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3. The manuscript should be submitted via email as Microsoft Word or PDF file to the Managing Editor at email address: esagarino@uic.edu. The author(s) should need to submit the following separately:
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4. Revisions must be submitted within the date provided by the managing editor.

About the Cover

Technically a simple picture frame, the cover design symbolically represents the big picture perspective of the essence of research publication. Conceptualized by Mary Gabrielle G. Barluado, the minimalist design features only two figures: an outside border of solid color and an inner quadrilateral of gradient hue. The former stands for strong framework foundation of the Journal's publication process while the latter, with the imposing Journal name and monogram, symbolizes the variety of the featured articles. This design will be applied on the covers of the **International Journal of Education Research for Higher Learning** as a consistent identity; only the color will be changed per issue. Also, the picture frame was designed blank not only to emblemize the limitless possibilities in education research, but also to provide artistic freedom for the editors to feature a teaser photograph related to any of the published articles in the issue.

Mary Jane G. Barluado
Associate Editor

About the Monogram

The INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EDUCATION RESEARCH for Higher Learning monogram depicts two feathers used in ancient quill pens. Intentionally juxtaposed to resemble the iconic Yin Yang symbol, this abstract form signifies the physicality and spirituality of the highest form of intellectual activity – research. Aside from capturing the dramatic glimpse of ancient writing, which is the essential aspect of any form of publication, this powerful image also depicts the interconnectivity and balance between the *multidisciplinary* and *international* characters of this research publication. In response to the UIC quest for quality research outputs that can pass international peer review process, this symbol was conceptualized to remind all researchers of UIC to commit to the truthfulness, credibility, and validity of information derived from the rigors of research writing. Created by Jo Caliph G. Rivera, this monogram is meant to become a unique emblem in every cover of the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EDUCATION RESEARCH for Higher Learning.

Renan P. Limjuco
Editor in Chief

CONTENTS

Item Analysis of an English Test for College Students <i>Catherine M. Roble</i>	1
A Phenomenological Hermeneutics on Jean-Paul Sartre and Gabriel Marcel's Freedom <i>Asiselo III M. Abonado and Alvin John J. Neyra</i>	37
Students' Knowledge, Awareness, Appreciation and Manifestation of the Signpost IGNITES of the University of the Immaculate Conception College Department <i>Renan P. Limjuco, S. Ma. Merma Liza Shalah, RVM, Mona L. Laya, and John Rey A. Aleria</i>	55
University Core Values and Faculty Competence: The Isabela State University Cauayan Experience <i>Gabriel L. Luna</i>	73
Exit Survey on Graduates of Bachelor in Medical Laboratory Science of the University of the Immaculate Conception <i>Ace Ronald C. Sarabia and Renan P. Limjuco</i>	87
Navigating the World of the Young Fishermen Beneficiaries of 4Ps: A Multiple Case Study <i>Dick B. Navaja</i>	107
Folk Epics: An Exploration of Kagan Culture <i>Angelo Lenard Yu</i>	129
Sero-Positivity for <i>Histoplasma capsulatum</i> among the Nearby Residents and Workers of Bat Caves <i>Marx P. Catalan, Anna Dominique M. Margas and Aprilyn F. Francisco</i>	147

Risk and Brand Equity as Predictors of Consumers’ Buying Behavior Towards Supermarket Retailers <i>Mary Jane Braga-Amoguis</i>	161
An Exploration of the Illocutionary Acts in Barangay Mediation and Conciliation <i>Amseva Mangonga-Bentayao and Teresita Q. Adriano</i>	181
Negative Media Portrayal of Politicians and Public Trust Towards Governance among Voters in Davao City, Philippines <i>Renan P. Limjuco, Monique Musni-Tagaytay and Luis Jan Lacida</i>	199

PREFACE

The April 2017 issue of the UIC RESEARCH JOURNAL now INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF EDUCATION RESEARCH for Higher learning, contains a diverse mix of articles written by researchers from both the public and private educational sector in the Philippines. These articles are the product of the scholarly work of professors and graduate school students in various fields and disciplines. The focus of these studies range from macro to micro perspectives on an array of educational and social phenomena.

In this issue, a total of five studies explore various issues in higher education and learning. Addressing the continuous need for educational institutions to improve learning and assessment, the study of Catherine Roble developed a model communicative competence test that could be utilized for syllabus enhancement. The study of Asisclo III M. Abonado and Alvin John J. Neyra adds to the scholarly body of philosophical discussions on Jean-Paul Sartre and Gabriel Marcel’s Freedom using phenomenological hermeneutics. Two studies tackle institutional values as internalized by members of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs). There is the study on Students’ Knowledge, Awareness and Manifestation of the Signpost Ignites of the University of the Immaculate Conception College Department by Renan P. Limjuco, S. Ma. Merma Liza Shalah, RVM, Mona L. Laya, and John Rey A. Aleria. Then there is the study of Gabriel L. Luna, on the other hand examines the university core values and faculty competence in Isabela State University Cauayan. The study of Ace Ronald Sarabia and Renan Limjuco looks into the exit survey on graduates of Bachelor in Medical Laboratory Science of the University of the Immaculate Conception, addressing thrusts in higher educational institutions for enhanced measures in guaranteeing quality education.

Other studies in this issue immerse in local communities to describe their environment, their lives and livelihood, behavior and preferences, their culture and even their health in rich detail.

Dick B. Navaja’s study on the young fishermen beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) while Angelo Lenard Yu exposes the Kagan Culture through their folk epics. The study of Marx Catalan, Anna Margas and Aprilyn Francisco investigate the sero-positivity for Histoplasma capsulatum among workers in bat caves as well as dwellers in surrounding communities. A study by Mary Jane Braga- Amoguis’ examines the business and the retail industry in study on the risk and brand equity as predictors of consumer buying behavior towards supermarket retailers. The study of Amseva Mangonga-Bentayao and

Teresita Q. Adriano explores mediation and conciliation at the barangay level in light of illocutionary acts performed when resolving conflicts among members of the community.

Finally, one study in this issue investigates television and its impact on audiences and the themes they cultivated themes in their portrayals. The study of Renan P. Limjuco, Monique Musni-Tagaytay and Luis Jan Lacida scrutinizes the negative media portrayal of politicians correlates with the public trust towards governance among voters in Davao City, Philippines.

Monique Musni-Tagaytay
Associate Editor

Renan P. Limjuco
Editor in chief

Item Analysis of an English Test for College Students

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ABSTRACT

This is a descriptive study aimed at finding out the level of response of the students in the communicative test in terms of the reliability index of the communicative test, the items' mean difficulty, the discrimination index, the item fit, the clarity of language, how the items were constructed, the options used, whether there were items functioning differently, if the item characteristics match the ability of the freshmen general education English 1 students, what the hierarchy of skill indicators as components of communicative competence is, what model test can be developed for general education students, and what syllabus can be designed out of the model. Samples of the study were 283 students from four different universities in Davao City. It was found out that the reliability index of the communicative test is .81, the items' mean difficulty is .419, the discrimination indices of the model test ranged from .20-.62, the item fit ranged from .56-1.44 to 0.93-1.07 which is within confidence intervals, the language of the test is clear, the construction of items observed principles of language testing, the options were parallel, the parameter estimates were -0.303, 0.600, -0.613, and 0.316 for Universities A, B, C and D respectively which means that the test items were functioning differently, that is, positively for students from University B; the item characteristics matched the ability of the freshmen General Education English 1 students; the hierarchy of skill indicators as components of communicative competence began with expressing gratitude appropriately, closing a conversation appropriately, applying courtesy in letters, and advances to inferring meaning through context, responding in affirmative, and giving meaning to unknown words; based on findings, the model test which can be developed for general education students is one which is communicative and is reliable, valid, practical, and fit to the students' abilities; out of the model test, the enhanced syllabus which can be designed is competency-based. The findings in this study imply that communicative testing has washback effect on teaching. This kind of testing confirms the theory that says that learning is a cyclical process.

KEYWORDS: Communicative competence, communicative testing, syllabus enhancement

INTRODUCTION

In other countries such as the United States, no test measured the students' ability to comprehend and compose texts until the advent of the item response theory (Purcell-Gates, Duke, and Matrineau, 2007 in Reading Research Quarterly). Moreover, the Center for Educational Testing and Evaluation had been looking for an evaluation instrument to identify exceptional and regular students until their researchers did the item response analysis on their tests. Here in the Philippines, there has been no reported or documented use of item response theory in the development of communicative competence tests nor studies of the same.

On the other hand, in Davao City, the University of Southeastern Philippines through its Guidance and Testing Office used the item response analysis in its English Plus (Grammar) test where 40 percent of the questions were found unfit for students' abilities. This might have been the reason why there were students who were good in English but failed in the English Plus test while there were students who were poor in English but passed in the English Plus.

It is for such reason that the researcher found it necessary to design a communicative competence test for English 1 (Study and Thinking Skills) following the framework of Canale and Swain (1980) and subject it to item response analysis following the Rasch Model (Fischer & Molenaar, 2012). This is in support of CHED's (Commission on Higher Education) mandate to promote, encourage, and support research in Philippine higher education institutions.

Study Objectives. The aim of this investigation was to determine the level of response of the students in the test items in terms of establishing reliability index, discrimination index, item difficulty, item fit, clarity of the language, construction of stem, options used, and differential item functioning. Moreover, based on the findings, this study sought for a model communicative competence test that can be developed for general education students and that which can be used to enhance the syllabus.

Theory Base. This study is anchored on the Item Response Theory (Rasch, 1980). Item Response Theory (aka IRT) is a modern test theory. It states that items on a test have a particular difficulty attached to them; that they can be placed in order of difficulty, and that the test taker has a fixed level of ability. This means that difficult items can only be answered by high performing students.

In IRT, the true score is defined on the construct of interest rather than on the test. Some applications where IRT is handy include: Item bias analysis – a test of item equivalence across groups. An item is tested if it is behaving differently for males and females. Item Response Theory (IRT) provides an estimate of the true score that is not based on the number of correct items. This frees us to give different people different test items but still place people on the same scale. One particularly exciting feature of tailored testing is the capability to give people test items that are matched (close) to them. This has implications for test security – different people get different tests.

To support the main theory is Canale and Swain's (1980) theory of communicative competence. Canale and Swain's model comprises an integrative view of communicative competence with four major components: (1) grammatical/linguistic competence, (2) sociolinguistic competence, (3) discourse competence, and (4) strategic competence.

Grammatical competence refers to the degree to which the language user has mastered the linguistic code. It includes knowledge of vocabulary, rules of pronunciation and spelling, word formation, and sentence structure. Canale and Swain (in Omaggio, 1986) maintain that such competence is an essential concern for any communicative approach that is oriented toward the eventual attainment of higher levels of proficiency, in which accuracy of understanding and expression are important goals.

Sociolinguistic competence is the extent to which grammatical forms can be used or understood appropriately in various contexts to convey specific communicative functions, such as persuading, describing, narrating, and giving commands. Such factors as topic, role of the participants, and setting will determine the appropriateness of the attitude conveyed by the speaker and his choice of style or register. A style that is appropriate among friends, for example, may be totally inappropriate in a more formal setting.

Discourse competence, the third component of the Canale and Swain model, involves the ability to combine ideas to achieve cohesion in form and coherence in thought. A person who has a highly developed degree of discourse competence must know how to use cohesive devices, such as pronouns and grammatical connectors (i.e., conjunctions, adverbs, and transitional phrases and expressions), to achieve unity of thought and continuity in a text. The competent language user will also be skilled in expressing and judging the relationships among the different ideas in a text (coherence).

Strategic competence, the final component of the model, involves the use of verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to compensate for gaps in the language user's knowledge of the code or for breakdown in communication for other reasons. This component is qualitatively different from the other three in that the more proficient or communicatively competent an individual becomes, the less he or she needs to draw on strategic competence. However, even educated native speakers sometimes experience breakdowns in their communication with others for a variety of reasons and must rely on this component for the successful transmission of messages (Omaggio, 1986). Indicators of communicative competence define student progress in meeting the standards (what students know and are able to do at the end of the course). They are taken from Yalden's syllabus checklist, Guide to Levels of Communicative Competence (2000), and Munby (1978).

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study.

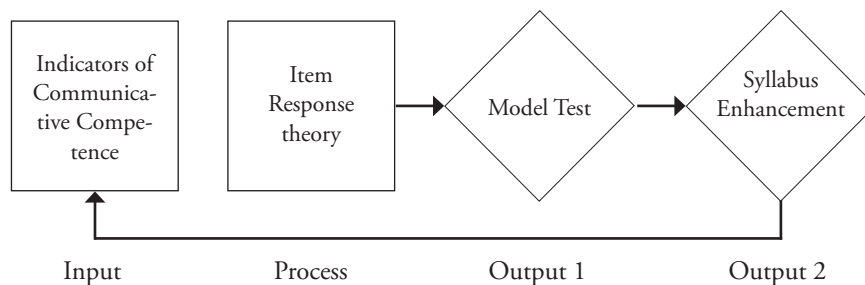


Figure 1. The conceptual framework of the study

The framework has the following components:

Input. It refers to the indicators of communicative competence measured by the Communicative Competence Test. Some of the indicators are expressing gratitude in a business letter, closing a letter appropriately, etc. (please refer to Appendix E).

Process. It refers to the Item Response analysis of the students' answers to the Communicative Competence test.

Output 1. It refers to the model communicative competence test in English 1 which was derived from the retrialled test and was subjected to item response analysis.

Output 2. It refers to the enhanced syllabus designed out of the model test.

Communicative tests measure the linguistic/grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence of students enrolled in second language classes.

As such, these tests are expected to exhibit the characteristics of a good test namely validity, reliability, practicality, and item fit. Since the first three characteristics can be established, using the classical method, the last one needs to be established by another approach called the item response theory which has not been used to any communicative competence test on the national arena.

Thus, a model communicative competence test having all those mentioned elements was developed to identify the indicators of communicative competence for second language speakers of English.

METHODS

Research Design. This study made use of a descriptive method of research. Pertinent data were obtained through the answer sheets of the students who took the test in English 1 (Study and Thinking Skills) First semester school year 2008-2009.

Research Instruments. The study used a researcher-made communicative competence test consisting of 58 items subdivided into linguistic, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic competence. The test format followed that of Omaggio's (1983).

The content was validated by three English teachers handling Eng. 1 from three different universities and reviewed by two experts in educational measurement and evaluation.

The interpretation of results was done by the researcher with the assistance of her statistician using the Conquest software (2005). The questions/items followed the communicative competence framework of Canale and Swain(1980) and the format of Omaggio (1983). The standard scores were computed into a logit score using the formula: $(\text{score} - \text{mean score}) / \text{Standard deviation}$.

The range of values is shown below:

Table 1. Range of values of test scores

Logit Range	Level	Description
<-.5	Beginner	Student can express gratitude appropriately, close a conversation appropriately, apply courtesy in letters, place reservations, give meaning to unknown words, use synonyms, infer meaning through context, identify relationship between interlocutors, answer one's query, identify pronouns, and retrieve information.
-.5-.5	Intermediate	Student can retrieve information, identify and use synonyms, initiate in discourse, paraphrase a clause, report a speech, sequence ideas using discourse markers, identify source of an excerpt, summarize paragraphs, infer meaning, ask for information, transform declarative sentences into interrogative.
>.5	Advanced	Student can identify purpose of notes, write a letter to inform, recall information, infer character traits, meaning and setting, identify parts of a conversation, give title to stories, retrieve information, identify purpose of sentences, infer meaning through context, respond in affirmative, give meaning to unknown words.

Research Participants. The participants in the study were the 283 general education freshmen enrolled in English 1 (Study and Thinking Skills) this first semester school year 2008-2009 from the four higher education institutions namely, University of Southeastern Philippines, University of the Immaculate Conception, University of Mindanao, and Ateneo de Davao University.

Sampling. As suggested by the panel, two sections or equivalent to two sections of the class with the highest population for each university were the sample of the study.

Research Locale. This study was done in four Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in Davao City namely the University Of Southeastern Philippines (USEP), located at Obrero Campus, Davao City, University of the Immaculate Conception, University of Mindanao (UM), and Ateneo de Davao University (AddU).

Data Gathering Procedure. The data were analyzed using the Rasch Simplistic Logit Model by CONQUEST Software. This software was used to establish the reliability of the test, its construct validity, item discrimination, item difficulty, item bias, and item parametrization.

Data Treatment. Data on the students' responses were analyzed using the ConQuest Software (2005).

Statistical Tools. This study employed descriptive statistics, while the analysis of the responses was performed using the ConQuest software (2005).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Response of Students in Terms of Test Characteristics. Shown in Table 1.1 is the result of the pilot test conducted. The reliability index given by Cronbach's Alpha which is equivalent to Richard-Kruder's α , is 0.57 which is low for a 58-item test. This means that during the first trial, the communicative competence test had a low internal consistency. After the analysis of each item where item flaws were revised based on the result of the analysis using Rasch Simplistic Logit Model, 14 of the items were discarded and 44 items were selected.

Analysis of the test items showed that the reliability index became .81 which is very good for a classroom test (Office of Educational Assessment, University of Washington, 2008). This means that the revised communicative competence test has high internal consistency (the extent to which items within one form of the test have as much common with one another) and it is one of the characteristics of a good test (Kubiszyn and Borich, 2003).

Students' Level of Communicative Competence, Discrimination Index and Item Difficulty. Table 2 shows the distribution and percentage of students belonging to the beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels of communicative competence.

Table 2. Distribution of students and their level of communicative competence

Level of Communicative Competence	Universities								Ave.
	A		B		C		D		
	# of Respondents	%	# of Respondents	%	# of Respondents	%	# of Respondents	%	
Beginner	4	6.56	1	1.25	16	27.59	0	0	8.85
Intermediate	49	80.33	33	41.25	37	63.79	41	48.81	58.55
Advanced	8	13.11	46	57.5	5	8.62	43	51.19	32.60
Total	61	100.0	80	100.0	58	100.0	84	100.0	100.0

Generally, the students' level of communicative competence is Intermediate with University A having the highest percentage (80.33) of students belonging to that level. It is followed by University C with 63.79 percent, University D with 48.81 percent and University B with 41.25 percent of its students. This means that students who belonged to intermediate level can retrieve information, identify and use synonyms, initiate in discourse, paraphrase a clause, report a speech, sequence ideas using discourse markers, identify source of an excerpt, summarize paragraphs, infer meaning, ask for information, and transform declarative sentences into interrogative.

University B got the highest percentage of students belonging to advanced level of communicative competence – 57.5 percent. It is followed by University D with 51.19 percent, University A with 13.11 percent, and University C with 8.62 percent.

This means that students who belonged to advanced level can identify purpose of notes, write a letter to inform, recall information, infer character traits, meaning and setting, identify parts of a conversation, give title to stories, retrieve information, identify purpose of sentences, infer meaning through context, respond in affirmative, and give meaning to unknown words.

In addition, 27.59 percent of the students of University C are in the beginner level. It is followed by University A and B with 6.56 and 1.25 percent respectively while no respondent from University D is in the beginner level of Communicative Competence.

This means that those at the beginner level can express gratitude appropriately, close a conversation appropriately, apply courtesy in letters, place reservations, give meaning to unknown words, use synonyms, infer meaning

though context, identify relationship between interlocutors, answer one's query, identify pronouns, and retrieve information.

During the tryout of the test, the discrimination indices ranged from -.09 to .55. There were items which did not meet the criterion of .20 up to be considered as good items. This is being considered in test development because the best items are those items which can discriminate low performing from high performing students. Similarly, the item difficulty of the test items given by delta values ranges from -3.73 to 4.63. This means that there are many difficult items considering that the mean ability of the students is equated to the difficulty of the item and is constrained at 0.

However, after the retrial, the discrimination indices ranged from .20-.62. All these values are accepted as discrimination index. This means that the 44-item test can discriminate low performing from high performing students.

Moreover, the item difficulty ranged from -2.40 to 2.14 logits. These values show that items are evenly distributed from easy to difficult.

