cultural and psychological changes during acculturation between cultural populations. Their significant contribution in acculturation study is that in individual level there are large variations in how people acculturate and in how well they adapt to the process and that there is a relationship between how individuals acculturate and how they adapt. Though this acculturation study was not conducted on students the result of the study contributed much to other acculturation studies.

These studies on foreign students' adjustment and acculturation were conducted in a non-faith-based context and at the time frame when pandemic was non-existent. Foreign students in experiencing the process of acculturation without the pandemic had already gone through the challenges and hurdles which affected their life in the university as reflected in various studies at different settings. Thus, those who recently have just come have more challenges to face than those who came in previous years because

of the pandemic when more restrictions are imposed by the government, different institutions and other sectors of society which limit freedom of movement and interpersonal contacts and exchanges. This current condition prompted the researchers to conduct this study. The prime purpose is to explore the transculturation experiences in the Philippines of foreign students at Adventist University of the Philippines during the pandemic.

Specifically, this study answered the following research questions: (a) what are the foreign students' perceived similarities and differences of Filipino culture and their country's culture; (b) what acculturation challenges have they experienced in the Philippines especially during the pandemic; (c) how being in a faith-based institution helped them cope with their acculturation challenges; and (d) what Filipino values have they assimilated that they are willing to live out even when they return to their country?

Methodology

Research Design

This qualitative research employed descriptive phenomenological design to delve into the experiences of the foreign university students in adjusting to life in the Philippines. The aim was to describe the perceptions of the foreign university students regarding the similarities and differences in their own culture and the Filipino culture. It also identified their experiences in adjusting to life in the Philippines during the pandemic and the influence of Adventist University of the Philippines in those experiences. Finally, this study determined the values/practices that they acquired which they are willing to bring to their local countries.

Participants of the Study

The participants were chosen through purposive and snowball samplings. One key informant was identified, and that certain participant was asked to refer to another refer another informant until data saturation is reached. Inclusion criteria includes:

Instrumentation

An expert-validated interview guide was used to gather the data. The interview guide was self-constructed ensuring that all the research questions were addressed. Moreover, follow up questions were asked to get richer information and clarifications for vague or unclear answers.

Data Gathering Procedure

One-on-one interviews was conducted to gather the information needed for the study. Consents from the participants were sought and the participation was voluntary. The participants were informed of their rights and roles during the duration of the study and their identities were kept confidential

Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed, and verbatim responses were tabulated. Thematic analysis employing Collaizi's method was done to analyze the data. Member-checking was also conducted to ensure an objective analysis to avoid misconception of the participants' subjective responses.

Results and Discussion

Perceived Similarities of Foreign Students' Culture to Filipino Culture

Familial and Relational Practices

The participants attested that their country's culture have commonalities with that of the Philippines in terms of familial and friendly relational practices. The Korean felt that familial relationship is really embedded in the minds of the Filipinos that his use of the term "celebrate" is indicative of a feeling of joy being with the family. He stated that the practice is the same in the (Chinese) culture that he grew up with. The Congonese, when asked about their cultural similarities to the Philippines, described, "The family is

the driving…home is…the one which come for the Filipinos…and the head of the family is the father…. it's the same thing as my country. Likewise, the Sabahan expressed that, "We care for our family, and it is priority." Similarly, Chinese, and Kenyan value their families above all else like Filipinos do.

The value Filipinos give to relationship is also found by Kenyan congruous to their cultural practice. The Filipino practice of respecting others especially the elders are evident in the deference and esteem given to their elders too. Indonesian observed that in the Philippines varied honorific titles such as ate, kuya, lolo, lola, etc. is so much like the practice in her country. According to Junkyard Journal (2014), in formal Indonesian, honorifics such as Tuan (male) /Nona (*female who is not yet married*) /Nyonya (married female) are commonly used… Also, Bapak/Ibu/Saudara/Saudari. Indonesians also have the tendency to call people with family-related honorifics such as Ibu/Bapak (Mother/Father literally) and Adik/Kakak (little brother-sister/big brother-sister). Further the Indonesian realized that these honorific titles put the addressee to the rightful level of respect the title conveys. Zambian mentioned that Filipinos are mindful of showing respect to people which is comparably the same to their practice. Further, the Congonese stated that "the Filipino children take their parents' friends as close relatives and these children use to them the honorific title "tito" meaning uncle, and treat them with respect…" and he finished up by saying "Yes, in my country we can really respect." These responses unequivocally evinced that familial and relational practices are extant and are equally a cultural practice in the country of the mentioned respondents.

Food and Manner of Eating

The Kenyan and the Surinamese mentioned that they have foods that are almost identical to that of the Filipinos. The latter further explained that foods such as vegetables and soups are similar for the ingredients used are the same. The Zambian, though they have difference in food items, are like Filipinos in their use of hands when eating. Tembo (2012) stated, when Zambians eat *nshima*, they wash hands and use them to eat, practicing their eating customs.

Social and Religious Practices

The Zambian saw his country's perception that products coming from other countries are much better than the ones produce in his country is similarly the perception of Filipinos which Filipinos call as "colonial mentality". Even some superstitious beliefs are the same. Tembo (2012) stated that the most important mindset that the British and Europeans imposed on all Zambian people was that the western culture was very superior, and all Zambian cultures were inferior. This resulted to the Zambian's feeling that all that belongs to their culture are of poor qualities. On the other hand, the Sabahan realized that their *gotong-royong* is the Filipinos' *bayanihan* where they help without expecting any compensation or remuneration. They also have their Manglish (Malay language plus English language) as Filipinos have Taglish.

Hygienic Practices

The Chinese participant found that the Chinese people are like the Filipinos in their hygienic practice of taking a shower morning and evening especially during hot season. Among the participants, the Chinese was the only participant that mentioned about the similarity in hygienic practices. However, it was still considered a theme since cleanliness is one of the traits that Filipinos take pride of. In a report by Tayao-Juego in 2017, The Philippine Statistics Authority's survey revealed that hygiene is a big deal to Filipinos hence, there was an increase in the consumption of hygiene and house cleaning products in the market since 2016.

Perceived Differences of Foreign Students' Culture From Filipino Culture
Familial and Relational Practices

The Korean's perception when he used the phrase "have more power" is that in the family, Filipino women can exercise more rights and can assume more challenging responsibilities like work for a living

,the same as the role of her husband, for her family. He feels that men and women in the Philippines have equal familial status when he described them as 'they look equal'. Women have always enjoyed greater equality in Philippine society than was common in other parts of Southeast Asia. Filipinas enjoys equality with men in many areas, notably in professional, business and career areas. From the traditional house-bond roles of Filipinas, they now take important roles in politics, religion, medical professions, and arts (Hays, 2015). When compared to Chinese family, he stated that in places wherein Chinese are rich, Chinese women have more rights (power) while those in poor places women are subordinate to men. Meanwhile, in relational practices he feels that present-day Chinese grew cold and are no longer hospitable."

The Kenyan and Sabahan perceived the Filipinos more respectful. They said Filipinos are using honorific term "po" in their speech. The Kenyan said further that Filipinos are friendlier than his countrymen while the Sabahan noticed that Filipinos can speak in hard and harsh manner but with the "po" it is still respectful. In Sabah they show respect by the tone of voice and by speaking nicely. Nigerian, too, found Filipinos, kind and happy and are likely to conceal anything that depress or trouble them with happy façade. And circumstances that will likely engage a Nigerian into a fight, Filipinos will meet with happy countenance. Congonese's perception is that Filipino households are very friendly. He felt so taken care of and well entertained unlike in his home country where parents would just leave them alone when he pays a visit to his friend. Contrary to the above perceptions, the Surinamese perceived the Filipino parents as too intrusive or nosy. In life circumstances, where in their country they are given full independence in making decision and granted full responsibility over their actions Filipino parents will not only disallow but meddle. She also commented that "Filipinos riding on jeepneys talk with you even if you don't know them" and she feels that so uncomfortable. The Zambians experienced Filipinos' unconsciousness in the use of their hands in greeting people. The Zambians customarily do not use their left hand in greeting people for it signals disrespect. This means that they felt Filipinos disrespectful at the onset of their encounter with them and at the time they were not aware of Filipino culture yet.

The Congonese learned that in the Philippines a man to be married must serve and give gifts to the woman's family while the man in his country has to pay dowry, depending on how much a man could afford. Dowry in his country is a sign that they will respect the wife. The Kenyan also noticed that there are many gays in the Philippines, and they are accepted while in her country the men hide their being gay. This perceived acceptance of homosexuality by Filipinos is opposed to the findings in the study of De Leon and Jintalan (2018) stating that acceptance of homosexuality in the Philippine context seems to be superficial. Homosexuality is tolerated in the media but is seems to be not accepted in a wider sense of the society. Social constructs brought by religion, colonial and postcolonial mindset widely affect how the society views homosexuality, thus affecting its acceptance. Filipinos seem to tolerate the idea of homosexuality in mainstream media but not necessarily accept it. In the context of the Adventist church, it is believed that God created only two sexes, male and female as stated in Genesis.

Transportation

The Chinese, Sabahan, and Surinamese found the jeepneys and tricycles peculiar. The Surinamese said that "they are a whole new experience" for her; adding that it was an interesting experience. The Surinamese said further that she enjoyed the tricycle but didn't like the jeepney when it was full, and passengers were squeezed in. The Chinese noticed that when she crosses the road the cars let the people go while the Sabahan observed that every sidewalk could be a bus stops.

Curriculum, Mode of Teaching, and Student Management

The Indonesian respondent noted that the Philippine Education System includes subjects about their national hero and several subjects about Philippine history while in her country they only have one subject about their history. Added to that she said that in the Philippines four courses of Physical Education are required while in Indonesia they have sports in the senior high school level only. Lopez (2018) stated that in culture-based education, culture is the core and the foundation of education, governance, and sustainable

development. It seeks to develop among Filipinos a greater awareness, understanding, and appreciation of arts, history, geography, and heritage towards the evolution of a consciousness that will improve the quality of life.

The Chinese found Filipino teachers different from the Chinese teachers in that the Filipino teachers are asking questions in class. Chinese teachers "just tell and teach" while Chinese students keep on taking notes. This statement supported what happened in 2014 where 70 United Kingdom (U.K.)-based teachers were sent to Shanghai in 2014 to study Chinese teaching methods. Surprised with what they found, they returned to the U.K. and reported China's success in the classroom comes from the "chalk and talk" approach – a teaching method the West has been moving away from. The "chalk and talk" approach is an example of direct instruction; it is when the teacher remains at the front of the classroom, directing learning, controlling classroom activities and ensuring a disciplined environment (Gottesman, 2016). The Surinamese, who studied in Adventist school in inter-American Division in Boston, being a student of matured age and experience found Philippine Adventist school authorities different from other Adventists schools she attended. For her, the authorities "just give orders and expect things to be done". She explained further that "...yes, for students who are grown cannot just say something without any consideration and expect it to be done…that's not how they work back home".

