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The Effects of Digitalization to SMEs in Ilocos Norte

1Claire Adana Shane C. Arzadon & 2Kingphillip Andrew A. Salvador

Abstract

This study aimed to evaluate how digitization has affected small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Ilocos Norte in the Philippines. It also identified the positive results, limitations and challenges that digitalization presents to the growing SMEs. Specifically, it evaluated the effects of digitalization on marketing, operations, and financial aspects. The study participants were the owners and employees of SMEs chosen using quota sampling, with a total of 100 SMEs located within the vicinity of Ilocos Norte. The study adopted a quantitative approach and used a survey questionnaire via Google Form as a research instrument. The quantitative data were analyzed using Pearson correlation. From the findings, the SMEs agreed to operate in a broader scope by using technology to sell their products and services and help them draw new customers and boost sales.

Keywords: digitalization, small and medium-sized enterprise, SMEs, e-commerce

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Introduction

Small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) are crucial for long-term economic growth, yet it can be difficult to maintain their performance (Ates et al., 2013). The performance and participation of SMEs in the economy are impacted by the multifaceted changes brought about by what has been named the "information-networked society" (Castells, 2010) or the "digital economy." The SMEs are more than miniature versions of larger companies. Hence, they are critical to various external and environmental factors including the digital commerce. The digital e-commerce, also called e-commerce, is the exchange of goods and services across networks such as the Internet, mobile devices, and commerce infrastructure. "Digitalization" involves transforming an organization into a digital one by leveraging digital technologies to change a business model and provide new income and value.

This study aims to assess the effects of digitalization to SMEs in Ilocos Norte by identifying the favorable outcomes, the constraints and obstacles that digitalization poses to the businesses. In particular, this study aimed to evaluate digitalization's effort and impact on SMEs' profitability and operation. It explored the impact of digitization on marketing, finance, and business operations.

Methodology

The study used a quantitative approach to quantify the effects of digitalization through mean and Pearson R to correlate the relationship between the operation and profitability in the digitalization. The owners and employees of SMEs in Ilocos Norte made up the participants. A quota sample of 100 was chosen from the different businesses operating in the Ilocos Norte region. In accordance with the COVID-19 protocol, the researchers distributed questionnaires via Google Forms to prevent direct contact and to implement social distancing.

Findings

In terms of the business operation, the result shows that SMEs has wider scope of operation using digitalization. The participants agreed that digitalization is more effective now in their operation and provides easy transactions, as well as access to materials and products.
In terms of profitability, SMEs are embracing digitalization because it has the greatest potential for helping them draw new customers and boost sales.

**Conclusion**

The digitization increased the amount of work required for SMEs’ operations because of the geographic spread of their operations. By applying digitalization, SMEs can easily obtain supplies or resources that would hasten the delivery of their goods to customers. As a result, digitization can increase SMEs earnings, decrease costs, and enables them to sell more by luring in new customers resulting to higher chances of profitability.

Digitalization has a significant operational influence. This shows that digitalization has positive effects on SMEs that have been in operation for a longer period. It has also been noted that financial variables greatly influence the impact of digitalization on SMEs in terms of business operations and profitability.

**References**


Performance of agricultural extension workers in the implementation of agriculture programs and project in the third district of Laguna

1Erlene A. Delgado & 2Preciosa D. Villacruel

Abstract

The study generally aimed to determine the performance of the agricultural extension workers (AEWs) in the implementation of agriculture programs and projects in the third district of Laguna, Philippines. The data were gathered from 31 AEWs and 151 farmers of the six local government units using a researcher-made questionnaire. The data were treated and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The results showed that AEWs in the third district of Laguna were dominated by single, middle-aged, female and agriculture professionals. Also, the study suggest that age, sex, and employment status have no significant difference as to the performance related dimensions but with strong effect sizes that have practical significance. Further, there was strong correlation between the level of competency of AEWs and level of support of LGUs/MAOs to the performance of the AEWs which implies that the higher the level of AEWs technical knowledge and skills and substantial support from LGU/MAO, the better services are being rendered by the AEWs. This study has also proved that programs and projects are still being dominantly funded by the national government and little has been provided by the respective LGUs. Based on the findings, an enhanced monitoring and evaluation tool was recommended to ensure the successful execution of the programs and projects. It is further suggested for LGUs the immediate augmentation of AEWs to effectively deliver agricultural extension services to the farmers. Finally, it is recommended to include LGU-funded agricultural programs as a criterion to obtain the Seal of Local Good Governance.

Keywords: banner programs, food sufficiency, agricultural extension workers, farmers monitoring, program reforms

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Introduction

In developing nations like the Philippines, agriculture is the queen of the economy (Martinez, 2013), the backbone of development and the stepping stone to get away from poverty. The World Bank (2000) describes agriculture as the main frame of rural life as it plays a critical role in guaranteeing food security and achieving global economic diversity. The two major agricultural sub-sectors in the Philippines historically have been farming and fishing. Rice, sugarcane, coconut, and banana production are among the highest in the country, and these crops are also among the most popular ones exported (Statistica, 2021). Despite decades of agriculture-led policies, programs, and projects and billions of pesos committed to reducing poverty and boosting farmer’s income, there are still approximately 19.99 million Filipinos living in poverty, defined as the “proportion of Filipinos whose per capita income cannot sufficiently meet the individual basic food and non-food needs” (PSA, 2021).

The Department of Agriculture is the principal agency responsible of establishing the policy framework, public investments, and support services required to transform agricultural businesses profitable and help the less fortunate take advantage of development (LawPhil Project, n.d.). The DA sees a resilient, food-secure Philippines with empowered and affluent farmers and fisherfolk. As such, six national banner/commodity programs of the department that include corn, rice, high value crops, livestock, fisheries and organic agriculture are being recognized as the drivers for growth and employment in the sector. These banner programs are the priority commodity areas of the national government to address food security, poverty reduction, and long-term growth by increasing production and farming income in partnership with the local government units (LGUs).

As bridge between government and farmers, the role of the AEWs is crucial. The FAO affirms this role of AEW as responsible for the transmission of knowledge and expertise to farmers. In the Philippines, as affirmed by Cidro and Radhakrishna (2020), agriculture extension is critical in transfer of technology to increase productivity and revenue of farmers.

The emerging challenges in agriculture in the local setting such as limited diversification, low productivity, limited credit facility, low farm mechanization, inadequate post-harvest facilities and extension services, incomplete agrarian reform program implementation, and ageing farmers and fisherfolk among others are the constrain for agricultural transformation (Brown et al., 2018). In
addition, as revealed by Intong and Ravelo (2020), the success of the DA agenda and the execution of the government thrusts for food sufficiency, food security and increased income of the farmers lies in the capability, skills, passion and technical knowledge of the AEWs.

Henceforth, the focus of this research is to assess the 31 AEWs in the 3rd district of Laguna to be able to determine and compare the key factors that affect their performances in implementing agriculture programs and projects in their locality as perceived by self and farmers, randomly selected from the district.

**Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive-correlation method of research and utilized a mixed-method design. A structured survey questionnaire was used to obtain the quantitative or primary data which was administered through online and face to face and was complemented by qualitative approaches like observation, interviews and focus group discussion conducted by the researcher herself with selected farmers. The secondary data was taken from existing records from various offices and agencies.

The primary respondents of the study were the agricultural extension workers (AEWs) who are directly involved in planning, execution, monitoring, and assessment of agriculture programs and projects in the local government units. A total of thirty-one (31) appointed and designated AEWs of each LGU in the 3rd district of Laguna were the participants in this study notwithstanding their employment status. There were twelve (12) AEWs from San Pablo City, four (4) AEWs from the municipalities of Victoria, Alaminos, Rizal, Liliw, while three (3) from Nagcarlan. To complement the responses of the AEWs, 151 farmer-respondents were included. Random sampling was used to select the farmers.

The survey questionnaire is composed of five parts. The first and second parts determine the socio-demographic profile of the respondents and work-related information, respectively. The third part enabled the researcher to evaluate the performance of the AEWs based on the performance dimensions using a 5-point Likert scale with verbal interpretations as strongly agree and strongly disagree. Likewise, the fourth and fifth parts of the survey questionnaire enabled the researcher to evaluate the level of support from the concerned institution and AEWs competency level, respectively using 5-point Likert scale with verbal interpretation as very satisfied and very dissatisfied.
Descriptive and inferential statistical treatments were used to guarantee systematic and impartial data analysis and interpretation. The researcher observed professional standards in conducting the study guided by the Data Privacy Act of 2012. The privacy and anonymity of the respondents are protected.

**Findings**

Majority of the agricultural extension workers (AEWs) in the third district of Laguna belong to the age groups of 26-35 and 36-45; majority are female (61.3%), single (54.8%), with 71% holding a permanent position, and are college graduates (77.4%). There are 41.9% whose length of service is from 1-5 years, while only 3.2% who have been in the service for 31-35 years. Around 32.2% respondents indicated LGU budget allocation of 500,000 and below, while only 3.2% declared a 2,600,000 to 350,00 budget allocation for their offices. In addition, only 74.19% of the respondents have access through Wi-Fi connection.

Perceived assessment of AEWs revealed an overall verbal interpretation of “strongly agreed” as to performance related dimensions in terms of farmer’s monitoring, area of responsibility, farmer’s training, AEWs training, no of farmer’s association and adopted new farm technologies and innovations. Further, the level of support extended by the LGUs and Agriculture Offices revealed an overall verbal interpretation of “satisfied with a mean value of 3.92 and 4.01, respectively. Meanwhile, a “satisfied” and “very satisfied” verbal interpretations were obtained as to the level of AEWs competency as to technical knowledge and skills and personal attributes.

**Conclusion**

The goal of the DA programs and projects are to increase production for food security, and improve farmers living condition to address poverty. These twin goals realization is dependent on the performance of the extension workers in the local level and the support extended by the national and local governments units. The results of the study revealed that the socio-demographic profile, such as age, sex, civil status, employment status, income and educational attainment have no significant difference to the performance-related dimension of the AEWs. However, there is a significant relationship between the level of support of the local government units and municipal agriculture offices and the performance-related dimensions. In addition, there is significant relationship between
the level of AEWs competency and the performance-related dimensions. This imply that the AEWs knowledge, technical skills and personal attributes influence the performance of the AEWs in all performance-related dimensions.

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Humor as a Teaching and Learning Strategy in a Language Classroom
1Khrys Ianah R. Isagan, 1Vincent R. Enecito, 1Jim Paul S. Ungsod, 1Caren R. Nagal & 2Ersyl T. Biray

Abstract

This study using the mixed method design aimed to find out the social and psychological effects of humor as a teaching and learning strategy of language teachers to college students, as well as how and when teachers integrate humor in teaching. Participants included sophomore students and language teachers from a state institution in Western Visayas, Philippines. A researcher-structured and validated questionnaire transformed into a Google form was employed to collect quantitative and qualitative data. Results revealed that majority of the respondents agreed that humor, when used as a teaching approach, helps build a positive student-teacher relationship. They reported that they feel more relaxed when humor is used in teaching, highlighting its effectiveness as a tool to reduce anxiety while learning, enhance their participation and contribute to their final grade in English. Teacher-participants mentioned that humor is used within the class discussion to sustain attention. The most popular humor used are jokes, funny experiences, and puns. Sarcasm and visual jokes are rarely injected. However, the application of humor in a classroom setting should be approached with caution and sensitivity. While humor has the potential to create a more relaxed learning environment and aid in the learning process, boundaries should be established to avoid causing offense. Using humor as a teaching and learning strategy has a positive impact on college students’ language learning experience, if used appropriately. Despite the occasional drawbacks, the benefits of using humor in the language classroom outweigh its limitations.

Keywords: humor, teaching-learning strategy, mixed method, social and psychological effects

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Introduction

Teaching is a profession that should not to be taken lightly for it is a job where the future of students is on the line. It is the process of equipping students with the necessary knowledge and skills to prepare them for the future. Teaching strategy is the umbrella term for the methods, techniques, procedures, and processes that a teacher uses during instruction. Teachers employ a variety of teaching strategies to ensure that the learning objectives will be met. These instructional strategies help students meet their learning goals by encouraging active participation in the classroom (Persaud, 2021). Without the use of a strategy, teachers would be aimlessly projecting information that does not connect with learners or engage them (Bouslog, 2019). They must be appropriate for the topic being studied, the learner's level of expertise, and the stage in their learning journey (Anikumar, 2022). According to Deiter (2000), students prefer teachers who have a sense of humor over those who either don't have one or do not display it in class. Students do not expect teachers to act like clowns or comedians; however, they do want teachers to make learning more fun and entertaining. Teachers who use humor inside the classroom impact the learning of students (McGhee & Lloyd, 1982, in Hegstad, 2022). While humor is an important educational tool, too much of it can lead to distraction from the subject matter (Lei et al., 2010). This study was anchored on Relief Theory which argues that an incongruous use of humor is more likely to induce laughter which can act as a reprieve from anxiety, tension, and worry (Alsop, 2015). Hence, this aimed to find out the social and psychological effects of humor as a teaching and learning strategy by language teachers to the class participation and performance of college students in a government-funded institution in Western Visayas. It also looked into how and when teachers integrate humor in teaching. Both the perceptions of teachers and students have been considered in coming up with the results. The findings are assumed to assist the educational stakeholders in developing desirable and appropriate integrative strategies for advancing language students' learnings within a language classroom, as well as furthering strategies from a mere traditional setting.

Methodology

Mixed method design was chosen for this study to find out if the integration of humor in classroom instruction by the teachers was effectively necessary as perceived by the students, and the
explanations shared by the language teachers on how and when do they inject humor in their discussions. This research design combines and integrates qualitative and quantitative methods in a single research study (Molina-Azorin, 2016). Purposive sampling method was used as it included all the 42 sophomore college students in a language class as respondents. Total population sampling is a type of purposive sampling where the whole population shares a customary characteristic (Lavrakas, 2008). Qualitative data were provided by four (4) college language instructors as participants. A researcher-made survey questionnaire validated by non-participant teachers and tested for reliability among students not included as respondents was used to gather quantitative data. It was transformed into a Google document and sent to respondents through Messenger. This two-part tool consisted of 15 items with a 5-point Likert scale of response choices from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, and information about students’ grade and preferences as to when and how humor should be used in teaching. A face-to-face interview with the college language instructors was conducted using an interview guide. Data were analyzed using frequency count, rank, and percentage distribution.

Findings

As to social effect, majority of the sophomore college students strongly agreed that humor in the classroom can help them create a positive student-teacher relationship, and agreed that they develop socialization skills among and between their classmates because of the non-threatening classroom atmosphere provided by the teacher. They also agreed that they do not feel uncomfortable when the teacher uses jokes in the classroom. However, they disagreed that the use of humor by the language teachers in class would undermine the authority and respect to the teachers nor would it contribute to a culture of disrespect or disregard for rules in the classroom. On the psychological effect, more than half of the total respondents strongly disagreed that humor is distracting in class. In fact, most of them strongly agreed that they feel energized and motivated to attend classes of teachers who have sense of humor, and feel relaxed than being tense when teachers use funny examples during discussions. This suggests that the use of humor sparks students’ interest, makes the classroom environment livelier, and helps reduce anxiety by creating an atmosphere of ease and comfort for learning (Al-Duleimi & Aziz, 2020). They also disagreed that the use of humor by the teacher to deliver lessons would make them feel awkward. As regards learning efficiency, the biggest number agreed that students remember lessons when humor is injected in discussions, understands complex
lessons when humor is used in explaining concepts, and become more participative in class. Indeed, concept-related humor appears to be one of the variables that influence teaching quality and student learning as it has a positive impact on both instruction and student acquisition (Bolkan et al., 2018). They added that when a teacher uses humor, it always captures and sustains their attention. This confirms the findings made by Henderson (2015) which linked humor to the improvement of motivation and long-term memory among students of all ages. As a result, most of the students had attained grades from 1.51 to 2.00 equivalent to 87-95 and described as Very Satisfactory because of the inclusion of humor in class instruction. It was noted that language teachers who used humor in 70-80% of class discussion were the most liked teacher by the respondents. It was also established that these teachers frequently insert humor during the discussion, sometimes after discussion, and rarely before the discussion of lessons. This proves the findings of Kaur (2021) which holds that using positive forms of humor during lessons fosters positive relationships between teachers and learners, maintains discipline within the classroom environment, promotes creativity, and boosts concept retention. Jokes were found to be the most used humor in class. This was followed by telling funny experiences, sarcasm, and puns. Rarely were visual jokes injected. Chowdhury (2021) reminds, however, that teachers should carefully use verbal, visual, and audio humor in the classroom setting to attain fruitful outcome. It should never target any individual or group in the class.

**Conclusion**

Indeed, using humor as a teaching and learning approach for language learning is effective. Through humor, both students and teachers can experience a stronger sense of connectedness. It promotes active participation during class discussions because teachers with sense of humor push students’ learning engagement to a higher level. Additionally, it lessens academic stress concerning the English language due to the supportive and student-friendly learning environment it fosters. However, because it is difficult for students to relate to jokes that are unfamiliar to them, teachers must pay attention to their interests. Even though teachers use humor in their instruction, their authority remains unaffected. On the contrary, it fosters a sense of community in the classroom and strengthens their bond with students. But one must always know where and when to draw the line to ensure that respect will always be present.
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Senior High School Strand Alignment and its Implication to the Tertiary Programs: A Basis for Bridging Program

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Abstract

Every educational institution seeks to establish and provide the best educational system for every learner. The Philippine education system transitioned from the 10-year basic education to 12-year basic education considering the tracks and strands offered in the senior high school, the counterpart in the tertiary program must be met by the students. This study aims to determine the implication of the senior high school strand alignment to the tertiary program and to develop a program that will bridge the student’s adjustment and readiness and the program difficulties encountered by the students. Using descriptive-correlational research design with mixed method approach, this study utilizes survey questionnaire to gather numerical data and interview guide to gather qualitative data. With 364 population, the sample size totaled 184 due to conflict of interest, availability of the student, and the problem in the internet connection. The result shows that the senior high school strand has a statistically significant association on the academic performance of the student. Further, the result also shows that the adjustment and readiness of the students has no statistically significant association on the academic grades of the students. The program, PAGSABOT: Bridging the Gap in the Academic and Social Aspect of the First Year Students, was proposed to bridge the implications found in the study.

Keywords: aligned program, bridging program, misaligned program, program difficulties, strand alignment

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Introduction

Every educational institution seeks to establish and provide the best educational system for every learner; hence, Republic Act Number 10533, known as the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, was implemented with the aim and purpose of bridging the gap and strengthening the educational system used in the Philippines by remodelling the whole system from the accustomed 10-year basic education to a 12-year basic education. Considering the various tracks and strands that need to be taken as part of the implementation of the new educational system, as stipulated in Section 5 of Republic Act Number 10533 and as stated in DepEd Order No. 021, s. 2019, the educational institutions of basic education and higher education, with their respective governing bodies, must devise a comprehensive curriculum for the transition from basic to tertiary education that ensures the preparedness of the students in the higher education programs and produces valuable and responsible citizens equipped with competent skills and working ethics (DepEd, 2019).

As revealed in the study of Quintos and Caballes (2020), the strand mismatch in the tertiary programs ranges from 31% to 39%, which implies a high percentage of strand misalignment in the tertiary programs from the two consecutive school years from 2017 to 2019. Moreover, the study of Benosa and Palaog (2023) revealed a high percentage of academic deficiencies among the students whose strand is not related to the program they are currently enrolled in, of which 42% are from the IT strand and 23% are from the non-IT strand. The study of Palabrica and Ferolino (2023) concluded that many of the graduates of the selected educational institution in Sorsogon City in the Philippines chose to take unrelated programs to their senior high school strand, considering various factors in selecting their career path.

The strand alignment in an education institution is inevitable; the only concern now is how a higher education institution will address the possible implications of the programs taken by the students. Hence, this study aims to identify the rate of alignment status of the students in a state university in the Philippines, determine the significant association of the senior high school strand, college adjustment and readiness to the academic performance of the students that will discuss the implication of the senior high school strand to the alignment of the tertiary programs, and propose a bridging program that will address the gap on the program difficulties encountered by students due
to the misalignment of senior high school strand and that of the chosen tertiary programs, which may become a mechanism to tertiary institutions in addressing the difficulties encountered by those misaligned students who are currently enrolled in their respective tertiary programs.

**Methodology**

Using a descriptive-correlational research design with a mixed method approach that utilizes a survey questionnaire to gather numerical data and interview guide questions to gather qualitative data. From a 364-person sample population, the sample size was reduced to 184 due to conflict of interest, availability of the students and the problem with their internet connection. With the approval of the university administrators and consent of the participants, in line with the Data Privacy Policy, all the gathered data were secured and used only for the sole purpose of discussing the content of the study. Using the SPSS application to make statistical analysis of the numerical data gathered, supported by the integrated qualitative data gathered through interviews of the particular samples, research methods, research designs and research ethics.

**Findings**

The result shows that most of the senior high school strands taken by the respondents are from the academic track, which mainly includes Accounting, Business, and Management (ABM), Humanities and Social Science (HUMSS) and Technical Vocational Livelihood track. Most of the respondents are currently taking the programs BS Information Technology, BS Entrepreneurship, and Bachelor in Physical Education, mostly having a general weighted average for the 1st semester of the academic year 2022-2023 ranging from 1.50 to 1.74.