Table 3.1 Characteristics of items as indicated by the response of the students during pilot testing

Test Item #	Discrimination Index	Item Difficulty	Item Fit			% of Students Correct	Point Biserial
			MNSQ	CI	t-value		
1	.04	.92	1.04	-.79-1.21	.4	24	.04
2	.09	-.02	1.04	.93-1.07	1.2	44	.09
3	.04	-.05	1.07	.93-1.07	1.8	44.80	-.04
4	.21	.47	1.00	.86-1.14	0-1	32.8	.21
5	.17	.59	1.01	.85-1.15	.2	30.40	.17
6	.13	.44	1.02	.87-1.13	.3	33.60	.13
7	.24	.09	.98	.92-1.08	-0.4	41.60	.24
8	.12	1.85	1.01	-.57-1.43	.1	11.20	.12
9	.22	1.32	.99	.70-1.30	0.0	17.60	.22
10	.26	-1.15	.99	.84-1.16	-0.1	70.40	.26
11	.22	.29	1.00	.89-1.11	0	36.80	.22
12	.33	.02	.98	.92-1.08	-0.5	43.20	.33
13	.11	-3.73	.99	.08-1.92	.1	96.80	.11
14	.11	.40	1.03	.88-1.12	.5	34.40	.11
15	.19	.19	1.01	.91-1.09	.2	39.20	.19
16	.28	-.82	.98	-.89-1.11	-.4	63.20	.28
17	-.01	4.63	1.02	0-00-2.95	.4	90.40	.19

18	.04	.47	1.04	.86-1.14	.6	32.80	.04
19	.33	-1.68	.97	.91-1.09	-.6	60	.33
20	.27	.05	.98	-.92-1.08	-.5	42.40	.27
21	.30	-.75	.97	-.90-1.10	-.7	61.60	.30
22	.34	-1.28	.97	.82-1.18	-.3	72.80	.34
23	.36	-.89	.98	.88-1.12	-.3	64.80	.36
24	.32	-.41	.98	.93-1.07	-.6	53.60	.32
25	.04	.36	1.06	-.88-1.12	-.9	35.20	.04
26	.36	.19	.97	-.91-1.09	-.7	39.20	.36
27	.06	3.20	1.01	.07-1.93	.2	3.20	.06
28	.19	-1.88	1.00	.71-1.29	0	82.40	.19
29	.05	1.01	1.03	.77-1.23	.3	22.40	.05
30	.43	-1.19	.95	.83-1.17	-.6	71.20	.43
31	.28	-1.59	.98	.76-1.24	-.1	78.40	.28
32	.04	-1.0	1.04	.86-1.14	.6	67.20	.04
33	.23	1.01	1.00	.77-1.23	0	22.40	.23
34	.25	-1.40	.98	.80-1.20	-.2	75.20	.25
35	.55	-1.32	.91	-.81-1.19	-.9	73.60	.55
36	.29	-1.74	.97	-.73-1.27	-.2	80.80	.29
37	.19	-1.08	1.00	-.85-1.15	0	68.80	.19
38	.34	-1.08	.97	.85-1.15	-.04	68.80	.34
39	.38	-.82	.96	.89-1.11	-.8	63.20	.38
40	.26	1.63	1.04	.63-1.37	.3	13.60	-.03
41	.11	.02	1.03	.92-1.08	.8	43.20	.11
42	.09	2.97	1.00	.18-1.82	.1	4	.09
43	.25	.15	1.00	.91-1.09	.0	40	.25
44	.13	-.28	1.03	.94-1.06	-.9	50.40	.13
45	.23	-1.59	.99	.76-1.24	-.1	78.40	.23
46	.19	-.82	1.01	.89-1.11	.2	63.20	.19
47	.24	-1.45	.99	.79-1.21	-.1	76	.24
48	.10	1.77	1.02	.59-1.41	.1	12	.10
49	.21	.63	1.00	1.16	0	29.60	.21
50	.05	1.01	1.03	.77-1.23	.3	22.40	.05
51	.28	-1.20	.97	.83-1.17	-.3	71.20	.28
52	.02	-1.5	.99	-.59-1.41	0	69.2	-.01
53	.06	1.94	1.01	.55-1.45	.1	10.40	.06
54	.09	2.61	1.02	.33-1.67	.2	5.60	.09
55	.05	1.50	1.03	.66-1.34	.2	15.20	.05
56	.02	.55	1.04	.85-1.15	.5	31.20	.02
57	.11	-3.15	.99	.33-1.67	.1	94.4	.11
58	-.02	-3.0	1.01	.38-1.67	.1	96.30	-.02

Table 3.2 Characteristics of the final items as indicated by the response of the students

Test Item #	Discrimination Index	Item Difficulty	Item Fit			% of Students Correct	Point Biserial
			MNSQ	CI	t-value		
1	.27	.61	1.01	0.90-1.10	0.2	35.19	.27
2	.21	-1.77	1.01	0.78-1.22	0.1	83.26	.21
3	.34	.47	0.97	0.91-1.09	-0.7	38.2	.34
4	.34	.41	0.98	0.92-1.08	-0.4	39.48	.34
5	.23	.63	1.04	0.90-1.10	0.8	34.76	.23
6	.36	.49	0.96	0.91-1.09	-0.8	37.77	.36
7	.30	-1.22	0.97	0.85-1.15	-0.4	74.68	0.30
8	.25	.31	1.02	0.92-1.08	0.5	41.63	0.25
9	.25	.53	1.03	0.91-1.09	0.6	36.91	0.25
10	.23	.25	1.03	0.92-1.08	0.9	42.92	.23
11	.32	-.31	0.99	0.92-1.08	-0.2	55.79	0.32
12	.36	-2.02	0.93	0.74-1.26	-0.5	86.27	0.36
13	0.30	0.25	1.01	0.92-1.08	0.3	42.92	0.30
14	0.41	-0.46	0.95	0.92-1.08	-1.2	59.23	0.41
15	0.32	-0.25	1.00	0.93-1.07	-0.1	54.51	0.32
16	0.44	-0.53	0.92	0.91-1.09	-1.8	60.94	0.44
17	0.44	-1.01	0.93	0.87-1.13	-1.1	70.82	0.44
18	0.43	-0.86	0.93	0.89-1.11	-1.2	67.81	0.43
19	0.44	-0.25	0.93	0.93-1.07	-1.9	54.51	0.44
20	0.51	0.59	0.89	0.89-1.11	-2.6	35.62	0.51
21	0.40	-1.65	0.92	0.80-1.20	-0.8	81.55	0.40
22	0.20	1.60	1.01	0.79-1.21	0.2	17.60	0.20
23	0.62	-0.55	0.82	0.91-1.09	-4.3	61.37	0.62
24	0.54	-1.03	0.98	0.93-1.07	-2.1	71.24	0.54
25	0.25	-0.10	1.03	0.93-1.07	0.8	51.07	0.25
26	0.30	-0.63	1.01	0.91-1.09	0.1	63.09	0.30
27	0.36	-0.92	0.98	0.88-1.12	-0.3	69.10	0.36
28	0.25	-1.01	1.02	0.87-1.13	0.3	70.82	0.25
29	0.27	-0.94	1.01	0.88-1.12	0.2	69.53	0.27
30	0.48	-0.61	0.91	0.91-1.09	-2.0	62.66	0.48
31	0.36	-0.84	0.97	0.89-1.11	-0.6	67.38	0.36
32	0.29	0.75	1.01	0.89-1.11	0.2	32.19	0.29
33	0.39	-1.05	0.94	0.87-1.13	-0.8	71.67	0.39
34	0.30	0.59	0.99	0.90-1.10	-0.1	35.62	0.30
35	0.48	-1.47	0.90	0.82-1.18	-1.2	78.97	0.48
36	0.24	-1.62	1.01	0.80-1.20	0.1	81.12	0.24
37	0.24	-0.65	1.05	0.90-1.10	1.0	63.52	0.24
38	0.33	-1.05	0.98	0.87-1.13	-0.3	71.67	.033

39	0.42	0.53	0.94	0.91-1.09	-1.4	36.91	0.42
40	0.30	0.12	1.00	0.93-1.07	0.0	45.92	0.30
41	0.35	0.41	0.97	0.92-1.08	-0.7	39.48	0.35
42	0.54	-0.55	0.88	0.91-1.09	-2.8	61.37	0.54
43	0.26	-2.81	0.97	0.58-1.42	-0.1	93.13	0.26
44	0.24	-2.88	0.97	0.56-1.44	-0.1	93.56	0.24

Item Fit. In addition, the item fit which defines if the test item measures the construct being identified, which is communicative competence shows that there are Mean Fit Square Values outside the confidence intervals and there are t-values outside -2.0 to 2.0 before the retrial. These items are considered to be measuring different construct or there are errors in the development. Those items were discarded so as to ensure the validity of the test.

However, after the retrial, the Mean Fit Square Values range from 0.56-1.44 to 0.93-1.07 which are within the confidence intervals which means that all the 44 items measure only one construct which is communicative competence. Thus, the test items are unidimensional.

Item Analysis in terms of Clarity of language, construction of stem, options used. Upon analyzing the items closely, there were errors identified and these were considered during the revision for the final draft of the Communicative Competence Test. To highlight:

a. Item # 1

Situation: You are reading a pocketbook and you found words which are not defined in the text. Infer the meaning of each underlined word using its context.

1. The other houses gazed with brown imperturbable faces.
 - a. hard
 - b. blank
 - c. movable
 - d. void

The discrimination index is .04 which is less than .20 and the point biserial for the correct option is .04 which is lower than options a and d which are .07 and .06 respectively. Point biserial means that only the correct option should have the positive value because that shows that the mean ability of the students

who answered that option is higher than the abilities of those who answered the wrong option.

Upon analyzing the item closely, it was observed that a higher percentage of students answered option a which is hard. This option is not a good one because the word hard is commonly associated with houses.

After the option was revised to scant, the item statistics improved. The discrimination index became .27, the item became less difficult and the point biserial for the correct option is the highest value which means that students with abilities from logit .61 up got the correct answer. Logit scale is illustrated in Figure 2.

b. Item # 3

3. I heard the rain impinge upon the earth.
 - a. fall
 - b. drop
 - c. collide
 - d. wet

The discrimination index is -.04 which is less than .20 and the point biserial for the correct option is -.04 which is lower than options b and c which are 0.00 and 0.09 respectively. This means that there are high performing students who answered options b & c.

Upon analyzing the item, it was observed that options b and c which are drop and collide respectively could be considered correct options. Hence they were changed to bury and glide respectively. After the retrial, the item statistics improved. The discrimination index became .21, the item became less difficult, and the point biserial for the correct option is the highest value which means that students with abilities from logit -1.77 up got the correct answer.

c. Item # 6

6. He answered me curtly.
 - a. rudely
 - b. politely
 - c. loudly
 - d. softly

The discrimination index is .13 which is less than .20 and the point biserial for the correct option is .13 which is the highest of all the options. However, there were more students who answered option b which is politely. This option tends to confuse students who seemed to equate curtly with courteously which have phonological resemblance. After it was revised to courteously, the item statistics improved. The discrimination index became .34, the item became less difficult and the point biserial got the highest value which means that students with abilities from logit .41 up got the correct answer.

d. Item # 8

8. I passed in quickly through a turnstile.
- rotating door
 - front door
 - new slide
 - revolving gate

The discrimination index is .12 which is less than .20 and the point biserial for the correct option is .12 which is the highest of all the options. However, option a which is rotating door got a .07 biserial. This option confused the students with revolving gate because rotating is almost synonymous with revolving.

After the option was revised to back door, the item statistics improved. The discrimination index became .36 and the item became less difficult and the point biserial got the highest value which means that students with abilities from logit .49 up got the correct answer.

e. Item # 14

14. You read the communication that the school is sending you to attend a training sponsored by your school and you want to inform your teacher that you would attend the training. How would you start your letter?
- I am informing you.
 - This is to inform you.
 - Please be informed.
 - This is informing you that...

The discrimination index is .11 which is less than .20 and the point biserial for the correct option is .11 which is the highest of all the options. However, option b which is this is to inform you got a positive value of .01. This option is a good one because after the revision of the stem with the adverb of manner properly added, the item statistics improved. The discrimination index became .23, the item became less difficult and the point biserial for the correct option is the highest value which means that students with abilities from logit .25 up got the correct answer.

f. Item # 17

17. You read "No Stocks Available" above the display you want to buy and you want to be informed in the event stocks arrive. Which of these sentences is the most courteous?
- Please inform me if the stocks arrive.
 - Please write me is the stocks arrive.
 - Please deliver the items when the stocks arrive.
 - Tell me if the items have arrived.

The discrimination index is -.01 which is less than .20 and the point biserial for the correct option is -.01 which is the lowest of all the options. However, after the retrial with 283 students, the item statistics improved. The discrimination index became .36, the item became less difficult and the point biserial for the correct option is the highest value which means that students with abilities from logit -2.02 up got the correct answer.

This increase in number to improve the reliability of an item is supported by testing experts such as Hughes (2003), Harris (1997) etc. who stressed that the more number of testees, the higher the reliability of the test.

The discrimination index is .04 which is less than .20 and the point biserial for the correct option is .04 which is lower than option a which is place.

g. Item # 18

18. Now you will read an advertisement. What is being advertised?

- a. place
- b. house
- c. hotel
- d. an airline

Terry Pawson, award-winning architect on Emirates:

Le Corbusier said "A house is a machine for living in," and Emirates clearly thinks that much the same applies to an aircraft. Flop in your comfy chair, relax in front of the TV enjoy a couple of drinks, make the odd call.

A high percentage of students answered option b which is house. All the options are good ones because after the revision by staging the selection in a box during the retrieval, the item statistics improved. The discrimination index became .30 and the item became less difficult and the point biserial for the correct option has the highest value which means that students with abilities from logit .25 up got the correct answer.

h. Item # 28

The students were given cotton balls with their corresponding brand and weight:

- Cosmic - 100 grams
- Galaxy - 75 grams
- Nova - 50 grams
- Star - 25 grams

They noticed that the weights are arranged in a (28) descending order. Which phrase below is the most appropriate substitute for descending?

- a. from top to bottom
- b. from A-Z
- c. from highest to lowest
- d. from lowest to highest

This staging of an item in a box is supported by Brown and Yule (1983) who pointed out the role of staging (a dimension of prose structure which identifies the relative prominence given to various segments of prose discourse) in discourse analysis.

The discrimination index is .19 which is less than .20 and the point biserial for the correct option is .19 which is the highest.

When the options were analyzed closely, a small percentage of students answered option b which is from A-Z. This option is not good and the embedded numbering of the stem seemed to affect the students because when the option was changed to from first to last and the number of the stem was fronted, the item statistics improved. The discrimination index became .40, the item became less difficult and the point biserial for the correct option is the highest which means that students with abilities from logit -1.65 up got the correct answer.

i. Item #29

They also noticed that they are bearing (29) astrological terms.

- a. astronomical
- b. heavenly
- c. celestial
- d. terrestrial

This fronting of the number is part of what Brown and Yule (1983) pointed out as staging.

The discrimination index is .05 which is less than .20 and the point biserial for the correct option is .05 which is lower than .09 for option b. Upon analyzing the item closely, it was observed that a higher percentage of students answered option b. This option is not a good one because it does not rhyme with the other three options. After it was revised to theatrical, the item statistics improved. The discrimination index became .20, the item became less difficult and the point biserial for the correct option is the highest value which means that students with abilities from logit 1.60 up got the correct answer.

j. Item # 32

When a construction worker was interviewed, the agent asked, "Have you, had any accidents?" After a moment's reflection, the applicant responded, "No, but a drunk kicked in two of my ribs last summer, and a couple of years ago a snake bit me on the ankle."

"Wouldn't you call those accidents?" replied the puzzled agent. "No," the construction worker said, "they did it on purpose!" (Our Daily Bread, March-May 1994)

32. Where do you think is the setting?
- a mental hospital
 - an insurance company
 - a noisy classroom
 - a psychiatric clinic

This item measures the sociolinguistic competence of the students. The discrimination index is .04 which is less than .20 and the point biserial for the correct option is .04 which is second highest value. Upon analyzing the item closely, students were confused of options a and b which are a mental hospital and an insurance company respectively. One student answered b which is a noisy classroom. The options are good ones because without any revision the final tryout with increased number of testees improved the item statistics. The discrimination index became .25, the item became less difficult and the point biserial for the correct option is the highest value which means that students with abilities from logit -0.10 up got the correct answer.

This increase in number is supported by testing experts like Harris (1977) who said that the more testees the test has the higher the reliability.

k. Item # 37

Read the headline of one newspaper below.

2 killed, dozens injured in Mideast tremor

37. What is the incident?
- a tidal wave
 - a tsunami
 - a typhoon
 - an earthquake

The discrimination index is .19 which is less than .20 and the point biserial for the correct option is .19 which is the highest value.

Upon analyzing the item closely, the item is very stable because no students were confused of the other options. The options are good ones because without any revision, the final tryout with increased number of testees, the item statistics improved. The discrimination index became .27 and the item became less difficult and the point biserial for the correct option is the highest value which means that students with abilities from -0.94 up got the correct answer.

Again the increase in number is supported by testing experts like Hughes (2003) and Harris (1997) who said that the more number of testees you have, the higher the reliability of the scores.

l. Item # 44

44. You want to use the place for one day exclusive for your classmates in P.E. You want to know if they accept reservations. Which of the sentences is the most appropriate?
- Do you reserve this place?
 - How can I reserve the place?
 - Do you accept reservations?
 - Are you accepting reservations?

The discrimination index is .13 which is less than .20 and the point biserial for the correct option is .13 which is the highest value. However, only fifty percent of students answered option d which is Are you accepting reservations? This option is a literal translation of the Visayan version which is Nagadawat mo ug reservations? Hence, this option was revised to Will you accept reservations?

After the retrial, the item statistics improved. The discrimination index became .48, the item became less difficult or confusing and the point biserial for the correct option is the highest value which means that students with abilities from logit -1.47 up got the correct answer.

This means that students tend to choose transliterated sentences if they do not know the correct answer.

m. Item # 46

Now read the text below and paraphrase the last clause.

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

- a. Anybody who wants to have everlasting life must believe in God's Son.
- b. Anybody who believes in God's Son will not perish but have everlasting life.
- c. If you believe in God's Son you shall have everlasting life.
- d. Whoever believes in God's Son shall not perish.

The discrimination index is .19 which is less than .20 and the point biserial for the correct option is .09 which is the highest value.

Because the discrimination index is lower than .20 the item was boxed during the revision. After the retrial, the item statistics improved. The discrimination index became .24 and the item became less difficult and the point biserial for the correct option is the highest value which means that students with abilities from logit -0.65 up got the correct answer.

Again, the revision made is what Brown and Yule (1983) called staging.

n. Item # 48

On your way home, you read your classmates exchange notes. The first note from a man is: See you tonight!. The woman's answer is: Yup!

48. Where do you think are the two?

- a. office
- b. park
- c. school
- d. classroom

The discrimination index is .10 which is less than .20 and the point biserial for the correct option is .10 which is lower than 0.11 for option a.

Upon analyzing the item closely, it was noticed that the stem is not very specific with the setting. It should be specific because it is an item that measures the sociolinguistic competence of the students. This is consistent with the idea of Rayevska (1976) that language differs in different situations.

The options are considered good ones because after the revision of the stem

from Where do you think are the two when they wrote their notes, the items statistics improved. The discrimination index became .42, the item became less difficult, and the point biserial for the correct option is the highest value which means that students with abilities from logit .53 up got the correct answer.

o. Item # 50

50. If it was a conversation, what part of a conversation was that?

- a. initiating a dialogue
- b. maintaining a dialogue
- c. ending a dialogue
- d. taking leave from a dialogue

The discrimination index is .05 which is less than .20 and the point biserial for the correct option is .05 which is second highest value. Looking at the table of responses, only 22.4 percent of the students answered correctly. Options a, b and c which are initiating a dialogue maintaining a dialogue, and ending a dialogue respectively were revised to initiating a conversation, maintaining a conversation, and sustaining a dialogue respectively. After the retrial, the item statistics improved. The discrimination index became .35, the item became less difficult and the point biserial for the correct option is the highest value which means that students with abilities from logit .41 up got the correct answer.

p. Item # 57

Situation: Your teacher Ms. Milagros Cruz requires you to submit an excuse letter for your absence yesterday. Supply the missing word or phrase to complete your letter.

57. _____ very much for your kind consideration.

- a. Thanks
- b. Thank you
- c. I thank you
- d. T.Y.

The discrimination index is .11 the point biserial for the correct option is .11 which is the highest value. However, option c which is I thank you also got a positive value which means that students also considered it correct. Because it is a case of an item with two answers, option c was revised to I will thank you. After the retrial, the item statistics improved. The discrimination index became .26, the item became less ambiguous, and the point biserial for the correct option is the highest value which means that students with abilities from logit -2.81 up got the correct answer.

q. Item # 58

58. _____

- a. Lovingly yours,
- b. Cordially yours,
- c. Friendly yours,
- d. Sincerely yours,

The discrimination index is -.02 which is less than .20 and the point biserial for the correct option is -.02 which is the lowest.

Without any revision, the item was retrialled to 283 students. After the retrial, the item statistics improved. The discrimination index became .24, the item became less difficult, and the point biserial for the correct option is the highest value which means that students with abilities from logit -2.88 up got the correct answer.

Once again, the increase in number of testees improved the reliability of the item.

Overall, the construction of stem was rated 3 by the experts which means that the items followed principles of test construction to a large extent.

Furthermore, the options used were rated 3 which means that the options were parallel to a large extent.

Differential Item Functioning

Items were analyzed to check if they exhibit differential item functioning or item bias. DIF is evident if the response probabilities for a particular item cannot be fully explained by the ability of the student and a fixed set of difficulty parameters for that item.

Gender. Considering the estimates for the gender differences in ability estimates, the actual parameter estimate for male students is .17 larger than its standard error estimate. This means that the difference between the abilities of male and female students is not significant. The chi-square value of .04 at 1 degree of freedom is consistent with this finding. This means that the test is not gender biased.