Social and Religious Practices

The Korean explained that Chinese society "is pushing the people especially the teen-agers, the students especially, to move forward like they push the people to competition to get the hardwork, hard study otherwise they will be useless people in the social(society), yeah that's how it works. So that's the thing good that's what I said….when I get to Philippines I'm not used to it but after that I really enjoy the Philippines….People need to be hardworking but sometimes we need to be chill. If hardworking all the time is really stressful." This statement shows that when he was yet new in the Philippines, he still had the attitude that he had in China where he pushed himself very hard to improve and be equipped in life of competition in China. He grabbed and maximized all opportunities for development to be able to hurdle the challenges that his society will proffer to him as a citizen. Opposed to Chinese lifestyle, he found that Filipinos are not driven extremely hard. Filipinos work hard but still enjoy life that at the onset of his stay in the Philippines he had difficulty adjusting for he thought Filipinos are not serious in life. But after sometimes he started enjoying and valuing life in the Philippines. A Chinese respondent attested to this by describing Chinese lifestyle as "Chinese live the fast pace of life but in the Philippines, people are always not hurry up always slow do this, slow do that."

Another Chinese participant affirms it by saying, "Lifestyle is very different. It's like the Filipinos are very enjoy their life they just do what they need to do they don't worry about the future, but the Chinese people are doing things hurry and quickly and it seems like they keep themselves very busy; they don't have much time to enjoy their life and we always worry the future and tomorrow. Filipinos do not worship money unlike in China." According to Outsource Accelerator (2021), optimism, humor, and positivity are valued traits in the Philippines. The country has a long list of national holidays, and many provinces and cities have their own sets of local holidays. At the same time, in the face of difficult or challenging situations, members of the community are encouraged to look at the brighter side of things.

Regarding holidays and festival, the Chinese described, "The new China don't really celebrate holidays like old China. In China when they celebrate this time they work the following Sunday. In China "they work 9-6-6. Meaning they work from 9 to 6 pm for 6 days. Many companies practice this even it's illegal. In modern China, people seem willing to tolerate unfairness and bitterness as long as their standard of living improves. The respondent continued by saying that "In the Phil I went to market, its close very early. Festivals are different. Lifestyle is very different." They evidently know that there are many holidays and festivals and thus, no-work days in the Philippines. Regarding Philippine market, there are market that sell only on designated days like once a week or two times a week and he probably went to market when it was not market day. According to the Korean, "Now Chinese become very cold but before they were

hospitable." In China people believe more in "science and themselves" rather than in any spiritual god. He said "…some kind uhh belief some like god or something… but they're only for bless not for curse like they (Chinese) don't care about the devil or culture side or like something…they only care about themselves". They feel that belief in god and other spiritual beings will only "make them weak and they want to be strong in their hearts" which means that the Chinese people want to be sturdy in facing life and its challenges. The Korean stated that "Filipinos are pretty religious". This the Sabahan conceded yet he differentiated, "We are religious people too, however in Malaysia, most of the population are Muslim." The Chinese also observed that abortion and divorce is not allowed in the Philippines and that in supermarkets there are baggers of one's purchases, a kind of service they don't have in China. More so, the Zambian noticed the indirect way Filipinos communicate and their asking of personal questions—a practice that is different from theirs for they respect people's privacy.

Food and Manner of Eating

The Zambian realized, describing in her own words that "Filipinos like to add some sweetness to food, love to put sugary things in food. I'm used to if food looks sweet then its sweet when it looks savory then its savory… Philippine staple food is rice, us its maize the white one…Filipinos are fond of partying and eating together stuff we also do that but not more often. Filipinos it can happen anytime anywhere." The Kenyan respondent found "Unusual the frequent eating of rice like 3 times a day. Back home it's only once a day—Rice diet." For Nigerian the natural thing is "Back home we like chili that much. Here they like seafoods like fish all these seafoods we don't have like that much seafoods in my country because we don't have a lot of fishermen." According to the Congonese, "Here in the Philippines, there are food major things is rice. They eat rice everyday they can eat it 3 times a day they can eat rice whenever they want so it ruined me they are major food. In my country our respect food is cassava so we take a corn flour, we eat it every day so when I'm back home I eat it from Sunday to Saturday everyday its cassava so I can add rice once a week just like that so ill made a food that is cassava those are differences in food. We don't have the same food although there is rice there but many people prefer too much cassava than rice. That one also I had difficulty adjusting it." The Indonesian's expressed her difficulty finding her preferred food in the Philippines when she said that, "food…. in my country we have so much spicy food in the Phil it's hard to find spicy food." The Chinese, on the other hand, stated that "The different food, fried banana with sugar in a stick-- The Food in China more vegetables but Philippines has more fruits and meat."

Acculturation Challenges Experienced by the Foreign Students During the Pandemic
Online Classes

The primary acculturation challenge of the participants is online classes. Cerezo (2020) reported that after the Philippine government announced students will remain barred from their classroom until a vaccine is developed, educators and over 24 million students were forced to adjust to an online and modular learning set-up. This teaching-learning mode brought acculturation challenges to foreign students. The Korean's experience as he described it is "online class is a big mess, difficult –sometimes there's misunderstanding between students and teacher. The website sometimes didn't give the information fully. Sometimes the student will miss some of the point, miss the class, or assignment or something." For the Zambian, "online classes… sitting down for too long but we don't have option…" The Kenyan said: "… lots of difficulties because this is something that came unexpectedly no one anticipated the virus…online learning because it's quite challenging esp. when you have poor connection, no study connection, intellect… everything yeah…It's quite challenging at first it would be easy for me because I wouldn't have to… like… walking to my classes here and there. But then I realized its more of a challenge than an advantage. That's one of the challenges I faced during the pandemic…" The Congonese narrated his experience as:

> When the pandemic starts there are many things that I did adjust to first of all it was classes.
> I enjoy it very well going to class because in class you can more interact with teachers you
> can talk and in class you can listen to peoples' idea and even though I don't want to talk in

class the teacher can just point me but in online class sometimes I can want even to talk but in the net really bad sometimes or I don't want and I use my phone so it's really it was really harder to adjust first of all because online class and we sometimes I always like to concentrate in something like I can say the whole week from Sunday to Friday or to Thursday I'll only read I'll not watch movies because I like watching medical dramas so I'll not watch this one I will just do assignment, do classes the things are the same so in other days I wanted to have time to relax in order to refresh my mind so that the other week when I start begin I concentrate this thing so for me I always… it's also our health I realized that before I went to have the check-up of my eyes, before my eyes were better than now because now I can see there are some difficulties I don't see directly from very far just because I spent too much time in this screen so first of all the difficulties in adjusting were because of online classes because we just come in the online classes without knowing sometimes it can be very hard before pandemic.

The Indonesian said that "during the pandemic it was very difficult at first because ah we have so many assignments specially like before it's not too much assignment…when we have online class, but it be online class I don't know it will be so much assignment with different teachers and different subjects." This is how the 2 Chinese respondents described on line class' difficulties: "because of covid 19 we just have on line class and I have lots of problem with my subjects…-----Study is a little hard than in the classroom. I cannot face to face. Because these professors I can't contact, cant contact with my friends… our teachers I cannot find teachers easily, to ask questions…… Ma'am also how can I solve the problems but also but maybe 2 days the teacher will answers."

The results showed that the following nationalities found online classes too challenging: Korean, Kenyan , Zambian, Congonese, and Indonesian. The challenges they faced in online classes are misunderstanding between teacher and students and bad internet connection that resulted to students' missing the main point of the teacher; long hours spent in front of the screen to do many assignments and other activities resulting to Congonese's not having time to relax at all and to develop poor eyesight; misperception that online class would come easier than face to face class; less opportunity to be called to participate orally in online class than in face-to-face class because in face-to-face teachers can just point at a student when asking for students' participation; and lastly, students find it hard to contact teachers when they want to inquire about their class and also to contact their friends. Ong Ki (2020) affirmed that the main concern for students during the pandemic is just how difficult online schooling is compared to actual classes. Several students lamented that they are no longer learning, as their focus has shifted to completing assignments on a daily basis.

Access to Basic Necessities

The Korean participant relayed that on the onset of the pandemic, going out to shop is hard "like they give ID card per family and only one can get one and one cannot get much stuff. One time I got sick. If you get sick its very hard to adjust because you are paying for, and it affect your studies, or daily life but you are scared to go out to hospital. I waited for doctor about 2 hours, but I think the doctor is busy because maybe he's busy". The Zambian lamented, "have done so much shopping online during the pandemic." The Kenyan also complained about the difficulty to buy groceries outside the campus. The Surinam stated "it was just a bit irritating when we have to go out when we have to do things like in the … and we have to pay so expensive because they would only allow us to take the time to go out and its quite expensive if we had to go to Manila. If we have to go to immigration, you know if we had to do our stuff it was a lot of money that we had to pay just for one trip. You know that would have normally been so much cheaper if it wasn't pandemic then we could just take public transport to go or if they just allow us take the cars of our friends to go because some of my friends have their own car. And they were not allowed to drive them.

The Malaysia-based firm iPrice Group examined the shopping behavior of Southeast Asians and discovered that it has significantly shifted since the COVID-19 outbreak. IPrice noted the Philippines' "hastened" move to the virtual landscape, in particular, was evident. According to the group, the total sessions or visits to shopping applications in the country climbed to approximately 4.9 billion during the lockdown period (Cerezo, 2020).

The Korean, Zambian, Kenyan, and Chinese participants found access to basic necessities challenging. They found going shopping difficult because of lockdown where only one family member was allowed to go out which led them to resort to much online buying. Access to immediate medical attention was another difficulty encountered by the Korean because doctors were too busy during the pandemic. The Zambian found it difficult to access basic information because of Filipinos' indirect way of communication besides when she inquired she could not get clear information or updates while access to cheap public transport was the challenge to the Surinamese when he needed to process documents, like immigration documents, to Manila for he was not even allowed to use his friend's car due to strict school policy.

Feelings of Isolation

Feelings of isolation was also apparent. The Korean national mentioned, "staying home all the time you easily get depressed. If you are staying home and you don't have social, you don't talk to anybody its' good in this new generation because we have technology." The Zambian admitted that although he is not an outdoor person, staying indoors was extreme during the pandemic. For the Kenyan, "the lockdown hindered me from doing a lot of things. Like travelling around the Phil. now its strict we can't.. like… move around freely and we need to take precautions like wearing of mask sanitizing our hands washing our hands every day and it has also affected my mental health like I mentioned this is something no one has expected to happen… It's really like frustrating at some points because it gets to point to times when you really feel like it's really hit you hard. It really affected my mental health. I adjusted to that--- I could not meet my friends off campus." Additionally, the Nigerian admitted to being stressed out because of quarantine. The same complaints were verbalized by the other participants.

It can be gleaned from the interview that another challenge the foreign students experienced during the pandemic was the feeling of isolation. Lockdowns inhibit them from going out of their homes or dormitories preventing them from socializing with friends which caused mental stress to some of them; restrain them from going to church services; visiting places in the Philippines to be exposed to and to explore Philippine cultures; even going home country for vacation during breaks became difficult.

Medina (2021) observed that young people "expected their 20s to be a time for friends and the passage to adulthood. Instead, they drifted into isolation." He added, "They are all living with some degree of social anxiety, a growing problem among young people as the disorder, amplified by the pandemic and intensified through months of isolation, fuels social withdrawal and entrenches reclusive habits. Results research showed that many international students desired frequent social support from host national students in emotional, practical, informational and in the form of social companionship, however, the pandemic precludes them from obtaining those needs.