The results also reveal that the need to adapt academically, socially, personal-emotional and institutional attachment gathers favorable response with a total mean of 2.61, which indicates that the first- and second-year level students were adjusted and ready to take the program and to enter the college life.

The result also shows that there is a high percentage of mismatch on the senior high school strand and the tertiary programs taken by the first- and second year students (64.67%), which indicates that most of the students are having a hard time on the program. The results further show a strong statistically significant association on the senior high school strand and the students’ academic
performances but there is no statistically significant relationship on the student’s adjustment and readiness on the academic performance.

From the findings of the study, a bridging program entitled “PAGSABOT: Bridging the Gap in the Academic and Social Aspects of the First-Year students” was proposed to address the gap on the college adjustment and readiness of the students and to address the difficulties encountered by the students and prepare the first-year students on the reality of the program they are going to take.

**Conclusion**

This study concluded that there is a high percentage of mismatch on the senior high school strand and the tertiary programs taken by the first- and second year students. Moreover, the null hypothesis of the study was rejected indicating a strong statistically significant association on the senior high school strand and the students’ academic performances. However, the second null hypothesis was accepted as it indicates no statistically significant relationship on the student’s adjustment and readiness on the academic performance while there still a strong association on the student’s adjustment and readiness in college and the academic performance of the students.

The study recommends the bridging program, “PAGSABOT: Bridging the Gap in the Academic and Social Aspect of the First Year Students”, for the betterment on the student's performance and to address the gaps found out on the study. Moreover, the institution must a create a committee focusing on the implementation of the program on coordination to the involved person on the program.

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Impact of Guided Oral Reading Approach to Students’ Reading Comprehension


Abstract

This study aims to determine the impact of guided oral reading approach to students’ reading comprehension. A quasi-experimental design was used to track the difference between two groups of students at an elementary school in the Philippines, specifically the control group and the treatment group. This research is limited to one section of fourth-grade students. Based on the findings, most of the respondents in the treatment group got very high scores, while the majority of the control group got low scores. A Vocabulary Enrichment Program for Better Comprehension was developed and proposed for implementation. This program introduces fresh vocabulary to the students to improve their ability to comprehend text and their capacity for independent word learning. The vocabulary of students is closely connected to academic success because students with larger vocabulary sets comprehend new ideas and concepts faster than those with limited vocabulary sets. Reading is a complex process that only gets better with repetition. It is essential to have great reading comprehension abilities. It improves reading efficacy and enjoyment and benefits students’ personal, professional, and academic lives in addition to their studies.

Keywords: reading comprehension, guided oral reading, control group, treatment group, professional development

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Introduction

The goal of education is to educate students on topics other than content, such as how to successfully learn, question, think, and function in modern society. Therefore, it stands to reason that good reading skills are an essential component of a student's education. However, students have been neglecting the importance of learning through the concept of reading comprehension.

In reality, many students are literate. However, reading and comprehension are not the same. One of these trends that has been growing in popularity over the past decade is guided reading. It is an approach to reading that is being used in classrooms by teachers and reading specialists; its purpose is "to build students' reading power—a strategy for processing texts" (Fountas & Pinnell, 2012, p. 272).

This study aims to determine the impact of guided oral reading approach to students’ reading comprehension. When it comes to assisting students in developing their reading abilities, guided oral reading is quite effective. It is one of the best instruments for both enhancing a student's basic reading abilities and assisting in the development of advanced comprehension abilities.

This study focused on the fourth graders. According to Chall (1983) and Stanovich (1986), the reason for the fourth-grade slump may stem from a lack of fluency and automaticity (that is, quick and accurate recognition of words and phrases). Lack of fluency tends to result, ultimately, in children’s reading less and avoiding more difficult materials. Children were still struggling to understand words and their meaning; they could read, but they had difficulty comprehending what they were reading.

This study will be helpful to a large portion of respondents for educational purposes. Teachers will benefit the most from this study because they will be able to help students develop and improve their oral reading strategies and foster positive relationships with their parents and teachers throughout this research. By utilizing this area of continuous learning, it allows teachers to communicate with students more effectively throughout the educational process.

This study tested the following hypotheses:
**Ho1:** There is no significant difference between the reading comprehension of the control group and the treatment group.

**Methodology**

This study used a quasi-experimental design to track changes in the effectiveness of the guided oral reading approach on students' reading comprehension. The study used one class of students and divided the class into two groups, specifically the control group and treatment group. The control group was students not exposed to the treatment being tested. On the other hand, the treatment group was a group of students in an experiment that was exposed to the treatment being tested which is the guided oral reading approach. Simple random sampling method was used, wherein the researchers let the students count from one to two, alternatively. There was a total of sixty students inside the classroom. Thirty students were selected as the control group and the other half were selected as treatment group.

The study used survey questionnaire to gather information and data from the respondents. The research instrument is composed of two parts. Part I of the research instrument consists of the items which gathers respondents' profile such as their name, sex, and age. Part II of the research questionnaire consists of one story with 10 questions. It is a story-based to be answered by the respondents. The test requires 15-20 minutes completion time. When performing the study, the researchers strictly adhered to the ethical guidelines approved by the Ethics Review Board in order to maximize the benefits for the respondents while minimizing their chances of harm. Respect for the study participant is the first and most important ethical standard followed throughout the study. Based on this ethical viewpoint, it is the participants' right to be recognized as human beings with the right to meaningful respect. The researchers did not use any hazardous substances that could harm the subjects if not handled properly. There were no monetary or tangible benefits to taking the poll, but they will be the initiative's primary goal. The respondents' information was completely confidential.

**Findings**

This study shows that the treatment group got higher scores compared to control group since the guided oral reading strategy was used. The respondents were able to have greater control in the reading process, with the researchers’ assistance in reading and comprehending the text individually.
There is a significant difference between the student’s scores gained from treatment group and control group. The null hypothesis was rejected. Based on the results, the research proposed an intervention called “Vocabulary Enrichment Program for Better Comprehension” in which having a wide vocabulary acquisition may result to increase students’ reading comprehension. This intervention program may help those frustrated readers to become an advanced reader.

Conclusion

The guided oral reading approach is proven effective in improving students’ reading comprehension. Guided oral reading is an instructional strategy that can help students improve a variety of reading skills, including fluency. Moreover, there is a significant difference between the reading comprehension of control group which has low scores compared to treatment group in which guided oral reading approach was applied. Therefore, the researchers proposed an intervention called “Vocabulary Enrichment Program for Better Comprehension” in which having a wide vocabulary acquisition may result to increase students’ reading comprehension. This intervention program may help those frustrated readers to become an advanced reader.

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Bitcoin Investment Returns Prediction Using ARIMA Model

Brendan Yap Kar Lun, Lee Wei Hong, Chen Ji Feng & Sadaf Khan

Abstract

Bitcoin stands as an immensely volatile cryptocurrency gaining increasing popularity. It signifies a pivotal shift in the perception of currency as the world's most valuable and costly cryptocurrency. This study aims to forecast the daily return on Bitcoin. Historical data of Bitcoin prices from 24/5/2020-23/5/2023 was collected and forecasted the Bitcoin return for a short 8 days (24/5/2023-31/5/2023). The objective was to validate the practicality of the traditional univariate Autoregressive Integrative Moving Average (ARIMA) model in predicting Bitcoin prices. We successfully projected the closing prices of Bitcoin for the initial seven days of May 2023. Bitcoin's value fluctuates similarly to a stock, but different in its features. The preprocessing stages were stationary tests using an Augmented Dickey-Fuller Unit Root Test, Jarque-Bera Test, and Lagrange Multiplier Serial Correlation Test utilizing EViews software with series line graph, Q-Q plot, histogram. The selection of potential model was selected through the utilization of the correlogram test looking at the ACF and PACF graph. This study used the ARIMA model and has chosen ARMA (1, 0) as the forecasting model based on the readings on Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), Schwarz Criterion (SIC), and Hannan-Quinn Criterion (HQC), Mean Absolute Error, was run as an accuracy measurement. Our study shows 2 findings, where (1) the forecasted daily return between 24/5/2023-31/5/2023 shows constant return of 0.1%, leading to an annual return of 36.5%; (2) the forecast of using ARMA (1, 0) model is weak in its accuracy.

Keywords: bitcoin, cryptocurrency, prediction, auto regressive integrated moving average, ARIMA

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Introduction

In 2009, an individual named Satoshi Nakamoto from Japan introduced Bitcoin. This marked the initial successful endeavor in creating a virtual currency and has since become one of the most debated digital currencies (Katsiampa, 2017). Moreover, the Industrial Revolution 4.0 has risen a lot of new technology, and these have raised the importance of cryptocurrencies that is expected to be one of the mainstream investment tools and is traded in a regular basis in the future (Senate RPC, 2020). Moreover, as cryptocurrency mining has becoming difficult than Bitcoin first announced, household investors do not possess the technology to mine and therefore is more interested in trading these investments tools. Malladi and Dheeriya (2021) studied cryptocurrency return and volatilities using the time series analysis. In their study, both Bitcoin and Ripple cryptocurrency has been studied using the Autoregressive Moving Average Model with exogenous inputs model (ARMAX), Vector Autoregression (VAR) model, Generalized Autoregressive Conditionally Heteroscedastic (GARCH) model, and Granger causality tests. Similarly, Qin et al. (2021) studied Bitcoin returns and volatility in relation to the global economic policy uncertainty engaging the Granger causality tests. In the study, they argued that Bitcoin market has relevant information to predict the global economic policy uncertainty, while the global economic policy uncertainty too contains information to predict the Bitcoin market. Therefore, it is important to understand the pattern of Bitcoin, which has been chosen as the main objective in this study.

Methodology

Daily data on Bitcoin’s closing price has been collected from Yahoo Finance, starting from May 24, 2020, to May 23, 2023. It is then computed into logarithmic return by using the log function, for further analysis. Academics argued that evaluating returns over multiple time periods using logarithmic returns rather than simple returns has theoretical and practical advantages (Hudson & Gregoriou, 2015). The reason is that logarithmic returns are time-additive and returns for each individual time period can be added together to calculate the overall return over multiple time periods. As a result, the time series characteristics of additive processes are simpler to derive compared to multiplicative processes (Campbell et al., 1997). For the study, we selected Auto Regressive Integrated Moving Average (ARIMA) model without considering trends and seasonal patterns to forecast Bitcoin's return. The ARIMA model represents a multipurpose model utilized for time series
forecasting. This model can be rendered stationary through differencing and can incorporate nonlinear transformations like logging or deflation. Notably, random-walk and random-trend models, autoregressive models, and exponential smoothing models are all specific instances falling under the umbrella of ARIMA models. Before processing through the time series forecasting, normalization and smoothing are essential, several tests were conducted to confirm the return data has reached at its stationarity, normality, and serial correlation benchmark. In the later stage, Bitcoin’s logarithmic return’s line graph has been observed and Augmented Dickey-Fuller Unit Root Test was run. Secondly, normality testing has been observed through Bitcoin return’s histogram chart, Q-Q plot chart, and Jarque-Bera Test. Lastly, OLS assumption of Serial Correlation has been observed (Valchanov, 2021). Serial correlation is an important relevant diagnostic test in time series. Lagrange Multiplier Serial Correlation Test LM Test has been conducted.

When the series have observed to achieved Stationarity, Normality, and Serial Correlation, ARIMA model is used to forecast and study the return of Bitcoin. It is a combination of Autoregressive model (AR), Integration (I), and Moving Average model (MA). To be specific, the formula can be shown as:

\[ Y_t = C + \phi_1 Y_{d,t-1} + \phi_p Y_{d,t-p} + \cdots + \theta_1 e_{t-1} + \theta_q e_{t-q} + e_t \]

Where \( \phi \) denotes the coefficient for the lags of the variables, while \( \theta \) denotes the coefficient of the error terms. The number of lags, error terms, and degree of integrating is defined by \((p, d, q)\). To find the sequence of \((p, d, q)\), several Information Criterion must be observed, and in this research, Akaike Information Criterion (AIC), Schwarz Criterion (SIC), and Hannan-Quinn Criterion (HQC) has been observed to find the best \((p, d, q)\) for the forecast of Bitcoin’s return.

Lastly, for accuracy measurement Mean Absolute Error (MAE), Mean Absolute Percentage Error (MAPE), and Root Mean Squared Error (RMSE) has been conducted to study the accuracy of our study. The lower the figure computed from these Forecast Accuracy Measurement, the more accurate the forecasting can be established.
Findings

For the data analysis, after running a stationary test the Bitcoin return is first found stationary on its own level without going any integration and has achieved normality and serial correlation. Hence, the d figure in ARIMA (p, d, q) has been set to 0 as no integration has been done. By looking through the ACF and PACF Correlogram, 8 possible ARMA model has been computed in EViews. They are ARIMA (1,0,0), ARIMA (0,0,1), ARMA (1,0,1), ARMA (2,0,1), ARMA (1,0,2), ARMA (2,0,0), ARMA (0,0,2), ARMA (2,2,0). As a result, ARMA (1,0,0) has found to be the most accurate model among the others.

ARMA (1,0, 0) model shows the 8 days of forecasted daily return between 24/5/2023 – 31/5/2023 is kept on a constant return of 0.1%. Where if it is computed into an annual return, 36.5% return per annum can be achieved by the investors. However, the Forecast Accuracy Measurement showed that this forecast contains a very weak accuracy, containing a 115.6% error computed in MAPE. In short, investors can achieve an average of 0.1% daily return investing in Bitcoin, which will receive a 36.5% return annually.

Figure 2

*Bitcoin’s daily return line graph (24 May 2020 - 23 May 2023)*
Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings showed that Bitcoin daily return is kept in a constant 0.1%, while the univariate time-series ARMA (1,0) is less accurate. Hence, this shows that the emergence of cryptocurrency market is still in unstable. Bitcoin is emerging currency as an alternative to traditional currencies, penetrating its global recognition across various communities due to its inherent benefits. Firstly, investors are highly recommended to invest in the cryptocurrency market as a diversifying tool to mitigate the price risk and to not refuse such new and potential financial assets. Secondly, it is recommended that future studies should not only focus on Bitcoin return, but also the Bitcoin risk factor to help investors and researchers to have an in-depth understanding of other cryptocurrencies. Thirdly, with the help of Granger Causality test, and Granger Causality in Quantile, multivariate time-series analysis is also recommended to forecast and study the pattern of Bitcoin. Although it increases the complexity and time-consumption, it also contributes to the improvement of human being and investors’ financial decision making. Despite its limitations, significant drawbacks such as government-imposed restrictions due to concerns of tax evasion are still prevalent.

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The Discourse of Gen Z in Social Media Network: Inputs to English Language Teaching
Zohail I. Ador

Abstract
Gen Z language in social media is expressive, unrestricted, and liberated. Many studies have revealed that the use of social media has adverse effects on the writing skills and performance of Gen Z. Thus, this study was conducted to identify the interests of Gen Z based on their postings and to design writing tasks that may be of interest to them. This critical discourse analysis aimed to explore and analyse the content and functions of Gen Z’s posts. Additionally, the writing style of Gen Z in social media was also investigated. Specifically, posts were limited to Twitter as it is believed that this platform is where Gen Z youngsters become loud, proud, unfiltered, and genuine in their language. A total of 45 tweets were collected by the researcher. Findings revealed that Gen Z posts are commonly about school-related tasks, entertainment, and personal matters. Their posts function to express appreciation, frustration, uncertainty, longingness, relief, sorry, wishful, and love. Furthermore, this study revealed that Gen Z people do not conform to the conventions of language, uses cursing and swearing in posts, and uses emojis to intensify and reinforce a strong emotion. Teachers are encouraged to adapt and embrace the technology to create engaging, authentic, and meaningful writing activities that may address the possible writing challenges of Gen Z in academic writing.

Keywords: Gen Z, language, social media, posts, critical discourse analysis

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Introduction

The language of Gen Z in social media platforms is expressive, unrestricted, and liberated. This generation is considered the least conservative as compared to former generations when it comes to language. They like to integrate emojis in their communication. They are also so innovative that they are fond of inventing new words (Devlin, 2021). It appears that this cohort has no limitations in expressing their thoughts, ideas, and insights as they are youngsters who are full of emotions and ideas. Their speech online mirrors their identity and the context to which language is used in function. Moreover, Gen Zers’ language is often informal as it may contain jargons, slang, and even taboo language that only their cohort may understand (Pasa & Mahyuni, 2022). Their language style may be attributed to their complex environment to which they keep on adjusting and thriving to (Serbanescu, 2022).

Specifically, Generation Zers, commonly known as Gen Z, iGen, postmillennial, etc., are those who were born between the mid-1990s to 2010 and grew up with technology at hand. Gen Z people are independent and care for their fellow, aim for diverse communities, highly regard flexibility, relevance, originality, and non-hierarchical leadership. They are inclined to collaborative tasks since they are sociable. Also, they possess a pragmatic attitude when it comes to resolving issues that arise (De Witte, 2022). Gen Zers are very connected online as it is through the digital world that they keep themselves updated of current events (Serbanescu, 2022). In fact, Gen Z youngsters are the ones who spark conversations and trends from all sorts of topics – entertainment, sports, news, pop culture, and the like (Pietsch, n.d.).

In terms of topic interests, Gen Z or Zoomers are found to be politically liberal on topics about same-sex marriage, race, and climate change (Devlin, 2021). They are also open-minded that they become more accepting and empathetic in terms of individual differences (Smith, 2023); thus, they embrace diversity in terms of viewpoints, they prefer to be outside of the box and not be confined exclusively to politics and to labels assigned to them (Young, 2019).

Statistically, Gen Z comprises the biggest percentage of demographic profile of social media users, with 30.6% whose age ranges from 18-24 years old. As of January 2023, there are a total of 84.45 million Filipino social media users whose average age is 24.9 years old. This supports the claim
that half of the time Gen Z spends on the internet is allotted to social media. It appears that the use of social media among Gen Z is for them not to be ‘irrelevant’ and not to be outcasted to their social friends’ activity. This has been a platform to remain connected with friends (Kissinger, 2019). Based on reports, the main reason for using social media is to keep in touch with friends and family. The commonly used social media were the following: Facebook (95.7%), FB Messenger (92.1%), Tiktok (77.2%), Instagram (71.9%), and Twitter (56.7%) (Howe, 2023). Specifically, Twitter – a free social networking microblogging site that allows users to broadcast short posts called ‘tweets’ – is one that is liked by Gen Z to practice their freedom of speech as they can post freely their insights on some topics regardless of their age, gender, and nationality. It is in Twitter that users spark public discourses and debates online on various timely issues. However, some claim that Gen Z youth are assertive in exercising their free speech that they tend to disregard the feelings of other social media users (Mamangon et al., 2018).

Based on the observation of the researcher, the Gen Z youngsters use various social media applications for various purposes. Some students would often use Facebook to share memes, update others of their errands, accomplishments, and whatever current events they have. However, these students seem to use Twitter for expressing strong emotions which may be vulgar as some would use profane language even if the context is on the positive side (e.g., winning a contest, conquering a challenge, received awards and distinctions, etc.). Additionally, in this platform students would express their rants about their mishaps in life, insights regarding social issues related to government, gender inequality, racial discrimination. According to some students, they prefer to use Twitter as this is more liberated as compared to Facebook. They also like the feature that tweets may not be visible to the public unless one ‘follows’ the user’s account. Lastly, there are few teachers who have Twitter accounts; thus, they may not be able to see what students are posting online.

**Methodology**

This study employed critical discourse analysis (CDA). For this study, social media posts from Gen Z students were collated by the researchers. The posts were limited to Twitter, one of the
topmost used platforms of Filipino youngsters in expressing thoughts and ideas. But most especially, in Twitter, Gen Z people are “loud, proud, unfiltered, and totally genuine” (Pietsch, n.d.).

In collecting the corpus for this study, a student known by the researchers was assigned. This was because: 1) the researcher had no Twitter account; 2) the students had access to accounts of their peers which may be private for public view; and 3) for the researcher, who was also a teacher, to observe anonymity by not knowing whom the posts were coming from. The posts were limited to January-July of 2023. These posts were downloaded. The names of the posters were blurred to keep their identity anonymous.

In analyzing the texts, this study employed Mullet’s (2018) summary of the CDA framework which were narrowed to seven stages: (1) selecting the discourse; (2) locating and preparing data sources; (3) exploring the background of each text; (4) coding texts and identifying themes; (5) analyzing the external relations in the texts; (6) analyzing the internal relations in the texts; and (7) interpreting the data.

Findings

1. Common Themes of the Social Media Postings of Gen Z

After the analysis of themes of the social media posts of Gen Z students, it can be deduced that their postings commonly fall under school-related tasks, entertainment, and personal matters. School-related tasks refer to posts of students which function as a means of expressing: appreciation to the school per se; frustration to various academic activities; and sharing of perspective on school-related issues. For entertainment, students’ posts were centered on celebrities like Korean Pop (K-Pop) icons, concert tours, sports interests, and online gaming. Lastly, for personal matters, students’ posts were commonly about their experiences in life and their romance.

These themes were clustered as to what functions the posts imply. These functions were expressions of appreciation, frustration, uncertainty, longingness, relief, sorry, wishful, and love.
2. The Linguistic Features Used by Gen Z in Social Media

Gen Z language may be described as eccentric. This is because of the unconventional form they use in their posts. Their deviation from the norms is one of the effects of the continuous dominance of technology. Notably, Gen Z language is characterized by the use of various slang terminologies. Interestingly, this study found various linguistic features and styles Gen Z applies in their postings. For instance, the majority of the posts were not following the conventions of the language like proper capitalization, punctuations, spacing, and spelling. This style was followed by using curses and foul language to express strong emotions. Then, they use emoji/s to reinforce/intensify the emotion being conveyed in the post.