Table 4. Ability estimates for gender differences

Variables	Unweighted Fit				Weighted Fit			
	Estimate	Error [^]	MNSQ	CI	T	MNSQ	CI	T
1 male	0.004	0.023	0.98	(0.66, 1.34)	-0.1	0.98	(0.66, 1.34)	-0.1
2 female	-0.004*	0.023	1.04	(0.79, 1.21)	0.4	1.03	(0.79, 1.21)	0.3

An asterisk next to a parameter estimate indicates that it is constrained
 Separation Reliability Not Applicable
 Chi-square test of parameter equality = 0.04, df = 1
[^] Quick standard errors have been used

Looking closely at the interaction between the item and gender facets, item numbers 1, 2, 3, 8, 16, 19, 20, 24, 27, 29, 31, 38, and 42 (13 items) are relatively easier for males than females. Similarly, item numbers 12, 14, 15, 21, 26, 30, 33, 34, 35, 39, and 43 (11 items) are relatively easier for female than male students. All other items have the same ability. Furthermore, the significant chi-square (92.25, df=43) means that the test could not generally be considered as gender bias, because the number of items which exhibit DIF for both genders are almost the same. So, the mean score for the male students is not significantly higher than the female students.

School. Considering school as facet of the test to determine if the test items are functioning differently for students from different schools, table 3 shows that University B performs better than Universities A, C and D respectively.

Table 5. Parameter estimates among schools

Variables	Unweighted Fit					Weighted Fit			
	school	Estimate	Error [^]	MNSQ	CI	T	MNSQ	CI	T
A	-0.303	0.031	1.00	(0.63, 1.37)	0.1	0.98	(0.63, 1.37)	-0.1	
B	0.600	0.030	1.06	(0.67, 1.33)	0.4	1.04	(0.67, 1.33)	0.2	
C	-0.613	0.034	1.01	(0.53, 1.47)	0.1	1.03	(0.53, 1.47)	0.1	
D	0.316*	0.055	1.07	(0.67, 1.33)	0.5	1.07	(0.67, 1.33)	0.4	

An asterisk next to a parameter estimate indicates that it is constrained
Separation Reliability = 0.997

Chi-square test of parameter equality = 813.44, df = 3, Sig Level = 0.000

[^] Quick standard errors have been used

The parameter estimates of -0.303, 0.600, -0.613, and 0.316 for Universities A, B, C, and D respectively mean that the test items were functioning positively for students from University B.

The actual parameter estimate for University B is more than 20 times larger than its standard error estimate so the difference between University B with other Universities is significant. This means that the students of University B find the test easy but it does not mean that they are high-performing students.

Similarly, the actual parameter estimate for University D is almost six times larger than its standard error and for University A it is almost 10 times larger.

These findings are consistent with the chi square value of 813.44 with 3 degrees of freedom.

Analyzing the interaction of the items and school facet, it is evident that there are items functioning differently for each school. However, these items are not consistently functioning differently for a specific university. This somehow affected the students' mean score.

This can be explained by what Bachman (1990) stressed that students' test scores are affected by some factors such as test method facets (testing environment, etc), attributes of test takers (cognitive style, etc) and unsystematic or random

factors which are unpredictable and largely temporary conditions such as mental alertness or emotional state.

Another factor that affects test scores is individual differences (Selinker, 1991) while Reves (1982) found out that aptitude (the rate at which second language learners learn a language) is first-rank predictor in an acquisition of a second language. Moreover, Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) believed that anxiety is another factor.

Sousa (2005) explained why no readers can be exactly alike. He found out thru functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) that skilled and novice readers have different neural pathways. For the skilled readers, visual information about the word is passed along to the word form region (occipito-temporal area) where all the linguistic and visual information about the word is generated. The lexical representation is quickly activated and a mental concept is formed. On the other hand, for novice readers, printed word stimulates the visual cortex, which passes the visual input information to the word analysis region (parieto-temporal area). He further explained that working with Broca's Area, these two networks slowly analyze the word for its constituent phonemes and pronunciation. Then a visual form is produced and the mental lexicon is activated to identify the word form and generate the concept of the word. If the lexicon cannot retrieve the word form, the visual cortex and coding areas may be reactivated to provide more input, thus slowing down the process.

During the interview of the researcher with teachers handling Eng. 1 classes, only University B requires its students to read and discuss two pocketbooks in one semester). It could be inferred that this high actual parameter estimate might be attributed to that requirement because that is additional input (Krashen, 1988). This could be supported by the finding of the study on The Effect of Exposure to Alternative Reading Materials on the Communicative Competence of College Freshmen done by Roble (1998). The finding states that students who were more exposed to alternative reading materials, which include pocketbooks among others, had above average level of communicative competence while those who were less exposed had average level.

This is the factor in the acquisition of second language which according to Ellis (1997) is input – the samples of language to which a learner is exposed because language learning cannot occur without some input.

The value of those materials was also recognized by Krashen (1993). His studies on reading that is assigned and recommended by teachers have proven that those materials can stimulate more free reading hence, develop the students' competence.

Ideally, however, each item in the test should not exhibit DIF but in reality all items will likely to behave in different ways for all subgroups and majority of items will show differential item functioning when the sample is large enough (Wu and Adams, 2002). Consequently, the decision to accept or reject an item based on DIF will still need to be made somewhat subjectively. This is what Hughes (2003) claimed that one can never have complete trust in any set of test scores because human beings do not behave in exactly the same way on every occasion even when the circumstances seem identical and we must accept it. He added that all he needs to do is construct, administer, and score tests in such a way that the scores actually obtained on a test on a particular occasion are likely to be similar to those which would have been obtained if it had been administered to the same students with the same ability but at different time.

Wu and Adams (2002) put forward some options how to deal with items functioning differently. One is to remove the item if there are sufficient numbers of items or treat the items as different set of items for different groups. In this way, DIF items will still contribute to the estimation of the level of autonomy for each group. However, care must be taken when developing a described autonomy scale for all groups. In other words, these items should not be used to compare the abilities of the students from each group because these items have different parameter estimates for different groups.

Item Characteristics and Students' Ability. The items meet the characteristics of the test because its reliability is very good for a classroom test, the discrimination indices are acceptable, the difficulty is slightly above the students' ability, the item fit is within confidence intervals, the language is clear, the construction of stem followed the principles of test construction, the options used are parallel, and the test is not gender-biased.

Figure 2 is the Distribution of Students and Items on a Continuum of Competence which shows that the test items targeted the sample of the students fairly well in terms of difficulty levels. It can also be seen that there was a wide range of item difficulties covering the range of abilities of the students tested as evident by the wide distribution of the items across the logit scale. Similarly, comparing the mean difficulty of the items to the mean ability of the students (which is constrained at zero by default), result shows that the mean difficulty was .419, which is slightly above the mean ability. This means that the test is considered a comprehensible input (Krashen, 1988) for the freshmen. And this is highly probable because Bachman (1990) explained that the language of a teacher-made test uses the teacher's language.

Another way of looking at item difficulty is by checking delta parameters of the items. Items with higher delta estimates are said to be more difficult than those items with lower delta values and vice versa (please see tables 3.1 and 3.2).

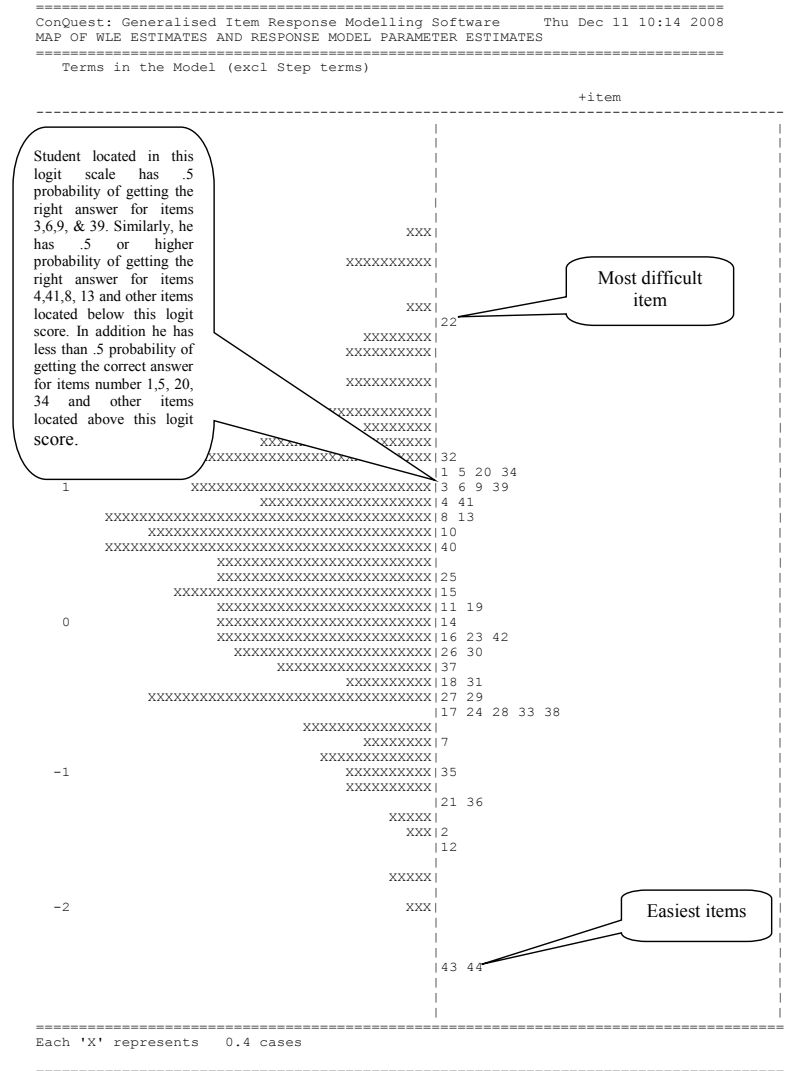


Figure 2. Distribution of students and items on a continuum of competence

This implies that teachers should start from those indicators in the beginner continuum because communicative competence is primarily sociolinguistic competence (Hymes, 1972 in Savignon, 1986).

Another indicator in the beginner continuum, identifying relationship between interlocutors, is worth noting because it is sociolinguistic in nature.

The intermediate continuum is a combination of linguistic and discourse competence indicators such as retrieving information, paraphrasing, reporting a speech, sequencing ideas using discourse markers, summarizing paragraphs, and asking for information. The students can now initiate in discourse.

This implies that the teachers should also teach students those indicators in the intermediate continuum because they are academically important for students because those indicators are the ones they use while reading in the content area (Rubin, 1992).

The advanced continuum starts with identifying purpose of notes but is later concentrated on the strategic competence such as writing a letter to inform, giving title to stories, responding in affirmative, and giving meaning to unknown words.

It is interesting to note that there are competencies that cut across all other competencies – retrieving information, inferring meaning, and giving meaning to unknown words. This means that at any level of the continuum, those competencies need to be taught.

This also implies that teachers should provide activities that would develop those competencies to achieve the goal of the second language classroom which is the development of the communicative competence of the students (Brown, 1994).

Clarity of Language. Clarity of language was rated 3 which means that the items observed principles on clear language to a large extent as suggested by Greenbaum (1991).

The test items observed clarity of language as suggested by Greenbaum (1991) as the subjects were not longer than the predicate, the modifiers were properly placed, parallelism was observed, and pronoun reference was clear.

The Model Communicative Competence Test. The communicative competence test is a 44-item test whose content was validated by experts and has a reliability of .81. Its construct validity was established using the Rasch Simple Logistic Model by ConQuest Software.

According to Harris (1977), a reading test should include at least 30 items

while Alderson, Clapham, and Wall (1995) recommended 40 or 50 items.

Taking into consideration the findings of Nitko (2001) that at the average, an item of a multiple test would require a student between 30-90 seconds depending on the complexity of the question, 40 questions are enough for a 1-hour test. It was also noted during the administration of the test that there were students who were not able to finish the test in 60 minutes. Hence, all the 44 items are presented below for the teacher to decide on the number of items for his/her students. They have been parametrized as suggested by testing experts.

Syllabus Enhancement. The result of the parametrization became the basis for enhancing the existing syllabus. The continuum of competence was considered so as to start from the easiest indicator to the most advanced. This is consistent with the theory of Bruner (1983) on cyclic learning's increasing complexity. It states that learning is an active, social process in which students construct new ideas or concepts based on their current knowledge. The student selects the information, forms hypothesis and then integrates this new material into their own existing knowledge and mental constructs and this is a continual process. He added that skills and knowledge are not acquired gradually but more in a staircase pattern which consists of spurts and rests. Spurts are caused by certain concepts "clicking", or being understood. These 'clicks' have to be mastered before others are acquired or before there is movement to the next step.

Glaser (1981) supported the theory of Bruner. The former advanced the development of assessment of proficiency on stages along progressions of increasing competence. Using that approach, he used a developmental continuum rather than a content domain. This implies that teachers and administrators should not be after the coverage of the subject but after the development of the competencies. Even if the coverage of the subject is not extensive, as long as the the students have mastered the competencies in a particular indicator of communicative competence, learning is still successful. The syllabus serves only as a guide not a law.

In the existing syllabus (please refer to Appendix I), the parameters listed were locational skills (scanning or skimming), note taking (summarizing, paraphrasing, transcoding), and discussion in academic setting while the missing parameters are formulating questions, test-taking strategies, following directions, and documentation.

The components of the existing syllabus are course number, course title, course description, terminal/ general objectives, course credit, enabling objectives, topic/content, method, materials, output, evaluation, and time frame while the

enhanced syllabus which is a combination of communicative and competency-based includes in its design the competence domain which is the expertise being developed; the competency continuum; the evidence requirements which are the performance indicators categorized to knowledge, skills, attitudes/values; task specification which are the students' activities in learning; assessment method which is the means to determine whether or not the objectives of a course have been achieved (Nunan, 1988); output which is the product of the task; the teaching method which is the orderly presentation of the material; the topic which is the content of the material and which could be changed anytime; and the time frame which specifies the term such a preliminary, midterm, and final. This format was suggested by Kern (1990) and Richards (2001).

Because tests should not be instructional afterthoughts (Burke, 2005), the communicative competence test above became the basis for enhancement of the existing Eng. 1 (Study and Thinking Skills) syllabus.

There is not much to be enhanced except for a few enabling objectives of the present syllabus which are specific but quite wordy. For example, at the end of the lesson, the students will be able to structure the text with maps to connect ideas and themes which is in short transcoding. To remedy that, the word transcode is used instead of structure in the enhanced syllabus. The competence domain, the competency continuum, and the evidence requirements which are the performance indicators categorized to knowledge, skills, attitudes/values were seen to have a need for enhancement. The three missing parameters especially formulating questions have been added because the seminal work of Bruder (1974) as based on her study found out that in order for the students to communicate, they need control of the question forms of each structure.

Gronlund (in Nunan, 1988) suggested that performance objectives will help teacher strike the correct balance in developing a course syllabus. He added that rewards in terms of more effective teaching, learning and evaluation is great. He was supported by Nunan (1988) and Kern (1990) who both stressed that in the field of general education, the use of performance objectives is a valid procedure.

The study of Shavelson and Stern (1981) on mainstream education indicates that most teachers simply do not plan their courses by starting with the generation of objectives but those who utilized objectives found that they have all the advantages suggested by Gronlund – effective teaching, learning and evaluation.

The design of the syllabus takes into consideration the principles of Communicative Approach which states that communicative activities are characterized with information gap, choice and feedback (Morrow, 1980).

An information gap exists where one person in an exchange knows something the other person does not; choice is not only about what to say but also how to say it; and feedback is anything – affirmative or negative – which the students receive after the performance.

Games were included in the enhanced syllabus because when students play a game, they receive feedback from the interlocutors. Errors are tolerated and seen as natural outcome of the development of communications skills.

The design followed what Krahnke (1988) suggested on syllabus design that one or two syllabus types should be dominant and one or two is secondary. During the enhancement, it was decided that the syllabus would be a combination of communicative and competency-based one. It is one of the outputs of the study and is presented below:

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A Phenomenological Hermeneutics on Jean-Paul Sartre and Gabriel Marcel's Freedom

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the respective positions of Jean-Paul Sartre and Gabriel Marcel, and the determination of the philosophic statuses of these positions. The intention of this investigation is to provide answers to the query of whether the respective phenomenologies of freedom proposed by Sartre and Marcel constitute a philosophy of freedom. For better understanding of the analyses, phenomenological hermeneutics method was employed to reflect that, taken as they stand, they do not. The reason is as compelling to avoid the reef of subjectivism. Oddly enough, these thinkers who differ so diametrically at the level of explicit statement agree on rejecting the type of reflective analysis that enables thought to surpass the plane of probability. Whether such reflection is mistakenly identified with an objectification of the subject and therefore refused, as in the case of Marcel, or it is falsely regarded as an aggravation of the for-itself constitutional self absence and therefore ignored as in the case of Sartre, the fact is that their rejection means nothing less than a rejection of scientific status. Sartre's failure to utilize a properly philosophic reflection is instructive as it first underscores the need of an essential type of reflection on method. Second, it establishes decisively the inability of phenomenological analysis to substitute for metaphysical analysis. Unlike Sartre, Marcel affirms the necessity of surpassing phenomenology through an exercise of reflection. A closer look at what he intends by reflection, however, makes it clear that he does not have philosophic reflection in mind. To say that the analyses of Sartre and Marcel are subjectivist is not to say that they are without interest for those philosophizing in the intellectual tradition of the west. Ultimate success of the collaborative effort depends upon an enlightened exchange – an exchange that does not stop at externals, but penetrates to dynamic intentions. If this effort to understand and evaluate the phenomenologies of freedom proposed by Sartre and Marcel furthers, however slightly, the progress of such an exchange, it is not without excuse.

KEYWORDS: Philosophy, freedom, human freedom, material freedom, existentialism, phenomenology

INTRODUCTION

In a world rapt by technological development, the difference between nature and art easily blurs; then all things – the human fact not accepted – are assimilated to the artifact. To be artifact is to be drained of mystery, fully fathomable, unreservedly subject to change, transformation, and destruction. When man sees himself and his world merely as artifact, he forgets what it means to be free.

Some contemporary thinkers are given merit for philosophizing man, world, and artifact in the manner of Kierkegaard. French existentialists, Gabriel Marcel and Jean-Paul Sartre, for instance, have reminded twentieth-century man that his being is not the thing-being of a robot but the free being of a responsible agent. Their analyses intend, more than anything else, the awakening of the slumbering liberties.

Some existentialists, chiefly Heidegger, Sartre, Marcel and Merleau-Ponty, employ the phenomenological method in their philosophizing and hence, they are frequently referred to as “phenomenological existentialists.” Sartre, in fact, subtitles his greatest work, *Being and Nothingness*, “An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology.”

The emphasis which phenomenological existentialists place on singular, lived experiences, explains why certain literary forms like novel, play, diary and autobiography have become so popular among the exponents of these postures. The argument is made that the best means of attaining the truly universal is by describing one's own individual experiences, since in every spiritual experience, a concrete I is involved.

Marcel and Sartre's analyses are not submitted as simple reminders or exhortations, but they are proffered as ontological analyses of human freedom. They answer the question: What is the true and ultimate meaning of human freedom? However, they may be asked of some questions: Are their analyses more than simple reminders? Do they constitute a philosophy of human freedom? The resolution of these problems is precisely the objective of the present study.

Likewise, existentialism does not compromise the importance of the philosophical learning gained through the observations of the early Greek thinkers. This is through the realization that man is not abandoned in this world; he is not the standard of everything. On the contrary, a philosophical outlook driven by the principle of pure objectivity which states that everything external to a thinking subject must be considered as sheer objects must be untenable and, to the excess, not viable. Philosophers who uphold this kind of philosophical line

are branded of solipsism which views that nothing exists except of one's own self and the contents of its consciousness. Consequently, it mostly leads to ideas like isolation, egocentricity, meaninglessness and other self-centered viewpoint in life. Thus, it will result to an unhappy way of living depicted by regrets – an example of lack besides a mistaken understanding of human existence.

Study Objectives. This study intended to explain the human freedom using the phenomenologies of Jean Paul Sartre and Gabriel Marcel based on the following questions: What is the true and ultimate meaning of human freedom? Do Marcel and Sartre phenomenologies constitute a philosophy of human freedom?

This study offers a contribution both in development and further popularization of existentialist movement particularly in enriching its theme on freedom. This work likewise gives a stage to different analysts who are intrigued by and engaged to existential and contemporary issues. This qualitative study is also of pertinence to the government workers and citizens, among others, as this study helps to analyze the actions that will guide the people towards peace and harmony.

Theoretical Lens. Existentialism is one of the most difficult and elusive concepts to define. The term itself is surrounded by a certain amount of confusion, ambiguity and lack of precision. Part of the difficulty is due to the fact that the word “existentialism” is applied to the postures of a number of widely disparate philosophers, whose thought ranges the full spectrum from Soren Kierkegaard's intensely theistic commitment to Christianity, all the way to Jean Paul Sartre's categorical denial of the existence of God and of all spiritual reality. As a result, the same term is used to describe both theistic and atheistic stances which are absolutely contradictory and diametrically opposed to each other.

Existentialism emphasizes individual existence, freedom, and choice. The diversity of positions with primordial emphasis on concrete individual existence and consequently on subjectivity, individual freedom and choice, however, makes it impossible to define existentialism (Aronson, May 2006).