Assistance Extended by the Institution in the Coping of Foreign Students with Their Acculturation Challenges
Spiritual Programs

The Korean and one of the Kenyan participants testified that AUP helped them through its "Week of Prayer" program with the Kenyan including other church programs done online. The Zambian was helped through the weekly (religious)activities happening in the dormitory. One of the two Kenyan participants said that he was helped to deal with the situation not only by the protocols AUP has provided but also, in his direct statement, "spiritually with my faith as a Christian we are reminded always to look up to God who is our great physician and he is the one who can help us during this situation and hearing that inspires me and gives me hope. So AUP with the sermon we listen to in church." The Nigerian claimed that AUP helped him

a lot because "back in (my) place I didn't really had faith" but his "going to bible classes, and studying all the bible class doing all the bible things" in AUP helped him through the pandemic.

The Congonese stated that "it (AUP) help me to adjust really a lot, really a lot. For me I like AUP first because it's really a school which doesn't talk only in one thing here in AUP we don't have only academic… so staying here in aup we have many things they were talking about faith although even though it was really online class on line activities but the school do whatever they want they do as much as they can to organize some bible activities, we can go to church."

In can be inferred that AUP offers activities that sustains not only academic needs but also activities that will make students develop to a well-rounded person as described in his statement "here in AUP we have many things." He claimed that AUP "meets the spiritual needs as well by organizing bible and church activities. According to the Indonesian the daily devotion they have in the dormitory helped her trust that God has a plan for her life, and thus, to surrender her all to God. During the pandemic, she mentioned, she was given chances to sing in these daily devotions which made her happy because she was able to use her voice in praising God. She likes these daily devotions and the AUP family. She concluded that there are good things to learn even in this pandemic. The Chinese respondents, too, saw AUP as different because they saw in the university activities God's love and that it promotes faith in God. The Sabahan testified that since his coming to AUP his faith grows stronger.

Personal Devotion and Initiatives

Personal devotions and initiatives play a great role in students' overcoming the challenges of the pandemic. Some students already have personal relationship with God prior to coming to AUP and have strengthen it in the university atmosphere while others have developed it in AUP. Like the Zambian, she said that "…(I) get myself involved in some of the weekly(spiritual) activities that are happening in the dormitory. The Kenyans, Nigerian and Indonesian said that they pray every day. One of the Kenyans believed that "it is the source of help during this difficult time." Aside from prayer he also plays sports and jog around the school when allowed and he also talks to his parents. The second Kenyan participant said he walks out once in a while. He believes that being able to continue his studies take his mind off the pandemic. The Nigerian does not only pray but spend time reading his bible and do other things." The Indonesian said that she needs to pray a lot to adapt…to make a preparation for her mental health and think how she can still study and learn. The Congonese was helped by the subject "Understanding the Self" he is taking where the teacher includes things about how to overcome the pandemic challenges. The direct statement of the Surinamese shows how she was supported by what she loves to do in overcoming pandemic challenges. She said that "the reason why I took the chance to go to the Phil was because of this Adventist (University)of the Phil. Because you're being Adventist, you'd kind of feel at home even if you know no one. Faith is a big part of our life. For my personal life my faith was the reason I was ok. So being in Adventist institution they allowed me to do what I'd love to do and that helps me a lot to be able to feel at home and to feel integrated and to not be stressed because I have a let out you know for the things that I want to do. Yah… let's say yah… that it had a positive influence on me feeling ok feeling secure during the pandemic. Because we didn't really have much to do I guess so I just started keeping myself active I started organizing my music programs and stuff because music is one thing that keeps me busy and something I enjoy. So, I was able to do hymns program, in my dorm and I did Christmas concert in the worship hall at Cadena, and I have a real big bunch of people that you know, were participating so I managed to have a great time even though there was lockdown."

Personal relationship of the participants with God and their engagement in other personal activities keep them busy that though experiencing difficulty during pandemic, each of them were able to get through it successfully.

Personnel's Care for Students

All the participants felt the deep and sincere care and concern of various university personnel as revealed by the following statements:

Korean: like other support and I remember one time one of the staff member was calling me asking me about the detail of my life in pandemic, they was really caring about my psychological health it's really helping me because for we just human we are weak so we need to get support from God to help us to go through this pandemic.

Congonese:

so on the very start we have always psychology people from the guidance to come and explain us and talk to us so if we have question if we have some stress they can talk to you… we can have some people to call us because sometimes I always have the message from the guidance 'Hi, Ellie this is from the guidance we want us to know your actual stress file are you stressed because of this class?' So you see even though it's academic but the school want also to know the situation of the students they don't want just to come to teach people but they want to know if the students are really ok that's one really help me and as well as know that we don't know about tomorrow so this the way it has come that we start the lockdown almost as the bible came so for us the message that they always give us is that the bible says once you will see those things about these happenings know that it is the end of the day and rejoice that I'm coming soon. So when they are telling us about that even though this happened these things are worldly things because soon it will end and God is coming. So, we are seeing again we are talking about a God which inspire us really a lot.

Surinamese:

he school takes good care of us when we had covid so like when we were positive with covid . you wont believe it I had a great time I get to go out when we were positive. The staff in the clinic I really appreciated them they did their best they work hard they were very understanding because that's also what I mentioned people are very careful to not insult you, like Filipinos, they were very careful to not offend you that was one thing for example I was in the clinic to get a shot ok this they like sorry we apologize they were apologizing they really have that culture of trying not to hurt you not to insult you. The staff in the clinic I felt happy. (In Calamba Quarantine) the school take care of us. They provided everything we need. The school was very attentive. The school took good care of us and that time I really felt secured."

Care Groups

Foreign students despite of the lockdown have care groups that help them get by and enable them to support others too during the pandemic. Through their statement we can deduce that each of them really cares for others too. They manage to find a way to communicate to their care group or to significant others in their life. According to the Zambian, "when rules become more flexible we have… We are taught that we need to share the love of God. I do video call to my friends and share." "I have friends here in my dorm." The Kenyan revealed. She further said that "Once in a while, I speak with my friend about life, situation about how the pandemic is affecting them its comforting to share with other people who have the same experience you're going through." The Surinamese enthusiastically shared " …but even though we were on lockdown on campus.. ahh.. I still manage to have a nice time with my friends doing music and…ahh.. staying at the dorm I'm not someone who needs to go out I don't really have that desire." For the Sabahan, his enjoyment during the pandemic is "… and I get to see people more like me especially those who believe in God- the same as me and I can relate to them and commune to them well. And also to see even those who are not the same faith as us but also Christian then I am also able to share comfortably with these people my thoughts about life and how God cares for us."

The study revealed that there are many similarities and differences in culture and practices among nationalities and Filipinos. It was also revealed that foreign university students experience many challenges in their acculturation in the Philippines, however, different support extended by various groups and individuals helped them cope with acculturation. Therefore, it is recommended for Filipinos to extend help to foreign students as much as possible to maintain camaraderie and healthy acculturation. For future research, a quantitative study regarding the themes that emerged from this study may be conducted to a larger group of university students in the Philippines or in South-East Asia.

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ARTS & HUMANITIES

Fake or Not: Media, News, Information and Digital Literacy, and the Ability of Undergraduate Development Communication Students to Identify Fake News

Anthony Q. Esguerra, Juvy Lou T. Bhattrai, Lea B. Licong,
Arjem Noryn C. Agum, Eunice M. Aclan

Adventist University of the Philippines

Abstract

Disinformation and "fake news" have become a vicious problem in the Philippines. Social media and digital spaces have become a battleground for the erosion of truth. Observers around the world express alarm over the detrimental effects of disinformation in society. Literacy interventions are a blanket solution to the problem of information disorder. Advocates promote media, news, information, and digital literacy education to help people protect themselves from the harmful effects of fake news by identifying it and stopping its spread. This study aimed (a) to determine the media consumption of the students (b) to measure the students' level of media, news, information, and digital literacies, (c) to assess the students' performance in identify statements of fact and opinion, and (d) to assess the students' performance in identifying fake news. This research utilized the descriptive study to analyze the data from 28 respondents in a total sampling method. The study found that the students have average level of literacies mentioned and their ability to identify fake news is on average level. Moreover, the higher the academic level of the students, the better they are at identifying fake news. In conclusion, there is a need for the academic community to enhance the competencies of the students when it comes to recognizing fake news. This opens opportunities for Development Communication educators and practitioners to combat fake news in their program and activities. The integrity of information spaces is everyone's responsibility.

Keywords: *disinformation, fake news, media literacy, news literacy, information literacy, digital literacy*

The proliferation of disinformation and "fake news" on information spaces is a serious threat to the society. In the Philippines and around the world, the abundance of "fake news" on social media is seen as a threat to order and democracy; and this is still a problem today. The term "fake news" became popular in 2016 during the divisive elections both in the Philippines and in the United States (Wendling, 2018). Fake news generally refers to misleading content found on the internet, especially on social media (Jackson, 2017). Fake news draws audiences because it validates their political preconceptions and worldviews, capitalizing on media consumers' confirmation bias. Disinformation can be traced to *dezinformatsiya*, which Soviet planners in the 1950s defined as "dissemination (in the press, on the radio, etc.) of false reports intended to mislead public opinion" (Jackson, 2017, para. 4).

As state and non-state actors continue to manipulate the internet to advance their agenda, citizens suffer from disinformation. Elections after elections, experts, policy wonks, researches, and internet companies are still grappling to understand and to respond to the disinformation crisis. Now widely viewed as a threat to the democratic project, disinformation often takes place on the internet, which has become the new public space for people to come together. Washington-based think tank Freedom House highlighted the rise of digital authoritarianism as governments cite "fake news" (or false content and information masquerading as legitimate news online) to suppress online dissent (Shahbaz, 2018).

In the Philippines, which is dubbed as social networking capital of the world, major news outlets and TV stations maintain their presence on the web and on social media. Many news outlets publish news in various forms on social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, which are visual platforms. Contents shared by news outlets vary in form: some are news articles published on their websites, video, live videos/broadcasts, infographics, and quote graphics or a mere status update or a tweet on Twitter.

As the dissemination of disinformation became more sophisticated, largely through the help of social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter and mobile chat applications like WhatsApp (which was acquired and now owned by Facebook), efforts to stop the spread of disinformation and "fake news" grew over the recent years (Shahbaz, 2018).

Responses vary from fact-checking initiatives to internet companies like Facebook, Google, and Twitter, rethinking their policy to monitor their sites. Innovative fact-checking initiatives have become a popular intervention from the news media, either by setting up dedicated websites that feature "fact-check journalism" or embedding the work in their regular daily coverage.

One of the potential interventions that is gaining support is the revitalized media, news and information literacy skills education. According to the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE, 1997), media literacy is defined as the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, create, and act using all forms of communication.

More needs to be done to gather empirical data on the news consumption and the ability of the Filipinos to identify fake news. In the Philippines, there has been limited literature on the how media and consumption can impact people's ability to identify fake news. Therefore, this study attempted to investigate the levels of media, news, and information literacy of students and if these factors affect their ability to identify fake news and disinformation. This study attempted to devise a way to test and quantify the ability to spot fake news in hopes that a larger study will be done in the future. The findings of this study aimed to help inform the academic community, society, journalists, and government in crafting the best intervention to combat fake news in the Philippines.