3. Classroom-based Activities for Gen Z Students

Writing personal essays or journal. It was evident that Gen Z students are very expressive of their feelings and emotions through posting updates on their social media account. They seem quite vocal about their current events and they post updates of their daily life. Furthermore, the activity of writing a personal essay will also give students a platform to share their insights on various topics they are interested in. It is worth considering that teachers should be careful in crucially planning the writing program for students.

Reviewing of the conventions of the language. Based on the findings, the majority of the posts of Gen Z do not adhere to conventions of language. Although posting on social media does not require to be grammatical, students may be affected unconsciously of the habits of not conforming to the conventions

Maximizing the use of technology. The ubiquitous use of technology in education is interminable. Most especially during the pandemic when in-person classes were suspended, the technology has been an alternative to continue learning despite global threat on health. Hence, it is recommended that language teachers adapt and embrace the use of technology in their ESL classes for a more engaging, authentic, and meaningful learning experience that caters the learners’ needs.
**Conclusion**

Gen Z students are inarguably expressive of their thoughts, ideas, and sentiments. In this modern world, they often expressed their strong emotions through posting to various social media sites (i.e., Twitter). As students, their postings fall under school-related tasks, entertainment, and personal matters. Their posts function to express appreciation, frustration, uncertainty, longingness, relief, sorry, wishful, and love. Interestingly, the Gen Z generation, aside from using slang terms, has become eccentric in their language as they employ different linguistic features in their postings. Their posts are generally deviating from the norms and conventions of language such as spelling, capitalization, use of proper punctuations, and vocabulary. Also, they seem to use curses and foul language that do not intend to harm but to express a strong surge of emotion. Likewise, their use of emoji in their postings signifies and reinforces strong emotion.

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Balik-Serbisyo: A Phenomenological Study Exploring the Lived Experiences of DOST-SEI JLSS Scholars Working as Public-School Teachers to Fulfill the Return of Service Agreement

John Bennidick M. Condino, Michael Angelo H. Ayap, Jean Claire B. Bondad, Marjian Godwill M. Macandile & Luis Joseph M. Maulion

Abstract

Some existing scholarships require a mandatory Return of Service Agreement (RSA) for their scholars, which include DOST-SEI JLSS Scholarship Program where the scholar-graduates work as teachers as part of the RSA. This phenomenological study explored the lived experiences of five (5) DOST-SEI JLSS scholar-graduates working as public-school teachers within the Division of San Pablo City through actual interviews. The data were analyzed through thematic analysis, where the responses of the participants were coded to generate categories and themes. The findings revealed that the scholar-graduates were experiencing difficulties in teaching due to inadequate preparation to teach, interpersonal stressors, and personality differences. It was also found out that they utilize internal and external assistance towards development and personal and social support with work regulation. The DOST-SEI should be able to provide assistance to their scholar-graduates by giving them proper training and holding teaching seminars and meetings that can help them with their work in the future.

Keywords: challenges, DOST-SEI JLSS, return of service, scholar-graduates, teaching

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Introduction

There are scholarship programs that may require a mandatory return of service agreement (RSA) from their scholars. According to CHED Memorandum No. 3 (s. 2017), return service is the work that must be done as part of the scholar's obligations under the grant after completing the scholarship. The scholar is expected to work under this return service term. This agreement is implemented to address the shortage of professionals in different fields, such as teaching. Some scholars were allocated to this profession since there were not enough teachers in the field. This shortage cannot be solved by just hiring 10,000 teachers, according to the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (Abarca, 2022). Because of these, scholars from different fields were assigned to be teachers. This will only become an issue when the scholars assigned to this field have no proper, adequate, and necessary training or background (Pasamanero, 2022).

At present, the graduates from the DOST-SEI scholarship program are given priority in job placements in the Philippines, specifically in teaching for Department of Education (DepEd) schools. These graduates are given the position of Special Science Teacher I. In general, most of the scholar-graduates major or specialize in fields related to Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), however Parsons’ Trait and Factor theory suggests that the teaching career might not be best suited for the scholars as talents, skills, and personality plays a role in career matching. In contrast, Krumboltz’s Social Learning Theory suggests that factors like causal events have an impact on people's career choice, implying that through these several factors, the overall career and person match could change overtime.

In addition to the DOST-SEI program, several studies have looked at other national and international scholarships. There is also a lack of studies focusing on the education field and exploring the experiences of the scholar-graduates working as teachers for their return of service term. The majority of the research is focused on medical scholarships for students in the medical field. The interactions, activities, and environments in the medical field differ from those in the teaching field, which may have an impact on the findings of those studies. Moreover, local literature discussing scholarship programs in the Philippines is limited.

This research aimed to explore the life experiences of currently working teachers who were once DOST-SEI scholar grantees. In this way, the currently working teachers’ experiences helped to determine the impact of the scholarship program and its RSA had on the scholar grantees. This
research also aimed to help students who were considering applying for the scholarship program in determining whether or not it was beneficial to get the scholarship based on the lived experiences of previous scholar grantees. Additionally, this could help aspirants of the scholarship by providing new knowledge regarding the program. Moreover, this research would help to understand the strategies and coping mechanisms of the past scholars to overcome the challenges of the RSA as teachers.

**Methodology**

This research study utilized qualitative-phenomenological research method to look into the lived experiences of the participants. This type of research is used to investigate the experiences of humans and what it means to them. The main goal of this research approach was to examine people's experiences in order to ascertain their shared understanding and the ways in which they understood both their own and other people's experiences. Using purposive sampling, five participants were selected who met the following criteria: (1) must be a DOST-SEI JLSS scholar-graduate; (2) must be fulfilling their return of service agreement as a teacher in public high schools for one to three years; and (3) handling STEM related subjects.

Data were collected in the form of individual interviews using a semi-structured interview guide that underwent expert validation. With their consent, the participants agreed to have their interviews audio-recorded. To analyze the data gathered, thematic analysis was used. This type of analysis is pertinent to phenomenology because it emphasizes the subjective nature of the perceptions, feelings, and experiences of the respondents (Chang & Wang, 2021). It is a technique for analyzing qualitative data that includes reading through a collection of data and identifying themes by looking for patterns in the meaning of the data. The researchers identify patterns, generate codes, and organize codes into themes using thematic analysis (Delve, 2020). Throughout the investigation, ethical standards were strongly adopted and followed. These ethical considerations were informed consent, voluntary participation and anonymity of the participants, confidentiality of their responses, risk of harm, and member checking.

**Findings**

The findings revealed that the scholar-graduates were experiencing difficulties in teaching due to inadequate preparation to teach, interpersonal stressors, and personality differences. It was also
found out that they utilize internal and external assistance towards development and personal and social support with work regulation.

The participants experienced hardships fulfilling their return of service because of inadequate preparation to teach. All five participants experienced lack of (1) background information (2) training and four of them also had problems with lack of (3) materials. These experiences support the findings of Elnaga and Imran (2013), wherein it states that effective training is a key factor to increase individual and company capability, enhancing the employees’ performance at work.

Aside from the lack of preparation, they also experienced interpersonal stressors. The participants indicated they were having problems with their (1) workload and (2) students, and two of those five individuals said they were also having problems with the (3) parents of the students. The study of Ketchumpol (2021) found out that the issues non-education major teachers encountered were classroom management, followed by difficulty using educational media, developing lesson plans, and overcoming student motivation issues similar to these findings.

Another challenge that the participants faced was the personality differences. Three out of five participants said that they have (1) deficient social skills, while two participants answered that they have (2) sufficient social skills. These statements support Haseeb and Sattar’s (2018) results that some of their participants have stress due to having insufficient interpersonal skills needed to meet the requirements of the job.

When asked about their adaptive strategies in teaching, thematic two categories were formulated: (1) self-engaged learning, and (2) assistance from co-workers. In line with the scholar-graduates’ responses, Saka (2021) found out that teacher cooperation is an effective strategy for raising teacher standards and that teacher collaboration will help teachers to succeed in their teaching endeavors and give them a chance to advance their knowledge, skills, and resourcefulness.

The coping mechanisms mentioned by the participants of this study include (1) self and relational assistance and (2) self or working time regulations. These findings support the implications of the study conducted by Rabago-Mingoa (2017) which mentioned coping mechanisms which include dealing with their stress and its sources directly, having hobbies which bring entertainment, seeking outside assistance, and receiving support from a group.
Conclusion

This research study aimed to explore the lived experiences of DOST-SEI JLSS scholar-graduates working as public-school teachers to fulfil their return of service agreement. Emerging themes were derived from the challenges in working conditions and personal skills, coping mechanisms, and adaptive strategies of the scholar-graduates. There were three emerging themes that were identified about the challenges facing the scholar graduates in their working conditions and personal skills, and they are: inadequate preparation to teach, interpersonal stressors, and personality differences. There were also two emerging themes that were identified about the adaptive strategies and coping mechanisms of the scholar-graduates, and they are: included internal and external assistance towards development and personal and social support with work regulations.

The study recommends that the institution of DOST-SEI should be able to provide assistance to their scholar-graduates, for example, by giving them proper training regarding topics that pertain to pedagogies and classroom maintenance and holding teaching seminars and meetings that can help them with their work in the future before assigning them to their respective posts. It is also recommended that future researchers may explore the gender variable regarding DOST-SEI JLSS scholars in terms of whether they will continue to pursue teaching or not, as well as DOST scholar-graduates who have different scholarship contracts, like the Merit Scholarship, which has a different return of service assignment compared to the DOST-SEI JLSS Scholarship.
References


Digital Marketing Strategies Used by Competing Coffee Shops in Candelaria, Quezon: Perspective of Employees

Josh Edric G. Sobrepeña, Reymond D. Ragas & Chrizza Kaye R. Sotomayor

Abstract

The study aimed to identify the digital marketing strategies utilized by coffee shops in Candelaria, Quezon, the digital platforms used by coffee shops in digital marketing, and the challenges and benefits of digital marketing strategy and its impact on sales and profitability of coffee shops. The study utilized a qualitative research method and used structured interviews to collect the data from 10 respondents. The study used content analysis and descriptive coding in analyzing the data from the interview. The results revealed that coffee shops in the area use a variety of digital marketing strategies, with social media marketing being the most used, and the identified online platforms that are being used by coffee shops are Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok, Messenger, Websites, and Email with Facebook being the most used platform. Likewise, the result also shows that digital marketing can influence customer decision-making and purchase behavior, which helps coffee shops gain more sales and profits. The identified challenges and benefits of digital marketing are competition and striving to improve their marketing strategies to attract customers; the challenges and the benefits, such as convenience in endorsing their coffee shops and the potential for increased profits and brand recognition. This study implies that digital marketing has many benefits and positive impact on coffee shops. Digital marketing strategy is effective to gain more customers online and increase their sales.

Keywords: digital marketing, business strategies, coffee shops, perspective

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Introduction

In today's digital era, effective marketing strategies have become vital for businesses to gain a competitive edge and thrive in the market. The coffee shop industry, characterized by intense competition and evolving consumer preferences, has increasingly turned to digital marketing to engage with its target audience. Chaffey (2011) mentioned that "encouraging customer communications on the company's own website or by using its social presence" is what social media marketing is all about. One key strategy in digital marketing is social media marketing since it allows businesses to reach their intended customers without having to pay publishers or distributors, which is normal for traditional marketing. According to Waghmare (2012), a lot of Asian nations are utilizing electronic commerce via opening up, which is crucial for boosting competitiveness and the development of internet technology.

Digital marketing strategies have transformed businesses' promotion of products and services, particularly in coffee shops. These strategies enhance brand visibility, attract new customers, and foster long-term relationships. To remain relevant in a saturated market, coffee shop owners and managers must adapt their strategies accordingly. The rise of social media, mobile applications, and online review platforms has impacted coffee shops' engagement with their target audience. Digital marketing strategies like campaigns, influencer collaborations, email newsletters, and search engine optimization are common, but their effectiveness varies across coffee shops. Limited research on employees' perspectives in competing coffee shops on digital marketing, highlighting their pivotal role in implementing initiatives, interacting with customers, and assessing their impact on business outcomes. This research investigates digital marketing strategies used by competing coffee shops from employees' perspectives, focusing on experiences, perceptions, and challenges. It explores online platforms, perceived challenges, and the benefits of digital marketing. Moreover, this study includes the Digital Marketing Strategies used by competing coffee shops as perceived by employees, the perceived impact of Digital Marketing on sales and profitability of coffee shops, online platform employees report as commonly used Digital Marketing efforts, and the perceived challenges and benefits of Digital Marketing as reported by coffee shop employees.
Theoretical Framework

This study explores the potential of digital marketing strategies in satisfying customer needs, connecting with them, and fostering long-lasting relationships. In line with Kotler's theory of marketing, which views marketing as a science and art aimed at delivering value to fulfill target market needs. Additionally, Chaffey's theory of social media marketing highlights the impact of interactions between businesses and customers in understanding consumer behavior and influencing purchasing decisions. Furthermore, Berry's relationship marketing theory emphasizes the importance of creating enduring bonds with customers to understand their needs in the long run. By examining these theories, the researchers seek to uncover valuable insights into the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies and provide practical recommendations for enhancing customer satisfaction, influencing purchasing decisions, and fostering loyalty.

Theory of marketing by Kotler (2012), wherein he defined marketing as science and art of creating value to satisfy the needs and wants of customers profitably. Marketing is about knowing and satisfying both human and social needs and wants. This theory is all about marketing and satisfying both needs and wants of customers. Therefore, this theory is related to this study since the aim of this study to know if digital marketing strategies can be used by business owners and employees to satisfy and connect with their customers.

Theory of social media by Chaffey (2012), wherein he defined social media marketing as an informal marketing approach. The theory states that the interaction between Business and its customers make a big contribution to understanding human behavior through consumer conduct. As a result, businesses used social media strategy to stimulate purchasing options among customers, lead them into making purchases, and even maintain loyalty to one brand of the product or service. This theory is about encouraging customers to purchase a product through the use of social media. Therefore, this is connected to this study because the primary objective of this study is to find out if the customers purchasing decision can be influenced by digital marketing.

Relationship marketing theory by Berry (1983), wherein he defined relationship marketing as a type of marketing strategy that helps the brand creates a long-lasting relationship with their customer. It is important to establish and maintain relationship as it helps the brand to understand their audience in the long-run. This theory is all about creating a strong relationship with customers. Therefore, this theory is related to this study since one another objective of this study is to determine
if digital marketing can be used by business owners to create a strong and long-lasting bond with their customers.

To sum it all, marketing theory provides a foundation for understanding the needs and wants of customers and developing effective strategies, whereas relationship marketing theory focuses on creating long-term customer loyalty. The theory of social media expands on these principles by understanding the role of social media platforms in building relationships and enhancing marketing strategies.

**Methodology**

*Research design*

This study utilized a qualitative descriptive research design. Candelaria, Quezon. Creswell (2012) states that this method gathers in-depth information about existing conditions. Specifically, this paper examines the digital marketing strategies of competing coffee shops in Candelaria, Quezon, as perceived by their employees. It also investigates how employees view the impact of digital marketing on sales and profitability, along with the commonly used online platforms and the reported challenges and benefits associated with these strategies.

*Research Locale*

The research was conducted in seven (7) coffee shops at Candelaria, Quezon. This locale stands out as one of the leading coffee producers in Quezon Province (Farmers’ Information and Technology Center, [FITS] 2020). The growing presence of coffee shops in Candelaria intensifies competition, driving the researchers to investigate the pivotal role of digital marketing in maintaining a competitive edge within this thriving market landscape.

*Research participants*

This qualitative research study explores the perspectives of coffee shop employees in Candelaria regarding digital marketing strategies. The researchers chose 10 participants in Coffee Shop Employees. This number is justified according to Creswell's phenomenological study (2013). The participants for this study were selected using a purposive sampling technique. Participants were purposefully selected based on the following criteria: (1) Employee at a coffee shop located in
Candelaria, (2) the shop employed in is actively involved in using digital marketing strategies with 500 followers, and (4) Willing to Participate in the study. These criteria allowed for a focused examination of the research topic, providing valuable insights into the digital marketing landscape of coffee shops in Candelaria.

**Corpus of the Study**

The corpus utilized in this study is comprised of ten distinct collections of textual data, each meticulously curated to address the specific research inquiries at the core of our investigation. Each corpus is derived from transcriptions meticulously generated from audio-recorded interviews conducted during the data collection phase of this research. These transcriptions represent a rich and diverse collection of spoken discourse, capturing the voices, perspectives, and insights of the study's participants.

To ensure the integrity and reliability of the corpus, rigorous transcription protocols were adhered to, including verbatim transcription of the audio interviews guided by the guidelines and tenet of Jefferson’s Transcription System (University Transcriptions, 2022). The transcribed data spans a range of topics, experiences, and viewpoints, offering a comprehensive foundation for our subsequent analyses. The data were separately inter-coded by co-researchers before the analysis.

The utilization of this carefully constructed corpus serves as the primary source of data for our investigation, allowing for in-depth analysis and the extraction of meaningful insights into the phenomena under examination.

**Data Gathering Procedures**

The data gathering procedure commenced with the researchers drafting a formal permission request letter, seeking approval to conduct interviews and collect information from a specific group of participants, namely, Candelaria's coffee shop employees. Concurrently, the researchers undertook the crucial task of preparing and validating a comprehensive questionnaire, tailored to the specific objectives of the study.

Upon submission of the permission request, the researchers patiently awaited the requisite approvals, a pivotal step in ensuring ethical and legal compliance. Once approval was obtained, the researchers proceeded to engage with the participants. In this phase, the significance of the study was
elucidated to the coffee shop employees, emphasizing the value and potential impact of their contributions to the research. Additionally, the researchers clarified any terms or conditions related to participation, ensuring that participants were well-informed and comfortable with the study's requirements.

The primary data collection phase involved interviews with Candelaria's coffee shop employees, focusing on their experiences and practices related to digital marketing strategies. These interviews were conducted using a standardized interview, wherein the same questions were asked to every interviewee without changes in the wording to maintain consistency and gather relevant information. The choice of interviews as a data collection method allowed for in-depth insights and personal perspectives, enriching the dataset with firsthand accounts from industry experts. The recorded interviews were separately transcribed by both of the researchers to uplift reliability and accuracy, to ensure quality control of the data, and to minimize bias, ensuring its completeness and unified capture of the idea from the data.

The utilization of digital marketing as a focus area provided a unique lens through which to examine the dynamics of the coffee shop industry in Candelaria, enabling the researchers to explore how modern marketing techniques are employed in this specific context

**Data Analysis**

The analysis of data is framed by Krippendorff's steps in content analysis (1980) with an emphasis on the importance of descriptive coding, as justified in Saldaña (2009). The following steps were followed by the researchers: (1) Preparation of data, which involves the translation of the recorded interviews into a text [coding and inter-coding] to make it ready for analysis. (2) Defining unit of analysis: The unit of analysis was defined as individual passages or segments of text that contained relevant information pertaining to digital marketing strategies, their impact, and associated challenges and benefits. (3) Category and Coding Scheme Development, a comprehensive coding scheme was devised to guide the assignment of text passages to relevant categories. (4) Coding Scheme Validation, a preliminary round of coding was conducted on a sample of interview data. This process facilitated the identification of potential ambiguities or areas where the coding scheme needed refinement. (5) Full Data Coding. All the interview data were systematically coded. Each passage was assigned to appropriate categories, ensuring that the coded data accurately reflected the content
of the interviews. (6) Inter-Coder Reliability Check, a subset of the data was independently coded by multiple researchers. Inter-coder reliability checks were performed to gauge the agreement between coders. (7) Drawing Conclusions: These are drawn by examining the prevalence and significance of each category. (8) Reporting: The entire data analysis process was transparently reported to ensure replicability and validity. The finalized analysis was presented to provide readers with a comprehensive understanding of how the findings emerged from the qualitative data as supported by reviews of existing studies and literature.

**Ethical Consideration**

In the context of investigating digital marketing strategies in competing coffee shops in Candelaria, Quezon, this study meticulously addressed ethical concerns. Prior to commencing research, diligent steps were taken to secure informed consent from participants. This involved providing detailed letters outlining the study's objectives, participant roles, potential risks or benefits, and data confidentiality. Privacy protection was paramount, and the data collected was solely used for the specified research variables. Ethical conduct was steadfastly maintained throughout the research, ensuring transparency, impartiality, and respect for all participants involved.

**Findings and Discussion**

*Digital marketing strategies of competing coffee shops as perceived by their employees.*

The digital marketing strategies identified include Social media marketing, Website marketing, and Email marketing. The data shows that coffee shops use varied digital marketing strategies in marketing yet the most commonly used and effective digital marketing strategy stated by the participants was Social media marketing. Thus, this result is similar to Baer’s (2015) analysis wherein he insists that social media has become an indispensable instrument in any digital marketing strategy because it enables businesses to engage with their customers on a personal level, create brand awareness, and develop brand loyalty. Furthermore, according to Schaffer (2023), almost 92 percent of marketers are using social media in marketing.