This difficulty of defining existentialism is supported by some of the leading existential scholars. Walter Kaufmann (Krapiec, 1985) says that existentialism is not a school of thought or reducible to any set of tenets. Some of the difficulty in defining existentialism results from the characteristics of the philosophy itself.

From contemporary nihilism, Sartre appropriates Heidegger's *Dasein* and renames it *Being-For-Itself* or consciousness which creates itself through

the choices it makes. Likewise, he acknowledges the opposition or dichotomy represented by being and nothing and translates it into his celebrated opposition between Being-In-Itself and Being-For-Itself (Webbs, 1952).

Stack (1971) in speaking of Sartre's existentialism makes the following evaluation: "Existentialism remains fundamentally a creed of frustration in the midst of fulfillment. For Sartre, the act of transcendence negates itself in the very process of materialization, trickles out and dies. It must be followed by a fresh exertion of creative revolt which, in turn, will not reach its goal.

Reinhardt (1953) finds Sartre guilty of several unfounded and arbitrarily stated assertions. Particularly in the case of Sartre's greatest work. Among such postulatory and unproven points are the concepts of Being-in-itself and Being-for-itself; the reduction of human existence to the sphere of consciousness; the contention of an aboriginal state of hate and strife between man and man; the way the concept of 'nothingness' is used.

Sciacca (1975) underlines the skepticism and the atheism in Sartre's philosophy; he also calls Jean Paul a moralist. He observes, "As a moralist Sartre does not believe in good actions for he holds that virtues are the alibi for vices, and that men preach them without practicing them.

Manser (2017) in his study of Sartre's philosophy complains of the tendency to reduce all moral action to the level of arbitrary decision. Given this, it would seem that meaning is given to the action only after the decision is made. For Sartre, it would appear that the meaning is subsequent to the decision, in which case it is impossible to know what is being decided.

Accordingly, human person is characterized as Being-For-Itself, which he identifies with consciousness. All other entities besides man, which lacks human consciousness, belong to the antithetical class of beings namely, Being-In-Itself. In the examination of Human person i.e. Being-For-Itself, one should consider first Being-For-Itself as consciousness. It is essentially consciousness and consciousness is always of something. In the preliminary remarks in his *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre describes the fundamental relation between consciousness (Being-For-Itself) and object (Being-In-Itself). Consciousness always presupposes an object of which it is conscious. The examination of Sartre's brand of existentialism is developed under the aspect of Being-For-Itself, while he maintains that, the first two modes of being (Being-For-Itself and Being-In-Itself) divide all reality (Warnock, 1970).

Jean-Paul Sartre maintains the non-stability of human nature. According to him, man is not what he is, inasmuch as he is a being who is not now, what his past has been. At the same time, man is what he is not, for he is not yet

the determined future. He will stand as a kind of nothingness of pure existence between his accomplishments, which are now history, and his future projects are still undetermined. The present becomes meaningful only in the light of what has already been achieved, and that remains to be accomplished (Blackham, 1952).

Lafarge (1970) writes that man's existence does not precede essence opposed to Sartre's view that existence activates nothing that pre-exists it. It means that one would exist but he would be nothing; he would exist, but he would not have human nature.

Schaldenbrand (1960) speaks that freedom is always considered as the specific quality of being human. It explains that man has a choice: to be or not to be, to do or not to do. Other living beings merely follow a path pre-set by their nature, but human beings do not have a plan to follow or if they have one, they can by means of freedom, a choice to subvert that plan. Some thinkers find difficulty to accept the existence of human freedom, especially when this freedom could be used to subvert god's will. She cited Sartre who asked why god endowed man with freedom to only thwart His plans. In *The Flies*, which she cited, Sartre presumed that god might commit a mistake by endowing man with freedom because by means of freedom, man can disobey Him. In the end, she said, to use one's freedom correctly means salvation; to use it wrongly is one's damnation.

Sartre maintains his affirmation that existence precedes essence is not at all a denial of consciousness as constitutive. He strongly protests the Husserlian equation of man's consciousness with a transcendental ego. Sartre argues that the empirical ego is created by consciousness, but he goes far beyond the phenomenological data when he ascribes its creation to an absolute (Schaldenbrand, 1960).

On the contrary, Desan (1954) opposes Sartre's position on existence that it precedes essence. According to him, Sartre maintains that Being-for-Itself is equated with consciousness or human condition is free from stability and fullness of the Being-In-Itself. With this, Desan argues that Sartre refuses to consider human reality as an essence because Being-For-Itself is Absolute and indefinable freedom.

Massley (2005) argues that one can combine several interpretations to arrive at the best understanding of Sartre's treatment of consciousness. She states that such an understanding treats consciousness as the state of affairs i.e., its facticity transcends itself towards its correlative objects. In the end, one must utilize certain aspect of Husserl's description of consciousness, a description that Sartre rejects.

After having examined some of the salient features of Sartre's existentialist postures, we shall now attempt to locate Marcel's philosophical perspective, as

well as to arrive at some sort of evaluation of his contribution.

Heinemann (1944) feels that one of the greatest contributions which Marcel has made to contemporary thought is the bringing to the fore a genuine philosophy of Hope. In answer to Jean-Paul Sartre's atheistic existentialism of godlessness, nausea and despair, Gabriel Marcel shows that there is a more genuine form of existentialism, namely, a theistic Christian existentialism. Marcel challenges Sartre's contention that man is doomed to live out his life in an absurd world, endlessly plotting to make an object of another Being-for-itself, at the same time running the risk of becoming himself entrapped and pulverized by the menacing other.

Mihalich (1961) praises Marcel for preserving the dignity of man by emphasizing the close connection between the human being and God, the Absolute Thou. Whereas Sartre consider man's existence as absolutely meaningless and futile, Marcel holds that human life has dignity, content and purpose.

Reinhardt (1953), in his highly sympathetic evaluation of Marcel's contributions, praises the French existentialist for criticizing incisively not only idealism but also rationalism and positivism. But he tempers his praise with the following qualifications: The critique of Marcel could be even more convincing, if it were implemented by a more positive acknowledgment of the legitimacy of certain indispensable objective and rational requisites and categories of any strictly philosophic and metaphysical reflection which refuses to be led into the blind alleys either fideism or agnosticism.

Sciacca (1975) pays Marcel the highest tribute when he says, "Of all the forms of existentialism, Marcel's is the only one that does not refuse but, rather, fulfills the experience of a Christian existence. Sciacca goes on to say that, on such a basis, it becomes absolutely impossible for Marcel to oppose the atheistic existentialism of Jean Paul Sartre. Sciacca says, we cannot tell Jean Paul Sartre that he is wrong or in error because we would have to demonstrate it, that is, we would have to objectivate, to discourse and to mediate the original immediateness.

Bouillard (1950), offers us the following insights: "Marcel justly criticizes the degraded forms of intelligence and objective knowledge that have given birth to the various kinds of positivism. This criticism would be still more convincing, if it were accompanied by a positive appreciation of objective and impersonal thought at its different levels, which would bring out, at the same time, by immanent reflection its essential role and its limitations.

Finally, Troisfontaines (1963), to whom Marcel confided the task of putting into organized form the main tenets of his philosophy, gives us a very penetrating point of the shortcomings of a phenomenology as a basis for metaphysics. It

would seem that these delineations underscore best what the authorities, whom we have cited, have tried to say. Troisfontaines writes, "In regard to phenomenology itself, several points of view are possible. While it constitutes an excellent method of explanation and illustration, it does not provide the basis for a universal metaphysics.

Each one claims to be right from his own viewpoint. Who will decide? Who will show where truth and goodness lie, or where, on the contrary, there is perversion?

Freedom of choice, through which each human being makes his own nature, is one of the essential themes. As a result, individuals are free to choose their own path; they have argued that they must allow the risk and responsibility of their actions. Those who follow this believe they are in a world that does not always make sense, a world that is filled with uncertainty where well-intended actions can become obscure and disorganized. In basic existentialist beliefs, "man is the only animal defining itself through life. Without life, there is no meaning. Existentialists believe in life and fighting for it.

Existentialism upholds that life is a series of choices. Some decisions are devoid of pessimistic results. Some things are irrational or absurd, without explanation. If one makes a decision, he or she must follow through. Also, that of anxiety, or the sense of anguish, a generalized uneasiness, and a fear or dread is not directed to any specific object. Anguish is the dread of the emptiness of human existence. Moreover, that of absurdity, an existentialist would say 'I am my own existence, but this existence is absurd'. To exist as a human being is unfathomable and absurd. Everyone is simply here, thrown into this time and place. Thus, one's existence has no reason, without necessary connection. One's life is an absurd fact.

Tillich (2006) in his study entitled, *Existentialism and Psychotherapy*, makes the following observation concerning Sartre's rejection of a human essence and emphasizes the absolute dependence of existentialism on an existentialist's doctrine. He likewise writes that there are, however, only rare moments in this vast development in which an almost pure existentialism has reached. An example is Sartre's doctrine of man stating that man is what he acts to be.

Roberts (2006) in his work, *Existentialism and Religious Belief* accuses Sartre of outright dishonesty. He argues that Sartre deceives when he refuses to talk about essential human nature. He discusses on universal human condition in connection with the fact that all men have to exist in the world of mortals along with other people. Roubiczek (2006) likewise criticizes Sartre's rejection of the notion of essence in preference to existence. Citing Sartre, man is not merely

developing his personalities by understanding different aspects of one's human nature, but creating himself entirely.

Foulquie (2006) criticizes Sartre's claim that man makes or chooses his own essence. He points out Sartre's failure to distinguish between the universal essence and the individual essence. Macann (1993), however, discusses that man is never an individual but a universal singular, metalized and universalized by his epoch. According to him, Sartre's process is the opposite of the classical meaning of universalizing.

Collins (1952), on the other hand, expresses that the exemplar notion is not a type wherein it accords with which finite individuals are immobilize. It represents the entire being of the creature in its unique existential act and individual traits, as well as in its essential nature. In such a case, there is a simultaneous co-existence of the real individual essence and the act of existence. Collins points out that Sartre's basic existentialist thesis implies a logical difficulty, for it is impossible to be without being something.

Desan (1965) and Levy (2002) point out that as an abstract notion, human essence is a group of abstract characters found in each of the existentialistic situations. Brown (2005) argues that Sartre and Foucault on the issue of freedom occur at different stages in their totality. By proceeding with a critical intention in mind, this book provides an interpretative analysis that elucidates three important similarities between Sartre and Foucault. In short, the implications of their refusal to introduce an idea of the good into the social field show that both reduce the status of freedom to a negative concept.

In view of this, the researchers attempt to scrutinize Jean Paul Sartre and Gabriel Marcel phenomenologies of freedom with emphasis on Human Freedom.

This study was limited to analyzing Jean-Paul Sartre and Gabriel Marcel's notions and meanings of freedom. This analysis is anchored in exploring the views of these philosophers with regard to these themes: empirical freedom, ontological freedom, and moral freedom. This paper consists of two main divisions: (a) presentation of the respective positions of Jean-Paul Sartre and Gabriel Marcel, and (b) determination of the philosophic status of these positions. For better understanding of the analyses, phenomenological hermeneutics method was employed.

METHODS

Research Design. The research design used for explaining the human freedom was qualitative. In this method, we explained the true and ultimate meaning of human freedom and phenomenologies of freedom that constitute the philosophy of Marcel and Sartre.

The method used in analysing Jean-Paul Sartre and Gabriel Marcel's Phenomenologies of Freedom was Phenomenological Hermeneutics. According to Warnke (1987), it is applied to draw out intelligibly the meanings of texts or text analogue for better understanding. So, in this study, extensive reading of Sartre and Marcel's works, commentaries and adequate philosophical interpretations were made. Besides, data gathering and philosophical thinking were used for a genuine philosophical discipline and integrity.

Data Sources. The data sources of this study were deposited from the University of the Philippines-Diliman, Ateneo de Manila University, De La Salle University-Taft, University of Santo Tomas, University of San Agustin, Silliman University, and University of San Carlos. These included the primary sources, secondary sources, general references, scholarly journals, monographs and documents.

Trustworthiness of the Study. This study observed the crux of establishing trustworthiness by applying the principles of transferability, dependability, confirmability, and credibility.

At first, the researchers ensured transferability as the first principle by supporting the discussion on the generalization of findings with supplementary texts and references. We also enhanced with the use of disciplinal, inter-disciplinal and multi-disciplinal approach the findings (Glesne & Peshkin, 1999) through instruction, symposia, conferences, and textbook publication.

Second, in place of dependability as the second principle, the concept of reliability in philosophical research paradigms was employed. Some common qualitative strategies such as audit trails, thick-rich description, in establishing the study's trustworthiness were also utilized.

Third, to ensure confirmability as the third principle, the researchers observed objectivity in using references. Several sources of data were used such as, primary sources, secondary sources, and general references. For corroboration, we examined and cross-checked the texts obtained from these sources.

Lastly, to ensure the credibility as the fourth principle, we referred to the believability of the findings and enhanced evidence such as confirming evaluation, conclusions by philosophy scholars, convergence of multiple sources of reference, investigation of unsolicited textbook publications, and philosophical soundness.

Role of the Researchers. As researchers, the following roles were performed in conducting this study. At first, we played the role of a reader who did a close reading of written texts taken from different books and references on the subject. Then, we outlined some notes in parallel with philosophical validation. Finally, the outline in a full written discourse using the IMRAD format were developed.

Data Collection and Analysis. The researchers analyzed the data from books and references with philosophical appropriation, data management, and reading, classification and interpretation (Creswell, Hanson, Plano, & Morales, 2007). Then, we underscored key terms and phrases in the photocopied references, field notes, and documents as these could facilitate in recalling them while writing the analysis and interpretation of the data. Lastly, we properly cited the sources of information relevant in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Marcel and Sartre regard themselves as phenomenologists as they make constant use of phenomenological techniques. But, they somehow differ in their construction of phenomenological analyses. Marcel is opposed to a scientific philosophy as he is not concerned with the construction of scientific philosophy. Sartre, on the other hand, is concerned with scientific phenomenology as his moral intent is the deliverance of man from ready-made values or, better, the salvation of man through acceptance of freedom as sovereign value.

Jean-Paul Sartre's Approaches to Freedom. It is important to recognize what Sartre intends by "human essence." That in man which corresponds to an essence, he claims, is his past. Only because man has a history may he be said to have an essence. But man has a history only because he is over freely projecting himself toward future possibilities. In strict rigor, therefore, man's essence is simply a residue, a result, a solidification of the eminently free and fluid temporalizing spontaneity that he is. In short human reality is not an entity but a process.

It follows that an analysis of Sartrean freedom can have but one object: the free dynamism, which is one with man's being. Yet nothing precludes a successive viewing of that single reality in accordance with deepening levels of penetration. Three such viewings constitute this effort of comprehension. At a first and immediate level, that of psychic process, freedom is embodied in empirical acts. At a deeper level, that of being, it is grasped in its ground or reason. In the final viewing, that of value, freedom's ethical significance is revealed.

Empirical Freedom: Freedom as Psychic Process. In considering freedom from the viewpoint of action, Sartre seems to be especially intent upon establishing two points: (a) all psychic processes are intentional, hence, free modes of behaviour. (b) Each of these free behavioural modes points to an "original choice."

His effort to establish the first point comprises three steps: (a) first of all, Sartre tries to show that action, as distinguish from simple movements, is intentional. (b) Secondly, he seeks to prove that intentional acts cannot be determined by physical or psychological causes. At this stage, he presents his critique of radical determinism. That his critique be properly understood as a defense of the freedom of all psychic acts, however, Sartre moves quickly into the third phrase of his argument. (c) All modes of human behaviour – passional conduct, for example, an imaginative activity – are intentional and, therefore, free. Since his position is evidently opposed to traditional theories which regard acts of will as sole instances of free action, Sartre is constrained to take up the question of free will. Within the context of a critique of the "restricted determinism" persisting in free will theories, Sartre strive to establish his second major objective: Free will, along with other behavioural modes, presupposes and points to an "original choice." Not before but identical with its concrete expressions, this original choice is nonetheless their purpose.

Ontological Freedom: Freedom as Lack. Originally, ontological freedom can hardly be reached in a single leap. A difficult objective, it imposes a gradual approach. Hence, this summary proceeds step-wise: (a) Man negates the in-itself of his past and his situation because as consciousness he determines himself not to be the being which he reveals: to be conscious is not to be what one is and to be what one is not. (b) In the manner of a lack, man exists the "is not" of consciousness: What he lacks is the substantial being which would transform his phantom-being of "presence to" into a full, positive, and transparent self-identity. (c) Precisely as a lack of being, human reality is altogether desired of

being: Not the contingent in-itself of everyday encounters, however, but an in-itself which would be to itself its own foundation is the true object of desire. (d) Fulfilment of this desire is absolutely impossible: As consciousness, human reality is of necessity a lack; fulfilled human reality is no longer human reality. (e) Yet, however unrealizable, the desire of aseity continues to haunt man as his supreme value and ultimate possibility: "To be man means to reach toward being God." (f) Although the meaning of desire is ultimately the "project of being God," human reality is not submitted to a necessity of essence: The original choice which expresses desire and which is one with man's being is free, unique, concrete, and unconditional.

Moral Freedom: Freedom as Value. When man chooses freedom as his absolute, he chooses himself absolutely because he is himself freedom. But, precisely as freedom, he is ambiguous being that "is what it is not and is not what it is." To choose himself as freedom, therefore, is to assume ambiguity. It is not merely to accept but to maintain and will both the "is" and "is not" that defines him.

What this commitment means can be summarized in the terms "engagement" and "transcendence." Man is what is what he is not. As consciousness, he is always "of" something, always "hooked on" to some in-itself in Sartre's preferred terminology, man is of necessity "engaged," of necessity a "choice." Nor is his engagement an egoistical affair. By his choice, man chooses the world and everything in the world.

Gabriel Marcel's Approaches to Freedom. Gabriel Marcel's take on freedom differs from Jean-Paul Sartre: "psychic process" is replaced by "action," for Marcel regards freedom as peculiar to certain acts of a definite sort rather than as coextensive with conscious process generally; "being" supplants "lack," since Marcel maintains that freedom is rooted in the superabundance peculiar to spiritual being rather than in the void; "fulfilment" succeeds "value," because Marcel acknowledges freedom as desirable in its own right only to the extent that it serves the achievement of the free person.

Empirical Freedom: Freedom and Action. To Marcel's mind, the fact of freedom is beyond dispute. Not that he claims to observe freedom as a datum. A datum is observed because it is present as an object, and it seems evident to Marcel that freedom is not present as an object. Rather, it is decided in the act. Precisely as decided, it is indubitable. No outsider is qualified to judge the decision by

which a self asserts his freedom. In the lived experiences of his act, the agent definitively knows himself as free. Ultimately, then, his assertion is inseparable from the consciousness that he has of himself. Of itself that consciousness suffices.

Yet Marcel is far from identifying freedom and consciousness in the Sartrean manner. On the contrary, he insists that relatively few conscious acts are free. Mere velleities, for example, cannot lay claim to freedom, for they do not reach to the real world; they modify nothing. Nor is every act effective of change in the real world thereby free. Madmen and idiots modify their respective environments considerably, but their unreasonable acts are not judged free. Neither are acts performed with knowledge but under duress judged free, although they, too, alter given situations. From these reservations, it appears that Marcel limits the specification "free" to acts possessing the notes of effectivity, awareness, and nonconstraint.

Ontological Freedom: Freedom and Being. That Sartre correctly grounds free process in a certain noncoincidence of the human structure, Marcel readily admits. Man is not equivalent to his being as a stone is equivalent to its being. What Marcel will not concede; however, is that this noncoincidence is to be interpreted solely in terms of the void. Where, in fact, Sartre sees "deterioration of coincidence," hence lack of being, he sees triumph over limitative determinateness, hence superabundance of being.

Superabundance derives from this: Man is by essence a free and conscious participant in the ontological dimension of things. What follows is an attempt to understand the precise meaning of, as well as the reason for, such a definition of a human mode. Accordingly, three variations on the theme of human being's noncoincident, participative structure are singled out for summarization: Man is immediately plunged in existence, a life-situation, a self-life. With none of these is he identical, for in each of them he participates. That is to say, each of them contains virtualities of ontological development which man, by his free creativity, must bring to actuality.

Moral Freedom: Freedom and Fulfillment. In discussing the existential conditions of freedom's discovery and fulfilment, Marcel elaborates a notion basic to his entire philosophy, namely, the notion of intersubjectivity. A first and obvious meaning of intersubjectivity concerns the relation of communion among or between independently subsisting subjects. That the term bears a second and subtler sense, however, is clearly implied in the description of achieved freedom as a mode of self-being. To be free is both to recognize and to engage

creatively the profound self of being in preference to, or in despite of, other superficial self-modalities. There is no need, it seems, to insist on the equivalence of intersubjectivity taken in its less obvious sense and freedom understood as securing the inner order of the self.

Yet existential recognition of the self as intersubjective is difficult. The very circumstances in which individual lives unfold tend to make men strangers to themselves. For this reason, Marcel makes intersubjective communion with others a prior condition of self-communion: True understanding of his own intersubjective structure is approached by a self only indirectly, that is, through communion with a "thou" who loves him at the profound level of his self-being and who thereby discovers to him his subjectivity in its uniqueness and depth.