The Philippines, like many countries around the world, experiences a surge of disinformation and fake news in its information ecosystem. While interventions such as education on the fake news is underway, it is imperative that a study be conducted to assess the media, news and information literacy skills of the students which will also serve as a check on their ability to identify fake news.

The Development Communication students, the subject of this study, are undergraduate students who are learning the ins and outs and the complexities of information and media systems. The students take hundreds of units of instruction and training on communication theory, practice, media, and production. Development Communication students, educators and practitioners use communication as a tool to initiate

change. It is important for Development Communication students to possess the key literacy skills to ensure that what they communicate is accurate and truthful. As they go along the course, they learn skills and values that are central to the production of credible news and information content.

This study answered the following questions:

1. What is the media consumption of the respondents in terms of (a) number of hours, (b) frequency of use, and (c) motivation?
2. What is the respondents' level of literacy in terms of (a) media literacy, (b) news literacy, (c) information literacy, and (d) digital literacy?
3. How did the respondents perform in identifying fact and opinion?
4. How did the respondents perform in identifying fake news?

Theoretical Framework

Signal Detection Theory

Also known as the Detection Theory, this theory provides explanation and premises for measuring the ability to differentiate or distinguish between information-bearing patterns or also known as stimulus in human beings and signals on machines and this can provide a basis for detecting and being able to discern effectively (Anderson, 2015).

Applying it in detecting or spotting fake news, the sensory detection of a person should also be highly active when encountering fake news online as this can enable them to effectively distinguish them from authentic and legitimate ones. From there, they can be ensured that whatever information they are consuming, they can be sure that it is true and factual and may not lead them into fear, panic, and confusion.

Methodology

Research Design

Descriptive research design was used in the study. It is the appropriate choice when the aim of the research is to identify characteristics, frequencies, trends, correlation and categories. The study investigated and described the news and media consumption, media, news and information literacy skills and the ability to identify fake news of college students. Thus, the study employed the descriptive research design. Descriptive research design was used to gather reliable data on the news consumption habits and perception on fake news of college students.

Population and Sampling Technique

The population are the Development Communication students at the Adventist University of the Philippines (AUP). The students taking up the sole communication course in the university consisted of individuals of diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. The students, given the nature of their academic discipline, were expected to exhibit awareness of the news events in their communities and within the country. The researcher conducted a single-shot survey among the undergraduate Development Communication students at AUP in the second semester of the academic year 2019-2020. There were 28 enrolled students at the time of conduct of the survey. Since the sample size is already small, the researcher opted to conduct total sampling.

Of the 28 students, 17 (60.7%) are female and 11 (39.3%) are male. Based on academic standing in terms of year/level, there are 5 (17.9%) freshmen, 7 (25%) sophomores, juniors make up the biggest chunk at 9 (32.1%), and finally, 7 (25%) are seniors. Total sampling was conducted because the researcher believes that the entire population, while not big in number, represents a group of individuals who are active consumers of news and may have been exposed to fake news and disinformation on social media and the internet.

Instrumentation

The study is quantitative in a nature and data was gathered through the help of a researcher-developed survey questionnaire. The survey is a one-shot survey design to collect data from the respondents. This study used Google Forms to make the survey questionnaire accessible and to make collection of the data efficient. The survey questionnaire was composed of the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, media and news literacy skills assessment, and news and media consumption.

Data Gathering Procedures

The researcher conducted a survey to gather data needed in the study. A survey questionnaire was devised to determine the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, their news consumption habits, their preferred sources of news and information and their ability to identify of fake news. The researcher sought the help of a statistician to validate the questionnaire. This ensured the statistical integrity of the data gathering procedure.

Analysis of the Data

The data that were gathered in this study were coded, classified, quantified, tabulated, and analyzed based on the objectives of the study. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations and ranges were used to describe the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, their news consumption habits, their preferred sources of news and information and their perception of fake news. The study also used the Likert scale of agreement to statements that assess the levels of media, news and digital literacy of the respondents.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure that the study passed ethical considerations and standards, this study sought the review and approval from the experts of the Ethics Review Board of AUP prior to the conduct of data gathering. In data gathering process, the researcher communicated with the participants of the survey their rights. The research prepared an informed consent form which the respondents filled out. All information gathered for the purpose of this study shall be strictly confidential and for academic purposes only.

Results and Discussion

Preferred News and Information Sources

Most-Used Media and Platforms

The respondents were asked to rank the Top 5 media and platforms they regularly use. The choices made available to them were traditional media: TV, Radio, Newspaper, Magazine, and digital media: Internet, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook Messenger. To get the ranking, the weighted score of each platform was generated by assigning the score of five (5) to a platform ranked as 1st, four (4) for the ranked 2nd and so on. The scores were added up and the average was calculated.

The results revealed that the students' top medium or platform of choice is the Internet with a weighted score of 2.78. Next is Facebook, which garnered a weighted score of 2.60. Statistically tied on the third spot with a weighted score of 1.96 are Facebook Messenger, which is an app and service by Facebook, and YouTube, a video sharing platform by Google. Twitter, a microblogging site that is known for its limited-character tweets, secured the fourth spot with a weighted score of 1.78. Finally, the fifth spot with a weighted score of 1.28 was secured by Instagram, a photo and video-sharing social networking service which is also owned by Facebook.

Table 1. *Frequently used Media and Platforms*

Platform	Weighted Score	Rank
TV	1.107	6
Radio	0.286	9
Newspaper	0.429	7
Magazine	0.357	8
Internet (Web)	2.786	1
Facebook	2.607	2
Twitter	1.786	4
Instagram	1.286	5
YouTube	1.964	3
Facebook Messenger	1.964	3

The Top five regularly used platforms was composed of digital platforms. None of the traditional media listed as a choice made it to the Top 5. The result reflected the latest picture on news and media consumption of Filipinos. According to a survey conducted by Social Weather Stations (2019), 21% or an estimated 13.9 million adult Filipinos use Facebook daily as a source of news. However, the same survey showed that TV is still the top as 60% or an estimated 40.4 million Filipinos still consume the news through television. Only 15% or 9.7 million Filipinos listen to the radio to get their news fix. Even fewer adults, 2% or an estimated one million, read the newspaper daily.

In both usage and as a source of news and information, social media and the internet have been proven to be the top choice of the students. This confirms the earlier assumptions and even studies suggesting that young people rely on digital platforms to be updated with the news and latest information.

Preferred Sources of News and Information

As presented in Table 2, the students' top preferred source of news and information is Social Media which garnered a weighted score of 4.28. Internet closely follows with a weighted score of 4.07. TV gets the third spot with a weighted score of 2.92. Radio is far fourth with a weighted score of 1.60. Finally, Newspaper was the least preferred source of news and information, just getting a weighted score of 1.32.

The students' inclination to use social media and the internet as a primary source of news and information means opportunities and challenges. As an opportunity, this would mean that the students have the potential to develop a healthy news diet by opening themselves to various options. They can compare news sources and media outfits. As a challenge, using social media as a primary source of news information is somewhat problematic because of the nature of content that thrive on these platforms. Social media platforms like Facebook prioritize viral contents which does not automatically mean reliable and credible. In one study, users say social media is an important source of information and new ideas for them. But the same population surveyed say they regularly encounter false and misleading information on social media (Pew Research Center, 2019).

Table 2. *Preferred Sources of News and Information*

Platform	Weighted Score	Rank
TV	2.929	3
Radio	1.607	4
Newspaper	1.321	5
Internet	4.071	2
Social Media	4.286	1

Media Consumption and Motivation
Hours of Consumption

The survey found that the students' media consumption in terms of hours is highest on digital platforms. As shown in Table 3, students use social media for an average of 6.78 hours daily. They spend an average of 7.57 hours on the internet in a day. The survey found that the students watch TV for an average of 2.14 hours per day. They listen to the radio for an average of 1.17 hours per day. The average time spent reading the newspaper is 1.14 hours.

Table 3. *Hours of Media Consumption*

Media/Platform	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
TV	28	1.00	8.00	2.1429	1.81994
Radio	28	1.00	2.00	1.1786	.39002
Newspaper	28	1.00	4.00	1.1429	.59094
Social Media	28	1.00	10.00	6.7857	2.68545
Internet	28	3.00	10.00	7.5714	2.37936
Valid N (listwise)	28				

Motivation for Consumption

The motivation for the consumption of media in this study was narrowed down to getting the latest news and information and entertainment. Using Likert scale, the students were asked the extent that they agree with the either using a medium or platform for news and information and for entertainment. The lowest score means they strongly disagree, and the highest score means they strongly agree with the statement.

As summarized in Table 4, the students' news and information and entertainment motives are high on the internet and social media. Their motivation for consumption is lower on traditional media. The students said they use the internet to get the latest news and information ($M = 4.6$, $SD = 0.73$) while also stating that they access the internet mostly for entertainment ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 1.05$). Meanwhile, the students also use social media as a source of latest news and information ($M = 4.28$, $SD = 4.46$). Using social media for entertainment scored a slightly higher than for accessing news and information ($M = 4.46$, $SD = 0.63$).

The students are mostly neutral to watching TV to get the latest news and information ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 1.49$). and for entertainment ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 1.18$). The students are scored the radio ($M = 2.64$, $SD = 1.47$) for news motivation and ($M = 2.32$, $SD = 1.30$) for entertainment. The newspaper got the lowest score for news ($M = 2.5$, $SD = 1.57$) and the *strongly disagree* for entertainment (M = 1.53, SD = 0.88).

It is a good indication that the students' motivation for media use and consumption is more on accessing news and information. In most of the platforms asked in the survey, the motivation to consume on the purpose of news and information is higher than entertainment. However, in social media, entertainment motivation is higher.

Table 4. *Summary of Motivation for Consumption per Media*

ITEMS	N	Min	Max	Mean	Verbal Equivalent
I watch TV to get the latest news and information	28	1.00	5.00	3.3929	Neutral
I watch TV mostly for entertainment.	28	1.00	5.00	3.2857	Neutral
I listen to the radio to get the latest news and information	28	1.00	5.00	2.6429	Strongly Disagree
I listen to the radio mostly for entertainment.	28	1.00	5.00	2.3214	Disagree
I read the newspaper to get the latest news and information.	28	1.00	5.00	2.5000	Disagree

{table continues on the next page}

I read the newspaper mostly for entertainment.	28 1.00	4.00	1.5357	Strongly Disagree
I use social media to get the latest news and information.	28 2.00	5.00	4.2857	Agree
"I use social media mostly for entertainment.	28 3.00	5.00	4.4643	Agree
I use the Internet to get the latest news and information.	28 2.00	5.00	4.6071	Agree
I use the Internet mostly for entertainment.	28 1.00	5.00	4.1786	Agree

Level of Media, News, Information, and Digital Literacies
Media Literacy

As summarized in Table 5, the overall level of media literacy of the Development Communication students is average ($M = 3.75$). In the statement, "I would follow the news using multiple media sources," it is seen that the students exercise a key component of media literacy which is to follow the news using multiple sources ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 0.95$). In the statement, "I would reach out to (through comments, email, tweets) news organizations to show my reaction and tell my criticism," it is observed that the students are at the neutral level in expressing their reaction or criticisms to respective news organizations they follow ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 1.45$). The students are also at the at the neutral level on exchanging information about the news they see in newspapers or on TV ($M = 3.75$, $SD = 1.37$). Finally, the students are neutral about cautioning people about the negative sides and negative effects of media ($M = 3.89$, $SD = 1.4$).