*Impact of digital marketing on sales and profitability in coffee shops.*

The identified impacts include the impact of effective posting on sales, the influence on customers' behavior that increased sales, picture editing and attention-grabbing posts, positive
perception of coffee quality and word-of-mouth, social media and online visibility, viewership and customer conversation, social media usage increased sales, and the positive impact on profitability and customer acquisition. The data shows that digital marketing has something to do with influencing customer decision-making and purchase behavior and has a positive impact that really helps coffee shops gain more sales and profits. Thus, this result affirms Allen's (2023), analysis wherein he insists that digital marketing can be a powerful tool for businesses to reach their target audiences and boost sales performance. By utilizing digital marketing strategies, businesses can reach new customers, increase their customer base, and increase their sales. Marino (2023) also reported that the impact of digital marketing can increase brand awareness by 80 percent. By this means, it is worth claiming that digital marketing is relevant in influencing consumer decision-making and buying behavior. The similar report also shows that consumers are 155 percent more likely to look up brand-specific terms after they've been exposed to display ads and 70 percent more likely to make a purchase from a retargeting ad.

**Online platforms that employees report as commonly used in digital marketing efforts.**

The online platforms identified include Facebook, Instagram, Tiktok, Messenger, Websites, and Email. The analysis reveals varied online platforms that coffee shop employees use in marketing. However, the most commonly mentioned to be used as online platform as stated by the participants, was Facebook. This result is similar to Patel, (2019) analysis as he mentioned that Facebook continues to be the leading social media platform for marketing. In addition to this, current statistics report that 48.93 percent of marketers use Facebook to promote their products and business (WebFx, Digital Marketing Strategy, 2023).

**Perceived challenges and benefits of digital marketing as reported by coffee shop Employees**

The challenges identified include competition among coffee shops, the need to improve editing skills, and the challenge of attracting more customers. On the other hand, the benefits highlighted are the ease of use of online platforms for endorsing coffee shops, increasing profits, and enhancing coffee shop recognition.
These findings provide valuable insights into the experiences of coffee shop employees regarding digital marketing. They indicate that coffee shops face competition and strive to improve their marketing strategies to attract customers. According to Sorav (2020) one of the challenges of using digital marketing is the increased competition. It was stated that the more businesses turn to digital marketing, the level of competition will increase. This can make it difficult to attract customers and convert leads. Furthermore, 34.5 percent of marketer struggle with the complicated digital landscape, and this includes the crowded digital space that presents challenges in standing out and reaching the target audience. However, they also recognize the benefits of using online platforms, such as convenience in endorsing their coffee shops and the potential for increased profits and brand recognition. In the context of the study, the aforementioned supports confirm the participants’ challenges in technicalities and editing skills and space.

On one hand, the participants’ response regarding the benefits of digital marketing is supported in Imolila (2020), which relatively states that some of the benefits of digital marketing are increased sales and increased brand recognition. In this case, digital marketing is a proven way to increase sales. Moreover, Marino (2023) also reported that the use of digital marketing strategies increases the sales by 24 percent and brand awareness by 80 percent. With customers being more in tune with digital channels than ever before, businesses have more opportunities to convert potential customers into paying customers. Digital marketing, when done right, can help build a strong brand and increase brand recognition. This can help increase sales in the future and strengthen your business’s reputation.

These findings have implications for the coffee shop industry and can inform practices related to digital marketing. By understanding the challenges and benefits highlighted by employees, coffee shop owners and marketers can adapt their strategies to compete in the digital space effectively. Additionally, the findings suggest the importance of leveraging online platforms to reach a broader audience and achieve business goals.
Conclusion

The study reveals that social media marketing, website marketing, and email marketing are the most commonly used digital marketing strategies. Meanwhile, the commonly used online platform is Facebook. The perceived impact of digital marketing on sales and profitability of coffee shops are the impact of effective posting on sales, influence on customer behavior, social media usage and increase sales, and positive impact on profitability and customer acquisition. On the other hand, competition among coffee shops, the need to improve editing skills, and the challenges of attracting more customers are the perceived challenges. Ease of use of online platforms for endorsing coffee shops, increase in sales and profit, and enhancement of coffee shop recognition are the perceived benefits of using digital marketing. Business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs should utilize digital marketing strategies to connect with customers, sell products, and promote offerings. Students should use this as a reference to gain more knowledge to study the effectiveness of these strategies, while future researchers should conduct similar studies in different locations and use this study as a guide, reference, or related literature.

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Allysa M. Medrano, Micka Faye M. Magnaye, Tracy Ann S. Sanggalang, Jherlyn Mae S. Magnaye & Chriza Kaye R. Sotomayor

Abstract

This research study explores customers' underlying standards of business strategy within the context of coffee shops. It investigates leveraging customer feedback to improve the products, services, and overall customer experience. Specifically, the paper identified the occurrence of prominent themes and patterns from consumers' outlooks and developed a strategical framework reflecting contemporary business strategies. The study employed a qualitative research design, occupying a content analysis approach. The research is centred on the local coffee shop and was selected based on its significant upswing in sales performance. The corpora of the study were creatively collected from customers who made purchases at the selected coffee shop, while the researchers used Miles and Huberman's (2013) steps in the analysis. The results revealed comments and suggestions as the two main themes reflected in the consumers' outlook, while patterns were classified in terms of price sensitivity, taste preferences, product quality, ambiance and cleanliness, space and overcrowding, and taste balance. This study provided invaluable recommendations not alone for coffee shop owners, managers, and consumers but also for students, educators, and stakeholders in the business field. These insights offered actionable strategies to enhance customer satisfaction and brand loyalty. Furthermore, the study's implications extend beyond the coffee shop context, contributing to the broader understanding of consumer behaviour, and effective marketing strategies.

Keywords: consumer outlook, business strategy, feedback, comment, and suggestion

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Introduction

Customer feedback offers a wide range of insights regarding the satisfaction level of consumers in products. These ranges involve consumer engagement with products, enhanced marketing strategies defined by consumer's needs and preferences, and the like. By listening to these insights, issues are prevented, and loyal customers are made. Due to the competitive nature of coffee shops nowadays, customer feedback holds immense significance in this industry. According to Duman (2020), it could offer a compass to local businesses, particularly in tailoring menus, considering quality product control, exploring innovative and special offerings, and optimizing pricing.

However, in the current post-pandemic era, the consumer's outlook has significantly impacted the coffee shop industry (Ismoyowati, 2021). These changes involve the consumer's behaviour and preferences, environmental safety concerns, shifting to online strategies, and fluctuating demands (Schaefer, 2021). In short, the stipulations, expectations, and satisfaction levels of consumers have possibly emerged greatly as a response to economic changes.

Since the coffee shop is one of the most outgrowing businesses in the chosen locale, this has increased the avenue to deal in this context of business. Moreover, a considerable amount of research is found to justify the claim of the importance of customer satisfaction identified through feedback as reflected on one's outlook in the coffee business. A significant relationship between customer satisfaction and loyalty is found in Lee and Moon (2018) in the exploration of attributes of the coffee shop business to customer satisfaction. Duman (2020) considered this [customer satisfaction] as the factor that consists of both tangible and intangible elements that greatly affect coffee shops' food quality, service quality, and ambiance. With these gaps, it has been the keen interest of the researchers to explore and establish a baseline understanding of what and how customer preferences and feedback could influence or be of any help to develop a proposed framework reflecting the contemporary business strategy in local coffee shops.

The main purpose of this study is to identify the different common themes reflected in the consumer’s outlook and determine the patterns that can be found in the consumers' outlook that identify and develop strategies to meet consumers’ needs. By this, it yields to construction of proposed framework that reflects contemporary business strategies of coffee shops.
Theoretical Framework

The framework of this study draws upon key theories and models to support its central purpose. The following are: User Feedback Iceberg Theory, SWOT Analysis for Decision Making and the concept on the Significance of Business Strategy. These theories and concepts collectively inform the construction of a contemporary framework tailored to consumers’ outlook on coffee shop operations.

Choi’s User Feedback Iceberg Theory serves as the foundational pillar of this study. This theory posits that customer feedback, analogous to an iceberg, consists of both overt and covert elements. It emphasizes that feedback from customers contains valuable insights that can guide businesses in meeting consumer demands effectively. Given the study's objective of uncovering latent themes in consumer outlook, these proves highly relevant. It underscores the belief that customer input significantly contributes to business enhancement.

Steffens’ SWOT Analysis for Decision Making offers a strategic framework essential for the development of contemporary business strategies. The pursuit of a sustainable competitive edge drives this framework, requiring organizations to formulate business plans that optimize internal strengths while addressing weaknesses. SWOT analysis connects internal strengths and weaknesses with external opportunities and threats, providing an effective strategy formulation method. This aligns seamlessly with the focus of the study, highlighting the need for coffee shops to align operational strengths with consumer needs while addressing vulnerabilities and external challenges. Lastly, Boyles emphasizes the critical importance of a well-defined business strategy. This theory asserts that without a clear business strategy, companies struggle to create value and face challenges in achieving success. In the competitive landscape, a coherent framework that encompasses the business strategy is vital for coffee shops in Sta. Catalina Sur to thrive and meet the evolving demands of consumers.

In a nutshell, the aforementioned frameworks collectively guide the present study to identify common themes in customer feedback and construct contemporary business strategies for coffee shops. The framework underscores the value of customer input, the need to align operational strengths with consumer needs, and the imperative of a well-defined business strategy for the success and competitiveness of coffee shops in Sta. Catalina Sur.
Methodology

Research Design

This paper employed a qualitative research method and utilized a content analysis approach. The combination of the two allows the researchers to gain insights and determine words, themes, patterns, or concepts in qualitative data with an in-depth examination of their importance and connections in consumer feedback on coffee shops (Bernard, 2012). The discovery in this study produced a proposed framework that visualizes strategies in business reflected from consumer outlooks.

Research Locale

This study examined consumer outlooks in a coffee shop in Sta Catalina Sur Candelaria, Quezon, focusing on the coffee shop's ongoing trend and increased sales. The study provided a baseline understanding of customer preferences and feedback, which can serve as a starting point for local entrepreneurs in the field.

Corpus of the Study

The study utilized customized note papers with diverse consumer feedback to analyze coffee shop perspectives, identify themes and patterns, and categorize customer opinions. The following criteria are used in choosing the collected corpus of the study: (a) It should contain feedback, comments, and suggestions regarding the consumers' outlook on that coffee shop. (b) The corpus should not contain personal letters. (c) The data is willingly given as a sign of the participation of the consumers.

Data Gathering Procedure

With the owner's permission, researchers performed a study in a coffee shop, where they set up a "Feedback Wall" for patrons to express their thoughts. High internal validity and a regulated setting for the analysis of variables were made possible by this method. Customers consented, and the researchers visited the store every other day to read the reviews. After three weeks, researchers collected all of the written comments and did an analysis.
Data Analysis

In this section, we provide an in-depth overview of the data analysis process employed in this study. The research utilized the framework proposed by Miles and Huberman (2013) to systematically analyse the collected data. This process encompassed four key steps: generation of raw data, chunking or coding, grouping, and deriving meaning from the data.

(a) Generating raw data: The researchers collected written feedback from customers through a "Feedback Wall" in a coffee shop. (b) Chunking or coding: They used a manual coding process to categorize the data, identifying key phrases and coding them as codes. (c) Inter-coder reliability checks were conducted to ensure rigor and trustworthiness. (d) Grouping and deriving meaning: The researchers then grouped the data into categories to understand common themes and patterns in customer feedback. (e) Data interpretation and error handling: The final stage of data analysis assessed the categories to understand customer perceptions of product flavor, cost, and atmosphere. The researchers maintained a rigorous coding procedure and inter-coder reliability checks to improve the validity and reliability of the study's findings.

Ethical Consideration

To assure validity and safeguard participants' intellectual property, privacy, and confidentiality, the researchers made clear the purpose of the study and its difficulties. Participants weren't coerced into participating and were informed about their needs for participation. The contributions of other researchers or pertinent material were acknowledged, and feedback was kept anonymous. The names of the participants were not revealed.

Findings and Discussion

Common themes reflected on consumers’ outlook

Outlook is the information given by customers that reflects one’s experience to a product or service. It helps coffee shops improve their products and services, identify areas for improvement, and build customer relationships. The discussion of these findings is pertinent to both consumers and businesses. The following exemplars in this section contain the identified themes and patterns that reflects the outlook of the consumers towards coffee shop in Sta Catalina Sur.
Theme 1.1. Comments on Product Taste

There are several statements which reflect the comments of the participants about the taste of the product. The words used to emphasize the theme are highlighted such as, “mangocheesecake, maasin”; “hindi matamis, hindi matabang”; “pagkatamis”; “masarap”. The descriptions reflect flavors, quality of taste and features referring to the gustatory senses of the participants. On the other hand, the way the statements are expressed exhibits an expression of opinion or comment on the product quality [taste]. Cambridge University Press and Assessment (2012) states that comments are remarks of expression from one’s opinion. Since the statements are made based on the personal expression of the participants yielded from the experience of trying the product, it justifies the point of the statements made as themes reflecting comments to taste. Nadathur and Carolan (2017) state that flavor and taste are important factors for food enjoyment. It is then a reliable sign that most of the data gathered speaks about the taste of the product. It could, therefore, be considered as impactful to the success of a business. In addition to this, Suchánek et al. (2015) further imply that customers’ satisfaction is the feeling for a product that can be met. Customers comments are important to know their feelings and thoughts so that the coffee shop can meet their wants for the product. Aggarwal et al. (2016) implied in his study that taste was evaluated as "very important" by 77 percent. Therefore, product taste has a significant impact to the food preference of consumers.

Theme 1.2. Comments on Place

Words that are used to accentuate the customers’ comments are highlighted including: perfect, maliiit, “magabok at medyo maingay". These descriptions show the consumers’ negative feedback on the place and a word of way in describing mostly the expected ambiance. Hutchinson (2012) discussed that customers will be able to look around and enjoy themselves, socialize, feel good, and even stay longer than anticipated when soak up in the vibe of the area. Cafes with a pleasant store environment are more likely to attract customers, which increases their likelihood of revisiting. Satisfaction of the customer is not always about the product or service, but also about place satisfaction.

Place as one of the themes found in this study, confirmed to be an important aspect in business as Sherman (2022) states that place and location has a big impact on whether a business succeeds or
fails. The study also added that a good place is an attraction to the consumers and its characteristic has significant impact to the customers.

**Theme 1.3. Comments on Price**

“Pricey”, “napaka mura”, and “very affordable” are highlighted words which describes the customers’ feedback regarding the cost of the beverage. Chron (2020) asserts that the allure of competitively priced items serves as an enticement for patrons to enter the cafe, by this means, one could exhibit a greater propensity to engage in the purchase of moderately priced items. Price has a direct impact on the cafe’s profitability; providing flexible pricing will assist the business in getting consumers. The price has a significant positive effect on consumers’ satisfaction due to the value that is considered very expensive by the target market.

**Theme 2.1. Suggestions about Product**

Statements represent the consumers’ suggestions about the product quality [taste]. The following are as follows: "Extra Flavor", "More Flavor", “Sana magka iced coffee na chocolate”, “Dapat may milk", "Sana pede ding ipagmix yung milktea at fruittea", and “Mas masarap kung mas matamis". The statements suggest adjustments to the formulation of the beverages, as well as additional flavors to the coffee shop’s menu. The responses from the participants directly fall on the product quality. Perzynska (2023) claims that the primary suggestion from the customers is more often related to the quality of products or services. By listening to customers’ suggestion or feedback, it will meet the customer satisfaction and leads to business improvement. Similarly, even previous research claim that buyers prioritized and placed greater value on quality over price. Though both are running in the competition, statistics reported that the quality or value of a product is rated by consumers with 51 percent than the price of the product (The First Insight, 2023).

**Theme 2.2. Suggestion**

Statements requesting to add more electric fans and to change the place’s ambiance are themes categorized as the suggestions referring to the place. It implies that the coffee shop should add more ventilation and should change the cafe’s theme. Related to this evidence is a finding which reveals that consumers puts a great value and consideration to the physical location, appearance and atmosphere of the stores and business (Ilakya et al., 2020).
Identified Patterns Based on the Consumers’ Outlook

The patterns identified from consumers’ outlook were categorized. It paves its way to structurally provide, the results showed seven (7) distinct patterns, including price sensitivity, taste preferences, product quality, ambiance and cleanliness, repeat visits, space and congestion, and taste balance. Researchers create business plans based on the patterns. Greene (2020) discussed that the reason why having a strategy is so important is because it gives business time to get a sense of how they are preforming, what their capabilities are, and if these capabilities are able to help them grow.

Framework of Business Strategies Based on the Consumers’ Outlook

Based on the consumers comments, feedback, and suggestions about the product cost and taste, and the place; the coffee shop can create different business strategies to improve their business. The costumers complain about the taste of the products, some customers said that beverages are too bland and does not mixed well. So, the business can improve it by adjusting the flavor to right amount of sweetness. Regarding on the price, the coffee shop can launch another size of drinks that has a lower price so that it can be affordable for everyone. Some customers are requesting to add more electric fans. Since listening to the costumers is important, the business should grant it. They should add more electric fans. These business strategies that can be develop based on the consumer outlooks can help the business to improve and meet the consumers satisfaction. According to Boyles (2022), business strategy is the creation, coordination, and integration of a company's strategic efforts in order to provide it a competitive advantage in the marketplace. Creating a business strategy will help you have a clear plan for achieving organizational goals so that your company can continue to exist and grow.

Conclusion

The study reveals two main themes: comments and suggestions about product, price, and place. Participants expressed their satisfaction with the taste and quality of the products, as well as the size and suitability of the place. Comments on product taste, price, and place included opinions on the taste, pricing, and physical environment. Participants also suggested improvements to the products and the place, such as adding more flavors, mixing different beverages, and requesting an
aesthetic theme. On one hand, seven (7) patterns in customer comments that influence business strategies are identified, namely price sensitivity, taste preferences, product quality, ambiance and cleanliness, space and overcrowding, and taste balance. The researchers suggest offering a range of price points, adjusting sweetness levels or adding extra flavors, maintaining high-quality beverages, implementing loyalty programs, improving ambiance and cleanliness, expanding or optimizing space, and ensuring the right balance of sweetness and flavor in drinks. These patterns note the details in developing strategies for different budgets and maintaining customer satisfaction. Strategies are identified based on consumers' outlook, specifically: (a) enhancing the flavor profile of products and beverages and (b) enhancing spatial atmosphere as few of the customers ask for some change in ambiance; (c) flexible pricing tailored to customer preferences.

In a nutshell, the study reveals that customer feedback significantly informs business strategies in coffee shops, prompting a recommendation for ongoing and responsive engagement with customers to enhance product quality, pricing, ambiance, and overall experience. To remain competitive, businesses should refine their feedback systems and prioritize excellent customer service. The strategies uncovered in this study hold valuable recommendations for students, educators, and business stakeholders alike. By understanding the significance of customer feedback and its role in shaping successful strategies, students can gain practical insights into real-world business dynamics. Educators can incorporate these findings into their teachings, illustrating the tangible impact of customer-centric approaches on business success.

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Rise of Online Food Businesses: Probing its Profitability and Longevity as a Business Entity
Lovely Vizconde

Abstract

Since the rise of technology, social media accessibility, promotion and marketing, traditional mode of selling and marketing transformed to online transactions especially in ready to eat food business. Since the rise of online marketing, the researcher thought that it would be helpful to provide an evidence in the profitability and longevity of the online food business. Thus, this study used quantitative-comparative design which aimed to systematically investigate and determine the rise of online food businesses between the profitability and longevity factors. Data gathered shows that in terms of profitability of online business as perceived by business owners, they said that online food business is easier to reach consumers by posting products online. On the other hand, in terms of longevity factors leading to the continuous growth of online business as perceived by the consumers, data show that it is easy to order online and most of the consumers used cash-on-delivery as payment option. It also shows that there is no significant difference in the profitability of online food business when the online business owners were grouped according to profile and there is no significant difference in the longevity factors of online food business when the consumers were grouped according to profile.

Keywords: business management, online food business, longevity, profitability

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Introduction

Online food business is a business that caters the orders of customers through online from restaurant, fast food chain or even small food businesses. The restaurant will prepare his/her order and also have a carrier or rider to deliver the order all the way to their given address. Online food business is usually done in the form of ready to eat foods. For instance, some business owners and employees who lost their jobs because of the pandemic ventured into online food business that offers food to people through online and deliver it right next to their door step.

The rise of technology gives opportunity to everyone to a start online business. Today, it becomes more popular due to the pandemic because many people lost their jobs and find alternative means of living through starting an online business. On the other hand, social media is the key why online food business is profitable especially this time of pandemic where most people are avoiding public places. Promoting business in social media can attract many people because many of them are spending hours on their social media. According to Lu (2017) in recent years, social media has gone from a new idea to an absolute must for marketers. Of all the new media marketing platforms, social has most thoroughly turned traditional marketing on its head. With older outbound marketing strategies, messages are sent to potential customers, and communication is one way. On social media, customers and businesses can directly interact. Both parties can ask each other questions, repost each other’s content and work on forming relationships.

This study determines the experience of people who lost their job and chose to start their own online food business, the profitability of the business, and the longevity factors of the online food business.