Critical Evaluation and Conclusions. Regarded in their result, the analyses of Sartre and Marcel oppose each other remarkably: To Sartre the very existence of a self seems a major threat to freedom; to Marcel the fulfilment of the self is precisely the main purpose of freedom. For Sartre being and value exist in rigorous dependence upon freedom; for Marcel freedom exist in rigorous dependence upon being and value. In Sartre's view the existence of an absolute Being means the death of human freedom; in Marcel's view, human freedom is absolutely unintelligible apart from such a being. Doubtless one fundamental opposition underlies all others: For Sartre freedom is negation, for Marcel freedom is affirmation.

Differences as deep as these are the more remarkable when it is remembered that Sartre and Marcel agree on a common method, specifically, the phenomenological method. Both set out to describe the human experience of freedom as it appears to consciousness. Each claim to reveal the ontological meaning of the freedom-experience through discovery of its basic structure.

On the first question: what is the true and ultimate meaning of human freedom? Both philosophers regarded this question differently. Sartre viewed freedom as negative while Marcel regards freedom as affirmation. Sartre categorically insists that man is an unconditioned freedom because he is a nothingness of being. What the phenomenological analyses of Sartre actually authorize is the conclusion that human reality introduces form into the formless plenitude of being in-itself. What is more, the descriptions of the form-giving process reveal man as a being that foresees, compare, and abstracts. If it is legitimate to speak of such a being as an "absolute lack," a "pure privation," then words have lost their meanings. To Marcel's mind, liberty is unthinkable except in terms in terms of "consent of being." That his affirmative position is superior

to the negative stand of Sartre follows from these two facts: (a) Affirmation, not negation, is the core of willing. A thirst for a good that would be in every respect good, man affirms before he denies and denies only when because he affirms. (b) A freedom articulated with being has somewhere to go and something to be. As much cannot be said for a liberty whose essential condition is disjunction from being.

To the question: Do the phenomenologies of freedom proposed by Sartre and Marcel constitute a philosophy of freedom? The answer is now clear. Taken as they stand, they do not. The reason is as compelling to avoid the reef of subjectivism.

Peculiarly, these thinkers who differ so diametrically at the level of explicit statement agree in this: Both reject the type of reflective analysis that enables thought to surpass the plane of probability. Whether such reflection is mistakenly identified with an objectification of the subject and therefore refused, as in the case of Marcel, or whether it is falsely regarded as an aggravation of the for-itself's constitutional self-absence and therefore ignored as in the case of Sartre, the fact is that its rejection means nothing less than a rejection of scientific status.

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**Students' Knowledge, Awareness, Appreciation and
Manifestation of the Signpost IGNITES of the University
of the Immaculate Conception College Department**

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ABSTRACT

The administrators of the University of the Immaculate Conception College Department initiated programs designed to guide students in handling today's materialistic culture and strengthening their essence; one of which is the development of the college signpost IGNITES, an acrostic for seven values – integrated, God-centered, nationalistic, innovative, transformative, excellence and service-oriented. This study investigated the students' knowledge, awareness, appreciation, and manifestation of the signpost IGNITES and the values it embodies. Further, it determined existence of significant relationships between the variables, and significant differences in the students' appreciation and manifestation of IGNITES when they are grouped according to their profile. By descriptive correlation design, validated and reliability-tested researcher-made questionnaires were used to gather data from 333 college students selected through stratified random sampling. The results revealed that the students are highly knowledgeable about, extremely aware of, extremely appreciate, and evidently manifest the IGNITES. Further, students' knowledge of the signpost significantly influences their appreciation ($r^2=.078$, $p < .01$) and manifestation ($r^2=.076$, $p < .01$), while their awareness significantly affect their appreciation ($r^2=.495$, $p < .01$) and manifestation ($r^2=.451$, $p < .01$) of the IGNITES values. Compared to male students, the female students are more appreciative of the signpost, hence manifest more the IGNITES values. The implementation of the signpost in terms of the students' appreciation and manifestation is equally effective across different courses, religious affiliations, length of stay in UIC, and age of the students.

KEYWORDS: Organizational values, knowledge and awareness, appreciation, manifestation, college students, correlation, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The University of the Immaculate Conception (UIC) is a private Catholic university run by the Religious of the Virgin Mary (RVM) in Davao City which traces its roots to the foundational community of Venerable Ignacia del Espiritu Santo in 1684. For more than a century since its foundation in 1905, UIC has produced thousands of students according to the ideals of a Catholic school.

When the University's vision and mission were revised through a process consultation, the College Department decided to take on the signpost IGNITES which stands for Integrated, God-centered, Nationalistic, Innovative, Transformative, Excellent, and Service-Oriented, in order to guide programs and activities. On February 15, 2006, when the deans articulated goals peculiar to their respective programs and synthesized these into integrity-laden, globally competitive quality achievers, the understanding of IGNITES evolved. Each value articulated in the signpost is intended to counter the prevailing issues of the time: inconsistency and dichotomy between word and action, materialism and over concern for worldly things, pervading colonial mentality, distrust and disbelief in one's capacities, toxic presence, mediocrity, and self-propelling interest (Agda, 2006). Faculty and middle administrators who participated in the visioning workshops focused on the values they hoped to be part of the UICian character, and identified a set of indicators for each value.

On July 1, 2006, a survey on the IGNITES values with the College Department students revealed interesting results. Overall, excellence, God-centeredness, and being service oriented were the top-three values prevailing in the College Community (Agda, 2006). Moreover, innovativeness got the lowest rating with females, while integrated got the lowest rating with males. For the Theology group, integrated was ranked last while the English group ranked it first. All age brackets from 20-70 ranked excellence first. Then and now, the challenge of UIC College Department is bridging theory and practice and to examine where in the process of education and formation needs the most strengthening in order to produce not only integrity-laden, globally competitive quality achievers but authentic Ignacian Marian leaders.

The advent of technology created a new challenge to the values of the students. Wilson (2007) and Coomes (2004) stressed that history and popular culture play an important role in shaping the values, beliefs, attitudes, and worldviews of individuals and groups. Values are shaped by environmental and social factors. Values are personal and have a significant impact on how college students respond and interact with the world around them (Wilson, 2007;

Coomes, 2004). Moreover, values are acquired either through listening or seeing or the combination of the two. This generation's students' constant affair with their cellular phones and laptops made materialism and lack of concern for others the dominant values. Participation in school activities became superficial. It is noticeable that they do not even stop for a while and reflect during morning praise and other prayer periods. Some Catholic students do not attend first Friday and feast day Masses. They participate in the community extension programs of the school for the sake of completion. All of these are manifestations of students lacking awareness of the IGNITES framework. These should not be left uncorrected because they are the concrete output of the academes' vision, mission and goals. With these understanding, it is important to revisit the IGNITES signpost of the College department.

Theoretical Framework and Lenses. This study is anchored on Value Theory conceptualized by Western sociologists Max Weber, Émile Durkheim, Talcott Parsons and Jürgen Habermas. As a foundation of a learning paradigm, this framework is concerned with personal values which are popularly held by a community, and how these values might change under particular conditions. Along this line, UIC has been envisioning itself as a Catholic university which aims to participate in the transformation of the society in response to the signs of the times; thus it has identified specific values for its students to imbibe within themselves to meet the noble mission of serving others, respecting the dignity of the person, working for justice and promoting Filipino values and culture, among others.

This school of thought is also in line with John Dewey's pragmatic theory that there is goodness as the outcome of ethic valuation, which may be refined or rejected based on its consistency with other objectives or as a means to objectives already held. This idea implies that moral values are also based on a learning process, and are never intrinsic or absolute. In particular, UIC has pledged to provide quality Ignacian-Marian education to mold students to be Ignacian-Marian leaders of faith, excellence and service wherever they are at all times. This action research is also founded on the philosophy of education and curriculum theory which explains that value choices is at the foundation of all curriculum decisions. Dewey (1943) argued that the values of a school are a reflection of the society and that values are relative to the social situation of a country. Such a relation between philosophical values and the curriculum means that some system of values, held and applied more or less consistently within an educational system, affects all areas of curriculum and instruction.

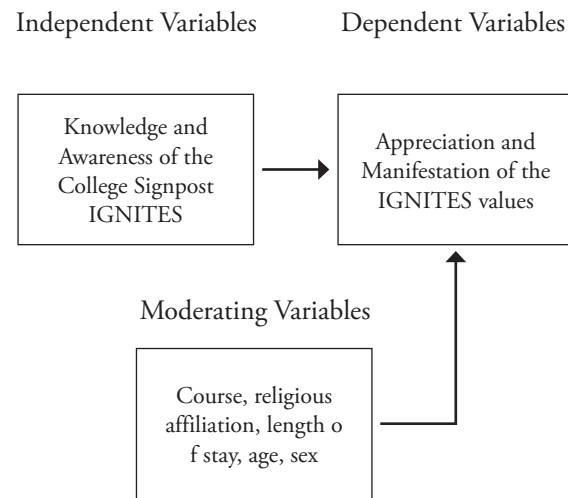


Figure 1. Conceptual framework showing the variables of the study

Conceptual Framework. As depicted in figure 1, the college students' knowledge and awareness of the signpost IGNITES serve as the independent variables while their appreciation and manifestation of the values embodied in the signpost are the dependent variables. The respondents' profile such as course, religious affiliation, length of stay, age, and sex are regarded as moderating variables that might affect their appreciation and manifestation of the IGNITES values. This study theorizes that the level of knowledge and awareness of the philosophy in IGNITES promoted by the school would lead to an evident appreciation and manifestation of the virtues enumerated in the signpost.

Study Objectives. This study aimed to determine the UIC College students' level of knowledge and awareness of the college signpost IGNTES as well as their degrees of appreciation and manifestation of being integrated, God-centered, nationalistic, innovative, transformative, excellent and service-oriented. Further, this investigation tested the null hypotheses (H_0) that there are no significant relationships among the students' knowledge and awareness with their appreciation and manifestation of the IGNITES values, and that there are no significant differences in the respondents' appreciation and manifestation of IGNITES when they are grouped according to their profile

METHOD

Research Design. The researchers utilized quantitative approach, specifically correlation design to establish the relationship of knowledge and awareness of the students of the college signpost with their appreciation and manifestation of the values embodied in the signpost. This associational approach assessed whether the students' level of knowledge and awareness of the college signpost is directly related to the degree by which the students appreciate and manifest them not only within UIC but in the entire community of Davao City.

Research Locale and Respondents. This study was conducted in the two college campuses of UIC in Father Selga and Bonifacio streets which together house 10 academic programs, namely Accountancy and Business Administration, Education, Engineering and Architecture, Information Technology Education, Nutrition Dietetics/Hospitality Management/Tourism Management, Liberal Arts, Medical Laboratory Science, Music, Nursing, and Pharmacy/Chemistry. Using stratified random sampling, the researchers selected 333 students proportionately from all of the programs, as shown in table 1. However, only 230 filled out questionnaires were retrieved due to the students' failure to return the questionnaires during the one month period that the researchers allotted for data gathering. Only third year to fifth year students were included in the sampling on the basis of the assumption that those who have stayed for at least three years in UIC have most likely manifested the virtues both consciously and unconsciously at certain instances of their being a student of the Ignacian-Marian institution.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents

Program Courses	3 rd year	4 th year	5 th
Accountancy	5	3	0
Accounting Technology	10	8	0
Bachelor of Arts	16	10	0
Business Administration	27	24	0
Chemistry	1	1	0
Civil Engineering	5	4	2
Clinical Pharmacy	0	0	5
Computer Engineering	3	3	3
Computer Science	1	1	0
Electronics & Communications Engineering	4	4	2
Elementary Education	4	2	0
Hotel and Restaurant Management	10	12	0
Information Technology	14	19	0
Medical Laboratory Science	32	26	0
Music	4	3	0
Nursing	0	2	0
Nutrition and Dietetics	3	3	0
Pharmacy	29	18	0
Physical Education	0	0	0
Secondary Education	5	5	0
Subtotal	173	148	12
Grand Total			333

Research Instruments. The instruments utilized in this study were two sets of researcher-made questionnaires, which were subjected to validity and reliability testing. Instrument A, which measured the students' level of knowledge on the signpost IGNITES, with Cronbach alpha of .892, is composed of three parts consisting 10 multiple choice items, five true or false items, and five situational analysis items. Instrument B, which measured the students' level of awareness and degrees of appreciation and manifestation of IGNITES, is a five-point Likert scale questionnaire consisting of a total of 45 items. The questionnaire was reliability-tested with respective Cronbach alpha values of .924 and .958. Overall, the students' knowledge, awareness, appreciation, and manifestation of IGNITES, are scaled based on the matrix in table 2.

Table 2. Matrix for students' responses on knowledge, awareness, appreciation, and manifestation of IGNITES

Scale	Descriptive Equivalent	Interpretation
A. Level of Knowledge		
8.20-10.00	Very High	
6.40-8.19	High	
4.60-6.39	Moderate	
2.80-4.59	Low	
1.00-2.79	Very Low	
B. Level of Awareness		
<i>Of the values embodied in IGNITES, the students are:</i>		
4.20-5.00	Very High	Extremely aware
3.40-4.19	High	Moderately aware
2.60-3.39	Average	Somewhat aware
1.80-2.59	Low	Slightly aware
1.00-1.70	Very Low	Not at all aware
C. Level of Appreciation		
<i>The values embodied in IGNITES, the students:</i>		
4.20-5.00	Very High	Extremely appreciated
3.40-4.19	High	Moderately appreciated
2.60-3.39	Average	Somewhat appreciated
1.80-2.59	Low	Slightly appreciated
1.00-1.70	Very Low	Did not appreciate at all
D. Degree of Manifestation		
<i>In the words and actions of the students, the IGNITES values are:</i>		
4.20-5.00	Very High	Highly evident
3.40-4.19	High	Evident
2.60-3.39	Average	Moderately evident
1.80-2.59	Low	Less evident
1.00-1.70	Very Low	Not evident

Data Gathering Procedure. During the data gathering, the researchers sought the help of the Program deans in the distribution of the questionnaires. The Program secretaries helped in the random selection of the students from their program, distribution of the questionnaires, and documentation of the retrieved questionnaires. This is done to ensure that only selected students based

on the result of the random sampling were given the questionnaires.

Focus group discussion (FGD) was also utilized to understand more the students' answers to the survey questions. Separate FGD sessions were conducted for the participants from the Fr. Selga and the Bonifacio campuses. After the FGD, the data were transcribed and were used to substantiate the discussions of the results.

Statistical Tools. To analyze the data, Pearson product moment correlation was utilized in determining whether significant relationships exist between each of the knowledge and awareness with each of appreciation and manifestation of IGNITES. ANOVA and t test were used to determine the difference between the students' responses when they are grouped according to their profile.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of knowledge, awareness, and appreciation of the signpost IGNITES

The respondents' overall knowledge of the signpost IGNITES is high, while their awareness and appreciation of the values embodied in the signpost are very high.

Table 3. Students' level of knowledge about the signpost IGNITES

	Mean	SD	Interpretation
History and Meaning of IGNITES	7.94	1.33	High
Expectations of UIC Graduate based on the IGNITES	3.47	1.12	High
Application of the IGNITES	4.01	1.33	High

The high rating that the students got on items about the history and meaning of IGNITES (7.94) means that the students know when the signpost was created, where it was first introduced and the corresponding values that each letter in the IGNITES stands for. This could be because copies of a bookmark that introduces the IGNITES values were distributed. During the FGD, when the participants were asked where they first learned the IGNITES, one student confirmed "the bookmark was inserted in the handbook."

Moreover, the students highly understand the expectations of a UIC graduate (3.47). This means that the students know what are expected of them in terms of their actions and behavior inside and outside of the campus. Furthermore, the students learn the values, IGNITES, through the teachers, that was integrated in the subjects taught in the classroom (4.01). This means that the students learn the values and attitude in accordance with the activities and programs of the academe (Brophy, 1999).

Table 4. Students' level of awareness of the signpost IGNITES

The IGNITES signposts:	Mean	SD	Interpretation
<i>Students are:</i>			
1. Embody the values that the university wishes for its graduates to possess to participate in the transformation of the society in response to the signs of the times.	4.31	0.88	Extremely aware
2. Pertain to acronym "IGNITES" which stands specifically for seven values that the UIC aim for its graduates to manifest.	4.41	0.88	Extremely aware
3. Are concrete actions to be carried out by the graduates to reflect the UIC vision, mission, goals, and objectives	4.36	0.89	Extremely aware
4. Are meant to counter the negativities of the contemporary graduates of UIC as they see themselves in the fast- changing materialistic society.	4.14	0.92	Moderately aware
5. Are reflections of the RVM Philosophy of Education.	4.23	0.95	Extremely aware
Overall Mean	4.29		Extremely aware

Based on the obtained values for standard deviation (SD < 1, table 4), it can be said that the students more or less show homogeneity in their awareness of the IGNITES signpost. Overall, they are extremely aware (4.29) of the college signpost being an embodiment of seven values that UIC aims for its graduates to manifest, as reflected in the vision, mission, goals, and objectives of the university and the RVM philosophy of education. Basically, all participants got right what IGNITES stands for when asked during the FGD. Most of them knew what it

means, and in synthesis, described integrated as being equipped with ideas and fulfilling promises; nationalistic as showing patriotism; God-centered as putting God in the center of everything; transformative as doing things for the society; excellence as giving the best in doing things; service-oriented is serving others with humility and love; and innovative is thinking outside the box.

Table 5. Students' level of appreciation of the signpost IGNITES

Appreciation of the signpost IGNITES as:	Mean	SD	Interpretation
1. Concrete actions to reflect quality Ignacian-Marian education	4.37	0.86	Extremely appreciated
2. Distinct marks of UIC graduates bearing the "branding" of UIC	4.30	0.90	Extremely appreciated
3. Reflection of RVM Philosophy of Education	4.30	0.86	Extremely appreciated
4. Well-defined set of values to be internalized by UIC graduates to be valuable and responsible citizens of the world	4.44	0.79	Extremely appreciated
5. Set of values to counter the negativities of the highly-competitive and materialistic modern world	4.31	0.86	Extremely appreciated
Overall Mean	4.34		Extremely appreciated

The results reveal that the respondents extremely appreciated (4.34) the purpose and ideals set by the college signpost IGNITES. This means that in their stay in UIC, they were able to embody the principles incorporated in the signpost. The participants, during the FGD, shared that they appreciate that the school is implementing activities and policies according to the IGNITES values:

"In our community service, once you have known that the people appreciated what we did, we do not feel that it is just for completion anymore."

"When we had our feeding program in the Missionaries of Charity at Juna, it is tiring and hot but when the activity ended we have seen that the children are very happy and their smiles are priceless."

However, some students think that the school fell short when it comes to the extent of the implementation of some activities, though they admit, "those activities were just limited." Moreover, the students value that the school does not only focus on the intellectual side of a person but on the individual's totality.

Degree of manifestation of IGNITES values

Table 6. Students' degree of manifestation of the IGNITES values

Value	Mean	SD	Interpretation
INTEGRATED			
1. Fulfilling promises	3.99	0.85	Evident
2. Practicing honesty at all times	3.96	0.87	Evident
3. Speaking well of others; affirming the good done by others	4.07	0.87	Evident
4. Giving credit to where it is due	4.11	0.84	Evident
5. Walking the talk	3.80	0.90	Evident
Category Mean	3.98		Evident
GOD-CENTERED			
1. Showing belief in God in speech and action	4.26	0.87	Highly evident
2. Praying daily	4.28	0.89	Highly evident
3. Participating actively in liturgical celebrations	3.91	0.95	Evident
4. Showing respect, compassion, hospitality towards others	4.31	0.82	Highly evident
5. Invoking constantly God's help, protection and guidance	4.33	0.84	Highly evident
Category Mean	4.21		Highly evident
NATIONALISTIC			
1. Appreciating and respecting my country's history, cultural heritage and sound traditions	4.14	0.92	Evident
2. Preserving indigenous customs and traditions in the light of the Gospel values	4.03	0.89	Evident
3. Patronizing products of the country	3.89	0.94	Evident
4. Working for the conservation of natural resources	4.00	0.87	Evident
5. Proud of being a Filipino	4.33	0.88	Highly evident
Category Mean	4.07		Evident
INNOVATIVE			
1. Enhancing creativity continuously	4.07	0.88	Evident
2. Making use of available resources wisely	4.09	0.85	Evident
3. Finding alternative and better ways of doing things	4.18	0.85	Highly evident

4. Manifesting originality and creativity in work	4.17	0.82	Evident
5. Contributing to the well-being of the family and the welfare of the society	4.24	0.82	Highly evident
Category Mean	4.15		Evident
TRANSFORMATIVE			
1. Responding creatively to change opportunities	4.07	0.83	Evident
2. Taking a stand on relevant issues	4.02	0.86	Evident
3. Treating the less privileged with kindness	4.16	0.85	Evident
4. Speaking and standing for what is true	4.19	0.01	Evident
5. Contributing to the well-being of the family and the welfare of the society	4.15	0.95	Evident
Category Mean	4.11		Evident
EXCELLENT			
1. Pursuing what is best	4.23	0.97	Highly evident
2. Loving to discover new knowledge	4.22	0.98	Highly evident
3. Continuing to develop talent and skills	4.26	0.94	Highly evident
4. Going beyond what is asked and expected	4.09	0.97	Evident
5. Utilizing giftedness and resources in coordination with the giftedness of others	4.17	0.93	Evident
Category Mean	4.19		Evident
SERVICE-ORIENTED			
1. Showing courtesy, tactfulness and refinement in words and actions	4.11	0.97	Evident
2. Sharing time, talent, and other resources with those in need generously	4.10	0.98	Evident
3. Accepting tasks willingly	4.09	0.96	Evident
4. Showing perseverance and determination in meeting responsibilities	4.16	0.96	Evident
5. Standing for what is good and true	4.21	1.03	Highly evident
Category Mean	4.13		Evident
Overall Mean	4.12		Evident

The IGNITES values are elaborated through five indicators shown in tables 3 to 6. The results reveal that it is evident that the students follow all the standards of a future UIC graduate (4.12). Integrated (3.98, Evident) was rated the lowest among the values while God-Centered (4.21, highly evident) got the highest score. This translates to the expectation that UIC College graduates are deeply rooted to their faith and are firm in their belief in God.