National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) defined media literacy is the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and create and act using all forms of communication (1997). Media literacy develops critical thinking among individuals which allows them to participate better (Kincal, 2007). A scale developed by Inan and Temur (2012) was utilized to measure the level of media literacy of the students. The students were asked to respond how much they agree or disagree in the following statements.

Table 5. *Level of Media Literacy*

Items	Mean	SD	Min	Max
			1 = Strongly Disagree	5 = Strongly Agree
I would follow the news using multiple media sources.	4.3571	.95119	2.0	5.0
I would reach out to (through comments, email, tweets) news organizations to show my reaction and tell my criticism.	3.0357	1.45251	1.0	5.0
I would exchange information with my family or friends about the news I see in newspapers and on TV.	3.7500	1.37773	1.0	5.0
I would caution people around me about the negative sides and negative effects of media.	3.8929	1.42307	1.0	5.0
Overall Media Literacy	3.758925			

News Literacy

Overall, the Development Communication students scored high in their news literacy level ($M = 4.1$). This is a little higher than the mean media literacy score of 3.75. In the statement "Two people might see the same news story and get different information from it," it is seen that the students understand that the people will always have different perspectives and understanding of the news ($M = 4.39$, $SD = .087$). The students also agree that news coverage of politicians influence people's opinion ($M = 4.42$, $SD = 0.87$). They also agree that individuals can find news sources according to their political values ($M = 4.10$, $SD = 0.99$). They also believe that conflicts are more likely to be featured as news ($M = 4.10$,

SD = 1.06). Finally, the students believe that news make things more dramatic than they really are (*M* = 3.92, *SD* = 1.11).

As cited in Jones-Jang et al. (2019), the goals of news literacy include an understanding of the role that news plays in society, a motivation to seek out news, the ability to find/identify/recognize news, the ability to critically evaluate and analyze news, and the ability to produce news. To scale the level of media, the researcher used the reliable scale developed by Ashly et al. (2013).

Table 6. *Level of News Literacy*

Items	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
			1 = Strongly Disagree	5 = Strongly Agree
The owner of a media company influences the media content.	3.6429	1.19301	1.00	5.00
Individuals can find news sources that reflect their own political value.	4.1071	.99403	2.00	5.00
Two people might see the same news story and get different information from it.	4.3929	.87514	3.00	5.00
News coverage of a political candidate will influence people's opinions.	4.4286	.87891	2.00	5.00
News makes things more dramatic than they really are.	3.9286	1.11981	2.00	5.00
A story about conflict is more likely to be featured prominently.	4.1071	1.06595	2.00	5.00
Overall News Literacy	4.1012			

Information Literacy

The survey showed that the average information literacy score of Development Communication students is 1.35, the perfect score is 3.0. In one question, "You need to know how current the information is in a book. Where can you find the date of when the book was published?", most of the students or 78.6% failed to identify the part of the book where information about the date of publication can be found. However, the students performed better at identifying statement opinion from an author with at least 60.7% getting it correct.

Table 7. *Level of Information Literacy*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Information Literacy	28	.00	3.00	1.3571	1.02611

To measure the information literacy of the students, several items from Podgornik et al.'s (2016) information literacy index must be considered. This was presented as a multiple-choice question. Correct answers are assigned 1 and incorrect ones 0 and then later averaged to form the information literacy score.

Digital Literacy

The students were asked to indicate their familiarity with 10 online and digital tools such as PDF, cache, phishing, etc. Digital literacy is assessed based on Hargittai's (2005) established scale. The students answered based on 5-point scale. As shown in Table 10, the average digital literacy of the students is *M* = 4.09 (*SD* = 0.71). The result is not surprising as the entire population are digital natives or those who are born after 1980s.

Table 8. *Level of Digital Literacy*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
How familiar are you with advanced search?	28	2.00	5.00	3.7857	.99469
How familiar are you with PDF?	28	3.00	5.00	4.6429	.62148
How familiar are you with Spyware?	28	1.00	5.00	3.4286	1.25988
How familiar are you with Wiki?	28	2.00	5.00	4.5000	.88192
How familiar are you with Cache?	28	1.00	5.00	3.9643	1.20130
How familiar are you with Phishing?	28	1.00	5.00	3.5357	1.52709
How familiar are you with Tagging?	28	1.00	5.00	4.3214	1.12393
How familiar are you with JPG?	28	3.00	5.00	4.6429	.55872
How familiar are you with Weblog?	28	1.00	5.00	4.0000	1.15470
How familiar are you with Malware?	28	2.00	5.00	4.4286	.95950
Overall Digital Literacy	28	2.33	5.00	4.0913	.71502

The data from this study showed that the students, collectively, have an average level of media literacy. The news, information and digital literacies of the students are all in the high level. There is a need to improve the media literacy level of the students. As future Development Communication practitioners, they must fully understand how the media works, its powers and its effects to the society.

The assessment showed that the students recorded a low level on Information Literacy. The ability to access credible information is an important skill every person must have to be a responsible member of the society. People tend to use different sources of information but for the wrong or malicious purposes (Jones-Jang et al., 2019). The Information Literacy skills of the Development Communication students can be improved if they are given the more exercises on research and library assignments.

On a more positive note, the students recorded high levels on News Literacy and Digital Literacy. This indicate that the students have a significant level of understanding on how the news works and how it impacts the society. This is also a good sign that the students actively consume news so that they are informed about the issues and concerns that affect them. The high level of Digital Literacy is not surprising since this generation of students are digital natives. The tools presented in the assessment are the everyday tools they encounter.

Identifying Fact, Opinion, and Fake News
Fact vs Opinion

The ability to identify fact from opinion is an important literacy skill that is often thought as early as grade school level. One of the components of the survey tested the ability of the students to identify statement of facts and opinion. The researcher composed three sentences that contained factual or opinion statements. For example, "Seventy-five-year-old President Rodrigo Duterte is not only the oldest President to serve the Philippines. He is also the most hardworking President in the history of the country." The respondents were given binary choice. The correct responses were coded as 1 while wrong answers got 0. The total score of each respondent were averaged and average scores were then processed for descriptive statistics.

Table 9. *Fact and Opinion Statements*

| The coronavirus disease (COVID-19), the disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus is believed to have originated from a seafood market in Wuhan, China.				
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Wrong Answer	10	29.4	35.7	35.7
	Correct Answer	18	52.9	64.3	100.0
	Total	28	82.4	100.0	
Missing	System	6	17.6		
	Total	34	100.0		

Seventy-five-year-old President Rodrigo Duterte is not only the oldest President to serve the Philippines. He is also the most hardworking President in the history of the country.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Wrong Answer	7	20.6	25.0	25.0
	Correct Answer	21	61.8	75.0	100.0
	Total	28	82.4	100.0	
Missing	System	6	17.6		
	Total	34	100.0		

With over 36 million population, Metro Manila is one of the most densely populated capitals in the world, according to a World Bank survey.					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Wrong Answer	4	11.8	14.3	14.3
	Correct Answer	24	70.6	85.7	100.0
	Total	28	82.4	100.0	
Missing	System	6	17.6		
	Total	34	100.0		

The results revealed that the Development Communication students' performance in identifying fact vs opinion is *average*. Overall, the Development Communication students scored 2.25 out 3.0 in the fact vs opinion test. Only 11 students (39.3%) were able to correctly identify all fact or opinion statements correctly, at least 13 students (46.4%) received two points after making one mistake, and finally, only 4 students got one point during the test.

Figure 1. *Performance in Identifying Fact and Opinion*
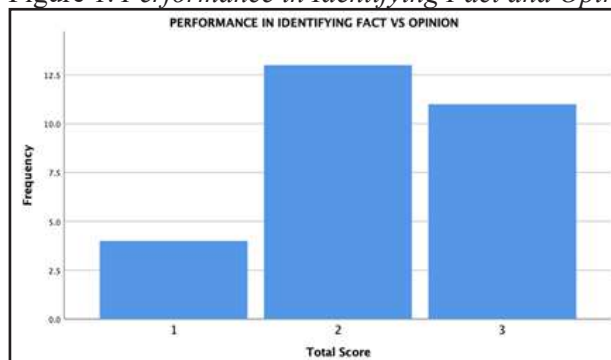
Identifying Fake News

      Testing the ability of the Development Communication students to identify fake news is the major objective of the study. Thus, the last part of the survey administered to the students tested their ability to identify fake news. The researcher prepared a series of news items presented in both graphical (screenshot) and textual formats. The logos of the news outlets and the uniform resource locator (URL) of specific news stories were included in the screenshots. Finally, a selection six news items consisted of three real news items and another three fake news items. All three fake news items were flagged by fact-checking organizations such as Snopes. Correct responses were coded with 1 and incorrect answers were coded with 0. The average scores per student was determined.

Figure 2. *Performance in Identifying Fake News*
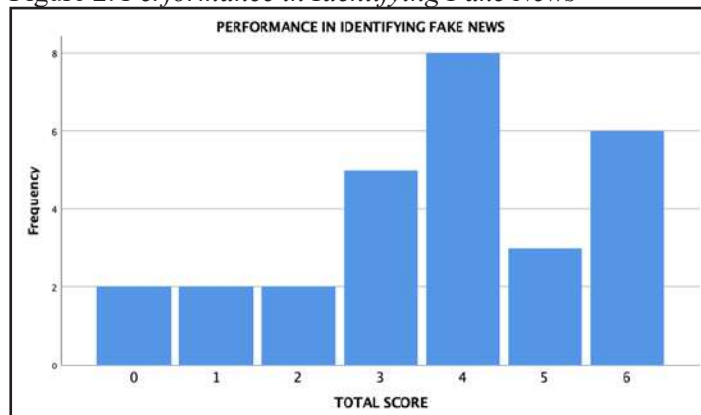
      The study found that the students' ability to identify fake news is just average. The overall average score is 3.71 over 6.0. Of the 28 students tested, only 9 (32.1%) have high level of ability to identify fake news correctly. This was followed by 13 (46.5%) students whose performance was average. Finally, 6 (21.3%) students recorded low performance. It is important to note that at least two students received 0 points for incorrectly identifying all fake news.

      An analysis of individual result of news items featured in the survey indicated that most of the students correctly identified real news items that came from popular news organization such as The Guardian, NBC, and The Huffington Post. It is important to note that the researcher opted to present items from foreign media outlets as well as foreign fake news website so as to the challenge the critical thinking of the students. The researcher believes that presenting local news items that the students are likely familiar with will result in a high identification performance.

      The results showed that the students have an *average level* of ability when it comes to identifying fake news. Their ability to identify statements of facts and opinion is also on the average level. This means that the students will still likely fall victim to disinformation and fake news. This is dangerous because as discussed in the review of literature, fake news has negative consequences. The study also showed that even though the students have *high levels* of literacies such as news, information, and digital literacy, this did not translate to a better performance on identifying fake news and identifying statement of facts and opinion.

      The results showed that the male students are better at identifying fake news. With an average score of 4.0, male students slightly performed better at identifying fake news than their female counterparts who received an average score of 3.53.

