An Assessment of the Impact of Trust and Rule of Law Based on the Legal Framework of the Philippine Covid-19 Response in Engaging Filipino Citizens

By

VILLAFUERTE, Giovanni Solano

THESIS

Submitted to

KDI School of Public Policy and Management

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF PUBLIC POLICY

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Committee in charge:

Professor Choi, Seulki, Supervisor

Professor Shin, Jaeun

Professor Kim, Dong-Young

Jaeun Shrin Dongtoung Kom

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ABSTRACT

By

Giovanni Solano Villafuerte

<u>Statement of the problem</u>: Do trust and rule of law play a role in engaging people in following the health protocols¹ of COVID-19 response to reduce the high rate of COVID-19 infections in the Philippines?

Methods, techniques, and data used: The research method used for this study followed the WHO standard research protocol (Betsch C W. L., 2020). The questionnaire is provided at this <u>link</u>. The researcher used an "online survey of nonprobability sampling (Vehovar V, 2016) to recruit" respondents by posting the said survey on social media sites, asking the overall population (individuals aged ≥"18 years) to answer the" said survey.

Perceptions on individual risk were determined "across age groups using an ANOVA model using risk perception as the dependent variable and age as the independent variable (four age groups).

The following correlation was tested using the Pearson correlation coefficient:

- 1) "Between crisis management attitudes and compliance with" behavioral guidelines as well as "between attitudes toward crisis management and perceptions of economic threat".
- 2) "Between the most credible spokesperson (independent variable) and attitudes toward crisis management" (dependent variable).
- 3) "Between the total impression of danger and the threat" to one's livelihood.
- 4) "Between perceptions of total risk and attitudes towards" how the government has handled the pandemic.

¹ "Individual Hygiene (for example handwashing with soap and water, as well as hand sanitizers and so forth), Environmental Hygiene (for example cleaning surfaces and items), practicing physical Distancing, Respiratory Hygiene and Cough Etiquette (Duque III, 2020:7, 10, 12, 15, 17, 19)."

The result of the "correlation between attitudes" towards "crisis management and behavioral guidelines compliance" were then compared to the existing literature on how the lockdown was implemented on the ground based on two laws, the Bayanihan To Heal as One Act as well as the Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public Health Concern Act using the lens of the International Health Regulation (IHR) as well as the Siracusa Principles which "are legally binding on the" Philippine Government.

Major findings of the study:

Risk Perception:

Thirty-four percent (34%) of the study sample perceived the the likelihood of contracting the new coronavirus as moderate with a mean score of 4.02 (95% CI 3.53 - 4.52; scale 1 - 7); The same is also true with perceived susceptibility as a result of an infection with coronavirus (34%) with a mean score of 4.22 (95% CI 3.72 - 4.71; scale 1 - 7) as well as perceived severity of contracting the novel coronavirus with a mean score of 4.17 (95% CI 3.73 - 4.62; scale 1 - 7).

It appears that the higher the age, the higher is the perceived probability, susceptibility, and severity of contracting the coronavirus infection. This finding is consistent with CDC's, 2020 findings as well as that of Gesser-Edelsburg A, 2020:8 who indicates that because of the severity of their sickness, older adults are the most vulnerable.

"Higher risk perceptions" were fundamentally connected with preventive health practices including washing hands, donning masks, and practicing social distancing (Sarah Dryhurst, 2020 as cited in Ro, 2020). It may mean therefore that overall; the respondents have a moderate response towards the health protocols of the pandemic. However, males, those with children as well as 51-65 years old age bracket have slightly better health behavior towards COVID-19. On the other hand, males, college graduates, as well as those living alone have fair health behavior towards COVID-19.

Knowledge of COVID-19:

93.48% of the respondents answered correctly that there is at present no treatment or vaccine² for Covid-19. While 91.3% correctly answered the question about maximum incubation period³ of the novel coronavirus. The same is true with symptoms of the coronavirus, 97.83% answered fever and shortness of breath. While 95.65% answered cough. However, 98% of the respondents fail to recognize nausea or vomiting as a symptom. The same is true for congestion or runny nose at 61%. Another is fatigue at 35%, muscle or body aches at 26%, headache, and diarrhea at 22%, new aversion to a particular flavor or odor at 20%, sore throat at 11%, fever at 2%.

Preventive Measures Taken:

The response on "I know how to defend myself against the coronavirus" is on the positive side of the Likert scale, with a mean score of 5.65 (95% CI 5.36 – 5.94: scale 1 - 7). This is also the same with the responses on preventive measures taken, especially 'wearing a face mask' which registered 100%. *Fears and Worries About COVID-19*:

Worry and fear are more significant than responses to the government's trust and perceived vulnerability.

4

² The study was conducted in June 2020 where there is no existing vaccine yet.

³ i.e., the time from viral infection to developing symptoms of illness.

Dedication

To Maria Cielo Solano Villafuerte, sister, mother, friend, who have been working in South Korea as an undocumented migrant worker. May this thesis give meaning to all her hard work.

To Elena Capispisan Cascasan, mother-in-law, mother, teacher, friend who has passed away during this pandemic. May her legacy live on.

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Table of Contents

LIST OF TABLES	8
LIST OF FIGURES	9
List of Symbols or Abbreviations	10
Introduction	11
Review of Related Literature	12
Legal Framework of the Response	15
Bayanihan To Heal as One Act	15
The Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public Heal of 2019 (RA 11332)	
International Health Regulation	18
Research method	19
Research Tools	20
Survey Structure and Variable Design	21
Results	22
Analysis	24
Who is most likely to get infected with coronavirus?	25
Knowledge of COVID-19	28
Preventive Measures Taken	30
Fear and worries about COVID-19	35
Discussion	36
How fair is Philippine government's COVID-19 response	38
Overstretching To Heal as One Act provision on spreading 'fake news'	43
Source of Information Credibility	47
Limitations and future directions	49
Conclusion	50
BIBLIOGRAPHY	53

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents	19
Table 2: Risk Perception of respondents	21
Table 3: Respondents Knowledge of COVID-19	24
Table 4: Preventive Measures Taken by Respondents	27
Table 5: Differences Between Preventive Measures Taken by National Representative Sample vs. Income Groups (Non-Representative Sample)	. Low- 30
Table 6: Respondents Fears and Worries About COVID-19	32

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Symptoms of COVID-19 as Identified by Low-Income Groups of Paranaque City	26
Figure 2: Fear of Respondents Among Low-Income Groups of Paranaque City	27
Figure 3: Protection Measures Identified by Low-Income Groups from Paranaque City	32
Figure 4: News Clips Detailing the Difference of Treatment for Senator Koko Pimentel	38
Figure 5: World Justice Project – Rule of Law Index Showing the Rank of the Philippines Among Peers in South East Asia	its 42

List of Symbols or Abbreviations

ANOVA - Analysis of Variance

CDC - Center for Disease and Control

CI - Confidence Interval

CoP - Community of Practice

DRDF - Demographic Research and Development Foundation, Inc.

ECQ - Enhanced Community Quarantine

HCT - Humanitarian Country Team

IATF - Inter-Agency Task Force

ICJ - International Commission of Jurists

IHR - International Health Regulation

JEE - Joint External Evaluation

LGU - Local Government Unit

NCR - National Capital Region

NEDA - National Economic and Development Authority

NGO – Non-Government Organization

PHO - Provincial Health Office

PNP - Philippine National Police

RA – Republic Act

RHU - Rural Health Unit

SWS - Social Weather Station

TWG - Technical Working Group

UPPI - University of the Philippine's Population Institute

WHO – World Health Organization

Introduction

If there is one thing that the Philippine government prioritizes at present among other things, it is obviously to fight COVID-19, for this pandemic not only takes away lives literally but more importantly, it made the whole world stand still: schools are closed for face-to-face classes, people working from home, malls and theme parks closed, no bars and other places of recreations were allowed to operate, people would just go out to buy essentials. This pandemic caused a world crisis that is greatly manifested in the countries whose economies went into recession, and these include the Philippines. It would then be obvious that for nations to rise again is for them to fight COVID-19, but how can this be possible if there is a shortage of vaccines and no cure is in sight. The only doable thing that people can do is to stay alive and survive, either by staying healthy and strong and living with COVID-19 around or simply to stay away and prevent themselves from getting infections. The latter seems easier, but why then is there still an increase in the number of instances of this virus that has been confirmed in the Philippines despite being a world leader in COVID-19 protocols compliance (Esguerra, 2020; Imperial College London, 2020)?

Do Filipinos follow the rules imposed by the government when it comes to COVID-19 protocols because they trust⁴ the government? Or are they just doing things because of the rule of law⁵? What is the impact then of the level of trust and rule of law in engaging the Filipinos to do what is supposed to be done then?

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⁴ "Trust is defined as a basic agreement among members of a society on shared values, priorities, and differences, as well as implicit acceptance of the community in which they live. It also has to do with citizens' expectations of the form of government they should have, how government should work and interact with other social and economic organizations and persons, and the behaviors of political leaders, public officials, and citizens. Individuals' expectations of parliaments and elected representatives are regularly exceeded, leading to a loss of faith (Cheema, 2010:21)."

⁵ "A principle of governance in which all public and private individuals, institutions, and entities, including the State, are held responsible to laws that are promulgated, equally implemented, and independently adjudicated, and are consistent with international human rights norms and standards." It requires measures to ensure the supremacy of the law, equality before the law, accountability to the law, justice in the application of the law, separation of powers, involvement in decision-making, legal clarity, avoidance of arbitrariness, and procedural and legal transparency (UN, n.d.)."

Review of Related Literature⁶

Table 1. Selected Studies on the Coronavirus Pandemic and Trust.