This result agrees with the statement of Miller (2006) that Catholic schools should form their students in accordance with the teachings of the gospel and they are expected to be the bearers of light. Furthermore, Miller stated that schools prepare students to relate the Catholic faith to their particular culture and to live that faith in practice. In contrast, Postman, Bruner and McGinnies (1948) said that values are present in any environment, and that how individuals learn and practice them depend on how the people around them transmit those values.

Excellence ranked second among the values (4.19). This means that the respondents are pursuing what is best (4.23) and discovering new knowledge (4.22). Furthermore the students are developing their talent and skills and going beyond what is asked and expected of them (4.09) and utilizing their giftedness and resources to be of help to others (4.17). It is expected that a UIC College graduate displays a quality standard in his/her outputs, especially in the workplace.

According to Meglino and Ravlin (1998), values are identified through the choices that an individual make. The Student Supreme Government (SSG), according to the participants, is a good venue where they can practice excellence:

“Handling a large group, like the SSG, is not easy because you have to balance academic and extra-curricular activities.”

However, according to one of the participants, the SSG still falls short in coming up with an activity, particularly in the legislative side, that will help and allow all students to participate.

Innovative ranked third among the values (4.15). This means that the respondents are willing to enhance (4.07) their creativity in doing things. Bransog, Baig and Begum (2015) said that values are manifested through actions. The respondents' aim to apply originality (4.07) in their work and willingness to find alternatives (4.18) to make their craft unique despite limited resources (4.24) are manifestations of being innovative. UIC graduates are expected to display new and creative ways in dealing with problems.

Service-oriented ranked fourth among the values (4.13). This means that the respondents are showing courtesy, tactfulness and refinement in words and action (4.11); accept tasks willingly (4.09); generously share their time, talent and other resources with those in need (4.10); show perseverance and

determination in meeting responsibilities (4.16) and stand for what is true and good (4.21). Further, it is expected that a UIC College graduate should possess good work ethics and follow the example of Mother Ignancia. During the FGD, the participants shared that doing the community service is difficult in the beginning but eventually the students saw the necessity of doing it not because it's a requirement but a responsibility to the community:

"There is a need for students to apply what they have learned in the classroom, such as based on the philosophy of Rita Manning - 'caring is a responsibility'."

Transformative ranked fifth among the values (4.11). This means that the respondents are creative in responding to change opportunities (4.07), speak and stand to what is true (4.16) and are willing to make a stand on relevant issues that confront the society (4.02) while treating the less privileged with kindness (4.15). It is expected that a UIC College graduate goes beyond the barriers to bridge the gaps in the community. According to one of the participants during the FGD:

"I have learned that when you treat a person, it will depend on the person you are talking to; if you are talking to a professional, you have to approach him professionally."

Nationalistic ranked sixth among the values (4.07). This means that the respondents appreciate and respect the country's history, cultural heritage and sound traditions (4.14), and proud of being a Filipino (4.33) while preserving indigenous heritage and patronizing the country's products. It is expected that UIC College graduates embody the ideals of being nationalistic in the light of the gospel.

Integrated ranked last among the seven values (3.98). Nevertheless, the results show that the respondents give credit to people what are due to them (4.11); speak well of others; affirm the good done by others (4.07) while fulfilling promises and practicing honesty at all times. It is expected that UIC College graduates should be true to their promises and should show compassion to their fellowmen. According to the participants, there are times or situations when they believe they are forced to commit white lies:

"For example, in doing our thesis, if during the defense the panel found a loophole in our experiment and we are asked to do it again, it would be impossible, that is why we have to lie."

According to Kohlberg (1975), values that are freely chosen from several alternatives are values that meticulously considered the consequences. Unfortunately, based on the FGD results, some of the participants failed to imbibe the value of being integrated, since they value passing a requirement more than practicing honesty at all times.

Relationship between knowledge, awareness, appreciation and manifestation of IGNITES

The results of the correlation tests support the rejection of the null hypotheses that the relationships between the variables are not significant (table 7); that is, existence of significant relationships between knowledge and appreciation, knowledge and manifestation, awareness and appreciation, and awareness and manifestation of IGNITES were revealed.

Table 7. Relationship between knowledge, awareness, appreciation and manifestation

Paired Variables	R	r ²	Sig.	Decision
Knowledge and Appreciation	.280	.078	.000	Reject Ho
Knowledge and Manifestation	.277	.076	.000	Reject Ho
Awareness and Appreciation	.704	.495	.000	Reject Ho
Awareness and Manifestation	.672	.451	.000	Reject Ho

The students' knowledge and awareness of the college signpost IGNITES result to their appreciation and manifestation of the IGNITES values. The correlation test results mean that 7.8% of the variation in the level of appreciation of the students was attributed to their knowledge about the signpost IGNITES. According to the National Research Council (2000), the people's knowledge about certain issues allows them to contextualize thus making them more effective in shaping public opinion. The students' knowledge about the values IGNITES lead them to appreciate more the values and making it possible for them to apply the values.

Moreover, 7.6% of the variation in the students manifestation of the values IGNITES might be attributed to their knowledge of the college signpost. Furthermore, the results also show that the appreciation and manifestation of the values IGNITES does not only limit to the students' knowledge of the signposts but also appeal to the heart and value system of the students. This means that 49.5% of the variation in the students' level of appreciation might be due to their awareness of the college signpost IGNITES. In addition, 45.1% of the variation in the students level of manifestation was ascribed to their awareness of the college signpost IGNITES.

Differences in the appreciation and manifestation of IGNITES based on respondents' profile

The results of the ANOVA and t tests support the acceptance of the null hypotheses that the differences in the respondents' appreciation and manifestation of IGNITES are not significant when they are grouped according to their course, religious affiliation, length of stay in UIC, and age. However, the differences in their appreciation and manifestation of IGNITES were revealed significant when they are grouped according to their sex (tables 8 & 9).

Table 8. Significance of the difference in the appreciation of the values IGNITES in terms of the respondents' profile

Appreciation	F/t	Sig.	Decision
Course	1.501	.140	Accept Ho
Religious Affiliation	.879	.477	Accept Ho
Length of Stay	.399	.902	Accept Ho
Age	.838	.524	Accept Ho
Sex	2.028	.044	Reject Ho

The results in table 8 show that the students' level of appreciation of the college signpost IGNITES are the same regardless of their course, religious affiliation, length of stay, and age. This implies that the implementation of the college signpost IGNITES was effective since it cuts across the students' course, religious affiliation, length of stay, and age.

However, the level of appreciation of the college signpost IGNITES significantly differ between males and females. Specifically, the female students are more appreciative of the college signpost compared to the male students.

Table 9. Significance of the difference in the degree of manifestation of IGNITES in terms of the respondents' profile

Appreciation	F/t	Sig.	Decision
Course	1.237	.269	Accept Ho
Religious Affiliation	1.060	.377	Accept Ho
Length of Stay	1.314	.245	Accept Ho
Age	1.285	.271	Accept Ho
Sex	2.579	.011	Reject Ho

Table 9 shows that the students' level of manifestation of the college signpost IGNITES are the same regardless of their course, religious affiliation, length of stay, and age. This reveals that the students manifested in the same manner the different values that the signpost IGNITES was intended for.

However, the level of manifestation of the college signpost IGNITES significantly differ in terms of sex. Specifically, the females manifested more the values embodied in the college signpost compared to the males.

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University Core Values and Faculty Competence: The Isabela State University Cauayan Experience

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ABSTRACT

Core values are anchored in the vision and mission statements of any institution to improve performance and productivity. As company culture and values become important, one challenge leaders face is integrating core values into their company's performance management process. The research aimed to assess the University core values and competence of the faculty at Isabela State University Cauayan Campus. Using the descriptive survey, with 676 students determining the faculty core values and faculty competence, findings show that ISU Cauayan faculty are noticed by the students to have practiced core values often. Students evaluated the faculty teaching competence as Satisfactory. Female, Ilocano faculty with advanced education, longer experience, permanent in status, higher in faculty rank, and higher salaries received tended to frequently manifest core values. Older and female faculty members, with advanced education, longer experience, higher in faculty rank, and higher in salaries received tended to demonstrate a better teaching competence.

KEYWORDS: University core values, teaching competence, faculty, Isabela State University

INTRODUCTION

Core values and company culture are extremely important nowadays. Core values are anchored in the vision and mission statements of any institution to improve performance and productivity. As company culture and values become important, one challenge leaders face is integrating core values into their company's performance management process (Mayhew, 1985 as cited by Satope, Akintunde & Olopade, 2014).

In 1989, Republic Act No. 6713 or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees was enacted because of the perceived loose sense of core values or ethics in the government. Essentially, the Code spelled out in fine detail the do's and don'ts for government officials and employees in and out of the workplace (Civil Service Commission, 2000). In fact, the Commission enumerated eight norms of conduct as enumerated in the Code to encompass not only the aspect of employment but also the personal lives of public officials and employees. Furthermore, core values imposed by the Commission for its government employees to serve as a guide and standards as government worker include the following: commitment to public interest, professionalism, justness and sincerity, political neutrality, responsiveness to the public, nationalism and patriotism, commitment to democracy, and simple living. As such standards of conduct point, ultimately, to public good or public interest as a better and objective standard of moral and ethical obligation in the public sector. Those standards for individual behavior, however, should connect the individual to the objectives, goals and targets of the organization, then from the organization to the overarching objectives of the society.

Core values are the heart of human culture. Learning more about them makes one learn more about what lies at the heart of a human person. In this sense, the faculty members consider the core values to guide their decisions and actions. In doing so, students including graduates draw inspiration from their teachers – both inside and outside of the university (Miles and Snow, 2002).

Man's core values when applied into action makes one achieve competence in his skills. One's competence may be demonstrated the fact that these are the combined skills, attributes and behaviors directly related to successful performance on the job. They are important for all staff, regardless of occupation they are engaged in, function and role they play, or level or position in the organization they are positioned to (Jacobs, 2000; Miles & Snow, 2002).

In addition, the UN regarded the human competencies to build in the human resources the capacity through the introduction of the organizational core

values and are essential for all its staff or employees. Furthermore, management competencies should be developed in them as they lead and supervise the performance of students in the classroom teaching. These competencies have been used as a foundation for human resources framework, recruitment, placement and development, and performance appraisal (Jacobs, 2000; Miles & Snow, 2002).

The university core values of faculty at Isabela State University are those values they hold that form a solid foundation on which teachers imbibe in their heart and mind while they carry out the vision and mission of the university. Every institution for this matter whether academic or non-academic in nature considers the core values as primary important throughout the changes in society, government, politics and technology, for without its presence in the culture of an individual worker, productivity would not be possible. In this way, Ethics, therefore, has a positive role in stimulating productivity.

Unfortunately, the decline of the University performance nowadays which initiated by its faculty can be traced by the poor values or attitudes of its teaching force could be associated with low performance. Karl and Sutton (1998) states that the workforce's poor performance could be attributed to poor values of the employees. A study found a similar stand affirming that attitude or core values were significantly related to teaching competence (Bogler & Somech, 2004). In a similar view, Farah (2002) affirmed that attitudes or core values and skills competency of teachers are significantly related.

Attitude bears significant relationship with and possibly predicts competence. It was further obtained that two of the five attitude constructs predict competence. Gumaru (2005) further affirmed that work values practiced by the faculty are related to performance. Similarly, core values of ISU Cauayan faculty determine the quality of its graduates. Corollary to the aforementioned findings, certain research confirmed as quoted by the Civil Service Commission (2000) those that outperform their industries share and exhibit a common set of traits and behaviors. Moreover, the Civil Service Commission (2000) also noted that same study shows that these successful companies are the ones that exhibit ethically correct and socially responsible practices and norms.

Aware of the importance of core values implementation for productivity, the present study therefore would like to determine whether or not the University core values of the Isabela State University affect would show productivity for the whole institution.

Study Objectives. The research generally aimed to assess the university core values and teaching competence of the faculty at ISU, Cauayan City, Isabela. Specifically, it answered the following objectives: First it aimed to determine the demographic profile of the Isabela State University Cauayan City campus faculty with respect to the following variables: age, gender, religious affiliation, ethnicity, residence, educational attainment, teaching experience, status of appointment, faculty rank, and monthly salary received; Second it aimed to determine how often do faculty manifest the practice of University core values with respect to excellence, public engagement, environmentalism, accountability, collaboration, efficiency, innovation, and integrity; Third was to determine the teaching competence of the faculty in terms of commitment, knowledge of the subject, teaching for independent learning, and management of learning; Fourth, to find out whether or not there is a significant difference in the University core values of faculty when grouped according to faculty profile; Fifth was to find out whether or not there is a significant difference in the faculty teaching competence when grouped according to profile; and last was to find out whether or not there is a significant relationship between the faculty core values and their teaching competence.

METHOD

Research Design. The study used the descriptive survey method. The 676 respondents consisted of the third year and fourth year college students who assessed the University core values and teaching competence of the regular and contract of service faculty members at ISU Cauayan Campus.

Research Locale and Respondents. The student-respondents were randomly selected from five colleges, school or institute broken down as follows: Institute of Teacher Education – 88; School of Arts and Criminology – 120; Institute of Agricultural Technology – 78; College of Computing and Information Technology – 142; and College of Business Management – 168; and Polytechnic School – 80, a total of 676 students.

The university core values and teaching competence of the faculty were determined using the arbitrary level, scale and description below:

Arbitrary Level	Scale	Frequency	Teaching Competence
4.50-5.00	5	Always	Very Competent
3.50-4.49	4	Often	Competent
2.50-3.49	3	Sometimes	Fairly Competent
1.50-2.49	2	Rare	Least Competent
1.00-1.49	1	Never	Incompetent

Statistical Tools. The frequency counts and percent computation, arithmetic mean, ANOVA F- test, t-test and Pearson Correlation Coefficient r were employed to answer the objectives of the study. The hypotheses tested used at .05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Profile of the ISU-CC faculty

	Frequency (n=128)	Percentage (100)
Age		
51 & Above	23	17.97
41-50	48	37.50
31-40	32	25.00
21-30	25	19.53
Sex		
Female	82	64.06
Male	46	35.94
Religious Affiliation		
Catholics	86	67.19
Non-Catholics	52	32.81
Ethnicity		
Ilocanos	72	56.25
Non-Ilocanos	56	43.75

Residence		
Cauayan	84	65.63
Outside Cauayan	44	34.37
Highest Education		
Doctorate	38	29.69
Masters	57	44.53
Bachelor	33	25.78
Years in Service		
31 & Above	32	25.00
16-30	68	53.13
Below 15	28	21.87
Teaching Status		
Permanent	100	78.12
Contract of Service	28	21.88
Faculty Rank		
Professor	2	1.56
Associate Professor	18	14.06
Assistant Professor	49	38.28
Instructor	59	46.09
Salary		
41 & Above	69	53.91
21 - 40	32	25.00
Below 20,000.00	27	21.09

Majority of the faculty of ISU-Cauayan Campus showed an age bracket ranging from 31 to 50; female, Catholics, Ilocanos, residents at Cauayan City, have advanced education, with longer experience in teaching, permanent in status, holding the ranks of Instructor, Assistant Professor and Associate professor, and with salaries ranging from Php21,000 to 41 and above.

Table 2. University core values of faculty

University Core Values	Mean	Description
Excellence	3.64	Often
Public Engagement	3.62	Often
Environment	3.65	Often
Accountability	3.60	Often
Collaboration	3.63	Often
Efficiency	3.64	Often
Innovation	3.69	Often
Integrity	3.71	Often
General Mean	3.65	Often

The University Core Values of Faculty with respect to excellence, public engagement, environment, accountability, collaboration, efficiency, innovation, and integrity having the means of 3.64, 3.62, 3.65, 3.60, 3.63, 3.64, 3.69, and 3.71, respectively are being noticeable “Often.”

The general average of the faculty University core values which is 3.65 implies that faculty often practiced core values as observed by the students.

Table 3. Teaching competence of ISU-CC faculty

Variables	Mean	Description
Commitment	4.15	Competent
Knowledge of the Subject Matter	4.17	Competent
Teaching for independent Learning	4.16	Competent
Management of Learning	4.09	Competent
General Mean	4.14	Competent

The teaching competence of ISU-CC faculty as presented in the table reveals that as regards commitment, Knowledge of the Subject Matter, Teaching for independent Learning, and Management of Learning, the faculty were evaluated as competent, with the means of general mean of 4.15, 4.17, 4.16, and 4.19, respectively.

The general mean of 4.14 implies that students evaluated the teaching competence of the faculty at the Isabela State University-Cauayan as Satisfactory. The finding was confirmed by various studies which found more teachers reported feeling “very competent” in areas such as dealing with fellow teachers, deal with administrative hierarchy, inspire students to take part in co-curricular activities, give reward or incentives to students on good work, teaches lesson by different methods with examples, gives new information to students and advise them to be honest in life (Feistritz, 2011; Certo & Fox, 2002; Betoret, 2006).

Table 4. Test of difference in the faculty core values when grouped according to profile

Variables	Computed-Value	P-Value
Age	F = 3.217	.067
Sex	t = 2.198	.000*
Religion	t = -1.074	.120
Ethnicity	t = 1.743	.03*
Residence	t = 1.758	.763
Education	F = 43.905	.000*
Experience	F = 17.400	.000*
Status	t = -16.314	.000*
Rank	F = 7.917	.000*
Salary	F = 77.099	.000*

Legend: *Significant

The test of difference in the faculty Core values when grouped according to profile shows that there is no significant difference between the core values of the older faculty and the younger faculty members; between the Catholics and the non-Catholic faculty members; and faculty residing in Cauayan and outside Cauayan. However, there exists a significant difference between the core values of the faculty in terms of sex, ethnicity, education, experience, faculty status, rank and salary.

Finding implies that female tended to manifest core values often than male faculty; core values are more frequently noticeable among Ilocanos than the non-

Ilocano faculty; core values are more frequently noticeable among those faculty members with advanced education and their counterpart; core values are more frequently noticeable among Ilocanos than the non-Ilocano faculty. Faculty with longer experience tended to manifest more frequently the core values than those with short teaching experience; core values can be more noticeable among the regular faculty members, with higher faculty rank, and salaries.

Such findings of the study ran counter with the study of Feistritz (2011) which also show amazing similarities among all teachers surveyed, regardless of their backgrounds, how they prepared to teach, their age, how long they've been teaching and other variables we analyzed the data by. Public school teachers surveyed: Strongly support getting rid of incompetent teachers regardless of seniority; Are generally satisfied with their jobs and various aspects of teaching; Think they are competent to teach; Rate their teacher preparation programs highly; Consider the same things as valuable in developing competence to teach – their own teaching experiences and working with other teachers/colleagues top the list; and plan to be teaching K-12 five years from now.

Table 5. Test of difference in the faculty teaching competence grouped according to profile

Variables	Computed-Value	P-Value
Age	F = 3.217	.025*
Sex	t = -2.198	.030*
Religion	t = -1.074	.285
Ethnicity	t = 1.743	.084
Residence	t = 1.758	.081
Education	F = 43.905	.000*
Experience	F = 17.400	.000*
Status	t = -16.314	.000*
Rank	F = 7.917	.000*
Salary	F = 77.099	.000*

Legend: *Significant

Data shows that there is a significant difference between the teaching competence of older and younger faculty; female and male faculty; those with advance education and those without advanced education; faculty with longer experience in teaching and those with shorter experience in the service; faculty with permanent status and those with contract of service or COS status; faculty with higher in rank and faculty with lower in rank; and faculty receiving higher salaries and lower salaries.

Findings of the data conclude that older and female faculty tended to be more competent in teaching than the younger and male faculty. Moreover, those faculty members with advanced education have better teaching performance than those without advanced education; Faculty with longer experience tended to become more competent than those with short teaching experience; Regular faculty members are more likely competent in teaching than the COS faculty; those faculty members with higher in rank, and higher in salaries tended to show a better teaching performance than their counterpart.