Methodology

This study used quantitative approach. Quantitative methods emphasize objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis of data collected through polls, questionnaires, and surveys, or by manipulating pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques (Babbie, 2010). The descriptive design was used in the study. The descriptive research involves gathering data that describe events and serves to organize the finding in order to fit them with explanation, tabulates depicts and describe the data collection.
The participants of this research were composed of people residing within Mandaluyong City in the Philippines chosen by random sampling and statistical manipulation of data. The participants answered the questionnaire online by using Google form survey.

The survey is a Likert-type of questionnaire. The business owners and consumers have different sets of questions. Questionnaire for business owners include, demographic profile, factors led to the growth of online food businesses and profitability of the online food businesses. On the other hand, questionnaire for consumers include demographic profile, factors led to the growth of online food businesses and longevity factors that led to the continuous operation of online food businesses as consumers.

After collecting the data needed from the respondents, the data were treated with statistical techniques such as weighted mean, t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA).

**Findings and Discussions**

In terms of factors leading to the growth of online business as perceived by business owners, 7 out of the 8 factors were agreed upon by the respondents, which include “the widespread use of technology” with the highest weighted mean of 3.85 (Agree), followed by “the emergence of the pandemic created various types of online food businesses” with weighted mean of 3.73 (Agree). According to Harbour (2020) as more people turn to the Internet, businesses increase their chances for success by building an online presence through e-marketing, or marketing online. Marketing in the digital world is crucial for entrepreneurs, and small-business owners can significantly impact business growth.

In terms of factors leading to the growth of online business as perceived by consumers, 7 out of the 8 factors were agreed upon by the respondents, with an average weighted mean of 3.62. It includes “the emergence of the pandemic created various types of online food businesses” with the weighted mean of 3.80 (Agree), followed by “the economical way of doing business” with weighed mean of 3.71 (Agree).

The profitability of online food business as perceived by business owners showed that 3 out of the 4 factors were given strongly agree (4.31) by the respondents including “easy reach/access of consumers” with the highest weighted mean of 4.40. It can be assumed that the highest factor leading to the profitability of the online food business as perceived by business owners is proven because
they can easily find consumers through online by posting products in their social media accounts. It will no longer be difficult for consumers to order, to view the menu, and to pay their orders.

The longevity factors leading to the continuous growth of online business as perceived by the consumers include “cash on delivery payments system” with the highest weighted mean of 4.34 (Strongly Agree). It can be assumed that the longevity factors leading to the continuous growth of online business as perceived by the consumers is proven because most of the people who are ordering online regardless of food or not, choose the Cash on Delivery (COD) payment system primarily for their convenience.

The results of the comparison of the profitability factors as perceived by the online business owners when grouped according to their profile showed that using ANOVA analysis, p-values is greater than .05. This means that the perceived profitability of the business owners is the same, regardless of type of business, years in the online business and coverage of consumer, because at the end of the day all of them are business people that have the same perception, and that is, to gain profit.

The comparison of the longevity factors perceived by the consumers, and the ANOVA tests likewise show that p-value is greater than .05. This means that the perceived longevity factors are the same, regardless of occupation of the consumers, and type of food they frequently transact online.

**Conclusion**

This study found that the factor leading to the growth of online business food as perceived by the business owners and consumers is the widespread use of technology. It is because most respondents said that regardless of food or not, they are using technology for business purposes and primarily for their convenience. The profitability of online food businesses is determined by easy reach/access of consumers while the longevity factors leading to the continuous growth of online business is cash on delivery payment system. However, there is no significant difference in the profitability of online food businesses when the online business owners are grouped according to their profile; and there is no significant difference in the longevity factors of online food businesses when the consumers are grouped according to their profile.
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Assessment of the Qualification and Competency of Maritime Casualty Investigators of the Maritime Safety Services Command: Inputs for Enhancement

Junie Rey C. Taer

Abstract

This paper presents a comprehensive assessment focusing on the qualifications and competency levels of maritime casualty investigators employed within the Maritime Safety Services Command. The primary objective of this assessment was to thoroughly analyze the existing capabilities of these investigators and pinpoint areas that could benefit from improvement. The study’s respondents were the 57 maritime casualty investigators who have undergone the 10-day training on the maritime casualty investigation. Respondents are the casualty investigators who are assigned to different Maritime Safety Services Units and Coast Guard Districts all over the Philippines. The outcomes of the comprehensive assessment revealed several potential gaps in the qualifications and competencies of maritime casualty investigators. One notable gap pertained to the requirement for specialized training in accident reconstruction, a field that demands a deep understanding of various factors influencing maritime accidents. Another identified gap centered on the need for proficiency in digital evidence analysis, acknowledging the increasing prevalence of digital data in modern maritime operations. Analysis has shown no significant correlation between the level of education of the present maritime casualty investigators and the six investigative competencies. These results suggest that level of education alone may not be a reliable predictor of proficiency in the assessed competencies, warranting further exploration of additional factors that may contribute to the development of marine investigative skills.

Keywords: casualty, assessment, maritime safety, enhancement

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Introduction

The maritime industry encounters a variety of situations, from major accidents to near misses. These accidents and incidents should be investigated since many flag administration regulations require it; international agreements mandate it, such as the IMO’s Casualty Investigation Code (CIC) and industry initiatives encourage it. The process of maritime casualty investigation is intended to assist organizations in reflecting on previous performance and formulating plans to increase safety (American Bureau of Shipping, 2005). To achieve a systematic and effective investigation of these maritime casualties, the appointed investigators need to have expertise in maritime casualty investigation and be knowledgeable in matters relating to the maritime casualty or incident.

This study, therefore, addresses the issue of how to assess the qualification and competency of maritime casualty investigators of Maritime Safety Services Command (MSSC) for them to be effective and efficient in the conduct of maritime casualty investigation. It also focuses on the development of the course framework for the Maritime Casualty Investigators Specialist Course to standardize the approach of the maritime casualty investigators in the conduct of maritime casualty investigations and will also fill up the gaps in the knowledge of the non-maritime background participants on the said course.

The Maritime Casualty Investigation Reports (MCIR) conducted by these maritime casualty investigators should be at par with the IMO’s internationally accepted standards under the CIC. This can only be assured if the Maritime Casualty Investigators (MCI) of the PCG are rigorously evaluated on their qualifications and have been continuously assessed on their competency. This study aims to assess the competency of maritime casualty investigators of the Maritime Safety Services Command.

Methodology

Descriptive correlation was appropriate for the topic because it provided a relationship between the current qualification and competency of the maritime casualty investigators of MSSC with their performance in maritime casualty investigation. In the study's conduct, the researcher collected data by employing a general investigation technique test and competency self-assessment of the respondents. The study design enabled the researcher to determine the changes that need to be done to enhance the performance and report-making of maritime casualty investigators.
The researcher created a questionnaire via Google Sheets to collect the study's data. Specific information was elicited by the questionnaire to meet the study's objectives. The questionnaire consists of three main sections. The first section determined the educational background of the respondents. The second section measured the technical knowledge of the maritime casualty investigators while the third part was the self-assessment of the maritime casualty investigators in their competence. To ensure and to make valid the reliability of the instrument, the validation process was done by employing experts in maritime casualty investigation, a language specialist, and a statistician.

On the other hand, to determine the reliability of the instrument, a reliability test was done through a test run of around 15 maritime casualty investigators who were asked to answer the final draft of the questionnaire. The final reliability of the instrument was determined through the Cronbach Alpha method. Frequency, percentage and weighted mean are used to describe the result of the obtained data; and Pearson correlation analysis and Chi-Square Test are utilized to determine the significance relationship and difference of the involved variables.

**Findings**

The study underscores that the majority of maritime casualty investigators hold bachelor's degrees, with a smaller cohort possessing master's degrees. This accentuates the relevance of formal education within this profession. The investigators predominantly hail from two distinct disciplinary backgrounds: social science and technology. This eclectic mix underscores the interdisciplinary essence inherent to maritime casualty investigation and meticulously assessed the MCI's efficacy across nine overarching investigative criteria: ethics, attention to detail, control, critical thinking, curiosity, interviewing, research, surveillance, and writing. Their ethical considerations exhibited an average performance and investigators showcased a heightened proficiency in meticulousness, an indispensable skill for precise incident assessment.

Control over the investigative process appeared relatively constrained, signaling a demand for augmented management of investigative procedures as critical thinking skills were gauged ranging from low to average, indicating an avenue for enrichment in analytical acumen and an elevated level of curiosity was exhibited by the investigators, a trait that proves instrumental in uncovering latent facets of incidents. Regrettably, interviewing skills ranked notably low, underlining a substantial
scope for enhancement in extracting information from witnesses but in the field of research, an elevated degree of research prowess was observable, spotlighting their capability to amass pertinent data.

Performance in writing skills on the other hand was evenly distributed, with half displaying superior capabilities and the other half at a comparatively lower level. MCI consistently adhered to secure work practices, encompassing proper lifting techniques and the adoption of personal protective equipment (PPE), thereby signifying their unwavering commitment to safety protocols.

Competence in identifying potential hazards within investigation sites manifested as generally rated from 'on average' to 'higher,' signifying their adeptness in discerning risks effectively. Over half of the respondents exhibited an advanced performance in surveillance techniques. Their adeptness in locating emergency equipment and evacuation routes onboard vessels ranged from 'on average' to 'higher,' underscoring their state of readiness during exigent circumstances.

In terms of interpersonal skills, a heightened aptitude in consistently manifesting respect towards colleagues and team members fostered an environment infused with positivity and regard. The MCI revealed a superior knack for taking initiatives, circumventing issues, and actively contributing to team accomplishments, thus accentuating their collaborative and proactive ethos. Their dynamic and constructive engagement in workgroup meetings was characterized by an elevated proficiency, indicative of their constructive input into collaborative deliberations.

Amid the six criteria: personal safety and knowledge of safety practices, evidence collection, snap chart construction, root cause analysis, corrective action development, and attitude and teamwork that underpin investigative competence, the 'attitude and teamwork' facet surged ahead with a resounding mean level of 3.96. This underscores that MCI exhibit an 'on average' to 'higher' level of attitude and teamwork, indispensable traits for effective collaboration.

Strikingly, the study discerned that attributes such as educational attainment, training history, and previous specialization displayed limited correlation with the performance attributes of maritime casualty investigators. This hints at the notion that while these attributes mirror theoretical understanding and expertise in particular realms, they might not comprehensively encapsulate all the requisite attributes for investigative success.
Thus, this comprehensive study furnishes invaluable insights into the competencies, proficiencies, and attributes held by the prevailing maritime casualty investigators. The findings underscore the significance of a diverse skill set, team synergy, and adaptability in effectively addressing the intricate challenges associated with maritime incident investigation.

**Conclusion**

The research findings underline a crucial aspect in the realm of maritime casualty investigation: the conventional benchmarks of qualifications, encompassing factors like one's level of education, participation in relevant training programs, and the specialized domain of prior work experience, do not exhibit a noteworthy correlation with the diverse range of skills and competencies demonstrated by present-day maritime casualty investigators. Although these qualifications can furnish a basic framework of theoretical knowledge, they prove insufficient in encapsulating the core attributes and pragmatic proficiencies imperative for conducting investigations with efficacy and finesse.

While qualifications can lay down a solid academic foundation, they fail to encompass the multifaceted traits and hands-on skills that form the bedrock of effective investigative work. Traits such as an unwavering commitment to ethical standards, a meticulous attention to even the minutest details, the ability to engage in critical thinking to unravel complex scenarios, an innate curiosity that drives thorough exploration, and practical aptitudes encompassing adeptness in interview techniques, adeptness in research methodologies, mastery in surveillance strategies, and adeptness in crafting comprehensive and coherent written reports, are not effectively captured by formal qualifications alone.

Furthermore, a holistic set of competencies that include ensuring personal safety during investigations, the proper collection and preservation of evidence, the construction of visually informative tools like snap charts to depict intricate details, delving into root cause analysis to unearth underlying factors, formulating strategies for corrective actions, and exhibiting a positive attitude towards teamwork, are attributes that emerge and mature through practical experience, on-the-job learning, and the accumulation of industry-specific insights.
Moreover, to solely rely on qualifications as indicators of investigative success within the maritime sector would be a limited approach, as it fails to accurately gauge an investigator's true abilities and on-ground performance. The intricate blend of ethical principles, a keen eye for detail, analytical acumen, an inquisitive disposition, practical proficiencies, and a well-rounded repertoire of competencies forged through hands-on experience collectively shape an investigator's effectiveness and contribution to the field.

To enhance the selection and assessment procedures for maritime casualty investigators, the following recommendations are proposed: Firstly, establishing clear and unambiguous job prerequisites is fundamental to refining the selection and evaluation process for maritime casualty investigators. Secondly, implementing a robust screening process is imperative to determine the suitability of potential candidates. Thirdly, offering specialized training and certification programs tailored exclusively to maritime casualty investigators is essential. Regularly revisiting and refining evaluation criteria ensures alignment with evolving industry standards and best practices. Also, providing ample learning and development opportunities is vital to nurture a culture of professional growth. This involves organizing workshops, seminars, conferences, and involving investigators in simulation exercises. Encouraging investigators to stay updated on industry trends and fostering an environment of continuous learning is pivotal. Lastly, pursuing further education in this domain is strongly advised. By implementing these comprehensive recommendations, organizations can elevate the selection and development processes for maritime casualty investigators. This ensures the appointment of investigators equipped with the essential attributes and competencies needed to conduct effective, meticulous, and comprehensive investigations within the maritime industry.

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The Skills of Asian Institute of Maritime Studies Cadets on MARPOL Training and their Readiness on Pollution Prevention at Sea Onboard Ship

Gerald S. Raza, Argie Boy Q. Deroca, Mark Edrian P. Lopez, Jhon Ruel L. Maulion & Justin O. Noble

Abstract

This study focused on determining the significant relationship between the skills of AIMS cadets in MARPOL training to their readiness for pollution prevention at sea onboard ships. The respondents were the forty (40) Asian Institute of Maritime Studies Marine Transportation and Marine Engineering cadets who were on international voyages that travelled internationally chosen using non-probability purposive sampling. The study utilized a descriptive-correlational technique through the validated questionnaire to approach and to analyze the relationship between the skills and readiness of the cadets. The questionnaires were distributed through online media platforms using Facebook, and Messenger and analysed using Pearson Correlation. The findings indicated that the majority of the respondents are knowledgeable and properly trained with regard to the discharge of oily mixture when there was no emergency or life-threatening situation; and have the ability to properly segregate the garbage wastes onboard the vessel. The respondents also express the utmost understanding with the proper incineration onboard and for the protocols issued for incinerating wastes. The respondents also understand the different criteria of the discharge of sewage that follows the MARPOL convention.

Keywords: MARPOL, pollution, readiness, skills, training

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Introduction

Concerning the problems of pollution, one of the greatest contributors identified as those in the shipping industry. Approximately 90% of global trade was transported by sea. These goods are transported by different ships all across the globe. As useful and beneficial as it seems, the environmental cost was considered negative, especially in terms of pollution. For example, every year, container ships ply the world's waterways emit about 1 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, accounting for roughly 3% of global greenhouse gas emissions. These greatly contribute to air pollution causing more greenhouse gas in the atmosphere and further worsening the global warming experience at present (Oceana Protecting the World’s Oceans, n.d.).

In response to this alarming situation, the International Maritime Organization establishes a major action to take care of this problem. The introduction of the International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) in 1973 which was modified in 1978 has brought major changes in the shipping industry, especially in the protection of the environment. The MARPOL convention is bound to protect all matters regarding pollution prevention, especially for the huge pollution caused by the maritime industry (IMO, 2019).

The MARPOL training includes the compliance of consolidated certificates for MARPOL annex I-VI. According to the Labor Communications Office (2010), “a consolidated single course on the 1973 International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships, as modified by the Protocol of 1978, or MARPOL 73/78 program, will be included in the training of seafarers, in response to growing concern about the worsening pollution of the marine environment. The memorandum further said that if MARPOL training is provided by a manning agency's training entity, that training entity must be accredited by the MTC and that the training must be completed for a minimum of five days.” Similarly, according to Azimuth Solutions (2017), “the course aims to increase your understanding of the standards of MARPOL Annexes I through VI, allowing you to better safeguard the environment, yourself, and your company, while lowering risk, expense, deficiencies or nonconformities, detentions, reputational harm, and fines.” The International Convention for the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL) and its six Annexes have been in effect for a number of years, but as regulations tighten and zero tolerance for environmental damage becomes more prevalent, the need for companies to fully comply with MARPOL has become increasingly important.
This study aimed to determine the skills of AIMS cadets on MARPOL training and their readiness on pollution prevention at sea onboard ship. Specifically, it sought to determine the skills gained by the respondents through MARPOL training and assess their preparedness on demonstrating readiness on pollution prevention at sea onboard ship.

Methodology

The study used the descriptive-correlational research design as it aimed to find the relationship between two different variables. In this study, it sought to prove any relationship between the skills of AIMS cadets on MARPOL training and to their readiness regarding pollution prevention at sea onboard ships.

The study utilized the purposive sampling technique. The respondents were selected through a sampling method which the researchers deemed them suitable as the right participants for the population to take part in the survey. The researchers also look for cadets that go on international voyages by which incineration and sewage are applicable. The study randomly selected forty (40) AIMS cadets enrolled in the Marine Transportation program or Marine Engineering program that undergone MARPOL training and in their cadetship program onboard a vessel.

Sets of modified questionnaires were used as research instruments that were handed to the respondents through Google Forms. The questionnaires were composed of close-ended questions and were divided into three (3) parts. The first part was the questions to establish the demographic profile of the respondents and the duration of their cadetship program. The second part was a close-ended question pertaining to the skills gained by the respondents through MARPOL training. The third part was the close-ended questions pertaining to the readiness of the respondents on pollution prevention at sea onboard ship. The researcher-made questionnaire has been validated by experts and was reliability tested by a Statistician using Cronbach’s Alpha (SPSS, 2019). The computation resulted in “Acceptable to Excellent” consistencies or inter-item reliabilities.

To achieve the necessary data needed for this study, the researchers sent a letter to the respondents for their consent to the survey. The survey was administered on different social platforms via Facebook, Messenger, and Gmail. The respondents were assured of the confidentiality of the private information that was put in the survey which was in line with their privacy rights. The data acquired was submitted to the statistician for tabulation and statistical treatment. With the help of the
statistician, the collected data were analyzed and interpreted by the researchers to answer the hypothesis and come up with the findings, conclusion, and recommendations.

The study used SPSS version 26 in describing the profile of the respondents, specifically, frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation. For the data analysis, the researchers utilize Pearson Correlation Analysis using SPSS version 26.

Findings

In terms of the length of cadetship training program, the respondents joined for about 9-12 months (f= 33, 82.5%) and some enrolled for 6-9 months (f= 4, 10%). One (1) participated in 1-3 months and 3-6 months, while another participant did no provide data.

Under the descriptive statistics of the participants’ skills gained through MARPOL training, results indicated that the participants generally “strongly agree” (M= 4.44, SD= 0.58) that they have the skills in pollution prevention learned from MARPOL training. Furthermore, the participant’s agreement to each of the items pertaining to the skills learned or gained from MARPOL training in pollution prevention on board was found to be strongly agreed helping them reduce the cause of pollution, specifically from accidental oil spills and leakages, disposal of garbage, burning off waste materials, and proper disposal of sewage. Likewise, the result of readiness on pollution prevention at sea onboard ship by the cadets suggested that the respondents strongly agree (M=4.52, SD=0.44) that they were ready or had sufficient readiness for pollution prevention at sea onboard ship.

Using SPSS version 26 (IBM, 2019), the Pearson Correlation Statistical Analysis examined the significant relationship between the skills gained by the respondents through MARPOL training and their readiness for pollution prevention at sea onboard ships in terms of reducing oil leakages and oil spills, proper garbage disposal, proper incineration on board, and discharge of sewage. The results revealed significant relationships at a .05 p-value, between the skills gained from MARPOL training and the readiness to prevent pollution of the participants. More specifically, all the skills developed and learned from the MARPOL training program were found to have a significant correlation, at a .01 p-value, with all the preparedness and readiness of the participants to prevent pollution at sea. The results indicated that MARPOL was highly effective in both acquiring skills and for preparation to achieve the level of readiness when it comes to the worst possible scenarios pertaining to the pollution at sea caused by the maritime industry. The preparedness and capacity of personnel engaged
to carry out certain emergency response and management duties significantly impact how effective a response will be. This required, at the slightest, the assignment of roles and responsibilities, the definition of incident response plans and processes, as well as training to impart the relevant knowledge and skills as asserted by the International Maritime Organization. It was therefore implied that acquiring knowledge and skills from MARPOL training has a lot of significance to the level of readiness of the cadets on pollution prevention at sea.

Conclusion

To ensure a safe and healthy working environment on board ships and to maintain a pollution-free marine ecosystem, every effort must be made to reduce and manage waste. To reduce waste, seafarers need to be actively involved in efficient ship operations and waste reduction on board. Therefore, the results revealed that the respondents have learned or acquired skills proving the effectiveness of MARPOL training.

On the level of readiness, results proved the effectiveness of the training when it comes to preparation and therefore effectively perform extensive pollution prevention at sea onboard the ship. Therefore, the probability of accidents on board will be reduced because almost everyone who went MARPOL Training was knowledgeable on how to prevent pollution at the sea.