Area	Findings	Countries	Authors
Implemen tation ⁷	The adoption of restrictive policies later in life is associated with higher levels of societal and political trust.	European Union countries	Toshkov, Yesilkagit and Carroll (2020)
Compliance ⁸	Higher levels of trust result in higher levels of compliance, albeit this may be dependent on faith in the people who provide the orders rather than trust in the system as a whole. Social trust has a negative link with compliance.	United States, Denmark	Goldstein and Wiedemann; Olsen and Hjorth; Han et al. (2020)
	Trust in science, rather than government, becomes a primary predictor of compliance at the national level.	China, Colombia, Germany, Italy, Mexico, South Korea, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America	Bicchieri C, Fatas E, Aldama A, Casas A, Deshpande I, Lauro M, et al. (2021)
	Professional trust has a direct and indirect effect on the link between government trust and policy compliance.	Thailand	Saechang, O.; Yu, J.; Li, Y. (2021)
	Governments must maintain confidence in order to properly control the pandemic.	UK	Liam Wright, Andrew Steptoe, and Daisy Fancourt (2020)
	The varying degrees of opposition to enforcement among initiatives show that while an enforced mandate might be harmful for some anti–COVID-19 proposals, it would be crucial for others.	Germany	Katrin Schmelz (2020)
	Governments must give material, information, and psychological help effectively and proactively to increase the public's risk response	South Korea	Eugene Song and Hyun Jung Yoo (2020)

 $^{^{\}rm 6}$ Lifted from Devine et al., 2020, 278-280.

⁷ Is there a link between trust and the types and timings of policy implementation?

⁸ Is there a link between citizen trust and citizen compliance with containment measures?

		1	1
	capacities and actions, and social trust must be developed by active reaction activities against the virus by all elements of society.		
Risk perception ⁹	Government trust is adversely correlated with risk perception. Individuals who have poor trust in science and specialists, on the other hand, have a higher risk perception.	The United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, Germany, Spain, Italy, Sweden, Mexico, Japan and South Korea	Dryhurst et al. (2020)
Mortality ¹⁰	Institutional trust is linked to a decreased death rate.	European Union countries	Oksanen, Kaakinen, Latikka, Savolainen, Savela, Koivula, Blais, Bol, Giani, Loewen (2020)
Consequences for trust ¹¹	Personal exposure to COVID-19 has been linked to a decrease in trust; nevertheless, the use of lockdowns may result in an increase in trust. (but see below) Political trust leads to increased societal trust. Governments that are well-organized, communicate well, and are seen as fair have a higher level of trust. Even in other countries, lockdowns may boost political trust. Not the lockdowns themselves, but the expanding number of people infected with the virus fueled trust.	European Union countries, Spain, Denmark, 23 countries globally	Amat, Falcó- Gimeno, Arenas, Munoz; Madsen, Mikkelsen, Christensen, Baekgaard; Esaiasson, Sohlberg, Ghersetti, Johansson Han et al.; De vries, Bakker, Hobolt, Arceneaux; Schraff (2020)
	People who have had personal experience with the COVID-19 virus (tested positive, admitted to hospital, or lost a loved one to the disease) were more trusting. A decline in generalized trust was connected to both pandemic fear and a high perceived health hazard.	Norway	Thoresen S, Blix I, Wentzel-Larsen T and Birkeland MS (2021)

 ⁹ Is people's perception of risk linked to their level of trust?
 ¹⁰ Is there a link between trust and mortality?
 ¹¹ Is there a change in (various sorts of) trust as a result of the pandemic?

Governments have attempted to control the pandemic by emphasizing people' individual responsibility, which is founded on mutual confidence between individuals and the state, which may be linked to government reactions to the outbreak being less restricted or slower. People's views of coronavirus danger are lower when they trust the government, but higher when they reject science and medical professionals, according to a research project that spans the globe (Dryhurst et al., 2020), which could explain why tighter rules were implemented later (Toshkov et al., 2020). Simultaneously, there is proof that higher levels of compliance are associated with better levels of trust (Han et al., 2020; Olsen and Hjorth, 2020), as well as lower death rates (Oksanen et al., 2020). It's possible that the first will result in the second (i.e. with lesser compliance leading to higher transmission rates). However, one research from the United States found that this is dependent on partisanship and a higher level of social trust may be connected to poorer compliance prevalent in the neighborhood (in this case, US counties) (Goldstein and Wiedemann, 2020). It's uncertain whether this result holds true outside of the hyper-polarized environment of the United States.

Nonetheless, based on past studies of the outbreak, Ebola (Blair et al., 2017), suggests that institutional trust and adherence to containment efforts are linked. In general, these findings imply that trust is associated with increased death rates but that mechanism is not dependent on risk perceptions. As a result, the mechanism behind political trust and obedience is yet unknown. Given that trust is associated with the implementation of stringent legislation later (Toshkov et al., 2020), a finding that contradicts previous research.

In many nations, the pandemic has produced a 'rally-around-the-flag' effect, with trust in governmental institutions and personalities growing to differing degrees. While this pattern has been described (Jennings, 2020), studies have also shown that putting lockdown measures in place enhanced trust in European governments (Bol et al., accepted). According to data from Spain, those people who are personally affected by COVID-19, whether it is them or a close friend or family member, have lower levels of political trust (Amat et al., 2020). This appears to be a conceivable impact, given that infection could lead to discontent with the government's action. The shutdown did not enhance trust, according to panel data from the Netherlands, but it did produce a rally effect due to the increased number of people infected because of the virus (Schraff, 2020). A panel study from Sweden indicated that, rather than the other way around, more government trust influenced interpersonal trust (Esaiasson et al., 2020), validating already conducted panel studies on the topic (e.g. Snderskov and Dinesen, 2016). It's uncertain whether this is a long- or short-term effect; but, according to Aassve et al., 2020, data from the Spanish flu epidemic suggests that the epidemic's detrimental influence on social trust lasted at least a generation.

Conceptually, what defines trust? Is it rational or affective? is a hot topic in the literature on trust The evolution of trust during the course of the pandemic has shown some interesting facts. Schraff (2020), for example, asserts that trust increased as the number of illnesses increased, but that traditional variables such as economic assessments became irrelevant as the number of illnesses increased.

The trust literature faces a variety of issues as a result of this discovery. It demonstrates that trust is rational in the sense that it responds to circumstances in the real world (increased infection rates), but that the epidemic has also weakened core trust determinants. A vital next step is to determine

whether this is due to the affective nature of trust, as the author suggests, or simply because the economy is no longer as vital as other concerns (such as healthcare).

Second, according to De Vries et al. (2020), a lockdown in Italy enhanced incumbent support in nations where lockdowns were not implemented. Although this does not address trust, it does highlight the pandemic's international nature, and how citizens look to what happens in other countries to determine their trustworthiness, as well as incumbents were rewarded for a situation over which they had no direct influence. This supported the emotive aspect of political support.

Although trust is commonly described in the literature as a "good thing," there is rarely a clear justification for this. Despite a lack of agreement in the studies of prior pandemics suggest that (a lack of) trust can have major implications, according to the trust literature on the benefits of trust as the works examined here demonstrate. They point to the fact that trust is a two-edged sword. As we've shown, trust can enhance non-compliance, at least in the United States, if non-compliance is encouraged by signals from credible actors, and/or the community isn't following the rules (Goldstein and Wiedemann, 2020). Second, higher levels of trust are associated with slower policy responses, maybe because people feel the government will be able to handle the pandemic without more stringent regulations, or that citizens will be able to self-police — or that the government trusts citizens to self-regulate.

Research on risk perception indicated that when people's faith in government grows, their risk perception decreases. (However, the opposite is true when it comes to trust in science and medical professionals.) As a result, additional research into the relationship between trust and compliance – and which actors – is required.

According to studies, societal (socio-tropic) exposure to the pandemic, such as Infection rates are growing and lockdown measures are being implemented is linked to increased trust. Ego-tropic (personal) exposure in the form of a close family member or acquaintance being unwell, on the other hand, is connected to a decrease in trust (Amat et al., 2020; Bol et al.; Schraff, 2020). In trust studies, this reveals the interwoven interaction between the personal and the societal once more.

Legal Framework of the Response

Bayanihan¹² To Heal as One Act¹³

The president was given various broad and exceptional powers to cope with the COVID-19 epidemic

in March 2020 by Republic Act No. 11469 for the Nation to Heal as One. Section 6(6) of the Act

¹² "The *Bayanihan* (pronounced buy-uh-nee-hun) is a Filipino ceremony derived from the word "bayan," which means "country, village, or community" in Filipino. The term bayanihan literally means "to be in a bayan," and it relates to a spirit of communal solidarity, hard effort, and cooperation toward a common objective (Imelda, 2013).

¹³ Lifted from Jeremiah Joven B. Joaquin, 2020:1.

further stipulated that "spreading false information on the COVID-19 crisis on social media and other platforms" might result in up to two months in prison and fines of up to one million pesos (\$19,500). However, because the Philippine Congress did not move to renew the Act, it was only in effect until June 2020.

The false information provision¹⁴

Section 6f of the Bayanihan Act condemns individuals who make and spread bogus data (via online media and different stages). Bogus data is characterized as data that have 'no legitimate or gainful effect on the populace, and are unmistakably outfitted to advance frenzy, mayhem, insurgency, dread, and disarray. Individuals who spread bogus data will be detained for as long as two months or a fine of up to one million pesos¹⁵ (Congress of the Philippines, 2020).

An infringement of the Philippine Constitution

Article III of the Constitution's Bill of Rights protects fundamental freedoms such as freedom of expression, freedom of peaceful assembly, and freedom of association.

However, the false information provision of RA No. 11469 is in direct contravention of "No law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the government for a redress of grievances," says Section 4 of the Bill of Rights.

The Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public Health Concern Act of 2019 (RA 11332)16

RA 11332 authorizes an epidemic or public health emergency to be declared (Section 7). The Secretary of Health will declare an epidemic, except if the emergency addresses a danger to public safety, the President will then proclaim a State of Public Health Emergency and mobilize a response

¹⁴ The Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public Health Concern Act of 2019 (RA 11332) has its own false information provision in Rule XI, Section 2, letter c, ii, which states that "creating, propagating, or disseminating false information in any form of media regarding a notifiable disease or health occurrence of public health significance, such as information with no basis in fact or reliable source.",

¹⁵ Equivalent to US\$25,000.00.