Table 10. *Performance on Identifying Fake News Based per Gender*

Gender	n	Average Score
Female	17	3.53
Male	11	4.00

The results also revealed that the senior students performed better at identifying fake news. As presented in Table 11, the seniors received an average score of 4.22. The juniors and sophomores are statistically tied at the second spot with an average score of 3.43. The freshmen performed the least with an average score of 3.20.

Table 11. *Performance on Identifying Fake News Based per Year/Level*

Year	n	Average Score
Freshman	5	3.20
Sophomore	7	3.43
Junior	7	3.43
Senior	9	4.22

Thus, it can be concluded that sharing fake news online is heavily dependent on the age group wherein a person belongs, and this is also coupled with that person's own experiences and even political affiliations. The different activities associated with age can also be a determining factor on how a person can allocate time in using and browsing the Internet and in his/her respective social media accounts. Time can also be considered as an essential factor which is needed in validating and assessing the reliability and authenticity of a particular news article to make sure it's not fake and is safe for sharing through family and friends online. However, regardless of age, it can still be noted that people of all ages, class and race is still prone in sharing fake news online.

The undergraduate Development Communication students at AUP are digitally connected and media-savvy individuals, active consumers of news and information on multiple sources and digital platforms. However, their media, news, information, and digital literacy levels are still at the *average level* and must be improved. Their ability to identify statements of facts and opinions must be trained even further. Although the level of their ability to identify fake news is average, there is so much room for them to improve as they climb the academic ladder. This shows that even though they are media-savvy and are active consumer of news and information, there is still a big chance that they will fall victim to disinformation and fake news online. This is a cause of concern because as Development Communication students, it is expected that they will perform better at these tests given their education and training on communication theories, media, and production.

It is therefore recommended that Development Communication educators be encouraged to integrate media, news, information, and digital literacy in their instruction. Likewise, it is recommended that they devise a program that would encourage students to consume more news and information using multiple sources. Development Communication practitioners, together with educators, are encouraged to be more involved in the global and local endeavor to fight disinformation, misinformation, and fake news whether in traditional or on digital and social media. The people's ability to make informed decisions is affected by the quality of information they receive. It is therefore an important task of Development Communication practitioners, educators, and students to ensure that the information ecosystem is healthy. Future researchers are also encouraged to use local examples of fake news that they respondents may find interesting and relatable. It is also recommended to use various presentation of fake news such as information graphics, quotation graphics, videos, and other forms of disinformation and fake news.

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ARTS & HUMANITIES

Reflections of Social Issues in the Philippines Through Contemporary Painting

Euodia B. Zeta, Ann G. Anolin, Hyreizl Love Tangonan, John Merick T. Eupalao,
Arjem Noryn C. Agum, Eunice M. Aclan, Jolly S Balila
Adventist University of the Philippines

Abstract

This research established that contemporary painting could be a challenging avenue to reflect social issues in the Philippines. The research gap is that previous studies focused on the work of art as aesthetically pleasing and reflective of the artists' personal expressions and imaginations; thus, they neither looked at contemporary painting as reflective of social issues in the Philippines nor an expression beyond the artists' personal expressions and imaginations, but this study did so. It addressed the audience's ways of seeing and making meanings, the audience's initial reactions, and the connection of the audiences and the artists' experiences to the reflected social issues. Directed by theory of instrumentalism, this study utilized semiology and purposive sampling technique was used to gather the six participants. Three artists were also interviewed for triangulation. Findings revealed that for research question one, the local audience got emotionally affected, got mentally confused, and made interpretations of money. For research question two, they felt puzzled and delighted. For research question three, they recalled the past and remembered personal encounters. Since the participants successfully connected to each other in seeing the reflected social issues in paintings B and C but failed in painting A, contemporary painting can be a challenging avenue to reflect social issues in the Philippines. To enhance future studies related to this study, the researcher recommends the use of the same social issue in the paintings, same field of the audience's interests, and same level of depth of the artists' presentations to establish more cohesive responses.

Keywords: *reflections, social issues in the Philippines, contemporary painting*

This research established that contemporary painting could be a challenging avenue to reflect social issues in the Philippines. Audience members make meanings out of the images that they see in paintings, and it is not guaranteed that they can successfully grasp the intended meanings from the artists. A mismatch can occur between the interpretations of the audience members and the confirmed concepts or messages from the artists. Specifically, the messages from the artists are sometimes misinterpreted by the audience members. How contemporary artists had started to use the social media to upload pictures of their artworks that were reflective of social issues since public exhibits and art gatherings had been prohibited during the COVID-19 pandemic was observed. Some artists have been creating paintings to visually communicate to their audience members about social issues which, by themselves, are not commonly discussed among communicators regardless of the setting that they are in.

As Christensen (2020) says, social issues pertain to social problems that produce an effect on people who reside simultaneously in a society, and that these problems create an impact on this society regardless of the size of its population. She adds that these problems are met even in places whose residents have a barely adequate connection with others. To direct their attention to these social problems, people in general use different channels to serve as platforms for discussion. This study used contemporary painting as one of those channels to reflect on such social problems.

In the educational sector, Gee (2019) claims that it can be difficult to determine exactly when to bring up the issues that are existing at the present time, although educators are responsible to get their students ready for the real world by engaging in dialogues about real social issues and by being aware of those issues that are prevalent at the moment.

Contemporary painting is a form of contemporary art. Accordingly, the contemporary era of art is seen as the cause or the explanation why some eccentric works are created, and these works include but are not confined within paintings that are extremely interesting. Contemporary artists, who use an expansive choice of art mediums, frequently give their comments and reflections on their modern-day societies; may question traditional ideas about the definition, composition, or production of art; or sometimes reject the styles and movements in the past. It also emphasizes that those viewers who get involved with contemporary art are called to put away questions on whether a work of art is good or is aesthetically pleasing; and are instead called to consider whether a work of art is challenging or is interesting.

Reflection as defined in Cambridge Dictionary (2020) is closely associated with the production of an image that is given back by a reflecting surface such as a mirror. Abrahams (2020) describes all true art as literally a mirror of the mind of the artist and a reflection of his imagination at work. Nair (2020) states that art is a mirror image of the individual or society's identity and that it reflects people's feelings, thoughts, practices, or beliefs. She emphasizes that art reflects identities that are varied from individual to individual and society to society because of differences in their personalities or systems in life. She adds that the painter leaves his own feelings and thoughts in his piece that reaches to give inspiration, but his perfect piece is the one that clearly indicates his intention that is likened or similar to his own or to that of the character he wishes to portray.

Art pieces that reflect the feelings and thoughts of the artists can be utilized in varied ways. The Lutheran Education in Australia (2021) uses artworks for devotional purposes such as the painting of *Jesus Calms the Storm* to energize the discussions about storms in life that appear to people as something that is hard to deal with. Castro (2016) mentions that the digital arts are utilized to represent computerized activity by capitalizing on artistic creations that are highly complicated and visually precise. The use of art creation software is also a great and almost essential resource to create highly complex and visually accurate artistic creations that may not have been possible in the past with traditional art tools.

The art community, meanwhile, faced challenges with the advent of a global pandemic in the year 2020. Its public gatherings in the forms of awarding for that year, competitions, conferences, exhibitions, and fairs had been postponed or ultimately cancelled. The United Nations News (2020) stated that because of the pandemic caused by the coronavirus, concerts were not performed, and museums were not opened; and these resulted to cultural institutions forcibly entering a state of uncertainties and experiencing sudden

economic losses. Additionally, this pandemic also gave signs or warnings of its effect on the arts that would occur over a long period of time. According to Durón (2020), in his presentation during the German-Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry seminar titled The Art Market Scene: Challenges and Opportunities During The Crisis, Klaus Hartung, owner of Transwing-Asian Fine Arts in Germany, and President of Transwing Art Gallery in Quezon City pointed out the limited resources of the artists, the scarcity of their sales that effected to lost income, and the problems they had encountered in relation to acquiring their art materials. Hartung noted that these artists were not the only ones affected, but everyone that worked in the world of arts such as advertisers of magazines, gallerists, organizers of fairs, companies that constructed or rented the venues, or companies that offered art insurances.

With the arrival of the pandemic, the art market stopped working or moving forward, and its outlook was depressing or worrying. Durón (2020) said that the moves of the auction houses and galleries were almost instantaneous so that they could exhibit, as much as possible, art through online and allow creative and modern ways for their collectors to establish interactions with their works that were being put up for sale. For these artists to connect with their audience and vice versa, the process could be challenging. Artists have utilized digital platforms such as social media websites for virtual auctions, exhibitions, or presentations of their portfolios and projects.

Nortajuddin (2020) says that the GlobalWebIndex of 2020 featured the Philippines with the largest number of Filipinos who had reported that the time they had been devoting to platforms of social media had accelerated during the pandemic. In this survey, sixty-four percent of them claimed that their social time heightened when compared to the forty-seven percent of the average global index. Sorilla (2020) mentioned the statement of Altro Mondo's artistic director Remigilio David that initiating exhibition online would equate to visualizing how art is presently experienced and uttered that the COVID-19 pandemic caused them to think about the place of the art in this reality and about the manner by which they could collaborate towards a future that is better and a world that is healthier. He said that their exhibiting artists reflected the nature of the times and their vision for the future, and that they hoped, through their series of exhibitions, to share their vision of the art world as being generous, more sustainable, and thoughtful; and to inspire artists to be courageous in embracing the future and consequently adapting to it.

Artists have turned to social media and built their concepts, focusing on social issues such as COVID-19. Since one of the results of the lockdown is the time people have acquired for reflecting about their lives, some Philippine contemporary artists have chosen to use the digital platforms for communicating about the current and relevant phenomena in the society. Bhandari (2018) featured on the website of Culture Trip ten contemporary Filipino artists with descriptions of their focus in their works. These contemporary artists would respond to social issues in their global environment and demonstrate a variety of artistic styles.

Abrahams (2020) reiterates that the viewer, who knows that art is literally a mirror of the mind of the artist and a reflection of his imagination at work, will be watchful of the details that suggest or communicate this principle visually. The feelings and thoughts of artists and people in general are generated from their experiences in life. Barber (2009) declares that the most important ingredient that should be directly experienced from the work is found in art that can be classified as good; and the artist must have a direct experience of the concept that he wants to make known. He sees that drawing from life should be accorded a supreme importance.

Reyner (2014) expresses that art enhances her experiences in life and that art that is powerful makes it possible for artists to feel that they are connected to others and to humanity and their culture. Barber (2009) says that those who observe art, just like how an artist will look at art, must direct their eyes at color, form, movement, shape, outline, and texture so that they can be aided in analyzing their impressions through those elements. He also mentions that when these observers look at those art works, they need to try to analyze why they find such works attractive through asking about their insights on the ideas that are behind the form or the capability of those ideas to remind them of someone in their lives.

The research gap is that previous studies focused on the work of art as aesthetically pleasing and reflective of the artists' personal expressions and imaginations; thus, they neither looked at contemporary

painting as reflective of social issues in the Philippines nor an expression beyond the artists' personal expressions and imaginations, but this study did so.

This research established that contemporary painting could be a challenging avenue to reflect social issues in the Philippines. It also sought to explore the local audience's experiences in viewing and understanding social issues as reflected in Philippine contemporary paintings by Filipino artists.