There was a significant relationship between skills and readiness for pollution prevention at sea onboard ships during MARPOL training. The data showed how effective the MARPOL training for the skills and readiness in the future to the preparations of the incoming cadets that plan to go onboard a vessel. The results indicated that MARPOL was highly effective in both acquiring skills and for preparation to achieve the level of readiness when it comes to the worst possible scenarios pertaining to the pollution at sea caused by the maritime industry.

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Tourism Destination Potential and Environmental Sustainability of Manila Bay Dolomite Beach

Mark Brian Principe, Kyle Cedrick J. Capeña, Laurence Cris Clavo & John Paul A. Fiestada

Abstract

The study assessed the potential of Manila Bay Dolomite Beach in the Philippines as tourism destination and how the stakeholders sustained the environmental protection of the beach. It also determined any significant relationship between the tourism destination potential and the environmental sustainability of Manila Bay Dolomite Beach. A total of 121 respondents chosen through convenience sampling participated the survey. The reliability of the Likert-type questionnaire utilized was tested using Cronbach Alpha with a high internal consistency of 0.817 and a p-value of .001. The study was accomplished utilizing descriptive-correlational research design. This methodology allowed to acquire the needed data subject for statistical analysis, using the Statistical Package for Social Science version 20. With the computed average of the weighted mean of 4.29, the respondents “strongly agree” that Manila Bay Dolomite Beach is a potential tourism destination, and with the computed 4.64, the stakeholders “strongly agree” to the environmental protection of Manila Bay Dolomite Beach. The relationship between the tourism destination potential and the environmental sustainability of Manila Bay Dolomite Beach was determined using Pearson r., with 0.298, p-value of .001, implying significant relationship.

Keywords: dolomite, environment, Manila Bay, tourism, sustainability

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Introduction

On January 27, 2019, former DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu officially declared the start of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation at the Bay Walk in Manila. This rehabilitation project aims to restore the water quality of Manila Bay in accordance with the Writ of Continuing the Mandamus of the Supreme Court and part of the rehabilitation project is Dolomite Beach. Manila Bay Walk Dolomite Beach or "Dolomite Beach", is an artificial beach along Manila Bay in Manila, Philippines, created through the process of beach nourishment. The budget for the project was approved prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department of Tourism (DOT) stated that they fully support the government's initiative to clean up and rehabilitate Manila Bay and it gives the best interest of the tourism industry and is in line with the thrust to create a culture of sustainable tourism (Rocamora, 2019).

Tourism is one of the most important sectors for the local community; consequently, great consideration should be given to its long-term viability (Yan, 2014). Hence, this study aims to evaluate the environmental sustainability specifically to the local residents and tourist that will result in the tourism of Manila Bay Dolomite Beach in the Philippines. Meeting the demands of current visitors and host regions may be viewed as sustainable tourism development (Inskeep, 1991).

In general, this study focused on the tourism destination potential and the problem of environmental sustainability of Manila Bay Dolomite Beach and if it can be sustained. Specifically, this aims to confirm the following hypothesis:

H01: There is no significant relationship between the tourism destination potential and the environmental sustainability of Manila Bay dolomite beach.

Methodology

This research was designed as a descriptive-quantitative study aiming to understand the tourism destination potential and environmental sustainability. The study used survey questionnaires to obtain the necessary data. Likewise, descriptive-correlation design was used considering two variables and comparing them to conclude that one is better than the other. This design was appropriate for the study because the intention is to know the potential of manila bay dolomite beach as a tourism destination, and to determine how the local residents and tourists protect Manila Bay. As such, the potential relationship of Manila Bay can be determined by how the stakeholders protect
Manila Bay. As stated by Ellis and Sheridan (2014) regardless of their engagement, stakeholders may express their concerns and contribute to the attainment of sustainable tourism.

Using convenience sampling as a technique in selecting the 121 respondents, the study only considered respondents who are already on the site coming from government, residents, and business firms as long as they are in Manila Bay Dolomite Beach.

Reliability test was one of the instruments used by statistician to determine the reliability and consistency of each item in the instrument. A pilot test was conducted on 16 respondents. The responses were treated using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20 as a statistical tool. Based on the results gained, Cronbach's Alpha was 0.817 with a p-value of .001. This indicated an excellent internal consistency of the survey tool.

Lastly, the researchers conducted the survey face to face but because the Covid19 has not yet vanished the researchers followed the government and the management of Dolomite Beach to wear masks while inside the Beach.

The research paper received full ethical approval from the office of Center for Research and Institutional Development (CRID) of Asian Institute of Maritime Studies (AIMS) including the consent to distribute surveys to the corresponding respondents. The confidentiality of the participants’ identities and data were strictly kept, and assured that the responses were for research purposes only. No participants were excluded based on their gender, age, race, or socioeconomic status.

Results

In terms of the potential of Manila Bay Dolomite beach as a tourism destination, there were six out of the eight statements that marked “strongly agree” by the respondents and has an average weighted mean of 4.29. “Manila Bay Dolomite Beach can be a relaxation for everyone” with the highest weighted mean of 4.63, followed by the statement “I think that the sunset at Manila Bay Dolomite Beach can attract more tourist” with a weighted mean of 4.62. The survey result proves the statement of Pearse (1981) that the distribution of tourist flows among different destinations varies and is influenced by a variety of factors such as attractiveness: beautiful shoreline, white sandy beach, and beautiful sunset influenced the tourists to visit Manila Bay Dolomite Beach that shows strongly agree on the survey.
In terms of environmental sustainability of Manila Bay Dolomite Beach, the data showed that the eight statements were marked “strongly agree” by the respondents with an average weighted mean of 4.64. The highest mean refers to the statement “I will be a responsible tourist when I visit Manila Bay” with 4.86. The environmental attitude of the tourists will cause tourism’s survival and long-term success as supported by Uysal et al. (1994) studies that conservation and protection of the natural environment take place. The survey shows that tourists strongly agree that their willingness to abide by the policy will maintain the beauty of Manila Bay Dolomite Beach.

In terms of the relationship between the potential and sustainability of Manila Bay Dolomite Beach, the result showed that the computed Pearson r between potential and sustainability is 0.298 with a p-value of .001. Since the p-value is less than .05, the relationship is said to be “significant”. This implies that while the potential is high, the environmental sustainability is also high, hence, there a significant relationship between the two variables and these two are interconnected to each other. According to Alampay (2005) that since the 1980s, the Philippines' national and municipal governments have worked to promote sustainable tourism projects, with different degrees of success. He also added that sustainable tourism development attempts to produce revenue including environmental sustainability, equality, and respect for local people and cultures. Many destination operators are primarily motivated by the predicted economic gains from tourism (Alampay, 2005).

**Conclusion**

The results of this study showed that Manila Bay Dolomite Beach is a potential tourism destination and the local residents and tourists agreed for the environmental protection in the area. In addition to this, the stakeholders’ attitudes to environmental protection and conservation will cause tourism’s survival and long-term success. Lastly, the environmental protection of Manila Bay Dolomite Beach has an effect on the tourism destination potential of Manila Bay Dolomite Beach.

The study shall be used as a way to raise awareness of the importance of the potential tourist destinations of Manila Bay Dolomite Beach and the stakeholder’s share of the environmental sustainability of Manila Bay Dolomite Beach. Therefore, it is recommended to advise the nearby provinces to improve the two lowest mean in the potential of Manila Bay Beach which are “the water on the beach is crystal clear” and “the number of different kinds of fish living around Dolomite Beach Manila Bay” by keeping Manila Bay clean and practice solid waste management in the nearby
barangays and provinces imposed by Local Government Units (LGU) and private sectors. The present study was purely quantitative, thus, future researchers can employ some qualitative approach, such as open-ended questions and interviews to avoid the limitation of an in-depth exploration of interaction among people who were in the study area and other additional stakeholders and thereby supplementing the findings of the current study.

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Adaptability of Filipino Seafarers Towards the Prolonged Onboard Period During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Andresrowen Q. Baro, Carl Michael I. Bobis, Andrei Miguel C. Gonzales, Austin Kenn P. Lendanan & Michael Lyndon P. Nieva

Abstract

The study focused on determining the adaptability of Filipino seafarers towards the prolonged onboard period during the Covid-19 pandemic. A total of 81 Filipino seafarers were selected as respondents using purposive sampling technique. The study employed descriptive-comparative design. Frequency and percentage, weighted mean, T-test, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to determine the adaptability of Filipino seafarers who have experienced prolonged periods at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic. The study used the three variables, cognitive, behavioral, and emotional adaptability, of Creative Adaptability theory by Hod Orkibi which served as the primary basis of the research instrument of the study. It was shown that the respondents agree on having such adaptability onboard. Moreover, it was shown in the results that there are both significance and non-significance when it comes to the grouping of respondents based on their profile. Thus, the study proves that even in the face of adversity such as the Covid-19 pandemic and prolonged periods, Filipino seafarers are shown to be highly adaptable.

Keywords: adaptability, seafarers, onboard, pandemic

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Introduction

In today’s world, where people are living their everyday lives with caution and awareness due to the constant presence of Covid-19, life has not been the same. There are restrictions and limits in things that normally would not have. But as the world progresses throughout the pandemic, people adapt. In various workplaces, adaptability is essential as it enables an individual to adjust his/her expectations, behavior, and thinking capacity in an appropriate manner in certain situations (National Institutes for Health, 2015). The restrictions strip Filipino seafarers of their precious time with their families instead of spending it with them, the inability to go home takes a toll on their family matters and psychological state. Factors such as the experiences of Filipino seafarers onboard will be explored to determine their adaptability during this time. Not only that, other important aspects such as the emotional, behavioral, and mental aspects will also be determined to further expand the concept behind adaptability.

For many years, seafaring has been one of the most sought out jobs in the world. Many people believe that life at sea can be hard, but at the same time, rewarding. Seafaring has a good reputation when it comes to building an individual’s career and investment. However, not long ago, the world has been struck by a disease that will change its course for years. In the maritime industry, there have been significant changes in the workplace and seafarers have to adjust to be competent despite the emergence of the disease. On top of that, several travel restrictions which sparked the crew change crisis caused serious problems for Filipino seafarers, prolonging their stay onboard vessels. In a study conducted by Burke et al. (2006), employees who face considerable environmental changes are subject to adaptability in many ways, e.g., work performance. There have been studies analyzing the adaptability of workers in their environments, one of which is the Individual Adaptability (I-ADAPT) theory. However, the previous study mentioned only focused on the technical side of adaptability particularly, in workplaces. To fill the gap, this study took major influence from the study of Orkibi (2021). This theory further explores adaptability not just in a technical manner, but also in the emotional, behavioral, and cognitive aspects of a person. Therefore, the researchers believe that creative adaptability is the most suitable theory to measure the degree or extent of adaptability of Filipino seafarers onboard. In the ever-changing landscape of a traditionally primary sector, with innovation transforming the future, let alone the unexpected uncertainty COVID-19 brought into our lives, adaptability appears to be an important trait for the maritime industry to possess.
Methodology

To obtain data regarding Filipino seafarers' adaptability toward the prolonged onboard period during the Covid-19 pandemic, the study applied a descriptive-comparative under quantitative methods. In descriptive-comparative research, there were two un-manipulated variables to develop a formal procedure to conclude that one is superior to the other (Ayanyemi, T., 2021). A quantitative research design uses objective measurements and mathematical, statistical, and numerical data analysis. Following this research design, the data is gathered through questionnaires, surveys, or computational methods to manipulate pre-existing statistical data. The goal of quantitative research is to collect numerical data and generalize it across populations or explain a particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). The study used different statistical analysis such as t-test to test the significant difference between two variables and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to assess variances between mean (or average) values for several groups.

The study utilized the purposive sampling technique with the target respondents of 100 Filipino seafarers in able to meet the qualifications as follows: 1) Filipino seafarers ranging from ratings to officers; 2) They must have an experience in prolonged onboard periods from 6 months onwards during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The research instrument used was a standardized questionnaire adopted from the theory of Creative Adaptability by Hod Orkibi (2021). In the first part of the questionnaire, it comprises the demographic profile of the respondents specifically in terms of the following: gender, age, number of crew, nationality of crew, and number of months onboard during the pandemic. The second part of the questionnaire was the questions answered by the respondents wherein the three categories (cognitive, behavioral, and emotional) of the Creative Adaptability theory were used as tools to find out the extent of adaptability of Filipino seafarers. The questions answered in the second part of the questionnaire were a total of 18, with six questions each for every category in a randomized order. For the sake of easier identification of the categories used in the questionnaire, the researchers made a number coding which is: Cognitive Creative Adaptability (CCA) – 2, 4, 6, 13, 14, 16; Behavioral Creative Adaptability (BCA) – 1, 3, 5, 10, 12, 18; and Emotional Creative Adaptability (ECA) – 7, 8, 9, 11, 15, 17. The questions were rated by the respondents on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being strongly disagreed, and 5 being strongly agreed in a Likert scale format. As for the reliability analysis, a pilot-
testing was held to ensure the legitimacy of the survey. For the description of the three categories of Creative Adaptability theory by Hod Orkibi are stated as:

Cognitive Creative Adaptability (CCA). From this category, it aims to determine how the respondent adapts to his/her situation by utilizing cognition such as critical thinking, ability to generate new ideas, and the likes.

Behavioral Creative Adaptability (BCA). This category from the said theory determines how a person adapts in terms of actions and behaviors by generating effective and potentially new behaviors to respond in a certain situation.

Emotional Creative Adaptability (ECA). The third category in the theory helps the researchers to determine the ability of a respondent to emotionally adapt through difficulties by the ability to introduce new and unfamiliar emotions.

Findings

In terms of respondents’ adaptability as to CCA, two (2) out of the six (6) statements were marked “strongly agree” by the respondents, wherein the statement “I combine my old and new ideas to better come up with a solution in a stressful situation onboard” has the highest weighted mean of 4.26. In general, the respondents “agree” with the statements related to CCA as reflected by the average weighted mean of 4.19 meaning “agree”.

In terms of the adaptability onboard as to BCA, four (4) out of the six (6) statements were marked “strongly agree” by the respondents, which include the statement “My actions vary depending on the need and how difficult the situation I am in”, “I set my behaviors in new ways outside of my comfort zone to effectively deal with a situation” with the highest weighted mean of 4.26. The respondents generally “agree” with the statements related to BCA as evidenced by the Average Weighted Mean of 4.20 (agree).

In terms of the adaptability onboard as to ECA, three (3) out of six (6) statements were marked “strongly agree”. As a whole, the respondents “strongly agree” on the statements related to ECA as shown by the Average Weighted Mean of 4.24 (strongly agree).

The results on comparison of overall adaptability when the respondents are grouped according to gender, age, and number of crew onboard during pandemic showed that the p-value of the three data is greater than 0.05, therefore, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that the level of
adaptability is the same for all respondents in terms of gender, age and number of crew onboard, that is, either from ships with few crewmates or many crewmates.

On the comparison of overall adaptability when the respondents are grouped according to nationality of crew onboard during pandemic and number of months onboard during pandemic, the computed F-ratio is 3.689 with p-value of 0.005, which means that the difference is significant. Using Scheffe’s Multiple Comparisons Test, it was found that those with Filipino crewmates have significantly higher adaptability than those with Russian crewmates (mean difference=0.99, p-value=0.05). The researchers consider the possible reason for this is explained in a local literature by Cruz (2013), which states that Filipino seafarers have a reputation of being highly adaptable in changing environments and situations. Meanwhile, the computed F-ratio for the mean differences is 4.061 with p-value of 0.003, which means that the difference is significant. Using LSD Multiple Comparisons Test, it was found that those 17-20 month onboard have significantly lower adaptability than those 6-8 months (p-value=0.001), 9-12 months (p-value=0.013), 13-16 months (p-value=0.003), and 24 and above months (p-value=0.043). Similarly, those 21-23 months on board have significantly lower adaptability than those 6-8 months (p-value=0.004), 9-12 months (p-value=0.018), 13-16 months (p-value=0.006), and 24 and above months (p-value=0.021). A possible reason for this is due to the fact that the Covid-19 pandemic affects almost every seafarer particularly the proper repatriation according to their contract (Pauksztat et al., 2020). The results imply that with the months of working onboard increasing, the adaptability of the respondents is decreasing.

Conclusion

Filipino seafarers are shown to be adaptable regardless of the circumstances present onboard. Despite the presence of the Covid-19 pandemic, Filipino seafarers tend to make use of their adaptability skills as way of coping up with the catastrophic effects of the pandemic particularly in connection with their repatriation, as suggested in the title of the study, prolonged onboard period. Applying the theory of Creative Adaptability, it was further shown according to the results that the respondents “agree” on the statements correlating to cognitive and behavioral adaptability while “strongly agree” on statements correlating to emotional adaptability. Hence, this means that Filipino seafarers are highly adaptive based on the definition of the said theory. Three (3) of the factors in the profiling of the respondents have no significance in the adaptability of Filipino seafarers that have
worked for prolonged periods during the pandemic such as the gender, age, and number of crew. Meanwhile, the remaining factors such as the nationality of crewmates, and the number of months working onboard, have significant differences in the overall adaptability of Filipino seafarers. The researchers conclude that having to work alongside fellow Filipino seafarers leads to greater and better adaptability skills rather than working with other nationalities. In addition, it was proven that the longer the period of months stay onboard, the more tired and exhausted a seafarer becomes, which leads to a lesser overall creative adaptability.
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Impact of Learning Competencies under Hybrid Laboratory Class Modality to the Academic Performance of AIMS Hospitality Management Students

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Abstract

The study was designed to analyze the impact of the learning competencies under hybrid laboratory class modality on the academic performance of AIMS hospitality management students particularly in ELECT 323AL1 Food and Beverage Operations in terms of (1) learning competencies gained by the AIMS hospitality management students under the hybrid modality, (2) the academic performance of AIMS hospitality management students under hybrid modality in ELECT 323AL1 and, (3) the relationship between the learning competencies and academic performance. Using the descriptive-correlation design, the study aims to describe the underlying impact of the learning competencies on the academic performance of the students and correlate it. This study used the purposive sampling technique which has a total of twelve (12) key respondents. To gather the data, a researcher-made survey was used. An online survey was done and all the statistical data was prepared for treatment. This study utilized frequency and percentage, weighted mean, and Pearson r to treat the data. Results showed that all of the students were able to learn and gained essential learning competencies that include functional, interpersonal, and critical thinking competencies. Moreover, the average mean of the academic performance has a descriptive rating of outstanding. Data also showed that learning competencies have no significance on the academic performance of the students.

Keywords: competencies, hybrid, laboratory, performances, hospitality management

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Introduction

Online classes started to be implemented to deliver education during the pandemic while ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of all learners, teachers, and education personnel. As a method of flexible learning that is commonly utilized nowadays, online classes in the Philippines consist of courses that are held online. Students attend either online or modular classes. It aims to help students learn from a distance in a high-quality way by using digital self-learning modules, radio, TV, and the Internet (Child Hope, 2021).

Hybrid learning is a teaching style that combines technology and digital media with traditional instructor-led classroom activities, allowing students to tailor their learning experiences (Panopto, 2019). Hybrid learning has become a priority in the educational delivery system because of the benefits it provides. The situation of training needs and transformative experiences in the progression of competency-based learning from concept to theory to the new reality of hybrid learning is described (Mallillin et al., 2021). Hybrid learning combines the advantages of Internet learning with some of the benefits of face-to-face learning. Then, it optimizes the effectiveness of classroom training and improves the reinforcement of web-based components (Rovai & Jordan, 2002). This allows students to comprehend their lessons more thoroughly. Since some lecturers are still delivered online, particularly for the skills required for face-to-face laboratory performance, this harms their performance because hands-on demonstrations are only conducted behind their screens or gadgets.

Competency-based learning is essential in the curriculum prescribed in various educational institutions. It can be used to assess the quality of hybrid learning. It refers to the grading, assessment, academic reporting, and student performance systems. As the learner progresses, it demonstrates the expected learning skills and knowledge. It determines the proficiency and competency of a subject area, or a specific course as developed and standardized in learning. Competency-based learning has thus emerged.

Hybrid learning modality is now adopted by the Asian Institute of Maritime Studies which is a non-profit and non-stock educational and training institute. It has been operating under a Quality Management System that has been certified to the ISO 9001:2015 Standards as well as the National Requirements. It is one of the tops performing maritime schools in the Philippines that offers various programs. One of which is the Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management.
During the pandemic, the institution implemented full online classes, in which students took their lectures and laboratories online. This is a challenge for hospitality students because most of their tools and equipment are not available at home. A face-to-face demonstration of the task is also required for them to effectively learn various competencies. But, as the situation improved and the restrictions became less stringent, AIMS eventually shifted to a hybrid class modality. In this setup, students were able to take their lectures online, while laboratories will be conducted face-to-face at their respective institutions.

The purpose of this study is to determine whether the institution's and other universities' adoption of hybrid learning has a positive impact, if it is effective in developing students' skills and knowledge, and if it is a viable approach for churning out competent students. This study will also provide an analysis of whether or not the students were successful in acquiring critical capabilities that meet industry standards.

The study aims to explore the effectiveness or the impact of hybrid classes in the learning acquisition of the students and the instructional models used in applying this learning method. With this, the researchers want to know the impact of hybrid laboratory class modality on hospitality students’ learning competencies. Generally, the study aims to determine the impact of hybrid laboratory class modality on hospitality management student’s learning competencies and performance.