¹⁶ Lifted from Oloteo, 2020.

to the threat. Regional health offices can likewise announce outbreaks when contained in their general vicinity and based on scientific evidence (Oloteo, 2020).

Notwithstanding, the arrangement on the law's culpable demonstrations appears to make a disturbance "when it was used as the basis for a warrantless arrest" (ibid).

Two explicit arrangements were referred to as grounds to direct such arrest:

- (9D) "Non-cooperation¹⁷ of persons and entities that should report and/or respond to notifiable diseases or health events of public concern"; and
- (9E) "Non-cooperation of the person or entities identified as having the notifiable disease or affected by the health event of public concern."

In a meeting, former Department of Justice Spokesperson Undersecretary Markk Perete stated that the *en flagrante delicto*¹⁸ concept is relevant in serving warrantless arrests based on a case-by-case basis. He did not, however, articulate any non-participation that may be regarded punishable, instead insisting that the aim of Section 4F of RA 11332 is to define the previously indicated punishable conduct, which states:

Area 4. Targets. - The following are the goals of this Act:

- (f) To make sure that public health authorities have the legal and regulatory authority to ensure that the following things happen:
 - (1) Reportable diseases and health occurrences of public health significance must be reported.
 - (2) Case investigations, patient interviews, the study of medical records, contact tracing, specimen collection and testing, risk assessments, laboratory investigation, population surveys, and environmental research are some of the methods used to investigate epidemics and outbreaks.
 - (3) Quarantine and isolation; and
 - (4) Containment and the prompt execution of disease prevention and control methods.

Recognized lawful illuminators, on the other hand, appear to reflect an alternative viewpoint to that of Former Undersecretary Perete. One of them, human rights lawyer Chel Diokno, expressed his dissatisfaction with warrantless arrest on one of his social media pages, stating that "police officers cannot merely arrest people for breaking health emergency measures."

The other is Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra, who said in a press conference that law enforcement personnel can only physically prevent anyone from entering or exiting Metro Manila unless they are covered by exemptions or have very good reasons.

¹⁷ "Non-cooperation" is defined as "failure to completely comply with a responsibility imposed by the Act and this IRR, or to follow guidelines, instructions, issuances, or ordinances issued pursuant to, and to execute the Act or this IRR" (Duque III, 2020:4).

¹⁸ In flagrante delicto (Latin: "in flaming offence"), or simply in flagrante (Latin: "in blazing"), is a legal term that refers to a criminal being caught in the act of committing a crime (compare corpus delicti). The English equivalents are "caught red-handed" and "caught quick." (Wikipedia).

In addition, when asked if warrantless arrests and detentions are permissible, Secretary Guevarra said with reservations only if there are other violations or if the individual assaults, slanders, or pays off a law enforcement agent. Secretary Guevarra cited three clear laws as justifications for one being legitimately arrested for serious defiance to law enforcement and major legal violations:

- 1. Resistance and disobedience to a person in authority, as defined in Article 151 of the Revised Penal Code, is punishable by a fine of not more than P100,000¹⁹ and up to six months in prison.
- 2. If there is violence, direct assault against an officer is a criminal offense under Article 148 of the Revised Penal Code, which carries a sentence of 6 months to 6 years in prison and a fine of not more than P200,000²⁰.
- 3. Section 9 of Republic Act (RA) No. 11332 on Mandatory Reporting on Notifiable Diseases makes non-cooperation a criminal offense by 1 to 6 months in prison and a fine of not more than P50,000.²¹

In addition, former Supreme Court Spokesperson Ted Te, points out the ambiguity of the law that may be applied to innocent people. He further believed that because of the wide terms of the said law it is hard to decide the reasonable justification that comprised warrantless arrest.

International Health Regulation²²

Human rights activists, academics, international organizations, and, most recently, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus have all used the Siracusa Principles on the Limitation and Derogations Provisions in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to assess the appropriateness of health measures that restrict human rights. The Siracusa Principles were developed in 1984 as a result of a consensus-building effort among international law experts coconvened by the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), with the goal of achieving "effective implementation of the rule of law" during national states of emergency and limiting government responses to human rights. The Siracusa Principles aim to guarantee that emergency response imperatives are tackled with human rights in mind, rather than as an afterthought. Since then, the Principles have been incorporated into international human rights law, most notably through the UN Human Rights Committee's jurisprudence. They are commonly recognized as the final expression of principles that must guide State actors when seeking to lessen or waive some human rights duties, especially in extraordinary circumstances such as states of emergency that "threaten the nation's survival."

The International Health Regulations (IHR) of the World Health Organization have long sought to codify international legal obligations controlling infectious disease responses by writing global health legislation in order to avoid public health disasters. The International Health Regulations (IHR), last revised in 2005 in the aftermath of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak, bind nations under international health law to stimulate global collaboration in the event of global public health disasters. The goal of this WHO statement is to avoid disease outbreaks and respond to them with "full concern for the dignity, human rights, and basic freedoms of individuals, therefore minimizing international transit and trade delays. Despite the fact that the pact, which is legally

¹⁹ equivalent to US\$2,005.77 as of September 16, 2021.

²⁰ Equivalent to US\$4,133 as of June 21, 2021

²¹ Equivalent to US\$1,033

²² This section borrowed heavily from Zarifi et al., 2021

obligatory on the 194 countries that have signed it, has been almost forgotten in the midst of the world's worst pandemic in a century, its legal deficiencies have been exposed at a critical time.

In the middle of a worldwide crisis, ensuring that states adhere to international criteria for permissible human rights limits has proven difficult. The Siracusa Rules, as a set of principles that essentially orients state action in the face of national dangers to the public's welfare and security, fail to fully explain and cater for today's actual experience, in which a global crisis has erupted across every continent. Similarly, while the IHR clearly specifies worldwide commitment to collaborating and assisting in the resolution of global health issues. The proviso has been made ineffective due to a lack of language clarity and a widespread failure by states parties to operationalize the commitment. In public health emergencies, human rights are only limited to the extent that they are "essential" – that is, measures implemented in response to "a compelling public or societal necessity," in pursuit of "a legitimate objective," and "proportionate to that goal," according to the Siracusa Principles. On the other hand, high levels of scientific ambiguity hampered government responses to global health emergencies, especially at the start of outbreaks. The IHR, like the Siracusa Principles, assesses the Interventions in public health should be proportional by requiring them to be no more limiting of foreign travel and no longer obtrusive of individuals than "reasonably accessible alternatives". They must, however, be carried out in accordance with "scientific principles," "scientific data," and "WHO guidelines." Despite the inclusion of scientific data in the proportionality criteria by the IHR, official responses to the epidemic have been unguided.

Research method

The research method used for this study followed the WHO standard research protocol of Betsch C W. L., 2020. The questionnaire is provided at this <u>link</u>. The researcher used the self-determination online study strategy for non probability testing (Vehovar V, 2016) to enroll members ``through social network posts asking the general public" (individuals ``aged ≥18 years) to answer the" study. Non-likelihood testing is regularly utilized in light of the fact that the strategies used to choose units for consideration in an example are a lot simpler, speedier, and less expensive when contrasted with probability testing and selection.

The reasoning for using this sampling method is the movement restrictions during the quarantine period in the Philippines. It was easier and safer than distributing the questionnaire online.

The survey was distributed to the public using four social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, as well as Yahoo, and Google Groups.

This study also met the "national ethical guidelines for health-related research" of the Philippine

Health Research Ethics Board. It is registered with the Philippine Council for Health Research and

Development with registration number: PHRR200601-002681.

All national mandated data protection requirements of Republic Act No. 10173 or the Data Privacy Act of 2012 were followed in the study and treatment of the data. "In general, data was collected anonymously. There are no names, phone numbers, email addresses, or other identifiers or links to the data being collected." (In the case of Google Form, the settings on collecting email addresses were disabled).

At the start of the survey, participants were asked for their permission. The study contains negligible risks as there are not any predictable risks of harm or distress other than the expected discomfort during participation.

A total of 46 people participated in the survey using the Google Form platform.

Research Tools

A quantitative poll was intended to test the following variables:

- Demographics (Age, Gender, Region, Education)
- Knowledge about the novel coronavirus
- Individual feelings of readiness and perceived self-efficacy in the face of a coronavirus infection
- Knowledge of efficient preventative steps to avoid infection with the coronavirus, both
 perceived and actual
- Preventive steps taken to avoid infection with COVID-19
- Risk perceptions regarding the disease (probability, susceptibility, severity)
- Affective interventions (feeling of closeness, novelty, threat, fear, and worry regarding the disease)

- Perception of the outbreak as a media-hype
- The outbreak was viewed as a publicity stunt by the media
- COVID-19 information search frequency
- 2 Trust in health authorities, government institutions, media, and other relevant stakeholders
- Major source of official health information
- Perceptions of outbreak-control policies and their acceptance
- Panic buying behaviour
- Discriminatory behaviour
- Rumours regarding COVID-19 (qualitative data, open text fields).

Survey Structure and Variable Design

In the initial segment of the poll (link), the respondents were asked to fill out their demographic information. The subsequent part incorporated a record of inquiries concerning hazard discernment. A few inquiries zeroed in on the member's very own dread of contracting Covid-19, for example, "How genuine do you see COVID-19 to be?" The individual danger insight list was the average of 3 inquiries composed of probability, susceptibility as well as the severity of contracting or being infected with COVID-19 (Cronbach α = .73). Other questions focused on personal protective behavior against COVID-19, such as "Which of the following measures have you taken to prevent infection from the novel coronavirus?" (Cronbach α = 0.59). The overall risk perception index was the average of 13 items (Cronbach α = 0.58).

The questionnaire's third portion included a list of nine questions (statements) on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very) that described the participants' behavior in light of the instructions given to the Filipino public as a whole. "Which of the following approaches are effective in preventing the transmission and infection of the new coronavirus?" for example. and "Do I follow

my country's authorities' instructions to avoid the spread of new coronavirus?" The average of all 10 items was used to calculate compliance with behavioral recommendations (Cronbach α =.62). The fourth part was a record of inquiries regarding impressions of the administration of the emergency, for example, "I think the choices are reasonable" or "I feel that the limitations right now being executed are enormously misrepresented."