Specifically, it addressed the following questions:

1. How do the Philippine contemporary paintings affect the local audience in their ways of seeing and making meanings?
2. What are the local audience's initial reactions to the Philippine contemporary paintings?
3. How do the local audience and the participating Filipino artists relate the reflected social issues in the Philippine contemporary paintings to their experiences?

Theoretical Framework

This study was directed by instrumentalism, a theory of art, to interpret, explain, and generalize the researcher's findings. This framework took instrumentalism in the light of an artwork as an instrument having a purpose and as an instrument being evaluated. The artworks that were instruments in this study were the paintings by Filipino contemporary artists.

Instrumentalism is a type of philosophical pragmatism promoted by American philosopher John Dewey. As described by de Neufville (2020), it is one that sets the worth of an idea by its functuality in assisting people to adjust to their world. Encyclopedia Britannica (2020) featured Dewey's instrumentalism as a means of looking at knowledge by those who seek for this knowledge; and once they do, they should actively take part in establishing modifications in the processes to discover the differences that occur and how an event changes in relation to such modifications. Parallel to this concept, this study established that the paintings by the participating Filipino contemporary artists changed focus in relation to the social issues to which these artists were exposed.

Methodology

Research Design

This study used semiology or semiotics. Hebert (2006) defines semiology as the area of study that deals with signs and one that enables people to give descriptions to any sign which he equates to something that is utilized in lieu of something else. Ferreira (2007) imparts that semiotics is the study of the signs and symbols in works of art that provides a greater understanding of and meaning to the works. Semiotics was fit for this study since the local audience of the Philippine contemporary paintings studied the art signs and symbols attached to the objects in those paintings to better understand the messages of the artists, described those signs and symbols, and did interpretations by relating those signs and symbols to familiar systems in the country and to their experiences in life.

Participants of the Study

The key informants for this study were the local audience composed of six professionals in their respective workplaces. The researcher used the purposive sampling technique to choose these informants based on her judgment. Dudovskiy (2021) states that "purposive sampling, also known as judgment, selective, or subjective sampling, is a sampling technique in which researcher relies on his or her own judgment when choosing members of population to participate in the study." He adds that this sampling is a "non-probability" sampling method and that researchers frequently suppose that getting a representative sample through their wise judgment will save them time and finances.

The inclusion criteria for the purposive sampling were: The local audience (a) earned, at least, their bachelor degrees; (b) were professionals in their respective work places; (c) were residing in the Philippines during the time when this study was conducted; (d) were aware of and exposed to social issues in the Philippines; and (e) were capable of communicating and elaborating how they were affected by

the Philippine contemporary paintings, their initial reactions to such paintings, and how they related their experiences to the social issues which they interpreted to be in the paintings. The six members of the local audience were identified as Participant A, Participant B, Participant C, Participant D, Participant E, and Participant F. The purposive sampling technique was fit for this study because those members were chosen by the researcher based on her wise judgment and by the inclusion criteria which were previously mentioned.

Table 1. *The Members of the Local Audience and Their Positions in Workplaces*

Members	Positions and Their Workplaces
Participant A	Registered Guidance Counsellor in a basic education school
Participant B	Senior Supervisor for Project Management at CDO Foodsphere Inc.
Participant C	Supervisor for Labor Employment at the Department of Labor and Employment Bureau of Local Employment
Participant D	Regional Area Manager at Insular Life Insurance Company
Participant E	Area Coordinator in a basic education school
Participant F	Vice Principal in a basic education school

Data Gathering Tools

The data gathering tools used in this research study were the (a) interview guide for the six local audience who were the key informants; (b) interview guide for the three artists whose responses were gathered for the purpose of triangulation with the responses of the local audience; and (c) three Philippine contemporary paintings which were contributed by the artists. The five interview guide questions for the local audience were semi-constructed to ensure that they could make meanings about the images that they had seen in the paintings, express their initial reactions, and relate the reflected social issues to their experiences. Since the guide questions were designed so that the local audience were not limited to giving definite answers, they could comprehensively elaborate on their responses to the paintings. The three interview guide questions for the Filipino contemporary artists were semi-constructed to ensure that they could identify the social issues that they had reflected in their paintings and relate them to their experiences. Like the interview guide questions for the local audience, the questions for the artists were designed so that the artists could comprehensively elaborate on their intended meanings for the paintings. The interview guide questions were validated by four experts in the field of research to assure that the questions were appropriate and could draw the responses that would answer the research problems which were specified in the Statement of the Problem. The Philippine contemporary paintings were used as instruments that served a purpose and were used for evaluation. The paintings were all created on canvases with the artists' preferred kinds of paint, such being either oil or acrylic. The paintings were ensured and confirmed by the artists to reflect social issues in the Philippines.

Data Gathering Procedures

Validation from four experts in the field of research was sought for the interview guides, to assure that the questions were appropriate and could draw the responses that would answer the research problems which were specified in the Statement of the Problem. Once the validation of the guide questions was received, the Ethics Review clearance at the university was acquired. Six local audience were interviewed based on the previously mentioned inclusion criteria for the purposive sampling technique.

Ethical Considerations

This study observed ethical considerations. All the information relating to the identities of the research participants was held with utmost confidentiality; thus, they were referred to according to the letters assigned to them by the researcher. The researcher would replace any member of the local audience

who would get stressed during the data gathering and ensure that the replacement would satisfy the criterion set as he/she is a professional/holder of at least a bachelor's degree. The three participating artists allowed the researchers to download the visible and very clear pictures of their paintings which they had sent her through Messenger, a messaging application and platform developed by Facebook.

Analysis of the Data

This study used the narrative analysis in qualitative research. Since the presented data from its research participants had words and descriptions, this study was a qualitative research. One of the methods being used for data analysis in qualitative research is narrative analysis. The stories or opinions that people mostly tell are directed to find answers to the research questions. This narrative analysis was fit for this study because the local audience and the participating Filipino contemporary artists were interviewed, and that the stories that they had shared about their experiences in relation to the reflected social issues in the paintings as well as their opinions were all answers to the research questions that were asked by the researcher. The themes or the central focus of the shared stories or opinions were then determined through briefing, debriefing, triangulation, and member-checking.

Results and Discussion
The Effects of the Philippine Contemporary Paintings to the Local Audience's Ways of Seeing and Making Meanings

When asked about the effects of the images that they had seen in the Philippine contemporary paintings, the local audience were either disturbed by the images in the first painting ("Panlimbasog") or they found the meaning of the painting too deep. The local audience were inspired, amazed, happy, or amused as they looked at the second painting ("DarNanay"), but some had an ambivalent feeling about the image of the woman. The local audience saw in the third painting ("P.S. Wag Tularan") the image of the man wrapped in money and gave different interpretations to the situation relating to money.

Emotionally Affected

The members of the local audience were emotionally affected. In particular, they felt disturbed about the first painting because they could not grasp the message of the artist and were affected by the projected emotions of the images. These were their verbatim responses: "I'm a little bit disturbed and sad" (Participant A); "I've been affected by the expressions of the faces of the two men who's [sic] facing the screen, and also the position of the third guy in the middle" (Participant B); "Actually, the first thing that came to my mind is there is a deep meaning of the painting" (Participant D); "It's disturbing. *Hindi ko sya magrasp kung ano yung gusto ng painter na iparating* [I cannot grasp what the painter wants to convey], but as you look at it longer, *parang ang daming nangyayari* [seems like many things are happening]" (Participant E); and "It needs some time for me to digest it and, for me, the painting is a bit deep. It requires some time for you to relate or have an emotional connection with the painting" (Participant F).

Mentally Confused

The uncertainty or confusion about the second painting was generated because they could not distinctly identify the image of the woman as Wonder Woman or Darna. These were their verbatim responses: "It seems to me ambivalent. I have an ambivalent feeling on this. It looks like a Darna. It's like a Darna attire. *Yung kanyang bra, parang Darna siya eh* [Her bra, seems that she is Darna]" (Participant C); "*Parang kay Darna ba ito? Yung bra ni Darna at saka yung ano ni Darna. Ganun yung bra ni Darna at saka yung ano ni Darna sa ulo* [Are these Darna's? bra and headgear of Darna]" (Participant E); and "Amused. Confused. *Kasi ang tingin ko sa kanya si Wonder Woman sya. Tapos nakahubad* [I see her as Wonder Woman. Then naked]" (Participant F).

Made Interpretations About Money

The money that wraps the man in the third painting generated different interpretations. These were their verbatim responses: "*Hindi ko naman siya makita na the love of money is the root of evil, kasi mahirap naman yung itsura niya so parang kailangang-kailangan lang din niya* [I cannot see it as love of money is the root of evil, because the man looks poor and seems to need money] (Participant A); "I'm really affected with that because somehow it relates to my situation right now. I think it's disturbing but it's true for most of the people especially in the Philippines" (Participant B); "You wouldn't see me like that. Enjoy the moment. The moment of having more or the moment of having less" (Participant C); "*Siguro naman di ako ganyan noh* [I hope I am not like that]. Wrapped in money?" (Participant D); and "This is actually a sad picture or painting because somehow what we should be doing as a people is we are not doing it because we are bound by our need for money and our want for money" (Participant F).

These dominant themes of getting emotionally disturbed, mentally confused, and making interpretations of money that were generated from the local audience's responses to the three Philippine contemporary paintings are natural effects that can be felt by anyone looking at and making meanings of images, especially when the paintings seemed to convey deep messages. Congruent to this analysis is the declaration by the Faculty of Psychology in the University of Vienna ("Art and Emotion," n.d.) that experiences in aesthetics can induce emotions to those who perceive and that it feels instinctive to experience emotions before any stimuli that are visually challenging.

The Local Audience's Initial Reactions to the Philippine Contemporary Paintings

When asked about their initial reactions to the Philippine contemporary paintings, the local audience had different reactions to the first painting ("Panlimbasog"), although two of them were focused first on the orange color of the background. The local audience had light initial reactions to the second painting ("DarNanay") because of the familiarity of the image of Darna and of a mother. The local audience had different reactions to the third painting ("P.S. Wag Tularan") as they wondered about the concept of money, the man's tendency to shout, and the story behind the painting.

Puzzled

The different reactions to the first painting were caused by the many images that they see in it. These were their verbatim responses: "*May mas malalim pa siyang pinatutungkulan* [There is a deeper reference]" (Participant A); "To be honest, I was captured first by the pastel color on the background, rather than the image on the center and the subject itself" (Participant B); "It shows strength to me" (Participant C); "Something about the current situation, worldwide, because of the survival of the fittest" (Participant D); "This painting is disturbing" (Participant E); and "There are so many things going on here. I'm a little bit detached to it initially" (Participant F)

The different reactions to the third painting were caused by the unanswered question of why the man seemed to be shouting or angry when he was wrapped with money. These were their verbatim responses: "*Nalilito ako. Is it love for money ba or greed or kailangang kailangan lang niya talaga na parang yung social issue is poverty* [I am confused. Is it love for money, or greed, or he really needs that it seems the social issue is poverty]" (Participant A); "I have a guilty laugh. That's my initial reaction. I tried to recount how many thousand dollar bills are in there. I feel pity for that man, and somehow I feel pity for myself and I feel pity for many Filipinos especially these times of pandemic." (Participant B); "I wish I could help this man find a job" (Participant C); "The first one that came into my mind is that there's so much money in him na parang ine-embrace [as if embracing] *na nya yung* money. Although on second thought, why is there a tendency to shout?" (Participant D); "What is the story behind the painting? *Hindi ko alam kung kinocontrol ba sya ng money or nililimitahan sya ng money* [I do not know if he is being controlled by money or being limited by money" (Participant E); and "It definitely depicts majority of the Filipinos. It's a smile with a bit of bitterness" (Participant F).