**Methodology**

The study used a descriptive-quantitative research design that determined the impacts of learning competencies under hybrid laboratory class modality on the academic performance of hospitality management students. Descriptive-correlation design is used to describe the relationship between or among the variables. Moreover, this design is much more pertinent to use as it describes if there is a significant relationship between the learning competencies gained by the students and the student’s academic performance. With this, the degree of the relationship was determined if there is a significant impact that affects the student’s performance.

This study chose students from the Asian Institute of Maritime Studies particularly, fourth-year Hospitality Management students as they have significant knowledge and experience regarding the topic. The total number of fourth-year students is twelve (12). Moreover, purposive sampling was
used in this study that ensures that all participants or respondents met the criteria as well as the characteristics needed for the study.

The study used a survey questionnaire as a form of research instrument. This questionnaire was divided into three learning competency categories. It consists of a statement that determined whether the students were able to acquire these competencies while they are under a hybrid laboratory class modality and if it has an impact on their academic performance. Moreover, questions are toned down to assist students in better understanding the question to obtain more accurate data. The researchers used social media to disseminate the questionnaires to avoid physical contact that also helped the researchers to collect data systematically. In addition, the questionnaire was reviewed by the research adviser, statistician, and two other validators, specifically linguistic and technical professionals that guaranteed that the questions are connected with the problem statement.

Lastly, given that this modality has a lot of limitations when it comes to how these students will learn, the researchers made use of the theory or the learning competencies that were developed by Abouchacra (2021) to justify the competencies gained by the students instead of the learning competencies that was presented by TESDA since these students took almost all of their laboratories online and not on a normal setup wherein laboratories are done on a face-to-face basis in which the competencies from TESDA are based on.

Results

The respondents in the hospitality management study showed strong agreement across various competencies gained through hybrid learning. Methodological competencies received an average weighted mean of 3.88, indicating agreement among the respondents. Interpersonal competencies, specifically oral, written, and visual communication skills, all garnered "agree" ratings. Notably, expressing thoughts freely during hybrid learning received the highest weighted mean of 4.00. Working with diverse teams also yielded positive results with an average weighted mean of 3.92, and three statements hit the highest mean of 4.00, emphasizing the ease of collaboration, obtaining new ideas, and valuing teamwork during hybrid learning. Most communication in this mode occurred online, facilitating collaborative idea exchange due to ample online resources. Critical thinking competencies were also affirmed by the respondents, with most statements rated as "agree" (3.83),
and the statement on academic assessments enhancing critical thinking scored the highest weighted mean of 4.17.

Academic performance, measured by numerical scores, demonstrated a mean of 1.26 and a standard deviation of 0.06, indicating a normal distribution. This suggests that most students achieved high grades in ELECT 323AL1 Food and Beverage Operations. In terms of the distribution of academic performance, 25% of the sample achieved an "Outstanding" academic performance, comprising three out of twelve hospitality management students. The analysis regarding the relationship between gained competencies and academic performance showed a Pearson r of 0.374 with a p-value of 0.230, suggesting an insignificant relationship.

**Conclusion**

Base from the results, hybrid laboratory class modality shows a positive or good impact on student’s academic performance but only as an alternative tool since it is still more effective when students will learn under the traditional mode of learning in which they will have a face-to-face setup, especially with this kind of program wherein there is a lot of laboratory activities to be done. It can be seen that all of the responses fall under agree which means that this modality is still incomparable to the traditional mode of learning.

From the data, learning competencies have no relationship or significance to the academic performance of the students. With that, the study would like to recommend increasing the number of participants or respondents as this study only surveyed twelve (12) students which might affect the results given the fact that hybrid learning will still be implemented in the following academic year.
References


AIMS-QUIZZER: A Multi-Platform Gamified Knowledge Tester for Asian Institute of Maritime Studies Hospitality Management

Jun Jihad C. Barroga & Mark Anthony M. Hipe

Abstract

The goal of this study is to determine the extent of the utilization of the AIMS-QUIZZER in helping the Hospitality Management students based on McCall’s Quality Model in terms of the following success indicators: correctness, reliability, and usability. The respondents are the 33 hospitality management students of AIMS from first year to third year. Percentage was used to quantify the demographic profile of the respondents and mean was used to determine the average response as per the success indicators of the system. A Likert scale type of survey questionnaire was used to get the data from the respondents. The system was deemed successful by the proponents based from the survey where majority of the students strongly agreed in terms of the three success indicators. In terms of correctness or the extent to which the AIMS-QUIZZER meets its requirement specifications the students deemed that it was very good. As for the reliability or the extent to which the software performs its intended functions without failure, it has an equivalent of very good. Lastly, in terms of usability, the HM students gave a rating of very good for the effort required to learn, operate, and understand the functions of the web application. The AIMS-QUIZZER, a web application for Hospitality Management students, was found to be easy to use based on McCall’s Quality Model. It was considered correct, reliable, usable, portable, and efficient by the majority of respondents. The system was able to achieve the expectations of the students, helped with bar and operations management lessons, and provided a user-friendly experience across different devices.

Keywords: AIMS QUIZZER, platform, game, hospitality

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Introduction

E-learning web apps has become popular nowadays as it enhances the user’s knowledge and skills. According to the article, the Cloudwise E-learning, web apps are very useful because it leads to higher engagement, better performance, and less learning barriers for learners. E-learning web apps are interactive websites that allows users to do different activities such as taking quizzes, viewing learning materials, online live learning presentations, and the likes which takes place in a virtual platform (Samuel, 2023).

For students to be skillful in the career field that they had taken, they must understand and keep in mind the lessons that they are studying since these are the building blocks in preparation for their future job. Aside from this, as the new normal is being implemented because of the fading of Covid-19 pandemic, it will be a great help if students have an alternative way of evaluating their knowledge on their own by just using gadgets. With this in mind, the researchers came up with a system that will help improve the knowledge of students.

The purpose of AIMS-QUIZZER: A multi-platform gamified knowledge tester for AIMS Hospitality Management students is to provide a compiled and organized different sets of topics from the hospitality management department such as bar and operations management lessons which will serve as a reviewer and refresher for students to improve their knowledge in line with their course specifically in the bar management which is being checked by the Customs Administration Department Head.

Hospitality Management students will choose and take different game-quizzes in the platform to continuously refresh and sharpen their minds to easily retain the things they have learned and at the same time learn more about their course lessons. In addition to this, the web-based app was made to let the students enjoy learning and will help students improve their knowledge without the fear of failing as the app will let them retake the wrong answered questions until they will perfectly answer the set of questions correctly. The main purpose of the scoring system is to let the students track their progress because even though they are allowed to retake the wrong-answered questions again, the system will only collect the first correctly answered questions and the purpose of retaking the incorrectly-answered questions is to make the students remember the correct answer for a particular question.
Methodology

Quantitative research was applied to this study as the success of the system tested using numerical data. This research methodology is used to process the gathered information from the respondents of the study.

For the selection of the sample size, convenience sampling is used. Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability method that will be used to collect data from conveniently available people from the target population (Saunders et al., 2012). The respondents were chosen from the first, second, and third year level of the Hospitality Management Department of Asian Institute of Maritime Studies. Hospitality management students were asked to evaluate the system based on the correctness, reliability, and usability. Also, they were also asked to share their opinion on the system to measure their acceptance to the system.

The researchers interviewed the Department Head of the Hospitality Management Department of AIMS via MS Teams to gather the necessary data that was needed for the system. Through the interview, she expressed her opinion and shared to the researchers the specific topics that were taken by hospitality management students.

The evaluation was in the form of Google forms. Before floating the form, the researchers asked for the permission of the respondents through a validated permit from the research adviser. After given permission, they asked the respondents to use the AIMS-QUIZZER. Then after playing, researchers distributed the evaluation forms to the respondents via Facebook, messenger, and Microsoft teams chat. After answering the evaluation form, the data were gathered, collated, and analyzed. Then the researchers interpreted the data based from the results of the study.

The study used percentage and mean computed using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) as statistical tools to analyze the data collected from the survey questionnaires. These tools were employed to derive the findings and outcomes of the study based on the gathered information.

In this study the researchers used Visual Studio Code to create the system with CSS and ReactJS to develop the graphical user interface and Apollo Server, Graphql, Express Js, MongoDB, and Google OAuth2 are used for the database administration, data access, and security of the application.
For the Software Development Life Cycle, the agile method is useful for its iterative development. The agile method will enable the researchers to test the different function of the system throughout its development and this method allows the researchers to make changes easily.

Findings

Hospitality Management students from different year levels evaluated the AIMS-QUIZZER Platform in terms of correctness wherein the overall mean score is 4.33 equivalent to very good. The highest indicator is “the app reaches the user’s expectations” with mean score of 4.39.

The mean tally result in terms of reliability, has an overall mean score of 4.24, meaning very good. The highest indicator is given to “the information on the app are helpful” was rated 4.33, meaning very good.

The mean tally result of the evaluation in terms of usability, has an overall mean score of 4.27, meaning very good. The highest indicator is given to “the app is easy to learn and understand” by most students with a mean score of 4.33, meaning very good.

The summary of the evaluation results given by the students has an overall mean score of 4.28, which means “very good”.

In terms of the position of experts, the two respondents are faculty members of the Computer Science Department. They evaluated the AIMS-QUIZZER platform system created by the researchers. First is based on functionality in which the mean is 4.75 meaning excellent. Second is in terms of correctness with a mean of 5 equivalent to excellent. Third, experts evaluated the reliability of the system in terms of different indicators and all the means is 5 (excellent). And fourth, evaluation in the usability of the platform has a mean of 5 equivalent to excellent. For the summary tally of the evaluation results, the overall mean is 4.94 (excellent) where functionality has a mean of 4.75 (excellent), and correctness, reliability and usability is 5 (excellent).

Conclusion

The developed web-app, AIMS-QUIZZER: A Multi-Platform Gamified Knowledge Tester for Aims Hospitality Management Students, is considered a success since the result of the survey which was based from McCall’s Quality Model was helpful to the students in terms of correctness,
reliability, usability, portability, and efficiency. Likewise, the faculty members commended the platform regarding its functionality, correctness, reliability, and usability.

References


Phenomenological Case Study of Project-Based Learning on Graduand STEM Students’ Performance
Alfonze Viktor B. Pinawin

Abstract

Project-based learning has been widely embraced as a pedagogical strategy in nations recognized for their excellent educational systems, such as United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, and France. Educational establishments in the Philippines are already starting to include PBL into their curricula in response to this global trend. The goal of this study is to better understand how STEM students in grade 12 at Gumaca National High School are using project-based learning. The study used phenomenology and case study as the methods to know the important insights into the students’ experiences with project-based learning, its success, and the key elements influencing it. Individual interviews and focus groups were the main study methodologies used by the researchers. Convincing findings are supported by these exacting methodologies: PBL’s efficacy is compromised by improper execution and the lack of adaptation. The hands-on experiences, positive engagement, career exploration and realization helped certain students in academics by enhancing and preparing them for their future careers. The results strongly imply that project-based learning must receive attention and support from the government as well as from educational institutions. Also, support from parents regarding the mental health of every student. Hence, the study categorically shows the urgent necessity for extensive improvements in designs of the curriculum, knowledgeable teachers, mentorship and counselling, research possibilities, college readiness, academic support services, ongoing evaluation and feedback, personal environment, and multidisciplinary approach are in need to attain a high educational level that will generate a profound impact and offer priceless support to every student.

Keywords: project-based learning, experiences, adaptability, and implementation

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Introduction

Project-Based Learning (PBL) is an innovative approach to teaching STEM education that fosters active and inquiry-based learning specifically in Grade 12 students. It allows students to work collaboratively on real-world problems, develop critical thinking skills, and apply knowledge to complex issues. According to World Population Review (2021), the United States, United Kingdom, Germany, Canada, and France are the top five best performing educational systems in the world that provide quality learning, and it is also known that these countries use PBL as a medium for academics. Anyhow, its impact on students' graduand performance remains to be investigated. Fortunately, viewed from a research point of view, it has a relation to the behavior portrayed by students who undergo this approach.

In the Philippines, PBL is gaining recognition as an effective approach that promotes students' critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills, and the Department of Education has been advocating its use in K-12 education. Having this practiced in the locale is a worth-investing approach. But since the study deals with different insights and personal beliefs of students, some may choose to stick to traditional academic practices as it gave them the foundation to the present. To sum up, Gayeta and Resaba (2021) concluded significant understandings on how PBL resources are used and how well they work in Senior High schools in the Division of Lipa, Batangas, and Batangas City. This study helps decision-makers in the educational field make well-informed choices that will improve methods of student-centered learning, teaching, and assessment.

This study aims to investigate the impact of PBL on Gumaca National High School's Grade 12 STEM students' graduand performance in the academic year 2022-2023 using a phenomenological case study approach. The study's findings may inform educators and policymakers about the potential benefits of PBL in STEM education, leading to improved teaching strategies and students' academic outcomes.
Methodology

The study used a dual research design that combined phenomenology and case study methods to thoroughly examine students' academic performance and lived experiences in the context of PBL. The goal of this mix of methodologies was to increase the study's veracity and thoroughness. The study, which concentrated on Grade 12 STEM curriculum students, was carried out in the STEM Building at Gumaca National High School. Six participants were chosen through the use of purposive sampling; they came from various sections and each had a different perspective on PBL.

Semi-structured guide questions were included in the research instruments to gauge participants' attitudes toward PBL and how it affected their academic performance. The themes were categorized using these open-ended questions, which allowed for effective analysis. Focus groups and case study interviews were used in the data collection process.

The necessary approvals were obtained from the appropriate authorities, and participants' informed consent was obtained. Utilizing the MAXQDA tool for qualitative data analysis, the data analysis included ongoing comparison analysis. To ensure a thorough understanding of the data, conventional analysis methods like theme analysis and human coding were also used.

The study's participants and teachers provided consent and were made aware of the goal and methods of the study as a matter of ethics. Participants' rights were upheld in accordance with the rules, with a focus on informed choice, data privacy, and protection.

The research aimed to achieve saturation in data collection and improve the credibility of findings by fusing phenomenology and case study methodologies. A thorough investigation into the relationship between project-based learning, students' experiences, and academic performance was made possible by the location chosen, the STEM students, and the use of various data collection and analysis techniques. The research's dedication to participant welfare and information security was underlined by ethical considerations and adherence to data privacy regulations.
Findings

The findings examined studies is that project-based education is an efficient teaching strategy that, when used judiciously, surpasses conventional teaching techniques. For educators, students, and researchers working on various facets of education, PBE has been found to be up to 97% successful and has real-world applications (Rusek, 2021).

The study explores into the significant experiences of grade 12 STEM students at Gumaca National High School, it reveals that working together on projects with friends helps students grasp challenging concepts more deeply. In experiencing PBL students are more capable to actively engage in real world activities to strengthen their foundations for the upcoming college years as well as gain insights and knowledge.

The research shows how PBL help students to develop their cognitive abilities, increase their knowledge of relationships, and experiential reasoning skills. Participants shared that PBL has given them more self-assurance, empowerment, and opportunities to master practical skills. However, obstacles and problems with the implementation of PBL have also been noticed. These includes the lack of knowledge among students and educators regarding PBL and insufficient funding and resources in school. The findings stress the value of providing the right materials and tools, fostering a welcoming and conducive learning environment, and addressing pressures and distractions that could impair students’ learning outcomes.

The study also highlights the significance of employing efficient teaching techniques, utilizing cutting-edge methods and technologies, and comprehending how educational policies and reforms affect instructional methods and student learning outcomes. Student learning experiences are found to be influenced by peer interactions, mentoring, and advisor support. Time limits, competing demands, and extracurricular commitments can also have an impact on students’ capacity for in-depth learning and time management.

Overall, the studies under consideration offer insightful information about the efficacy and implications of project-based learning, emphasizing the necessity of careful implementation, encouraging learning settings, sufficient resources, and ongoing research and innovation in instructional techniques.
Conclusion

The overall conclusion suggests that project-based learning is growing but still in the process of development as a means to enhance student learning. As a result, we can draw the following inference from the research whereas:

A lot of students are unaware of the use of project-based learning at their educational institutions. This lack of knowledge may be caused by several things, such as poor communication, little exposure to the PBL's guiding principles and advantages, or a general ignorance of the teaching approach itself.

The environment has a significant impact on how well students learn and comprehend. A supportive setting encourages focus, engagement, and motivation, which supports efficient learning outcomes. The design of the classroom, the amount of noise, the amount of light, and the available materials all affect the learning environment.

Due to a variety of reasons, some participants are emotional while discussing their experiences. These include the enormous pressure they feel to meet their academic obligations, their challenging financial condition, and the absence of parental support. The mental health of the pupils is significantly impacted by these situations, which causes them to exhibit more intense emotional reactions.

The success of project-based learning is significantly influenced by government efforts and legislation. Its influence can be increased with adequate financing and resources dedicated to education, as well as with clear instructions and assistance for putting PBL into practice. Further enhancing its efficacy are policies that place a high priority on flexible curricular, teacher development, and assessment techniques that adhere to PBL principles. On the other hand, PBL's successful implementation and results at educational institutions may be hampered by a lack of government backing and funds. As a result, the degree to which the government is actively involved and supportive will determine how well PBL promotes student learning and participation.

In conclusion, the research emphasizes how important it is to match PBL with curriculum standards and learning objectives. PBL helps students get a deeper comprehension of the subject matter while also fostering the development of crucial 21st-century skills when it is created with clear
learning objectives in mind. The disregard of project-based learning is clearly seen as a crucial factor in its effectiveness. Moreover, the proper implication of PBL can encourage active learning and student engagement in improving students’ ability to think critically and solve problems. PBL encourages greater understanding and long-term information retention by incorporating real-world difficulties into the learning process.
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Mediating Effect of Employee Engagement on its Drivers and Employee Job Performance: A Study of the Apparel Sector

Naduni Wickramasinghe, Anuradha Iddagoda & Hiranya Dissanayake

Abstract

Employee participation is when a person puts his or her brain, heart, and hands into their work and organization. Employee engagement has consequently gained traction in management circles. This study aims to determine the mediating effect of employee engagement on its drivers and employee job performance. The identified research gap is the lack of empirical evidence of the mediating effect of employee engagement on the relationship between its drivers such as leadership and work life balance and the consequence on employee job performance. Using a quantitative study, this empirical research gap was bridged in the apparel sector in Sri Lanka. The unit of analysis is individual and the sample size is 100. This cross-sectional study was done in a non-contrived setting with the minimal researcher interference. The structural model highlighted the work-life balance's significant impact on employee engagement and employee job performance, with employee engagement positively affecting employee job performance. While leadership had no clear relationship; further exploration is needed. The mediation analysis confirmed employee engagement's mediating role between work-life balance and employee job performance, offering actionable insights for enhancing employee job performance. The study was limited to the apparel sector in Sri Lanka. Due to the time constraint this study was also limited to a cross-sectional study.

Keywords: employee engagement, leadership, work life balance, employee job performance

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Introduction

Employee engagement affects employee outcomes, organizational success, and financial performance (Richman, 2006; Ramanayake et al., 2022). As per Anitha (2014), one of the consequences of employee engagement is employee job performance. Another consequence is organizational financial performance (Iddagoda & Gunawardana, 2017) while Mendis and Weerakkody (2017) mention work-life balance affects the individual as well as the organization. As emphasized by several empirical studies, work-life balance is favorably associated with employee performance and organizational performance (Harrington & Ladge, 2009) while leadership is inspiring, guiding and influencing people when it is necessary (Iddagoda, 2021). Despite the many empirical studies, the empirical research gap is clear that there is no empirical evidence of the mediating effect of employee engagement on the relationship between its drivers such as leadership and work-life balance and the consequence on employee job performance. Research gap was bridged with the five research gaps namely: to identify the impact of leadership on employee engagement; to identify the impact of work life balance on employee engagement; to identify the mediating effect of employee engagement on the relationship between leadership and employee job performance; to identify the mediating effect of employee engagement on the relationship between work life balance and employee job performance; and to identify the impact of employee engagement on employee job performance.

Literature Review

Leadership is a commonly discussed term amongst people at different instances in their day-to-day lives. Leadership has been defined by many, in different ways. Hughes et al. (1993), describe leadership as “the ability to influence others to achieve goals”. Meanwhile, Iddagoda et al. (2022) argue that “leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act toward achieving a standard goal”. Winston and Patterson (2006), as cited in Sirisena and Iddagoda (2022), conceptualize a leader as “a person who essentially influences diverse followers in order to guide their focus towards achieving organizational objectives”. Employees prefer an employer with whom they can maintain a healthy balance between professional work and personal life. As suggested by Sopian et al. (2022), work-life balance refers to a condition in which employees move forward with the faith that they can balance their professional work and personal life commitments.
Employee engagement is increasingly recognized as essential for commercial and company performance. According to Tharika et al. (2021), Iddagoda et al. (2016) define employee engagement as “the extent to which an employee gets involved in the job and the organization cognitively, emotionally and behaviorally”. According to Gurugamage et al. (2022), employee job performance is defined as “the overall outcome of an employee fulfilling his/her duty in terms of the quality, effectiveness, efficiency and standards which have been determined in advance”. Ramanayake et al. (2022) mention that quality of work, amount of work, accuracy, speed of work, and employee effectiveness concerning his/her job are all measures of employee job performance.