"Attitudes on the crisis management index were determined as the average of 9 questions on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) Cronbach α =.48.

A question about economic security was included in the questionnaire's fifth section: "How much do you worry about: (1) economic recession in my country; (2) restricted access to food supplies; (3) becoming unemployed; not being able to pay my bills?" (1: Don't be concerned at all to 7: Be concerned a lot).

Questions about trust were included in the sixth section. These ideas were rated on a scale ranging from no trust at all (0) to a high level of trust (7). Social trust, for example, comprised belief in given data, earlier measures, and the pandemic's combat. The public authority's seeming assurance in executing well-being measures was measured as a percentage of certainty, and trust, separate from crisis management. On a scale of 0 to 7, the three assessments of government trust were combined into one idea of trust (Cronbach α : 0.832). Due to the fact that only two elements of the model were available after factor analysis, the three estimates of government trust were summed up as one idea of trust (Cronbach α : 0.832) on a scale of 0 to 7.

Results

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Characteristics	Total N = 46
Condon	11 - 40
Gender	
Male	
Female	44%
	66%
Age	

38 – 50 years old	55.3%
26 – 37 years old	23.4%
51 – 65 years old	14.9%
18 – 25 years old	6.4%
Education (%)	
College	53.2%
Graduate School	46.8%
Population Density (%)	
Rural	25.5%
Urban	74.5%
Region	
National Capital Region	40.4%
Central Luzon	23.4%
CALABARZON	10.6%
Western Visayas	8.5%
Bicol Region	2.1%
Central Visayas	2.1%
Northern Mindanao	2.1%
Davao Region	2.1%
CARAGA Region	2.1%
Cagayan Valley	2.1%
Ilocos Region	2.1%
Characteristics of Household	
Living with a child	57.4%
Without a child	42.6%
Living alone	4.3%
Living with others	95.7%

In total 46 respondents participated in the online survey. Most respondents were women (66%), 38 to 50 years old (55.3%), college graduates (53.2%). Almost half of the respondents' hail from the National Capital Region (40.4%). Almost three quarters come from cities (74.5%). More than half are living with a child. While 95.7% are living with others. Compared to the general Filipino population, where 49.55% is female, women are slightly overrepresented in the survey. Compared to the general Filipino population, people aged 38 - 50 years were somewhat overrepresented in the survey (55.3% versus 17.35%), and people aged 18 - 25-year-old are slightly underrepresented (6.4% versus 9.09%). 53.2% and 46.8% of respondents had received college and graduate school education, respectively. This distribution is only 0.63% "in the general population, which reveals an overrepresentation of participants with a high educational level and a lack of representation of "those with an intermediate educational level".

Analysis

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) model was used to look at individual risk discernments "between age groups," with the dependent variable being hazard insight and the independent variable being age (four age groupings). The relationship between general danger insight and mentalities toward crisis management and the connection between general danger discernment and financial danger discernment was tried using the Pearson relationship coefficient. The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to assess the link between attitudes toward crisis management and behavioral advice, as well as the relationship between attitudes toward crisis management and perceptions of economic threat. "Testing the link between the most credible spokesperson and attitudes toward crisis management, with the dependent variable being attitudes toward crisis management and the independent variable being the most credible spokesperson," according to the Pearson correlation (twenty-two groups).

The result of the correlation between attitudes towards crisis management and compliance with behavioral guidelines was then compared to the existing literature on how the lockdown was implemented on the ground based on two laws, the Bayanihan To Heal as One Act as well as the Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public Health Concern Act using the lens of the International Health Regulation (IHR) as well as the Siracusa Principles which are legally binding on the Philippine Government.

Who is most likely to get infected with coronavirus?

Table 2: Risk²³ Perception of respondents

Characteristics	Probability of getting	Susceptibility to an	Severity of
	infected with the	infection with the	contracting the novel
	novel coronavirus	novel coronavirus	coronavirus
	Mean (95% CI)	Mean (95% CI)	Mean (95% CI)
		Scale 1 – 7	
Total Sample	4.02 (3.53 – 4.52)	4.22 (3.72 – 4.71)	4.17 (3.73 – 4.62)
Elementary			
High School			
College	3.72 (3.08 – 4.36)	4.36 (3.71 – 5.01)	4.24 (3.60 – 4.88)
Graduate School	4.38 (3.57 – 5.19)	4.05 (3.23 – 4.87)	4.10 (3.42 – 4.77)
Female	4.69 (3.63 – 5.75)	3.46 (2.46 – 4.47)	3.92 (2.86 – 4.98)
Male	3.88 (2.36 – 5.39)	5 (3.41 – 6.59)	4.38 (3.61 – 5.14)
Urban	4.29 (2.90 – 5.67)	4.71 (3.23 – 6.20)	4.29 (3.41 – 5.17)
Rural			
I live with 1 or more	4.02 (3.52 – 4.52)	4.27 (3.78 – 4.77)	4.20 (3.74 – 4.67)
persons			
Alone			
No children	3.42 (2.60 – 4.25)	4.53 (3.75 – 5.30)	4.05 (3.36 – 4.74)
With children	4.44 (3.84 – 5.05)	4 (3.32 – 4.68)	4.26 (3.63 – 4.89)

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²³ "The likelihood of a negative future event is defined as risk" (Risk, 2003; Renner B, 2014). Individuals assess risk based on how likely they feel a given type of occurrence will occur (probability) and their level of anxiety about the event's effects (severity) (Sjöberg L, 2004). Risk can be a physical sensation as well as a mental one. Risk feelings have a greater influence on conduct than risk understanding (Slovic P, 2006)."

18 – 25 years old			
26 to 37 years old	4.4 (3.29 – 5.51)	4.6 (3.49 – 5.71)	4.6 (3.18 – 6.02)
38 – 50 years old	4.93 (4.17 – 5.70)	3.27 (2.44 – 4.09)	3.8 (2.75 – 4.85)
51 – 65 years old	3.33 (1.27 – 5.4)	5.33 (3.17 – 7.5)	5 (4.34 – 5.66)

Thirty-four percent (34%) of the study sample perceived the the likelihood of contracting the new coronavirus as moderate with a mean score of 4.02 (95% CI 3.53 - 4.52; scale 1 - 7). This is a little bit closer to the John Hopkins University survey (2020) which found that "23 percent of individuals believed people like them are likely to become infected with COVID-19". While perceived susceptibility to an infection with the novel coronavirus is also at 34 percent with a mean score of 4.22 (95% CI 3.72 - 4.71; scale 1 - 7). The perceived severity of contracting the novel coronavirus is also at 34 percent with a mean score of 4.17 (95% CI 3.73 - 4.62; scale 1 - 7). However, this is lower than the John Hopkins University survey (ibid) which showed that "67 percent of individuals fear a serious outcome if infected with COVID-19".

Disaggregated by gender, males perceived themselves to be more susceptible to the novel coronavirus than females with a mean score of 5 (95% CI 3.41-6.59: scale 1-7). However, female's perceived probability of contracting the new coronavirus is higher than the males with a mean score of 4.69 (95% CI 3.63-5.75: scale 1-7). This is also true with the perceived severity of contracting the novel coronavirus with a mean score of 4.38 (95% CI 3.61-5.14: scale 1-7).

Although there is only one respondent from a rural area, it is worth noting that perceived probability, susceptibility, and severity of contracting the novel coronavirus borders on the high side with a mean score of 4.29 (95% CI 2.90 - 5.67; scale 1 - 7), 4.71 (95% CI 3.23 - 6.20; scale 1 - 7), 4.29 (95% CI 3.41 - 5.17; scale 1 - 7) respectively.

With regards, level of education, college graduates has a little bit higher perceived susceptibility and severity of contracting the novel coronavirus than respondent who attended graduate school with a mean score of 4.36 (95% CI 3.71 - 5.01; scale 1 - 7) and 4.24 (95% CI 3.60 - 4.88; scale 1 - 7) versus

the mean scores of respondents who attended graduate school, 4.05 (95% CI 3.23 - 4.87; scale 1 - 7) and 4.10 (95% CI 3.42 - 4.77; scale 1 - 7). However, respondents who attended graduate school had a higher perceived probability of contracting the novel coronavirus than college graduates [4.38 (95% CI 3.57 - 5.19; scale 1 - 7) versus 3.72 (95% CI 3.08 - 4.36; scale 1 - 7).

Those with children appears to have higher perceived probability and severity of contracting the novel coronavirus than those living without children (4.44 (95% CI 3.84 - 5.05; scale 1 - 7) and 4.26 (95% CI 3.63 - 4.89; scale 1 - 7) versus 3.42 (95% CI 2.60 - 4.25; scale 1 - 7) and 4.05 (95% CI 3.36 - 4.74; scale 1 - 7). However, those with no children appear to have higher perceived susceptibility to the coronavirus than those living with children [4.53 (95% CI 3.75 - 5.30; scale 1 - 7) versus 4 (95% CI 3.32 - 4.68; scale 1 - 7).

It appears that the higher the age, the higher is the perceived probability, susceptibility, and severity in contracting the coronavirus infection. This finding is consistent with CDC's 2020 findings as well as that of Gesser-Edelsburg A, 2020:8 demonstrating that older people are at most risk because they tend to have serious illness as well as susceptibility to death. See Table 2, above.

Overall, respondents have moderate levels of preventative health behaviors towards the COVID-19 health protocols. However, males, those with children as well as 51-65 years old age bracket have slightly better health behavior towards COVID-19. On the other hand, males, college graduates, as well as those living alone have fair health behavior towards COVID-19.