Furthermore, males seem to be more successful in early grades at least in some countries. Older teachers are more successful than younger ones; Teacher credentials and certification are clearly important for successful teaching. Although the overall evidence is somewhat less than unanimous, the more complex and thorough studies provide strong evidence for the positive effects of teacher training on student outcomes; Teacher experience is important for student performance in primary and early secondary grades, but less so far upper secondary grades; Teacher salary does not emerge as a consistently important variable in maximizing student achievement. The ambiguous results are probably due to the high inter correlation between teacher salary and other teacher variables; Teacher absenteeism and punctuality although only little researched, do not seem to be important teacher characteristics in relation to student performance; and Teacher attitudes towards job and carrier did not clearly emerge as an important variable, in spite of sound theoretical reasons why it should be so; and Teacher behavior operationalized as the assignment of homework and time spent preparing lessons, did not clearly emerge as an important variable and thus of dubious value in teacher training programme.

Table 6. Test of relationship between faculty core values and their teaching competence

Variables	r - Value	P-Value
Core Values Versus Teaching Competence	.631	.000

Legend: *Significant

The test of relationship between faculty core values and their teaching competence showed that r-value of .631 means that there is a significant correlation between the faculty core values and teaching competence. Such result can be confirmed by the study of Johnson (2015) which reported that the attitude predicts competence. It was further obtained that two of the five attitude constructs predict competence. It was observed that as teachers perceived computers to be useful in their pedagogical enterprise, the interests become aroused which in turn help their computer skills

Attitude or core values bear significant relationship with competence. It was further obtained that two of the five attitude constructs predict competence. A study revealed that teachers perceived computers to be useful in their pedagogical enterprise showing that respondents' interests become aroused which in turn help their computer skills.

A study of Zaidi (2015) revealed that attitude was significantly related to competencies of classroom teaching. In a similar view, Farah (2002) confirmed that there is a significant relationship between the attitudes or core values and skills competency of teachers. Finding implies that the more frequent the students notice core values as manifested in the faculty attitude, the teaching competencies of the faculty tended to get higher.

Majority of the faculty of ISU-Cauayan Campus are young; female, Catholics, Ilocanos, residents at Cauayan City, have advanced education, seasoned teachers, with permanent in status, holding the ranks of Instructor, Assistant Professor and Associate professor, and with salaries ranging from Php21,000 to Php41,000 and above. The Isabela State University at Cauayan faculty were noticed by the students to manifest and practice core values often. Students evaluated the teaching competence of the faculty as Satisfactory. Female, Ilocano faculty with advanced education, longer experience, permanent in status, higher in rank, and higher salaries tended to frequently manifest core values. Older and

female faculty members with advanced education; longer experience; higher in rank, and higher in salaries tended to become more competent in teaching than their counterpart.

Recommendations. The research posits five key recommendations. First, more seminars and trainings on values reorientation be given to faculty to inculcate to them the implications and meanings of the University Core Values and fully understand as they imbibe the true meaning of their work as molders to the mind and heart of the youth, the leaders of the next generation. Second, there should be more intensive trainings on classroom management and effective teaching approaches and strategies be conducted among the COS faculty to become more competent in teaching. Third is there should be better monitoring the faculty attendance to their classes be observed at all times to ensure effective management of classes and proper exercise of core values which should be noticed in the behavior of the faculty when teaching. Also, proper implementation of the University Core values should be more concretely manifested and become a culture of every faculty member for the realization of the attainment of vision mission of the University, thereby, ISU graduates become globally competitive and at par with the international standard. Lastly, researchable studies related to the present study should be undertaken to consider other variables in order to have a full understanding of who an employee really is as he is the best resource for the attainment of productivity in the academe and industry.

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Exit Survey on Graduates of Bachelor in Medical Laboratory Science of the University of the Immaculate Conception

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ABSTRACT

Evaluation of the learning competencies in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitude of the Bachelor in Medical Laboratory Science graduates became an issue due to the lack of an assessment tool. Hence, a descriptive study, aimed to determine the participants' perception on the competencies of the 2014 BMLS graduates and on the school-related environmental factors, was conducted among the graduates and three key informants. Total enumeration was done. There were 71 or 83% of the 2014 graduates who took the exit survey. The three key informants were the Dean, Program Coordinator, and the Internship Coordinator of the Bachelor in Medical Laboratory Science Program of the University of the Immaculate Conception. A self-constructed questionnaire was employed and personally administered by the researcher. An online questionnaire was also made available for the participants. Results show that the 2014 BMLS graduates of UIC perceived an Excellent performance in the attainment of competency in terms of Knowledge, Skills, and Attitude; and the identified school-related environmental factors were perceived to have Excellent services which reflects the BMLS program and on-campus learning experiences of the 2014 BMLS graduates. The BMLS graduates of UIC performed excellently in the September 2014 licensure examination because its products are proficient and the school, in general, provides a significant learning environment.

KEYWORDS: Medical laboratory science, exit survey, competency, descriptive research, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

In competency-based learning, the assessment of academic objectives and the on-campus experiences is not about passing or failing a candidate and the evidence collection is more than just setting a test. The assessment process should be considered to be part of the learning process identifying gaps as learning opportunities to develop skills, not failures. It is a collaborative process to be negotiated with the trainee and not a one-off event that is imposed. Generally, competency does not mean expert. It means that the candidate has attained sufficient skill and knowledge to perform the activity or service to a degree and quality that is acceptable to the industry and the customer in a time within which a competent person at the level could reasonably be expected to perform the task (Witty & Gaston, 2008). Learning competencies are pre-determined and evaluated at the end of a given time frame when the learners have reached a certain level of proficiency.

In Medical Laboratory Science (MLS), interns are expected to exhibit proficiency by acquiring the knowledge, skills, and attitudes under the domains of learning competencies expected of future medical laboratory scientists.

In formal education, objectives are planned with the SMART criteria. SMART stands for specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bounded and thoroughly assessed to ensure if the learning competencies are achieved. These objectives are the expected attainment of knowledge, performance of the skills, and the positive change of attitudes. When objectives are clearly identified, these benchmark the competencies that must be sought by the learners. At the end of the baccalaureate degree, a locally specific tool should be meticulously designed and implemented to evaluate the graduates and some school-related environmental factors. A notion arose in the Bachelor in Medical Laboratory Science (BMLS) academic community that no tool exists to evaluate the proficiency of graduates when they finish their training.

In Philippine education, enhancing the quality of the products of education—namely, the students; raising student test scores to be at par with those of other countries; and improving the quality and standards of the teaching profession are some of the products through the years (Mañebog, 2011). Thus, exit surveys were done to evaluate the school's offices and services in its general and to scale the quality and excellence of learning being offered. In order to properly assess something much time and thought is given to the development of the data gathering tools. In the case of Bachelor in Medical Laboratory Science, which is an academic degree program offered by several schools in Davao City,

there is no available tool or in this case, exit survey questionnaire, for evaluating the program, the school-related environmental factors, and its graduates. The primary concern of this study was to evaluate the BMLS competency of the 2014 graduates, their perception on school related factors that describe their on-campus learning experiences, and to come up with a competency-based assessment tool or exit survey.

Study Objectives. The study was intended to determine the perception of the participants on the 2014 BMLS graduates' competencies and on the school-related factors. First it sought to gain a profile of 2014 MBLS graduate in terms of gender and address. Then it sought to determine the perception of the participants on the 2014 BMLS graduates' competencies in terms of their knowledge, skills; and attitude. Third it aimed to determine the perception of the participants on the school-related environmental factors in terms of six key areas, namely: general services, BMLS program services, instruction; faculty, research and co-curricular activities.

METHODS

Research Design. A descriptive research design was used in this study. Sana (2010) describes this type of research as addressing questions to participants with the goal of getting demographic data, political candidate of choice, television shows or movies seen, and the like. The use of a descriptive design is to describe an object, person or group of persons, events or programs. The main purpose of the questions asked in this study was to determine the perception of the participants on the 2014 BMLS graduates' competencies and on the school-related environmental factors. Descriptive research may address the question on how much or how many (quantitative) or be concerned with the nature or essence of the object of the study (qualitative).

Specifically, this study made use of mixed triangulation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006) between the participants' different perspectives on the BMLS competency and school related factors: (1) the graduates' self-evaluation; and, (2) the BMLS program key informants' point of view on the graduates and school related factors. The focus of the participants' evaluation were in BMLS competencies in terms of knowledge, skill, and attitude domains, and the school-related environmental factors which influenced on-campus learning experience. These two different outlooks verified each other's information to assess and evaluate an educational institution striving for excellence.

The quantitative method was done on the graduates' self-evaluation. Conversely, the qualitative method was employed to determine the perceptions of the BMLS program key informants on the graduates' competencies and school related factors.

Research Locale. The locale of the study was the University of the Immaculate Conception (UIC) in Davao City. This university is a Catholic institution run by the Religious of the Virgin Mary and has three campuses in the city, namely: the main campus, situated at Father Selga Street, Bankerohan; the annex campus, located at Bonifacio Street; and the Bajada campus which houses the Elementary and High School Departments. The main and annex campuses cater to the College Department. The College offers a wide variety of degree programs like Education, Engineering, Business Administration, and several health sciences such as Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy, Nursing, Nutrition and Dietetics, and Medical Technology.

BSMT was first offered by the university, then known as the Immaculate Conception College (ICC), in June of 1961. The school produced its first BSMT graduates by March of 1965. The program underwent a drastic change in the academic year 2005-2006, when the Commission on Higher Education issued a memorandum converting the curriculum of BSMT to BMLS. This made several changes to the program like the addition of some courses and shortening of the internship training program. UIC and the MLS Program currently face more challenges in the advent of the ASEAN 2015 Integration and the preparations they have been doing in the K to 12 Program and its effects to higher education institutions, particularly the college level.

Another research locale was the Clinical Laboratory of UIC located at the annex campus. It is a tertiary level clinical laboratory which caters to the medical needs of the whole university and the public clientele, as well as a training laboratory for the MLS interns.

Research Respondents and Interview Informants. The participants of the survey were divided into two groups: (1) the 2014 BMLS graduates, and (2) the BMLS key informants.

Complete enumeration was required for the 2014 graduates. The graduates of batch 2014 have successfully accomplished the requirements set by the BMLS Program and UIC. They finished their internship duties which made them eligible for graduation and were therefore conferred their degrees in BMLS.

The first informant is the Dean of the UIC-MLS Program and a resident of Davao City. She is a degree holder in Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology

and has a master's degree in Medical Technology. She has served the university as faculty for nine (9) years and seven (7) years as the MLS program dean. Key Informant A has remained active as member and officer (Board member) of the Philippine Association of Medical Technologists, Inc., Davao Chapter (PAMET, Davao). She has also attended continuing professional development offered by PAMET, Davao and other institutions offering seminars and workshops for professional updating.

The second informant is the Academic Coordinator of UIC-MLS. She is a resident of Davao City and holds a degree in Bachelor of Science in Medical Technology. She has been teaching for four (4) years and is actively participating in continuing professional development conducted by PAMET, Davao, an organization to which she is an active member.

The third informant is the Internship Coordinator of the UIC-MLS and lives in Davao City. He is a graduate of the degree Bachelor in Medical Laboratory Science and has been teaching for two (2) years. Key Informant C eagerly participates in seminars and forums offered by PAMET, Davao and other organizations for the purpose of self improvement in the area of education and the medical technology profession.

The variables of the study included (a) The perception of the participants on the 2014 BMLS graduates' competencies in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitude; and, (b) the perception of the participants on the school related factors in terms of general services, BMLS program services, instruction, faculty, research, and co-curricular activities, that describe the graduates' on-campus learning experiences.

Research Instruments. The proponent of this study made two (2) separate questionnaires, which are both self-structured. An exit survey questionnaire (see Appendix D) relating to the BMLS competency and school related factors was administered to the 2014 graduates of the BMLS program; and an open-ended survey questionnaire (see Appendix E) was given to the BMLS program key informants, specifically, the dean, the academic coordinator, and the internship coordinator. The gathered data from these two questionnaires were expected to answer the general and specific objectives of the study.

The questionnaire for the graduates was divided into three parts: part one, the profile of the graduates; part two, the perception of the graduates on the BMLS competency; and, part three, the perception of the graduates on the school related environmental factors. The items for each variable were provided to draw out information about the graduates' attainment of the BMLS competency and

describe their on-campus learning experiences. Parts two and three used the 4-point Likert scale (Likert, 1932; Allen & Seaman, 2007).

Meanwhile, the questionnaire for the BMLS program key informants was also divided into three: part one, the BMLS key informant's profile; parts two and three were open-ended survey questions relating to their perception on the graduates' BMLS competency and school related factors, respectively.

In the desire to provide ratings for the BMLS competency of the exit survey questionnaire for the 2014 graduates, particularly, in terms of knowledge and attitudes, the following weights, category, and descriptive equivalents were given below:

- 4 – **Excellent.** When the behavior is always practiced by the graduates.
- 3 – **Good.** When the behavior is sometimes practiced by the graduates.
- 2 – **Poor.** When the behavior is seldom practiced by the graduates.
- 1 – **Needs Improvement.** When the behavior is never practiced by the graduates.

On the other hand, the BMLS competency in terms of skills was evaluated using the following weights, category, and descriptive equivalents:

- 4 – **Independent.** When the skill is performed independently by the graduates.
- 3 – **Experienced.** When the skill is performed by the graduates and requires minimal assistance.
- 2 – **Theory only.** When the skill is performed by the graduates and requires assistance.
- 1 – **No knowledge.** When the skill is not performed by the graduates.

Lastly, for the school related factors, the following weights, category, and descriptive equivalents were given:

- 4 – **Excellent.** When the service outstandingly fulfills its function.
- 3 – **Good.** When the service satisfactorily fulfills its function.
- 2 – **Poor.** When the service is available.
- 1 – **Needs Improvement.** When the service is not available.

The final results have the following interpretations on table 2.

Statistical Treatment and Data Analysis. The variables of this study were specifically evaluated by the 2014 BMLS graduates and the BMLS Program key informants. Answers supplied by the graduates in the perception of the competencies and influence of school related factors were measured by computing the weighted mean (businessdictionary.com, 2014). Meanwhile, answers provided by the key informants were treated with thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Roulston, 2001). Competencies in terms of knowledge and attitudes are measured by these descriptions: excellent, when the behavior is always practiced by the graduates; good, when the behavior is sometimes practiced by the graduates; poor, when the behavior is seldom practiced by the graduates; and, needs improvement, when the behavior is never practiced by the graduates. On the other hand, the competencies in terms of skills are measured by these descriptions: independent, when the skill is performed independently by the graduates; experienced, when the skill is performed by the graduates and requires minimal assistance; theory only, when the skill is performed by the graduates and requires assistance; and, no knowledge, when the skill is not performed by the graduates.

School related factors are measured by these descriptions: excellent, when the service outstandingly fulfills its function; good, when the service satisfactorily fulfills its function; poor, when the service is available; and, needs improvement, when the service is not available.

Table 1. Interpretation of final results

BMLS Competencies	Rating/ Description	Scale/ Description	Interpretation
Knowledge	4-Excellent	3.25-4.00 Excellent	The behavior is always practiced.
	3-Good	2.50-3.24 Good	The behavior is sometimes practiced.
	2-Poor	1.75-2.49 Poor	The behavior is seldom practiced.
		1.00-1.74 Needs Improvement	The behavior is never practiced.
Skills	4-Independent	3.25-4.00 Excellent	The skill is performed independently.
	3-Experienced	2.50-3.24 Good	The skill is performed and requires minimal assistance.
	2-Theory Only	1.75-2.49 Poor	The skill is performed and requires assistance.
	1-No Knowledge	1.00-1.74 Needs Improvement	The skill is not performed.
Attitudes	4-Excellent	3.25-4.00 Excellent	The behavior is always practiced.
	3-Good	2.50-3.24 Good	The behavior is sometimes practiced.
	2-Poor	1.75-2.49 Poor	The behavior is seldom practiced.
	1-Needs Improvement	1.00-1.74 Needs Improvement	The behavior is never practiced.
School-Related Environmental Factors	4-Excellent	3.25-4.00 Excellent	The service outstandingly fulfills its function.
	3-Good	2.50-3.24 Good	The service satisfactorily fulfills its function.
	2-Poor	1.75-2.49 Poor	The service is available.
	1-Needs Improvement	1.0-1.74 Needs Improvement	The service is not available.

Prior to the administration of the questionnaire (for the graduates), a pilot test was conducted among twenty (20) BMLS graduating students from San Pedro College (SPC). The data gathered from the pilot test were statistically treated with Cronbach's Alpha and revealed excellent ratings. The questions for graduates' competencies in terms of knowledge got an alpha of 0.93. An alpha value of 0.92 was garnered for both the skills and attitude related questions. The questions on school-related environmental factors received an alpha rating of 0.92 as well. All Cronbach's Alpha values are interpreted as Excellent (high-stakes testing) as compared with the acceptable limit of 0.7. This reflects the reliability of the survey questionnaire. The Cronbach's Alpha was employed to measure the internal consistency on how closely related a set of items are as a group. It is considered to be a measure of scale reliability (Institute for Digital Research and Education, 2014).

A standard content validation instrument was provided to three experts for the validation of the two questionnaires.

Data Collection Procedure. The researcher asked permission from the respondents – the 2014 BMLS graduates of UIC and the key informants in writing attached as the cover letter of the questionnaire. Proper ethical considerations were applied in conversing with the respondents.

Next, research instruments were administered to the participants. Prior to this, a pilot test of the questionnaire was performed with twenty graduates coming from the BMLS Department of SPC. A validity test was also employed to the questionnaires. Scheduling for the administration of the research instruments to all respondents was done to have a smooth process. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to the respondents. Online assessment was done for respondents who cannot be reached in person. Retrieval of the data was done after the administration of the research instruments.

Collation of the gathered data followed. After the survey questionnaires were administered and retrieved, collation of gathered data were executed in a tabular manner using a computer software. After which, the data was summarized and presented in tables. Based on the analyses of the findings, interpretations were drawn.

The respondents accomplished a standard consent form attached as the cover letter of the questionnaire. This form was mainly divided into three parts.

The first part contained the study's title, the researcher's name, and course/school.

The second part began with an invitation to participate in the study. It

also contained information explaining why the study was being performed. In addition, the respondents made aware of the potential benefits gained by participating in the study. A statement on confidentiality of the data was made to assure the respondents that all information they shared with the researcher, through the questionnaire, were kept private. Contact information of the researcher was also available to the respondents.

Finally, the third part ended with the consent of the respondents, affixing their signature as a sign of their involvement, together with the researcher's signature.

RESULTS

Out of 86 2014 BMLS graduates, 71 or 83% from the total population responded to the exit survey on BMLS competencies. Majority of the participants (80%) were females. Only a fifth of the 2014 BMLS graduates were males. More than half (54%) of the participants were from Davao City.

Table 3 presents the mean scores and standard deviations describing the perception of the 2014 BMLS graduates on their competencies in terms of knowledge on six areas namely Hematology, Immunology/Serology and Blood Banking, Clinical Chemistry, Bacteriology, Urine Analysis and Parasitology, and Histopathology.

Of these six areas, five had means ranging from 3.31 to 3.42 which are all rated as "Excellent" (refer to rating and scale description in table 2 on page 24). "Excellent" implies that the behavior is always practiced in these five areas as perceived by the graduates. Only Histopathology got a lower mean of 3.08 ± 0.44 which has a qualitative description of "Good" meaning the behavior is sometimes practiced. The over-all mean of 3.32 ± 0.43 is equivalent to "Excellent" which means that generally, the 2014 BMLS graduates perceived that they always practice the competency based on knowledge.

Table 3. Perception of the graduates on BMLS competencies in terms of knowledge

Areas of Competency	Mean \pm SD	Description
Hematology	3.38 + 0.40	Excellent
ISBB	3.34 \pm 0.43	Excellent
Clinical Chemistry	3.31 \pm 0.41	Excellent
Bacteriology	3.36 \pm 0.47	Excellent
UA and Parasitology	3.42 \pm 0.41	Excellent
Histopathology	3.08 \pm 0.44	Good
TOTAL	3.32 \pm 0.43	EXCELLENT

On the other hand, table 4 reveals the mean scores and standard deviations of each section in the clinical laboratory where the proficiency in performing the skills are exhibited by the graduates during their five-month internship.

As revealed, the areas on Hematology/Coagulation, Urine Analysis and Fecal Analysis, Phlebotomy, and Specimen Processing/Handling have means ranging from 3.32 3.68, which have an equivalent descriptive rating of "Excellent" which means that the skills were performed independently. On the contrary, Blood Bank, Microbiology, Clinical Chemistry, and Serology/Immunology had means ranging from 2.83 to 3.09 which were classified as "Good" meaning the skill is performed and requires minimal assistance. Overall, the 2014 BMLS graduates have exhibited their proficiency level in clinical laboratory skills with a mean of 3.32 ± 0.43 , which indicates a descriptive rating of "Good" or the skills were performed and required minimal assistance.