**Methodology**

Sekaran and Bougie (2016) describe research design as a blueprint for collecting, measuring, and analyzing data, created for finding answers to the research questions. Sekaran (2003) proposed six elements of a research design. Hence, this is a quantitative study with a sample size of 100 using a non-probability convenience sampling technique. Sampling rule laid by Roscoe (1975) as cited in Sekaran (2003) that is minimum sample should be 30 and maximum sample size should be 500. The purpose of the study is hypothesis testing. Extent of researcher interference with the study is minimal. Type of investigation is correlational and the unit of analysis is individual. Data were gathered from the machine operators from the apparel sector in Sri Lanka. The study setting is non-contrived and the time horizon is cross-sectional.

The mediation involving leadership (L), employee engagement (EE), and employee job performance (EJP), along with the mediation effect of employee engagement on work-life balance (WLB) and employee job performance, was thoroughly examined using SmartPLS 4.0 software. The investigation unfolded in two essential stages: the measurement model and the structural model, employing Partial Least Squares (PLS) modelling. This approach enabled a comprehensive exploration of the intricate mechanisms at play.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the constructs in the study, a comprehensive measurement model analysis using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (rho_a), composite reliability (rho_c), average variance extracted (AVE), Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, and the Fornell-Larcker criterion were used. The study focuses on EE as the mediator, EJP as the dependent variable, and L and WLB as independent variables.
The HTMT ratios indicate acceptable discriminant validity, with values ranging from 0.435 to 0.779. All ratios fall below the recommended threshold of 0.85, underscoring the distinctiveness of the constructs. Furthermore, the Fornell-Larcker criterion supports convergent validity, with the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeding the correlation estimates between constructs.

**Structural Model Analysis**

This section presents outcomes of the structural model, unveiling complex interactions among EE, EJP, L, and WLB. Metrics include R-squared values (48.1% EE, 46.5% EJP), highlighting explained variance. Effect sizes reveal EE’s significant influence on EJP (16.6%), while WLB notably impacts EE (61.6%) and modestly affects EJP (4.1%). Predictive power is supported by Q²predict values (0.446 EE, 0.339 EJP), with RMSE (0.767 EE, 0.827 EJP) and MAE (0.620 EE, 0.662 EJP) gauging predictive precision.

The structural model analysis reveals substantial influences on EE and EJP, notably from WLB (EE: $\beta = 0.657$, $T = 7.911$, $p = 0.000$; EJP: $\beta = 0.218$, $T = 1.520$, $p = 0.129$). Leadership displays limited direct effects, moderately impacting both dimensions (L -> EE: $\beta = 0.066$, $T = 0.688$, $p = 0.491$; L -> EJP: $\beta = 0.168$, $T = 1.686$, $p = 0.092$). Hypothesis tests reinforce these findings, confirming a strong positive relationship between EE and EJP ($\beta = 0.414$, $T = 2.956$, $p = 0.003$), with WLB significantly impacting both EE and EJP outcomes. However, L’s relationships with the constructs exhibit varying significance levels, warranting further investigation.

|                | Beta  | $T$ statistics (|O/STDEV|) | P values | 2.5% | 97.5% |
|----------------|-------|-----------------|----------|------|-------|
| EE -> EJP      | 0.414 | 2.956           | 0.003    | 0.140| 0.687 |
| L -> EE        | 0.066 | 0.688           | 0.491    | -0.124| 0.252 |
| L -> EJP       | 0.168 | 1.686           | 0.092    | -0.029| 0.364 |
| WLB -> EE      | 0.657 | 7.911           | 0.000    | 0.493| 0.816 |
| WLB -> EJP     | 0.218 | 1.520           | 0.129    | -0.070| 0.487 |
Mediation Analysis Results

The mediation analysis explored pathways involving L, EE, EJP, and WLB. While no significant mediation effect was found between L and EJP ($\beta = 0.027$, $T = 0.621$, $p = 0.534$), EE was confirmed as a mediator between WLB and EJP ($\beta = 0.272$, $T = 2.722$, $p = 0.007$). These findings emphasize EE's pivotal role in translating the positive influence of WLB into enhanced EJP, providing valuable insights into organizational dynamics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Mediation analysis</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beta</td>
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<tr>
<td>L -&gt; EE -&gt; EJP</td>
<td>0.027</td>
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<tr>
<td>WLB -&gt; EE -&gt; EJP</td>
<td>0.272</td>
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Conclusion

In conclusion, the study utilized comprehensive analysis to unveil relationships involving L, EE, EJP, and WLB. The structural model highlighted the significant impact of WLB on EE and EJP, with EE also positively influencing EJP. While L showed no relationship, further exploration is needed. The mediation analysis confirmed EE's role in mediating the impact of WLB on EJP, offering actionable insights for enhancing EJP through EE and WLB. This study is limited to the apparel sector and also due to the time constraint, this is limited to a cross-sectional study.

References


Abstract

The editorial cartoon is a visual commentary that expresses a satirical or critical message about current events, politics, or social issues in a concise and often humorous manner. This research analyzed the selected editorial cartoons based on their political colors regarding the representation of the political situation in the most recent election. Using the Semiology of Roland Barthes, the data gathered in The Manila Times, Philippine Star, and Sunstar. Furthermore, by utilizing visual analysis, the findings of this study showed that the analyzed editorial cartoons utilize a diverse array of signs to skilfully communicate their messages, all of which contribute to the cartoons' impactful visual style and satirical essence. Also, the data revealed that by employing diverse signs such as icons, indexes, and symbols, the examined editorial cartoons effectively criticize social and political matters. Through the strategic use of these signs, the cartoons deliver thought-provoking commentary on the complex nature of politics. Furthermore, the findings also showed that the cartoons provide astute observations on the complex dynamics of politics, skilfully critiquing both societal and political issues and shedding light on the less favorable aspects of the political landscape. A “guidebook” entitled “Decoding the Editorial Cartoons: A Semiological Analysis using Roland Barthes’ Theory” was crafted by the researchers. By incorporating the booklet as recommended learning material for a Contemporary Issues subject. Several conclusions are drawn from the study’s findings, as well as recommendations for use by citizens, teachers, students, and future researchers.

Keywords: political colors, political situation, editorial cartoons, semiology, Roland Barthes

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Introduction

The electoral situation in the Philippines can be described as dramatic, and it seems to be a severe political competition since various media are exploited and manipulated; either the purpose is to construct or to assassinate one's character. As one cannot usually express all their thoughts in narratives and opinions, one of the usual media accessible to the masses is the editorial cartoon. Those who cannot read benefit from its visual character, which allows them to see through the cartoonist's eyes and grasp the information they convey. In the best cases, the cartoon cannot be read or comprehended simply by glancing at the text or the picture. To grasp the cartoonist's message, both the text and the images must be read together. Editorial cartoons can be a suitable medium for expressing these thoughts, particularly on political issues, as it allows cartoonists to sketch out ideas that cannot be easily explained in an editorial text (Popatco, 2020).

The 2022 election left a lasting impression on every Filipino because like the editorial cartoon's hidden white and black lines the previous election featured a variety of hues each of which has a symbolic value. They are a social, political, and economic monitor of events in the country and throughout the world that represent the scene from the cartoonist's environment (Lawate, 2012). An editorial cartoon is distinguished from other cartoons in the newspaper by its currency and content. Political and social topics have long been brought up by journalists and cartoonists using editorial cartoons. It is undeniable that editorial cartoons serve as a tool for readers to get information about the current events and problems in their environment through the use of white and black colors, lines, and various picture styles. Many newspapers continue to employ editorial cartoons today as a kind of humor or satire, but many are unaware of the significant significance behind them.

The contents of the editorial cartoons were collected and only focused on the three presidential candidates in the Philippines in the 2022 election. Thus, this study explored representations of the presidential candidates of the Philippines in print media, specifically in the editorial cartoons of three of the major Philippine broadsheets: The Manila Times, Philippine Star, and Sunstar, to form an understanding of the political issues and their implications. To form an understanding of the political issues and their implications, this study aimed to tackle the significance of the political situation in the most recent election by examining the cartoons' visual form, formal elements, and themes, as well
as in the context of issues present in society. The study used the Semiology of Roland Barthes as a theory for this study.

**Methodology**

This study employed qualitative research, utilizing archival resources from online and printed newspaper databases, particularly The Manila Times, Philippine Star, and Sunstar. In addition to collecting editorial cartoons, archival research encompassed historical and political events to contextualize the issues depicted. Visual analysis enabled a deeper exploration of form and imagery beyond the surface level.

To analyze and interpret editorial cartoons from the three sources, these approaches were employed. The aim was to scrutinize signs presented in editorial cartoons regarding the 2022 Philippine presidential candidates using Barthes' Semiology. The selected cartoons centered on Domagoso, Marcos, and Robredo and were chosen from trusted newspapers.

For this visual analysis, a questionnaire wasn't suitable due to the method's qualitative nature. Instead, selected editorial cartoons from The Manila Times, Philippine Star, and Manila Bulletin were used. Online resources enriched the framework for analyzing political situations in the 2022 election. This approach laid the groundwork for potential future analysis.

Visual analysis, a qualitative technique, was chosen to discern the implications of editorial cartoons on the 2022 presidential candidates. The researchers observed and interpreted editorial cartoons from the three sources, applying Barthes' Semiology – particularly denotation and connotation – to establish main claims based on signs' interpretations.

The study encompassed the seven months leading up to the 2022 Philippine election. The focus was on identifying signs in editorial cartoons about the presidential candidates from The Manila Times, Philippine Star, and Sunstar. Ethical considerations were upheld, with the focus on the visuals and symbols rather than the cartoonists' personal information.

Primary sources, including respected newspapers like The Manila Times and Philippine Star, formed the foundation of this study. While limitations existed – such as limited availability and
temporal scope of cartoons – the researchers maintained neutrality, analyzing symbols objectively. Their goal was to provide a solid understanding of candidate representation within the given timeframe.

Results

Based on the gathered data, the following findings were revealed:

On the signs represented in the editorial cartoons. The editorial cartoons analyzed in this collection incorporate various signs to convey their messages. These signs include the King, Rooks, Bishops, Horses, Pawns, the chessboard, the Peso sign, bag, man, speech bubble, tax, evaders, political handlers, podium, red collar, lightbulbs, violet background, circular shape, VP Leni, large pink bear, small man, big man, red, blue, white colors, star, orange hue, gray color, bright pink shoes, pants, and a dress, dark shadow, red rubber shoes, sando, and shorts, bumps, uphills, and downhills, four-wheeled wagon, microphone, scale, two paths, guitar, hat, red, white, and blue colors, white and black panda, red rose, pink stars, salakot, and barong, carved blade, stone, black shadow, chain, gold, and coins, cloudy, brown and yellow color.

On the meanings of icons, indexes, and symbols expressed in editorial cartoons. The analyzed editorial cartoons employ a diverse range of signs to convey their messages. These signs encompass icons such as chess pieces, representing power dynamics and strategic maneuvers in politics. They also include symbols like the Peso sign, podium, and scale, which highlight issues of corruption, the influence of political handlers, and the pursuit of justice. Additionally, visual elements such as colors, shapes, and cultural symbols evoke emotions, comment on leadership and national identity, and address themes of complexity and oppression. These strategic uses of signs effectively communicate nuanced messages, critique societal and political issues, and shed light on the intricacies of the political landscape.
On how they are represented in editorial cartoons. In the examined editorial cartoons, the presidential candidates are represented using a wide array of signs and symbols that carry specific meanings. The use of chess pieces symbolizes power dynamics and strategic maneuvers in politics, while symbols like the Peso sign, bag, speech bubble, and more highlight issues related to corruption, taxes, and public perception. Depictions of political handlers and podiums signify behind-the-scenes influence and the significance of public speaking. Various visual elements evoke emotions and convey themes such as creativity, enlightenment, and complexity. Symbols like VP Leni, a large pink bear, contrasting sizes, and patriotic colors represent political figures, leadership, affiliations, and national identity. Colors, shadows, and contrasting elements evoke moods and risks. Symbols such as red rubber shoes, obstacles, and a microphone depict challenges and communication in politics. The presence of a scale symbolizes justice and fairness, while the two paths represent different choices and outcomes. Cultural symbols express affiliations and national pride, and symbols of power, wealth, and corruption shed light on darker aspects of politics. The use of color contributes to the overall mood of the cartoons. Through these symbols, the editorial cartoons effectively critique societal and political issues, providing commentary on the complexities of the political landscape.

On creating a booklet that will serve as the criteria for analyzing editorial cartoons. Editorial cartoons are a powerful medium for expressing opinion and commentary on contemporary issues. Analyzing these cartoons can provide valuable insights into social, political, and cultural matters. This booklet aims to serve as a comprehensive guide for educators and learners to effectively analyze editorial cartoons. By using this criteria booklet, students can develop critical thinking skills, enhance their understanding of current events, and engage in meaningful discussions about complex topics. The booklet consists of an introduction, an understanding of editorial cartoons, semiology, steps to analyze editorial cartoons using semiology, and the analyzed editorial cartoons made by the researchers. It provides the result of the analysis of selected editorial cartoons in the Philippines.

Conclusion
The analyzed editorial cartoons visually represent the Philippine political landscape, addressing power dynamics, accountability, alliances, public perception, and opposition to Marcos
Jr.'s candidacy. They convey messages on democracy, human rights, political responsibility, and potential outcomes. Symbolism such as chess, tax evasion, handlers, debate invitations, alliances, and opposition effectively communicate complex ideas. Colors, shadows, and symbols enhance impact, conveying emotions, uncertainties, and international involvement. These cartoons deepen understanding of Marcos Jr.'s candidacy and the broader political landscape in the Philippines.

The analyzed editorial cartoons reveal underlying messages and themes, depicting Philippine politics, public sentiment, and concerns about Marcos Jr.'s candidacy. Symbols like chess, tax evasion, handlers, debate invitations, alliances, and opposition capture multifaceted politics, emphasizing transparency, accountability, power dynamics, and public perception. Colors, visual cues, and symbolism convey emotions, risks, and international influence. These interpretations deepen understanding of the complexities and challenges in Philippine politics and public opinion on Marcos Jr.'s candidacy.

The editorial cartoons effectively convey messages and themes through various visual representations. Chess imagery symbolizes power, while tax evasion is represented with money and arrows. Political handlers are shown as controlling figures, and debate invitations are depicted through formal setups. Strong alliances and vigilance are conveyed through flags and symbols. Emotions and risks are expressed through colors and shading. Power dynamics and opposition are depicted using lines and contrasting colors. The complexities of politics are shown through wagons, roads, and facial expressions. Fair confrontation and opposition are emphasized through dynamic poses and symbols. Potential outcomes are illustrated with paths and arrows. Recognizable symbols represent entities like the USA, Bongbong Marcos, and China. Diverse perspectives and legal challenges are highlighted symbolically. Marcos Jr.'s portrayal as a "savior" figure is depicted through heroic imagery, while insensitivity is conveyed through expressions and symbols. These visual representations enrich the cartoons' messages, providing deeper insights into the political landscape and public sentiment.

Creating a booklet titled "Decoding Editorial Cartoons: A Semiological Analysis using Roland Barthes' Theory" will allow more people to have access to the results of the study and might influence other researchers to undertake a similar study. The booklet created as part of this study serves as a comprehensive guide for educators and learners to effectively analyze editorial cartoons.
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Food Security and Coping Strategies of Ata-Manobo Tribe: An Inquiry

1Hannah Kem M. Bondaon, 2Jerrylyn E. Caduyac, 2Nenia Joy R. Datoy & 3Sharlyn B. Torotoro

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to explore the experiences and strategies of the Ata-Manobo tribe on food security. The study used a qualitative type of research, specifically a phenomenological approach. This was conducted at Feeder Road 5, Barangay Tibal-og, Santo Tomas, and Davao del Norte in the Philippines. It was confined to the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions of the fourteen Ata-Manobo adults. The findings of this study revealed that they were food insecure and mentally and emotionally unstable, and that this had affected them financially. However, the majority of them continued to utilize subsistence farming—crops that serve as both a food source and a source of nutrients. There were two limitations considered in this qualitative study: language barriers and financial barriers. First, there are language barriers since the participants of this study were from the Ata-Manobo tribe, and the terms being used need to be given meaning in layman's terms. The researchers had to provide the right definition and confirm the terms with the tribal chieftains and IPMRs. Secondly, financial barriers exist since the study needs to request a Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) in order to comply with the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) Law, and the researchers have to shoulder the expenses from the FPIC process up to the validation of the results. The insights generated in this study could lead to the development of effective outreach activities and a food security program.

Keywords: Ata-manobo tribe, food security, subsistence farming, food insecurity, indigenous knowledge

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Introduction

Root and tuber crops have become staple foods for the indigenous people in every part of the world. Even up to this day, these crops played an important role in feeding their empty stomachs to save them from hunger due to the high inflation of foods available in the market. The food systems of the world’s 476 million Indigenous Peoples are often branded as ‘backward’ or unproductive – but evidence shows they are highly productive, sustainable and equitable. These systems preserve rich biodiversity, provide nutritious food and are climate resilient and low carbon (Swiderska & Ryan, 2020). The UN emphasized the potential advantages of indigenous knowledge in achieving food security through the wise and sustainable exploitation of biocultural resources (Hunter et al., 2019).

In South Africa, Masekoameng and Molotja (2019) described indigenous foods are being eaten, and the rural South African households of the Sekhukhune District still consider indigenous knowledge to be a crucial resource for ensuring their own food security. Because they are knowledgeable about indigenous culture, the participants can recognize edible native fruits and vegetables in their surroundings. In order to grow, harvest, process, preserve, and cook indigenous foods, they also draw on their cultural knowledge. In the communities, native foods are sold, and the proceeds are used to help families maintain a secure supply of food.

Nevertheless, despite being a country with a major agricultural sector, the Philippines is the world's top importer of rice, according to a study by Buenavista et al. (2022). However, economic downturns and adversity from the natural world have made the issue of a constant lack of rice worse. The abundant agrobiodiversity and wild edible plants, however, are essential for the Higaonon tribe's food security and adaptability in Bukidnon Province, the Philippines, while rice production is difficult due to the province's rugged topography. The purpose of the ethnobotanical research was to record the variety, use, and biocultural refugia of both cultivated and wild food plants in order to learn more about the native edible plant knowledge of the Higaonon tribe. There were 76 edible plant species total, distributed among 62 genera and 36 botanical groups.

In this study, the Ata-Manobo tribe has a total population of 859 inhabitants in the barangay, and the Municipality of Santo Tomas is one of their ancestral domains. The research gap that this study wants to investigate is the experiences of the Ata-Manobo Tribe in keeping their family food
secure and to identify their coping strategies in times of food insecurity, be it in their indigenous food system or their food access resources. The insights generated in this study can lead to the development of effective outreach activities and food security programs.

**Methodology**

This study utilized a qualitative research design called descriptive phenomenology. According to Bonyadi (2023), phenomenology is a research method that can be used in educational settings to explore the essence of a particular phenomenon from the perspective of the one who has experienced it. This is because there is no single research approach that can capture the nature of multifaceted educational phenomena.

This study employs a focus group discussion (FGD) and an in-depth interview (IDI) for data collection. IDI is a one-to-one interview with the participant. Meanwhile, participating in FGD is a useful technique to learn more about how individuals see a particular phenomenon.

To collect the data, the researchers used two techniques. First, the researchers have asked the Ata-Manobo tribe to share their experiences with keeping their family food secure. Second, the researchers have conducted IDI and FGD with 14 adults from the Ata-Manobo tribe.

In order to comply with the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA) Law, the researchers requested a Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) from the Provincial Office of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). The researchers also prepared the research documents to be forwarded to the regional office. After the FPIC, upon conducting the interview, the researchers handed them the consent letter.

**Findings**

When asked about their views on their experiences in maintaining a food-secure home, they honestly expressed their answers since all of them were able to experience a variety of difficulties. From the responses gathered, three (3) themes emerged, namely: (1) economic instability, (2) emotionally unstable, and (3) common experiences.
The participants in both the IDI and FGD were asked several questions about their coping strategies for dealing with food insecurity. The participants answered each question honestly, and from the responses gathered, three (3) essential themes arose, namely: (1) roots and tuber crops as alternative foods; (2) burial methods of preservation (kukulot) and wrapping food using banana leaves (linuput); and (3) financial management.

When asked about their views on their insights about food security, they honestly expressed their answers since all of them were able to experience a variety of difficulties. From the responses gathered, three (3) themes emerged: (1) food insecurity, (2) sources of nutrients, and (3) plant crops for subsistence.

**Conclusion**

In this study, one of the most important things to consider is the economic stability of the household. The most common factor that causes food insecurity is poverty, which causes the family to skip meals, adjust their eating patterns, and limit their spending and stress. The Ata-Manobo tribe encountered difficulties in maintaining a food-secure home, which led them to rely on their food system to provide food for their family. Root and tuber crops have been their staple foods since then. When they run out of food, roots and tuber crops have been their substitutes for rice since they also provide satiety, which mends hunger.

The Ata-Manobo Tribe was found to be food insecure in this study. This caused them to be mentally unstable because they worried about where their next meal would come from and what they would eat for dinner. They also acknowledged that food insecurity was a problem that affected every household regularly and that the management of their finances was focused solely on maintaining their daily budget. It was also discovered that, even though some Ata-Manobo members now reside in rural areas, the majority of them continued to use traditional agricultural methods, such as planting crops that serve as both a food source and a source of nutrients. Additionally, the method of food preservation taught by their ancestors is still practiced today. The informants in this study emphasized the value of industriousness and persistence to provide food for the family.
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