Knowledge of COVID-19

Table 3: Respondents Knowledge of COVID-19

Basic knowledge of COVID-19			Symptom	5			
	There is currently no drug treatment or vaccine	Maximum incubation period (i.e., the time from viral infection to developing symptoms	Fever and shortness of breath	Cough			
٧	93.48%	91.3%	97.83%	95.65%			
	Nausea or vomiting	Congestion or runny nose	Fatigue	smell Headache and diarrhoea Muscle or body aches	Sore throat New loss of taste or	Fever	
X	98%	61%	35%	26% 22% 20%	11%	2%	

93.48% of the respondents answered correctly that there is currently no drug treatment or vaccine for the novel coronavirus. While 91.3% correctly answered the question about maximum incubation period²⁴ of the novel coronavirus. The same is true with symptoms of the coronavirus, 97.83% answered fever and shortness of breath. While 95.65% answered cough. However, 98% of the

 $^{^{24}}$ (i.e., the time from viral infection to developing symptoms of illness)

respondents fail to recognize nausea or vomiting as a symptom. The same is true for congestion or runny nose at 61%. Another is fatigue at 35%, muscle or body aches at 26%, headache and diarrhea at 22%, new loss of taste or smell at 20%, sore throat at 11%, fever at 2%. This is understandable as only the three symptoms (fever, cough, and shortness of breath) are included in the Department of Health's advisory bulletin²⁵. The rest are advisory from the Center for Disease and Control²⁶. In comparison with a similar survey, ID insight 2020, reports that less than 50% of respondents realized that COVID-19 could show shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, which is an extreme symptom that requires prompt medical care. It is considerably less known than 'influenza-like manifestations', like fever and cough, and was somewhat less known by older respondents (see Figure 1, below).

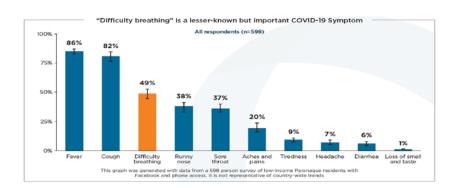


Figure 1: Symptoms of COVID-19 as Identified by Low-Income Groups of Paranaque City

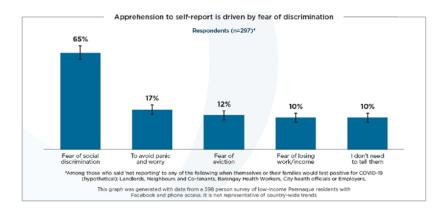
Source: ID Insight, May 2020

In addition, as reported by ID Insight, 2020, fear of social discrimination impedes self-reporting of positive cases and discourage community support (see Figure 2, below).

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https://www.doh.gov.ph/node/19124 (This is no longer available as it was replaced by a text FAQs last July 8, 2020. However, this was the source of information for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 since the start of the pandemic). The information about the symptoms is clearer at another DOH website funded by USAID: https://covid19.healthypilipinas.ph/faqs/about-covid-19?topic=ano-ang-mga-sintomas-ng-covid-19&lang=tl
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html

Figure 2: Fear of Respondents Among Low-Income Groups of Paranaque City



Source: ID Insight, 2020

Preventive Measures Taken

Table 4: Preventive Measures Taken by Respondents

|--|

	(95% CI 1 – 1; scale 1 – 3)								
Mean	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
%	96	98	96	98	98	98	100	91	98

The response on "I know how to defend myself against the coronavirus" is on the positive side of the Likert scale, with a mean score of 5.65 (95% CI 5.36 – 5.94: scale 1 - 7). This is also the same with the responses on preventive measures taken, especially 'wearing a face mask' which registered 100%. These responses seem to jive with existing data that SWS, 2020 reports that "77 percent of Filipinos constantly wear a face mask, 68 percent always wash their hands, and 64 percent always maintain 'social distance'. This becomes higher in the John Hopkins and YouGov Survey which concludes that 93 percent of respondents "always" wear a mask when they leave the house. 93 and 83 percent of Filipinos "always" wash their hands with soap and water. While 86 and 91 percent practice social distancing (see Table 5 below).

However, among the most vulnerable (low-income households) the opposite is true, 31%, 32.4% have practiced social distancing, while 72% have difficulty practicing social distancing. On the other hand, 47% and 49% have practiced wearing a mask, while 54% have difficulty wearing a mask. Lastly, 50% have practiced washing their hands, while 52% have difficulty washing their hands (see Table 5 below). "Social separation... is a luxury that poor people, especially in urban areas, often cannot afford (Moraes, 2020)." "Many informal settlements have a higher population and housing density, which means there are fewer options for physical/social separation and more opportunities for social mixing." Because, "the limited circulation of air in unventilated and enclosed settings increases the danger of transmission" (Wilkinson, 2020). This was corroborated by former Health Secretary Dr. Esperanza Cabral, when she said that, "It definitely won't work If you live in a slum area where ten individuals share a 15 square metre (161 square-foot) space with one room and bathroom for everyone, that is hardly rocket science (Robles, 2020)." In addition, water is scarce in most informal

communities, and people rarely have access to their own water supply. Instead, water is frequently purchased at a considerable cost from private sources, preventing extensive consumption and handwashing. Water points are also shared, posing concerns of spatial distancing (for example, while queuing and collecting as well as the necessity to leave the house for collection) (Wilkinson, ibid). The response rate on handwashing is consistent with Water.Org's assertion that "almost a quarter of the Philippine population—24 million Filipinos—does not have access to proper sanitation (washing facilities), and over 7 million Filipinos do not have access to clean and safe water" (as cited in Inquirer.net, 2020). However, UPPI and DRDF, 2020 report that about 3.3 million families or about 14.7 million Filipinos will be unable to follow the prescribed hand washing steps due either to the shortfall of spots for hand washing in their homes or the absence of water and cleanser.

However, this is in contradiction to the results of the 2019 Annual Poverty Indicators Survey (APIS) which place "the majority (93.7%) of the 25 million Filipino families had a hand-washing facility, primarily in the form of a fixed facility (sink/tap) in the dwelling unit (69.9%), the majority of which had available water (96.6%), and provision of bar/liquid soap (82.9%) and/or detergent soap (43.0%)," according to Mapa (2019).

Table 5: Differences Between Preventive Measures Taken by National Representative Sample vs. Low-Income Groups (Non-Representative Sample)

Response on preventive measures taken						Precautionary measures that people or the community find most difficult in their daily life under the 'new normal' among the most vulnerable
	John Hopkins	SWS	YouGov ²⁸	ID Insight ²⁹	Lincoln Leehang Lau, 2020 ³⁰	HCT's CoP on Communi ty Engagem ent ³¹
Social distancing ³²	86%	64%	91%³⁴	31%	32.4%	72%
Wearing a face mask	93%	77%	93%	47%	49%	54%
Always wash their hands	93%	68%	83%	50%	82.2%	52%

Source: SWS May 4-10, 2020 Covid-19 Mobile Phone Survey; August 17 - 23, 2020 YouGov³⁵ Survey; Humanitarian Country Team's Community of Practice on Community Engagement, May 2020; ID Insight, May 2020. Red indicates differences in answers or health practices.

²⁷ July 2020

²⁸ Data are self-reported from http://www.coviddatahub.com/ and degrees of truth-telling across the country may vary (August 31 – September 6, 2020).

²⁹ The response is from a 598 person survey of low income residents of Paranaque City with Facebook and phone access. It is not representative of countrywide trends.

³⁰ "A total of 2224 people were polled from 166 settlements in rural, urban, and coastal areas. Despite the fact that the study was conducted in the early stages of the pandemic, 94.0 percent of respondents had heard about COVID-19. Despite the fact that the respondents in this study do not represent the general public, they do represent a segment of the community that has limited access to health care and is frequently excluded from social services (ibid)."

³¹ The response is from 1,767 person survey of most vulnerable households in National Capital Region (NCR), Bicol, Eastern Visayas, Northern Mindanao, Zamboanga Peninsula, Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), South Cotabato-Cotabato-Sultan Kudarat-Sarangani-General Santos (SOCCSKSARGEN), Central Visayas, Caraga Region, Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), Central Luzon, Cavite-Laguna-Batangas-Rizal-Quezon (CALABARZON), Ilocos Region, Western Visayas and Davao Region under the Community of Practice on Community Engagement (COPCE).

³² Avoided crowded areas in the YouGov Survey.

³³ Stayed at least one meter in public

³⁴ 78% (always) + 13% (frequently).

³⁵ British research firm

In addition, the online survey of ID insight involving low-income residents of Paranaque last May 2020 has identified "staying at home" by far (72%) of respondents. Fewer than one out of ten people were aware that COVID-19 might be prevented by cleaning common surfaces, practicing cough etiquette, or avoiding direct contact with the face. (see Figure 3, below). This is a cause of concern, on the grounds that over-dependence on "remaining at home" as the essential security measure could prompt "laziness when at home, where indoor transmissions are" generally normal. This is particularly a worry as quarantine restrictions begin easing on the grounds that some family members will probably leave home and risk exposure, conceivably uncovering weak relatives who have not ventured out from home upon their return.

This is validated by the current trend of infection which is now moving towards the family³⁶.

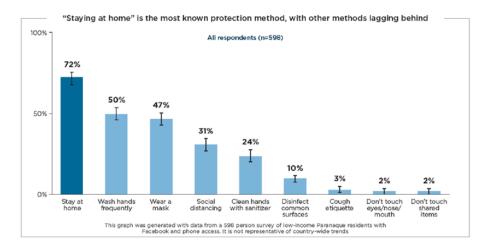


Figure 3: Protection Measures Identified by Low-Income Groups from Paranaque City

Source: ID Insight, May 2020.