Delighted

The members of the local audience were delighted because they were familiar about the images of the mother and of Darna whom they knew as a Filipino heroine. These were their verbatim responses: "I am inspired *at tsaka natuwa ako. Ang galing nung painter din, na ganun niyang dinepict yung* motherhood [and also felt happy. The painter is good at depicting]" (Participant A); "I'm thrilled because, as I have mentioned, it's kind of look familiar, I see Darna on it. When I was a little boy, I used to watch these comics and adaptations, the whole thing about Philippines and foreign folklores. That relates me with that and brings me back my childhood" (Participant B); "I like the way the painting is done. *Yung pag tilt, magaling yung artist na ito. Naverbalize nya yung gusto nya* [The tilt, this artist is good. He verbalized what he wanted] through the lines and the movement of the object especially the mother" (Participant C); "I was refreshed by the fact that I had this same experience in the past and I miss having a baby" (Participant D); and "I salute the women out there especially the moms" (Participant E).

These dominant themes of being puzzled and delighted were generated from the local audience's responses to the three Philippine contemporary paintings are typical initial reactions of people to images that they see for the first time, especially when they are about issues in society. Congruent to this was the shared experience of Gaugy (2017) when he was asked about his initial emotional response to one of Picasso's paintings. He said that his response was typical of average people, that anything that went beyond traditional was very much a stretch for most since arts education in society was not emphasized in schools.

The Relation of the Reflected Social Issues in the Philippine Contemporary Paintings to the Experiences of the Local Audience and the Participating Filipino Artists

When asked about how they related the reflected social issues in the Philippine contemporary paintings to their experiences, the local audience said that they could relate by recalling the past events in their lives and awareness about the social issue of poverty in the first painting ("Panlimbasog"), symbolized by the hands that are neither smooth nor clean, the background color, the feet that are bare, the clothes that are casual, and the box that limits what Filipinos can do. The local audience said that they could relate by expressing their personal encounters about the social issue of motherhood or womanhood in the second painting ("DarNanay"), symbolized by the image of the breastfeeding mother and the superheroine who removed her attire just to nurse her baby. The local audience said that they could relate to the issue of poverty (symbolized by the Philippine currency, the Filipino man who seems confused, is shouting, is being wrapped with money, and is not rich) in the third painting ("P.S. Wag Tularan") by recalling those times when they, or others, did not have money and so were limited in what they wanted to do.

Recalled the Past

The recalling of the past events in their lives and their awareness about poverty was instantaneous as the local audience were looking at the first painting. These were their verbatim responses: "Ever since I was a young boy, I was raised in a poor family and what I want in life is to accomplish my education first, so I can be whoever I can be and who I wanna be in the future" (Participant B); "From employment perspective. *Yun kasing mga* [Those] economic imbalances natin [of ours] currently ay palagi kasing nakabangga sa [always referred to] employment, economic issue, *nawalan ng trabaho* [loss of job], interrupted *ang kanyang buhay* [his life]" (Participant C); "Life wasn't easy for me. I started from scratch and I would say that I started from the low low rank" (Participant D); "I can relate to the painting in terms of *isa ito sa mga* [one of] lessons *ko na dinidiscuss* [that I discuss] under Understanding Culture, Society, and Politics. The awareness that I have relates on the painting" (Participant E); and "I know some people who work in the government and they are good people, pero [but] at times they are also doing things that should not be done kasi yun yung kalakaran eh [because that is the system]" (Participant F). To triangulate these local audience's responses with those of the artist, these were the verbatim responses of the artist: "*Isa rin akong active sa church. Napapansin ko na karamihan sa mananampalataya, o member ng isang religious organization ay nagiging o nakukulong doon sa sistema lang. Sa religion, sa organization, or sa*

group, hindi talaga tumatagos yung doon sa pagiging tao, o pagpapakatao [I am also active in church. I observe that majority of the members of a religious organization become trapped in its system, religion, organization, or group and that it doesn't cover how it is to be a human.]

The local audience interpreted the social issue in the first painting as poverty. This meant that none of them was able to figure out the social issue that was being reflected by the artist, which is the religious or spiritual aspect of the Filipinos who want to win souls as if they wrestle for it but they fail to recognize true worship and eventually become selfish.

The local audience regarded the hands that are neither smooth nor clean, the background color, the feet that are bare, the clothes that are casual, and the box that limits what Filipinos can do as symbols of poverty. This meant that none of them was able to figure out some of the symbolisms used by the artist, which are: 1) naked man who does the true worship and is humbled and 2) background color orange that is for correction, thinking, and meditating. Congruent, however, to the local audience's interpretation of the symbols of poverty were the declarations in the website of FineArtAmerica ("Poverty Paintings," 2021) that its paintings from poverty collection depict meager surroundings, barefooted children playing in the street, and images of tattered clothing.

As the local audience looked at the third painting, they recalled their experiences of not having enough money. These were their verbatim responses: "*Yung parang naghahanap ng ayuda. Nakita ko nga kanina sa news, ang haba-haba ng pila nila pero ang kukunin lang nila, isang libo* [Those who are looking for social assistance. I saw through the news their long line and yet they each would get a thousand pesos only]" (Participant A); "I think this is the one who have the most impact in my life, which I can say, I have already reached that rock bottom. I'd been through networking and it's my choice" (Participant B); "*Kasi* [Because] I grew *sa pamilya na galing sa mahirap* [family that was poor] and then they worked hard para magkaroon sila ng [so that they can have] big house, education" (Participant C); and "Sometimes, money limits us from doing the things that we want. Since you do not have enough money, you can't do the things that you love, for example, to travel or to have an education, to have a good vacation or to buy the things that you want because there's no enough money. Sometimes *ganun din ako* [I am like that]" (Participant E). To triangulate these local audience's responses with those of the artist, these were the verbatim responses of the artist: "*Yung mapapaisip ka na lang din talaga. Tuwing nakikita ko itong painting na ito, nakikita ko yung sarili ko na ginagapang ako nung pera, tinatali ako, kasi nagiging sakim din ako dahil sa mga pangangailangan. So, honestly, yun din ako* [You will really have to think. Every time I see this painting, I see myself being bound with money, since I become greedy because of need. Thus, honestly, I am that man.]

The local audience interpreted the social issue in the third painting as poverty. One of the local audience expressed that the poor cannot move or escape from the system, which came very close to the social issue that the artist was reflecting – a desperate hanging on to life by the majority of the Filipinos bound by money because of need, but wanting to be freed that is why they shout.

The local audience regarded the image of the Philippine currency, the Filipino man who seems confused, is shouting, is being wrapped with money, and is not rich as symbols of poverty. This meant that all of them were able to figure out the symbolism used by the artist, which is the poor Filipino who needs money. According to the artist, the Philippine currency is used to represent the country whose news items at those times were about killings, about those who were ready to kill or do bad things for money, or about those who wanted to be freed but could not. This problem of desperately hanging on to life or being tied by money still exists among Filipinos, thus the image of the man. People, whether rich or poor, remain greedy. The poor are greedy because of their need. The rich are greedy because they want more. Congruent to the local audience's interpretation of the symbols of poverty was the declaration by Bostwick (2021) that the interpretations of the symbolic meanings of money will be different depending on personal financial situations, together with other socioeconomic factors. To triangulate, the money binding the man because of need led to the analysis that the social issue reflected in it is about poverty, considering the economic or financial situations in the Philippines.

Remembered Personal Encounters

As they looked at the second painting, they appreciated the women in their lives who had given birth, had been taking care of their children, and had been challenged by motherhood. These were their verbatim responses: "*Nakita ko iyan sa nanay ko, sa wife ko* [I saw it in my mother, in my wife]. They are wonder woman" (Participant A); "the last memory that I will have in my mind is my wife giving birth to my child, and I think that's the best memory I can have, and that's what I can pray about for" (Participant B); "*Nung ako ang dumadaan sa ganyan* [When I was passing through that stage], I enjoyed that moment, those moments. I actually had to go. It was an agreement between me and my husband that I had to stop working for four long years so I can very well nurture my son" (Participant C); "I had a very great experience when I gave birth because I did not have any problems in terms of financial concerns" (Participant D); "I have observed, the people around me especially my mother, my aunties, my co teachers *na nanganak na or may anak na, talagang alam kong* [who had given birth or with children already, I really know] struggle, sobrang [extremely] challenging for them ang [the] motherhood" (Participant E); and "If you observe it in society, normally they can easily give higher position to men and for women, they have to work. In the Philippines, we recognize women, women leaders" (Participant F). To triangulate these local audience's responses with those of the artist, these were the verbatim responses of the artist: "When my kids were younger, we tried breastfeeding, too. But maybe because of lack of knowledge on how to 'properly' do it, we turned to breastmilk substitute instead. My kids could have benefited more from natural mother's milk, not to mention the money we could save."

The local audience interpreted the social issue in the second painting as motherhood or womanhood. This meant that all of them were able to come close to the social issue that is being reflected by the artist, which is about working mothers who are heroines and who have a complete and balanced understanding of her role as a mother.

The local audience regarded the image of the breastfeeding mother as a symbol of motherhood. This meant that all of them were able to figure out one symbolism used by the artist, which is a breastfeeding mother. Congruent to the local audience's interpretation of the symbols of motherhood were the declarations of Hilt (2017) that motherhood is feeling the love while the mother is staring into the eyes of her child and feeding that wrapped child in her arms with a look of awe.

This study concludes that contemporary painting can be a challenging avenue to reflect social issues in the Philippines since the local audience and the participating Filipino contemporary artists successfully connected to each other in seeing the reflected social issues in the second and third paintings but failed in the first painting. The paintings, which were used as instruments for visual communication and for evaluation to fit the theoretical framework of instrumentalism, were reflective of the social issues in the Philippines such as poverty and motherhood.

This study also concludes that in viewing and understanding social issues as reflected in Philippine contemporary paintings, the local audience will go through several processes: (a) initially focus on the images that they see in the paintings, including their colors, shapes, and movements; (b) figure out the meanings that the images convey after recognizing such images; and (c) make meanings or generate their reactions from their experiences in life or from observations of others' experiences.

The researcher recommends the use of three Philippine contemporary paintings that reflect the same social issue in the Philippines to limit the diversity of interpretations of the images by the local audience and thus establish cohesion of responses, the selection of the local audience from the same field of interest or work experience to limit the diversity of exposure to the social issue and thus establish cohesion of responses, and the selection of three Philippine contemporary paintings that present the same level of depth in reflecting that same social issue in the Philippines. These recommendations are framed for the enhancement of future studies related to the subject of this study and for the future researchers who may want to improve on the divergence of the local audience's responses due to the varying social issues that were presented for evaluation.

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