On the part of healthcare workers, hand hygiene compliance was low at 11% in the premier public hospital in the Philippines. Hand hygiene is insufficient and difficult to access, insufficient awareness Hand hygiene compliance is hampered by a lack of hand hygiene signals in the workplace, a lack of

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³⁶ "There were no COVID-19 cases in Nueva Ecija. There was a family gathering, and 60 people were poisoned since someone invited family from Manila "Carlito Galvez, Sec. "The frequency of families that live in tiny houses is another cause of family-wide diseases. In poor neighborhoods, this is the case. To prevent further transmissions, the government has recently increased its enforcement of the requirement that COVID-19 cases without their own room and bathroom be sent to authorized isolation institutions (Ranada, 2020)."

reminders and a heavy workload (Malundo, 2017:6). In addition, three in ten health facilities in the Philippines lack access to clean toilets (UNICEF, 2019:90)

Fear and worries about COVID-19

Table 6: Respondents Fears and Worries About COVID-19

	Scale 1 - 7	
Characteristics of fears and worries	Mean	95%
		Confidence
		Interval
Losing someone I love	5.80	5.39 – 6.22
Health system being overloaded	5.87	5.51 – 6.23
My loved one's health	6.09	5.71 – 6.46
Economic recession in my country	5.76	5.38 – 6.14
Becoming unemployed	4.83	4.21 – 5.45
Not being able to pay my bills	5.07	4.50 – 5.63

Worry and fear are more significant than responses to the government's trust and perceived vulnerability. This is also consistent with the national survey of Social Weather Station in the Philippines last September 12 - 16, 2021 which shows that Filipinos are worried of catching the coronavirus by 91%. In the same national survey, 60% of the Filipinos expressed that, "The worst is yet to come".

People who get afraid, more often find it difficult to process information. This is significant to take into consideration when they receive crisis risk communication (Glik, 2007:4). When people are uneasy and under stress, it is likely that they may distrust and doubt whether communications are valid or not (P. Slovic, 1999; Renn O., 1998; Levine, 1991; Peters RG, 1997). "When people are under

a lot of stress for a long time, they don't have a positive mindset.", ("perception of risk . . . diminished") "to consider the costs and benefits of various actions", "careful trade-off analysis", or "systematic decision making" . . . "to discriminate between lower and higher threats" . . . that will assist people in making informed decisions for their families, addressing inherent trade-offs such as income risks vs health hazards (Lerner, 2020)" "for they are also dealing with their own internal issues (Covello VT P. R., 2001)." Dread naturally triggers a feeling of vulnerability and a feeling that one cannot handle what will occur (Lerner, ibid).

This is also echoed by the survey conducted by the Humanitarian Country Team's Community of Practice on Community Engagement, 2020. They found out that, "Some of the respondents cannot distinguish if the information they received or accessed is fake news or a form of systematic disinformation or accidental misinformation. They do not verify information from the authorities or other credible sources due to stress, fear and anxiety in getting and understanding much information."

The upside of worrying is, "previous research suggests that mild concern about the coronavirus, along with knowledge and conviction that social distancing works, leads to increased adherence to guidelines." "We are more inclined to conceive of reasons to act and be inspired to do something if we are worried about something (Watkins as cited in Ro, 2020)". In addition, "Worry motivates us to try to prevent the awful thing from happening, or at the very least prepare for it to happen (Sweeny as cited in Ro, 2020)."

Discussion

With regard to Crisis Management, it was found out that there is strong evidence for real effect (Pearson) between self-isolation (r = 0.42, p-value = 0.006) and disinfecting surfaces (r = 0.51, p-value = 0.001) if one follows the suggestions from authorities to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus. This may suggest that government admonitions are only effective in urging people to self-isolate if

they are infected, suspected of being infected, or have come into contact with someone who is infected as well as urging people to disinfect surfaces that may be infected by COVID-19.

This is consistent with the survey of the Humanitarian Country Team's Community of Practice on Community Engagement last May 2020, which gave the Barangay Council high score in terms of consulting them and somehow managing to take actions on their several concerns.

A significant positive correlation was also found between fairness³⁷ of decisions made by IATF to following the authorities' advice to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus (r=0.22, P-value=0.03) and one's susceptibility to the novel coronavirus (r=0.14, p-value=0.03) as well as between 'rightness' of the decisions and following the recommendations from authorities to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus (r=0.24, p-value=0.02) and to a lesser degree with self-isolation [r = 0.31, p-value = 0.05]. This may suggest that people will follow instructions from government authorities about precautionary measures to avoid COVID-19 if the decisions are based on 'fairness' and 'rightness'³⁸.

It was found out too, that citizens follow the protocols of the COVID-19 measures if they trust that these measures are fair and right, for they usually use justice as a reference to a standard of rightness.

If this is the case, how then do we determine what is fair to people? What is the basis or standard of rightness should we use? Policies based on established rules or rule of law would then be the standard of how measures would have to be employed to guarantee wellbeing, equity, reasonableness, and uniformity particularly in the hour of a pandemic like COVID-19.

During a crisis like this pandemic, people tend to trust the advisories coming from the government: local and national, and to follow directions based on the laws enacted, on the off chance that they are sure that they will be dealt with decently as per law and order. Law and order is similarly

³⁷ ensuring that the affluent and poor are treated equally, protecting freedom of speech and association, and ensuring access to basic necessities like food, clothing, and shelter (Nathan, 2020).

³⁸ the state of being morally or legally correct (Cambridge Dictionary).

significant as numerous general well being measures, like lockdowns and different limitations on movements "and activities during episodes of infectious diseases, since they likewise require community support to be completely effective". "When those in positions of authority engage in overreach or discrimination, citizens seek out alternatives to obtain a fair and impartial reexamination of decisions that limit their fundamental freedoms." "The rule should also be based on good governance to ensure that all government institutions operate fairly and efficiently; because good governance comprises all of the norms, procedures, and institutions of a just society that makes and enacts laws for the common good and equity (IDLO, 2020:2)".

The Philippine government has taken cognizance of the *Siracusa Principles* in implementing the International Health Regulations in the context of the country. It has spelled out its understanding of the said principles in issuing the Department of Health's Administrative Order No. 2020 – 0015.

Specifically, No. 3 on Socioeconomic equity & rights-based approach which states that:

- a. ... Vulnerable groups should ... be identified and provided additional social safety net protections.
- b. Policymakers must always choose the least restrictive option that meets their objectives.
- c. In the event of a contradiction between rules or guidelines, the interpretation must ensure that human rights are protected. As a result, the individual's safety, needs, and well-being will take precedence.

This study will use the above principles in making sense of the Philippine's COVID-19 response.

How fair is Philippine government's COVID-19 response³⁹⁴⁰

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³⁹ Lifted from Oloteo, 2020 and Salem, 2020.

⁴⁰ Lifted from Cats-Baril, 2020:3-4.

Equity⁴¹ and equality⁴² are not synonymous in most contexts. Most often than not, having a rule applicable to all seems to be a manifestation of equality, however, the impact of such rule would differ from one individual to another.

The lockdown protocols employed by the national government may seem to be a measure equal to all; however, there would be some scenarios that would prove otherwise. For example, individual A who lives in a good fenced and gated house would still enjoy his/her front yard without getting apprehended by authorities in areas where a strict lockdown is being implemented; on the other hand, individual B who lives in the slums would be immediately apprehended the moment he or she would get out of her house and stay in front of it. Same measure but different impact, how fair is the response then?

There were cases where people would be apprehended by authorities for reasons that were inevitable in their circumstances like the case of more than 100 people from Sitio San Roque gathered to demand effective aid provision where in some were arrested by the police in order to maintain the more strict implementation of enhanced community quarantine (ECQ).

There was no let-up even in the period of lockdown in the Philippines in the matter of peace and order, however, a study shows that since the lockdown, 47% of violence against civilians has been carried out by state forces" (Miller, 2020).

Even though COVID-19 cases were more rampant in the Luzon part of the Philippines; still the people, especially the Indigenous peoples, particularly in Mindanao, were also affected in different ways. A ceasefire was called between the government forces and the non-state actors, however this posed a threat to people who felt increased insecurity due to threats from the said non-state actors

⁴² the right of many groups of people to be in a similar social position and to be treated equally (Cambridge Dictionary).

⁴¹ Equity is defined as the lack of avoidable, unfair, or reversible disparities between groups of people, whether those groups are characterized socially, economically, demographically, geographically, or in other ways. (WHO).

and lack of protection and other services from the government for more focus was given to contain COVID-19. Furthermore, many indigenous communities in this part of the Philippines were also affected in terms of their livelihood, for most of them rely on "arawan⁴³" or salary from day-to-day employment, leaving them economically vulnerable.

The enforced lockdown has affected Filipinos' capacity to buy essential goods but also in terms of going out and buying their own goods. Households that were not able to have their stock of food became reliant on promised services and relief packages from the local government units, although these relief materials were mostly distributed in central areas and were not able to reach more remote areas where indigenous communities live.

Even the quarantine measures have become the basis of contention whether the COVID-19 measure of the Philippines is fair or not?

The quarantine protocols that were supposed to be the same to all areas of the implementation, were interpreted and enforced, most of the time, in different ways. Take for example the case of the arrest made since March 2020. "Police across the country detained a total of 100,486 accused quarantine offenders. Only 73, 812 had been freed for regular filing as of September 6, 2020, 26,674 had been released after facing inquest hearings, and 1,735 were still imprisoned in police stations (Talabong, 2020)."

Such arrests could have sounded fair and just and could have kept everyone trusting the policies if some prominent individuals who were also found violating quarantine rules, were also sanctioned (see Figure 4, below).

⁴³ means daily in the Filipino language.

An incumbent member of the Philippine Senate, Senator Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel accompanied his pregnant wife to a Makati hospital, where she was set to give birth on March 24, 2020. Despite the fact that his test results were positive, he had already placed himself in self-isolation. later that week. The senator should be prosecuted for breaking the restrictions based on COVID-19 protocols

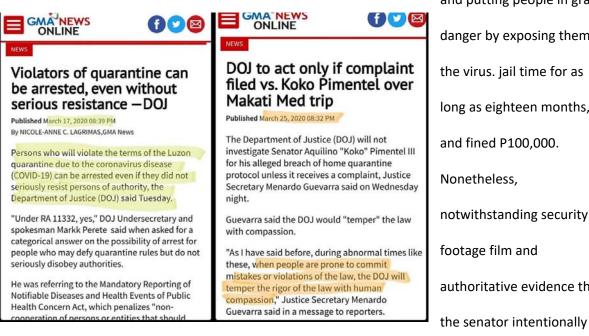


Figure 4: News Clips Detailing the Difference of Treatment for Senator Koko Pimentel

and putting people in grave danger by exposing them to the virus. jail time for as long as eighteen months, and fined P100,000. Nonetheless, notwithstanding security footage film and authoritative evidence that

broke quarantine protocols, investigation didn't begin until May 20, 2020. There was no case filed against him or an attempt to arrest or summon to be given that would usually be given to ordinary people who were unlike him. He made an apology that was taken into consideration, but such apology seemed not to be enough if the violator of the rules would not share the same status in life. Another interesting anecdote involved Jinggoy Estrada, a former senator. When he was captured for allegedly breaking San Juan City's enhanced community quarantine by distributing relief commodities without a permission and not observing physical distancing, he was arrested. He was shortly released with no accusations filed against him."

There is one silver lining however, Norzagaray Municipal Trial Court Judge Julie Rita Suarez-Badillo has ruled⁴⁴ that going outside one's home without an authorization to travel or a quarantine pass "doesn't qualify" as "non-cooperation" infringing upon Republic Act No. 11332 or the Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public Concern Act. Notwithstanding, Suarez-Badillo's decision doesn't bind different courts. Under the precept of *stare decisis*⁴⁵binding precedents are set up in Supreme Court decisions (Nonato, 2020).

If such maximum tolerance was something exercised for everyone and the same considerations would be given to all, then how come that some relief volunteers in Marikina were apprehended for giving out food, simply because they didn't have a quarantine pass to get out of their houses? Group gathering is a big no-no under the strict limitations of quarantine measures, but "National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) chief, Major General Debold Sinas' "astonishing birthday celebration" on May 8, 2020 that was found out to have happened through the photos that his own agency posted was every-inch a definition of a group gathering". "Despite the restriction on such meetings, buffet food, alcohol, songs, cakes, roses, and singing were all included." "He was never apprehended for it, and other government officials defended him."; including the chief of PNP who

⁴⁴ On their way to a relief operation, six Anakpawis members were arrested in Norzagaray, Bulacan in the morning of April 19 after they allegedly failed to show checkpoint officers a quarantine pass or permit to travel. Casilao reportedly arrived at the police station a few hours later.

The court said the inquest prosecutor alleged their act of staying out of their homes was a violation of RA 11332's Section 9(d), or the "non-cooperation of persons and entities responsible for reporting and/or responding to notifiable diseases or public health occurrences."

The court, however, said it believes that "travelling outside the residence without the travel permit or quarantine pass does not qualify as violation of Section 9(d) of RA 11332."

[&]quot;While such an act defies the open directive to adhere to the increased community quarantine, it does not come under the forbidden activities of RA 11332," says the report the judge ruled.

[&]quot;As a result, this Court finds that the circumstances stated in the Information do not constitute an infraction under Section 9(d) of RA 11332." she said in an order dated May 13 but seen on Thursday (Lagrimas, 2020).

⁴⁵ "Stand by the object and do not disturb the calm," says the Latin phrase staring decisis et nec quieta movere. Article 8 of the Civil Code establishes it. It stipulates that after a legal subject has been considered and decided, it should be considered settled and closed to further debate. This essentially implies that a verdict by the Philippine Supreme Court on a specific set of facts must be followed by all courts in the country in subsequent scenarios in which the facts are essentially the same, regardless of the parties or property involved (Federis Law, 2015).

reiterated that no party happened. Sinas provided reasons to deny the party. Despite the denial, he still apologized but reasoned out that he did not see anything wrong with it. Because of the objection of the many, the authorities said last May 15, 2020 they would record criminal allegations against him, and 18 others recognized on the photographs; however last May 18, 2020 the PNP boss said since Sinas is difficult to supplant during this crisis along these lines as opposed to documenting a body of evidence against him, he would simply remain on as NCRPO boss. He was later promoted to PNP Chief.

Overstretching To Heal as One Act provision on spreading 'fake news46'

Since pandemic is a crisis that is new to everyone, it is natural that people would always find ways on how to gain more information about the COVID-19 per se and the many concerns that it has entailed. Due to the quarantine measures imposed, there was a greater chance that Filipinos would turn to social media to know what is going on. The question would then be how reliable these pieces of information are.

To Heal as One Act, a COVID-19 law was promulgated on March 24, 2020. This law mandated to confront the coronavirus epidemic in the country, the administration of funding and wide emergency powers were provided. The law did not expand the presidential powers relevant to human rights, but it provides criminal prosecution for media actors and others, who might spread false information in regards to the COVID-19 crisis to as long as two months in prison and a fine of up to 1 million pesos (\$19,500). This provision concerns not only journalists and the media but also other people sharing information on Facebook and other social media platforms (Rappler 2020).

In less than a month since its implementation, 47 persons have been apprehended for allegedly violating the agreement (Caliwan, 2020). Maria Victoria Beltran, a well-known Cebu-based crafter and playwright, is one of them. Because of her COVID-19 satirical post on social media, in which she wrote: '9,000+ new cases of COVID-19 in Cebu City in 1 day (all from Zapatera). Beltran was

⁴⁶ Lifted from Conde C. H., 2020; Cats-Baril, 2020:4 and Salem, 2020.

intimidated by the city mayor, arrested, and had to make bail of 42,000.00⁴⁷ Philippine pesos (2020, Panti)⁴⁸.

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) took legal action against 17 people in April 2020 for allegedly posting "false information" on the internet, a crime that carries severe penalties. The police recorded arguments against two writers, citing violations of the COVID-19 and other regulations. A body of evidence was also presented against a town mayor for allegedly "creating a COVID-19 panic."

Though the law may seem to protect the public from getting misinformed, it could not be denied that such law was also used as bases for some local government officials to act against critical journalists. One example is the case where the governor of Cebu, a province in the Visayas region, sent a scary message to the editor of a campus paper for condemning the public authority's COVID-19 response.

On April 2, 2020, human rights lawyer Jose Manuel Diokno posted on his Twitter account that the NBI had summoned a Facebook client fundamentally for the latter's basic posts, referring to the COVID-19 law. Diokno disclosed to Human Rights Watch that "this has become an unsettling pattern since it is simple for the public authority to obscure the line between genuine analysis and 'fake news."

What would be the repercussions if people would find it hard to trust whatever is said or whatever is reported in the news? It would then be deduced that apart from trust which is hard to give, another key to achieve a greater level of engagement of the people is an effective and consistent implementation and interpretation of rule of law.

The rule of law index takes into account a number of criteria, including government power limits, open governance, fundamental rights, order and security, regulatory enforcement, civil justice, and criminal justice.

Over the last five years, the Philippines' experience of the rule of law has suffered the greatest average annual percentage decline at (- 2.5%) as reported by the World Justice Project, 2020. This is more telling in the issue/factor of due process of law and the accused's rights where the Philippines' rank is at the bottom third (3rd) in the region (South East Asia), see Figure 5, below.

⁴⁷ About US\$ 800.00

⁴⁸ Beltran was one of 17 recipients of the 2020 DW Freedom of Speech Award by international media network Deutsche Welle (DW) for her devotion to free speech on May 6, 2020 (Mayol, 2020).

When it comes to global pandemic context, the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Pandemic Democratic Violations Index (PanDem), "which catches the degree to which state reactions to the pandemic violate democratic norms for emergency responses, mentioned that the Philippines is one of seven states with a high risk of pandemic backsliding" (V-Dem 2020). In International IDEA's new COVID-19 Monitor, it called attention to three stressing territories of worry from a popularity based and common liberties point of view; Freedom of expression, media integrity, and predictable enforcement are among them (International IDEA 2020 as cited in Atienza, 2020:8).

With these figures about the rule of law in the Philippines, whom to trust then?

A significant correlation was also observed in trust in media, hospitals, Imam or Church leaders, and one's barangay captain and the perception that the decisions are fair⁴⁹ (r=0.45, p-values=0.001, 0.002, 0.001 respectively). This is also true with trust in media, hospitals, one's barangay captain⁵⁰, one's governor⁵¹, and Imam or Church leaders and the perception that the decisions are right (r=0.48, p-value=0.003, 0.02, 0.01, 0.01, 0.001, respectively). A significant correlation was found between trust

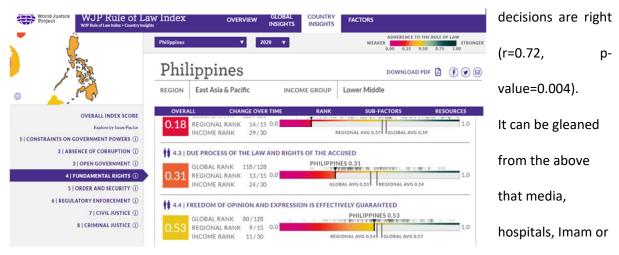
⁴⁹ free of self-interest, prejudice, or favoritism; distinguished by fairness and honesty (https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/fair).

⁵⁰ A Barangay captain, the top elected official in a barangay, the smallest level of administrative divisions in the Philippines, is known as a barangay chairman.

⁵¹ Leader or head of a province in the Philippines.

in local public health authority (RHU⁵², PHO⁵³, Barangay Health Emergency Response Team⁵⁴) and the

Figure 5: World Justice Project – Rule of Law Index Showing the Rank of the Philippines Among its Peers in South East Asia



Church leaders and one's barangay captain have more credibility so decisions coming from or of these institutions are perceived to be fair. In the same manner, their credibility also gives weight to their decisions to be the right one. It can also be gleaned that these institutions also practice ethics⁵⁵.

This is also true with rural health units, provincial health offices as well as Barangay Health

Emergency Response Teams. One thing that is common among these institutions is that they are
frontliners⁵⁶ or they are the first point of contact of citizens during the pandemic. Since they are
frontliners they deal with the wellbeing and needs of constituents or patients, a cornerstone of trust
(Belliveau, 1995 as cited in Maiese, 2003, 2013, 2017).

⁵² clinics serve as the main source of free basic healthcare for rural communities.

⁵³ This office is in charge of promoting and protecting the health of the province's residents, as well as maintaining hygienic conditions.

⁵⁴ A team composed of an Executive Officer appointed by the Barangay Captain, assisted by one (1) Barangay Tanod (Village Watchman), and two (2) Barangay Health Workers one of whom is preferably a nurse or a midwife (Lina, 2003:6)

⁵⁵ "Ethics in communication works to promote credibility, improve decision-making, and allow for trust between... two parties. Ethics establishes the foundation for right and wrong, allowing two parties to speak with a fundamental grasp of expectations (Writer, 2020)."

⁵⁶ For a better illustration of these frontliners, see Bacani, 2020.

Proximity⁵⁷ is a significant factor to establish trust. The closer the local authorities are the easier it would be for the constituents to trust them and believe them when they give reasons for people to get engaged. This could be because since they are closer, it would be easier to hold them accountable (Resnick, 2020). It is also the local authorities that are most capable of determining fiscal policies to be implemented in the localities, for they know more on what public services are more responsive to the local context (Ebel and Yilmaz 2004 as cited in Cuenca, 2020). Apart from the local authorities, general practitioners (GP)and pediatricians were the most dependable wellspring of data about the flu pandemic based on an Italian research (Ferrante et al., 2011). This is evident for people will be most likely to do things according to the recommendation of the general practitioners, regardless of their level of trust on government agencies that would also provide a different kind of advice on the same matter (Zingg, 2014:1-2). This is most likely true maybe because the public find it easier and faster to access the GPs and pediatricians who serve as the first point of contact during the pandemic and who can also give immediate advice that can engage the citizens in a two-way communication. Government authorities may seem to be inaccessible during a pandemic because most of the actions are limited to warning people, and providing aid, cash, or basic needs supply.

Source of Information Credibility

Even though there is no significant correlation between the most believable data sources and attitudes towards the level of engagement among citizens, still it has been established that people get engaged not only by rule of law but also by the trust on the source of information. Although this may seem a good thing to look at, still it poses an issue because it was revealed that the Philippines has limited capacity in "addressing disinformation, dangerous behaviors, and perceptions" (McPherson, 2019:49). It follows that there is a great deal of need to monitor the viability of public

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⁵⁷ the state of being near in space or time (Cambridge Dictionary).

effort through informing and amending falsehood and to improve standard sharing of data with different partners to ensure that citizens are getting engaged for the right reason based on the right information (ibid). A clear understanding of the information also plays a vital role for citizens to get engaged⁵⁸. It would be noted that "despite having daily coronavirus press briefings, the government was not" unmistakably imparting the significance of straightforward methods, for example, handwashing, physical separating and wearing a mask (Cabral in Robles, 2020), for there are a lot of people who have been apprehended and sanctioned just because they failed to wear a mask. This does not necessarily prove that these sanctioned people were just simply disengaged for it is possible that they could have just been misinformed. If wearing a mask would be exceedingly difficult, how much more confining oneself to self-quarantine or self-isolation.

The misinformation could never be just blamed only on the authorities for based on the results of the media analytics, it was found out that there have been various endeavors to give data on COVID-19 taken by various government organizations, neighborhood government units (LGUs), academe, and media (IATF TWG for AFP, 2020:7); in fact people may resort to a lot of sources and information were made to be highly accessible (HCT, 2020). A factor then here that is contributory to the level of engagement or disengagement could be the quality of the information being disseminated. Some information was inconsistent with one another, contradictory, vague, or incomplete. These kinds of information then could have possibly led to confusion, anxiety, and frustrations among people in general and even among implementing units, which could have resulted in a low level of engagement (loc cit). The sources may have been credible, the information could have been right but the interpretation of local media of such information could have also "played an important role in" the manner of how the citizens engage themselves (ibid). This would now be a concern if some of the citizens cannot distinguish if the information they received or accessed, is fake news or a form of

⁵⁸ At the provincial, city/municipal, barangay, and household levels, mechanisms for effective participation of stakeholders in COVID-19 response (Duque III, 2020:2) . . . They will work with local civil society or people's organizations to give health education to homes, such as recognized community leaders, schools, and senior citizen groups (ibid:7).

systematic disinformation or accidental misinformation considering the credibility of their sources (ibid). With things not being normal, there is a tendency that people who are under stress, fear and anxiety would never hassle themselves to verify information from the authority or other credible sources to triangulate and understand much information (ibid). This study of the media analytics established that some of their respondents were easily influenced by any information shared by relatives, neighbors and friends regardless if the information is not based on facts, simply because of the trust built among them (ibid).

Limitations and future directions

The current findings depended on a small sample of online media users. It is not an accurate representation of the Philippine population. The sample was mainly from the National Capital Region and Central Luzon. It is also dominated by women, 38 – 50 years old (only three respondents from 18 – 25 years old), those who attended college and graduate school (no respondents from elementary and high school), urban areas (no respondents from rural areas), respondents who are not alone. Moreover, the respondents are probably going to have been more well informed than the normal Filipinos, and in this way more associated with the media. Future exploration is expected to decide if the findings are generalizable to the national population.

Another restriction is identified with the study's instrument. The instrument was tweaked based on a recent review that has been tried and tested in Germany (Betsch C W. L., 2020). Except for questions on personal risk perception and trust, the other questions have a Cronbach's α of less than .70, which may suggest a lower internal consistency of the questionnaires used. A more rigorous evaluation of the instrument's validity and reliability could have resulted in a better and more reliable instrument (Azlan AA, 2020).

Additionally, the dynamics of the pandemic is changing rapidly. Since September 15, 2021, confirmed cases have gone down, despite the lower approval rating of how the government is handling the pandemic. Reasons on why this has gone down cannot be explained alone by this study.

Another limitation of this study is that willful compliance practices were self-reported by respondents. As opposed to gathering target proportions of respondents' rule compliance and health precautionary

measure practices, the investigation depended on members to consider and report the degree to which they take part in these practices. Self-report measures shift in their correspondence to real practices (Asendorpf J.B., 2016), as members might be not able or reluctant to report precise assessments. Future work may look for uniting support for the current discoveries by inspecting consistent and genuine well-being practices.

Conclusion

There are "two worlds" in the COVID-19 response in the Philippines. One world is composed of the middle class who has no difficulty following the COVID-19 health protocols. The other world is composed of the low-income poor communities who have difficulty following the said health protocols. There is a need therefore to bridge the gap between these two worlds to stop the infection from spreading. The gap must be bridged in terms of how to help the low-income poor communities to practice social distancing, wearing a mask, and handwashing. We need to engage the low-income poor communities to practice said health protocols. This can only be done through provision of free masks, soap, access to clean water as well as affordable housing where these low-income poor communities can have ample space to practice social distancing. This can never be answered by better enforcement of the law on community quarantine. The problem is not abiding by the law, the problem is access to resources so the low-income poor communities can abide by the law. As William Godwin, 1824:91, would have it, "Law is made for man; and not man for the Law".

For people to be free from getting the wrong information, the government particularly the Supreme Court should decide with finality what constitutes "non-cooperation" under Republic Act No. 11332 in order to be able to apprehend the real violators of quarantine or lockdown rules as well as those who maliciously spread false information or fake news in Republic Act 11469 and to guide the police

60

⁵⁹ Peele, 2020.

in their implementation of quarantine procedures so as to prevent abuse to comply with Article 3.1⁶¹ of the New International Health Regulation Treaty of 2005 which the Philippines has assented to.

The rule of law provides a legal framework around which the restrictive measures imposed in reaction to the epidemic can be justified. The rule of law can help to build public trust in institutions and solidify the legitimacy of policies, resulting in more compliance and, as a result, increased efficacy. Such devotion is based on a balance of accountable and rational executive decision-making, as well as vigorous legislative and judicial examination and review (Grogan and Beqiraj, 2021).

As Chief Justice Allsop, 2016 would put it, "people get engaged with everything that they have full trust . . . especially if such engagement would be founded on a solid rule of law; . . . [the] law is not just command or a tyrannical rule that everybody should just blindly follow. Law is something that people should be amenable to, based on their grasp of the concept of each provision, based on rational concepts considering each aspect's utility and practicality. However, it should also be noted that law only works through consent and loyalty, no matter how useful or practical they may be."

Such rule of law would only be effective if people would only understand the reason behind each measure, for there may be a great tendency that though coercive force may regulate behavior, it may not necessarily resort to total prevention of transmission of the virus.

Utilizing intimidation will probably diminish the viability of assurance attainable through deliberate compliance (Gerwin op.cit.). In fact, using coercion without the capacity to understand the reality of the people's context may entail significant negative impact both for the individual and for the response. It may cause greater levels of disengagement for it may just create stigma on individuals who have the infection, deter individuals from getting tested and obliterate trust between public authority and communities (UN AIDS op.cit.).

Worry and fear are more significant than responses to the government's trust and perceived vulnerability. There is a need to adopt or implement a risk management strategy that addresses worries and fear rather than perceived vulnerability. There is a need to capitalize on the worry and fear to nudge people to action by making the imposition of lockdown or community quarantine more predictable and manageable at the personal level of the people. For example, transparency in how decisions are arrived at by the IATF will inspire confidence. Conducting public consultations on

⁶¹ These restrictions must be implemented with the utmost respect for people's dignity, human rights, and fundamental freedoms.

how these decisions will be implemented will also create agency⁶² in the people who will follow these decisions.

Since local public health authority (RHU, PHO, Barangay Health Emergency Response Team), media, hospitals, Imam or Church leaders, and one's barangay captain, one's governor, and Imam or Church leaders are more trusted because of their proximity to the people, decision-making should be done at their level. These key actors can also hold consultations with the affected people, so they can give feedback to improve the current COVID-19 response. By decentralizing decision-making (not only implementation) at the local level, but these actors can also allocate resources where it is most needed. It will also drive a sense of responsibility at the local level, making the response more enabling and empowering rather than being forced upon them.

⁶² the ability to take action or to choose what action to take (Cambridge Dictionary).

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