Table 4. Perception of the graduates on BMLS competencies in terms of skills

Areas of Competency	Mean \pm SD	Description
Phlebotomy	3.55 \pm 0.31	Excellent
Specimen Processing/Handling	3.68 \pm 0.37	Excellent
Clinical Chemistry	3.04 \pm 0.45	Good
Hematology/Coagulation	3.32 \pm 0.41	Excellent
UA and FA	3.45 \pm 0.40	Excellent
Blood Bank	2.83 \pm 0.48	Good
Microbiology	2.97 \pm 0.42	Good
Serology/Immunology	3.09 \pm 0.46	Good
TOTAL	3.32 \pm 0.43	GOOD

Meanwhile, table 5 displays the graduates' perception on their competencies in terms of attitudes such as Leadership and Work Ethics. Both competencies got high means of 3.61 \pm 0.31 and 3.71 \pm 0.34 respectively, which are equivalent to "Excellent" meaning these behaviors were always practiced by the 2014 BMLS graduates.

Table 5. Perception of the graduates on BMLS competencies in terms of attitudes

Areas of Competency	Mean \pm SD	Description
Leadership	3.61 \pm 0.31	Excellent
Work Ethics	3.71 \pm 0.34	Excellent
TOTAL	3.66 \pm 0.33	EXCELLENT

Table 6 shows the mean scores and standard deviations of the perceptions of the participants on school-related environmental factors which can influence learning competencies and on-campus learning experiences. These factors are the following: General Services, BMLS Services, Instruction, Faculty, Research, and Co-Curricular Activities.

The data show that among the six factors, five had high means ranging from 3.37 to 3.65 which are considered as "Excellent." These data imply that the five school-related environmental factors namely General Services, co-

curricular activities, Instruction, Research, and Faculty outstandingly fulfilled their functions as perceived by the graduates. The BMLS Services got the lowest mean of 3.22 \pm 0.56, rated as "Good" meaning this services satisfactorily fulfilled its functions.

Obviously, the over-all mean of 3.46 \pm 0.44 indicate that the school-related environmental factors provided "Excellent" services to the graduates during their student days.

Table 6. Perception of the graduates on the school related environmental factors in terms of on-campus learning experience

Factors	Mean \pm SD	Description
General Services	3.37 \pm 0.39	Excellent
BMLS Services	3.22 \pm 0.56	Good
Instruction	3.54 \pm 0.38	Excellent
Faculty	3.65 \pm 0.36	Excellent
Research	3.56 \pm 0.44	Excellent
Co-curricular Activities	3.42 \pm 0.48	Excellent
TOTAL	3.46 \pm 0.44	EXCELLENT

DISCUSSION

Graduate perceptions on Knowledge, skills and attitude. The perception of the 2014 BMLS graduates of UIC on the competencies in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitude got a qualitative rating of "Excellent." Specifically, the 2014 BMLS graduates' perceived an Excellent rating in Knowledge and Attitudes. Meanwhile, they have perceived a Good performance in Skills. These three indicators comprise the BMLS competencies tagged as semantic label (Cronbach, 1971) which connotes knowledge, skills and acumen. They are assumed to be a general attribute of high-ability professionals; multidimensional construct and inferences govern the attribution of competence to a professional (McGaghie, 1980); involve possession and application of knowledge, skills and attitudes to perform work activities according to the expected standard in the workplace; and, the ability to perform the activities within an occupation or function to the

standard expected in employment (National Competency Standards Policy and Guidelines, Australian National Training Board, 1993).

In areas which the 2014 BMLS graduates showed the higher and lower mean scores, specifically, in the areas of Phlebotomy, Specimen Processing/ Handling, Hematology/Coagulation, and Urinalysis and Parasitology where the graduates have a qualitative rating of Excellent and projected the higher mean scores. Moreover, the graduates perceived the highest mean score, particularly, in specimen processing/handling since their trainings were consistently following the “standard operating procedure (SOP)” in the clinical laboratory. Specimen processing and handling is one of the basic pre-requisites in any diagnostic test. Failing on this may result to erroneous laboratory results which may affect the physician’s diagnosis. Key informant C shared that, “I have only rare feedbacks received that the interns were not able to perform phlebotomy well. I have received good feedbacks in general from the staff and CIs.” This information from the key informant justifies the high rating given for Phlebotomy. The graduates, however, perceived a Good rating for Clinical Chemistry, Blood Bank, Microbiology, and Serology/Immunology. Particularly, the blood bank area (in the laboratory) projected the lowest mean score, like other areas, this section is where interns are exposed to the routine and the common procedures and may lack exposure to special tests or procedures due to varying schedules or limited number of special tests performed or requested during their duty schedule.

To support these findings, Key informant A noted that, “(our) students got excellent skills in handling laboratory testing especially on the routines. However, absence of high-tech/updated gadgets in their training ground could be their limitations as to performing the complicated testing.” Furthermore, she identified that on blood bank per se, “they (the 2014 BMLS graduates) got difficulty in the actual blood processing like freezing of the blood and or other blood preparations, maybe because of limited request and exposure in the training ground, though principle behind these preparations are mastered theoretically.”

The Nebraska Health Care Workforce Center (2013) stressed out that clinical laboratory skills are performed in complex tests which play a crucial role in the detection, diagnosis, treatment and management of disease. With increasing automation and the use of computer technology, the work of technologists has become less hands-on and more analytical. After testing and examining a specimen, technologists analyze the results and relay them to physicians whose expertise in giving the right treatment for the disease relies significantly on the laboratory results done by the medical laboratory scientist/technologist.

The three BMLS key informants suggested that graduates were able to have

acquired the expected knowledge and attitudes since they satisfactorily passed all examinations; they have complied all the requirements; and, they have possessed the desired attitudes that a medical laboratory scientist/technologist should have. Key informant C even mentioned that the 2014 BMLS graduates were “able to create study groups and facilitated their own study circles.” This confirmation from one key informant supports the general rating perceived by the graduates in the Knowledge domain. Key informant B added that “the essence of discipline, determination, and speed with accuracy have become the trademark of the UIC students according to feedbacks from mentors and other reliable individuals.” This statement complements how the Attitude domain was rated by the graduates.

Findings of this study supported the perception of Valdez (2010) that competencies are very important because they encourage learners to integrate related outcomes and perform at higher and more complex levels. They are gained through a multitude of ways namely life experience; formal education; a wide variety of learning experiences (e.g. courses, laboratories, independent research, presentations, and projects); clinical rotations or apprenticeship; on-the-job experience; self-help and training and development programs.

Conclusions. Basing from the results, it can be claimed that the 2014 BMLS graduates of UIC possess high level of knowledge, skills, and attitudes; and, a high level of proficiency following the “standard operating procedure (SOP)” in the clinical laboratory which equipped them to achieve excellence. Results proved the notion of Valdez (2010) that critical thinking, problem solving and the ability to use and combine knowledge and skills to address new challenges are the attributes believed to be most needed in the work force. This is evidenced by the graduates’ performance in the September 2014 licensure examination, which has placed UIC as top one performing school in the Philippines. They have achieved this by garnering a one hundred percent (100%) passing rate in the said examination. With this, the faculty and staff of the MLS program and other clinical laboratory professionals have performed excellent as well. The findings of this study determined the efficacy of the course of action performed by them, which served as an assessment of their performance for the academic year 2013-2014.

Therefore, it can be claimed that the BMLS program of the UIC has significantly attained its Vision, Mission, and Goals. Guided by the school’s vision to shape the very core of diagnosis and management of illness used in today’s highly specialized health care industry, a mission to possess knowledge, technical skills, and right attitude in scientific laboratory investigation necessary in the

diagnosis and treatment of disease, and a goal to commit to the improvement of the community health care services through the practice of professional and ethical responsibilities (UIC MLS Handbook, 2014), the 2014 BMLS graduates of UIC have been prepared for the practice of the profession.

The school-related environmental factors which were identified by the researcher in this study have been rated Excellent through the various services and outstandingly fulfilled their functions in the BMLS program and on-campus learning experiences of the 2014 BMLS graduates.

The findings supported the notion of Mondal (2014) that physical or environmental factors affected the efficiency of learning. These include the classrooms, textbooks, equipment, school supplies, and other instructional materials – in this study; they fall under the general services provided by the school, BMLS services, instruction.

The three BMLS key informants agreed that the identified school-related environmental factors have excellently provided significant and meaningful learning experiences in the BMLS program and the 2014 graduates' on-campus learning experiences. Key informant A toughly pointed out that, “(the school) tried very well to achieve students' satisfaction as they are considered the most important clientele in the university.” Key informant B proudly said that, “(the school) paved way to allow the 2014 BMLS graduates to learn and unlearn by different learning experiences and encounters.”

Reconstruction of programs and co-curricular activities, adding facilities and technology, and more valuable services as part of the preparations for future development are seemingly the tangible implementation of the recommendations from the exit surveys. Imperatively, this tangible implementation is directed towards the enhancement of the students' learning environment (Weeks, 2012; Wiggins, 2014).

Mondal (2014) further stated that “in the school (and at the home), the conditions for learning must be favorable and adequate if teaching is to produce the desired results. It cannot be denied that the type and quality of instructional materials and equipment play an important part in the instructional efficiency of the school. It is difficult to do a good job of teaching in a poor type of building and without adequate equipment and instructional materials. A school building or a classroom has no merit when built without due regard to its educational objectives and functions.”

Empirically, this study identified and validated important parameters on exit survey to assess the implementation of the BMLS curriculum particularly in UIC. The results were of great help in the continued efforts of improving the

curriculum, instruction, and other services in the pursuit of excellence. This also provided insights and recommendations on the implementation of the BMLS as perceived by the participants.

Meanwhile, the output of the study may be used as a standardized exit survey questionnaire for future graduates, which each institution may use to their academic and professional advantages.

Recommendations. Based on the findings of the study, Performance-Based Learning and Assessment (Hibbard et al., 2014) is recommended in order to uphold the perceived Excellent rating of the BMLS competencies in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitude of UIC's graduates.

To maintain excellent performance, especially on specific domains in clinical laboratory skills, weaknesses on the internship training program and clinical laboratory exposure should be identified. A “standard” pre and post proficiency assessment tool is recommended to assess the proficiency level of the interns. For instance, in cases where proficiency level of the interns is poor or needs improvement, extension trainings of identified interns in the particular clinical laboratory section/s with poor or needs improvement proficiency level must be given. To preserve the excellent services provided by the BMLS program and UIC in general, it is recommended that whatever has been practiced will be continued. Furthermore, yearly assessment and evaluation should be considered as to whether or not the services provide their significant roles and/or functions. For further studies, the researcher recommends to broaden the scope and conduct of exit survey using learning competencies in BMLS and other academic courses.

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Navigating the World of the Young Fishermen Beneficiaries of 4Ps: A Multiple Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to describe the fishing and academic experiences of the young fisherman students who were beneficiaries of the Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino Program (4Ps) and unravel the challenges they had encountered and how they were able to manage such roles. Five participants were selected through purposive sampling, which included only high school student beneficiaries of 4Ps engaged in fishing. In-depth interview, observations, and field notes were employed in the gathering of data. Using thematic analysis, major findings revealed that poverty was the main reason why these children engaged in this risky activity. The benefits they received from 4Ps were not enough to support schooling so they had to find sources of additional income. It showed further that the participants loved education for it is through education that their lives would improve. The study underscored that fishing embraces economic landscape, source of fun and living, awaits danger, requires extra cautions, can be learned in different ways, cause of scholastic derailment, and supports academic endeavor. The participants coped with their roles by maintaining a positive attitude and realistic beliefs, taking others as helping hands, keeping up perseverance, and fine-tuning. The insights they gave were battling poverty through fishing, engaging fishing as a subsidy, and showing a wavelength of might, for they up-welled from the troughs in the ocean of life in order to reach the crest of a brighter future.

KEYWORDS: Educational leadership, 4Ps beneficiaries, fishing experiences, young fishermen, academic life, qualitative multiple case study, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

The life of a fisherman is never easy. One must possess fortitude of spirit to counteract the downward and upward pressures as consequences of the challenges it brings. This is especially true for young student fishermen, who not only take on this multitudinous task but also are placed at the forefront of the bar of stress and strain that comes with engaging in fishing as a livelihood while at the same time trying to attain a good education.

The International Labor Organization (1999) describes fishing at sea as probably the most dangerous occupation in the world. The type of work boys and girls are involved in fishing and diving, where children run the risk of drowning and other injuries. These girls and boys, between ages of 5 and 17, are performing work that obstruct their education or damage their health or personal development. Moreover, children, who belong to poor households, work in order to satisfy their needs. Besides, these children will have to abandon their education or they will give much preference to fishing over education because they care for their parents and siblings.

Various efforts have been done to help students, especially those who belong to low poor households, finish basic education. One example of this support is an educational subsidy called Conditional Cash transfer (CCT). This subsidy program helps students concentrate on their schooling by reducing their time to engaged in labor, promote school attendance and reduce common forms of child work (Barrea-Osorio et al., 2011; Behrman et al., 2011; Malucio & Flores, 2005). The Philippine government has embarked on this Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) known as the Pantawid Pamilya Program (4Ps) which provides not only conditional cash assistance to poor families but also a means to improve the health, nutrition, and the education of children aged 0-18. Additionally, it aimed to alleviate their immediate needs and to break poverty through investment in human capital by sending children to school.

However, there are still reports that some children who are recipients of this educational subsidy do work to earn money. And what attracted me are those students who are beneficiaries of 4Ps who do fishing, in spite of the fact that fishing is a dangerous activity. This kind of experience is rare because only few studies have looked into child labor related to fishing activities and there is no such concrete available data about young fishermen students with educational assistance from the government. It is interesting since they are students, attending class daily, rendering eight hours from morning till afternoon. It is puzzling, for they receive a monthly allowance for their study, yet they do fishing. Moreover,

I would like to explore and navigate their world to describe and understand wavelengths of experiences and the kind of buoyant force that pushes them up to cope with their roles as fisherman and as a student so they may see the beautiful sunshine in their lives.

Study Objectives. The purpose of this qualitative multiple case study was to describe the experiences of young fishermen students who are recipients of the 4Ps. This study wanted to find out the fishing and academic activities of the participants. Further, the study looked into their feelings and emotions, and consequently connected some patterns to gain understanding of their present situation. Furthermore, it unraveled the challenges they encountered as a student and as a young fisherman; and how they were able to manage such roles. Finally, this study provided lessons from the participants to other student beneficiaries of the 4Ps and to the educational sector as well.

The research questions that guided this multiple case study inquired, first, about how the young fisherman students as beneficiaries of 4Ps describe their fishing and academic activities. Second the study looked into the different methods of fishing being practiced by the young fishermen students as well as how the research participant cope with their roles as a student and as a fisherman. Based on their responses, I tried to examine what insights the participants could offer to other student beneficiaries of 4Ps.

Theoretical Lens. As a theoretical lens I used Basu and Van' Child Labor Model (1998) which posits that children work when their family cannot meet its basic needs otherwise, regardless of how large or small the return to child labor is. This model emphasizes that children find means to gain earnings in their own capabilities to fill in the needs of family members. When a family is below the poverty level, then they need income from child labor. As Permanent Income Hypothesis (Friedman, 1957) implies that changes in consumption behavior are not predictable, then, it can be inferred that children will have to find means of earnings so as to anticipate future expenses, particularly in their studies. This can be linked to Becker (1974) as a key factor in children-to-parents transfer. In this model children transfer money to their parents because they care for their parents' well being. In some cases, some young fishermen have acquired their skills from direct observation from the fisher folks. Some would join into the group of youth who does fishing in other municipalities or locations on an average size of vessel and do fishing at night. This kind of activity is enshrined within the context of Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), which states that

learning is a cognitive process that takes place in a social context and can occur purely through observation and direct instruction.

Studies have repeatedly found that socio-economic status affects students' outcomes. It is believed that low socio-economic status negatively affects academic achievements because it prevents access to vital resources and creates additional stress at home (Barry, 2006; Bradley & Corwyn, 2002). Poor students work in order to meet their needs for learning and are less likely to get support from their parents since they are engaged in livelihood activities (Kaylor & Flores, 2008). Haushofer and Fehr (2014) revealed that families with a child in poverty alleviation programs appeared to reallocate educational opportunities away from their other children. This study can be related to the reallocation of funds intended for education of student beneficiaries of 4Ps. It might be another factor why some students try to find means to obtain money to be used for their schooling. This was also anchored on the study conducted by Ray (2000) that wage has a very significant impact on the number of hours that children work. Children are prone to work when they receive wages. This particular study can be linked to why do children perform fishing may be because there is a quick roll of money that can be acquired from fishing.

On the other hand, an educational subsidy is given to students who belong to low socio-economic status to continue their schooling. This program helps these students concentrate to their schooling by reducing their time to do labour. Evidence shows that schooling incentives such as Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) like the Pantawid Pamilya Pilipino Program (4Ps) can promote school attendance and reduce common forms of child work (Barrea-Osorio et al., 2011; Behrman et al., 2011; Malucio & Flores, 2005).

This qualitative case study was delimited to discovering the experiences of the young fishermen beneficiaries of 4Ps as a fisherman and as a student. The data in this study was limited only to the responses and observations to the five participants who do fishing while schooling. There were few constraints in this qualitative case study as the data and results gathered from the interviews and observations could not be used to generalize the entire population of young fishermen who are beneficiaries of 4Ps and at the same time do schooling. Furthermore, I cannot assure that the five young fishermen beneficiaries of 4Ps responded truthfully and sincerely to each of the questions I asked.

METHOD

Research Design. The study employed the qualitative multiple case design since the purpose of this study was to capture and elucidate the rich descriptions of the experiences of the participants. I chose this method since it was my desire to understand this kind experience by gathering in-depth data directly from each of the five young fisherman students and beneficiaries of 4Ps. I was also interested about the challenges they encountered in their fishing activities and their study in school as well; and how were they able to cope with their roles as fisherman and as student. I was also interested in the insights that can be gathered from their experiences so it might be shared to other 4Ps student beneficiaries. Ghauri and Gronhaug (2002) emphasized that case studies do not represent the entire population under investigation. In this study, observations and data results of in-depth interviews from the five young fishermen beneficiaries of 4Ps were compared and corroborated in order to establish themes of their experiences.

In order to obtain and elicit detailed and clear descriptions of the study that would include the experiences and challenges of the participants, I conducted an in-depth interview among the participants. The purpose of conducting an in-depth interview with the five young fishermen beneficiaries of 4Ps in this particular study was to find out their experiences as a fisherman and as a student, the challenges they have encountered in their fishing activities and study, and how they coped with their roles as a fisherman and as a student so as to elucidate insights out of their experiences. I used the semi-structured or focused interviews in which questions were contained in an interview guide with a focus on the issues or topic areas about the young fishermen beneficiaries of 4Ps.

Research Participants. The participants for this study were young fishermen beneficiaries of the 4Ps who were high school students in Santa Maria, Davao del Sur. Purposive sampling was used to select the particular participants of this study. I used homogeneous sampling to narrow the focus of the study to young fishermen who were recipient of the 4Ps. According to Creswell (2007) a maximum of five participants in a single case would be enough, as this would already provide ample opportunity to identify themes of the cases as well as conduct cross-case theme analysis. Each of the young fishermen 4Ps recipients was given informed consent to be signed along with the assurance that all data to be gathered from the interview was solely for the purpose of the study.

Data Sources. The sources of data involved in this multiple case study included the in-depth interview and observations. The data in this study were gathered from my one-on-one interview with the participants using the interview guide that addressed the research questions and sub questions. I obtained the views, perspectives and feelings of the participants with regards to their fishing and academic experiences. In this study I used a smartphone application recorder to record the conversations and views of the participants and were subsequently transcribed for the purpose of analysis. To supplement the audio-recorded interview, I also took down notes during the course of the interview, which underscored their experiences as young fishermen and their performance in school. All pertinent documents gathered after the course of the interview and observation were placed in a large archival envelope properly labeled for safety keeping and retrieval purposes.

Another source of data in this study was the observation of the teachers about the participants' academic performance. This was based on their experiences with these participants during their classes. I interviewed the class adviser of each participant and some teachers who had a class with each participant. Data collection involved spending considerable time in the setting under study, immersing oneself in this setting, and collecting as much relevant information as possible and unobtrusively as possible (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006). The researcher determined and found what data contributed to his understanding and resolution of a given problem and collected the suitable and available data for that problem.

Data Collection. The collection of data for this study was patterned from the five (5) steps given by Creswell (2008). First, I asked permission to conduct the study from the school head and from each young fisherman 4Ps recipient emphasizing that his/her involvement was voluntary that he/she could withdraw anytime from the interview. The participants, with their parents were contacted verbally, initially, and I informed them of the purpose, procedures, and nature of study. Upon consent, I gave each participant an informed consent and a letter of explanation before the interview began. I discussed the issues of risks and about complete anonymity with each participant and made clear to them that all responses including identity and personal information would be treated with utmost confidentiality. Furthermore, I also informed them that the whole course of the interview would be audio-taped using a phone recorder and that they would be given a copy of the full transcript and translation for perusal and checking lest there were parts they wished not to be included in the data

analysis. They were informed that transcript and translation would be treated as final after they would affirm by affixing their signature. Second, I selected the appropriate sites that best helped the researcher to understand the phenomenon. Each participant was given his choice to select the most convenient day, time and place for the interview, free from noise and distractions.

Another aspect of data collection was identifying the types of data that addressed the research questions and sub questions in the interview guide, for the purpose of obtaining the perspective of the participants and allowing them to share their views. There were four open-ended questions formulated in this study, which were validated by experts in research. Each main question had sub questions that serve as the guide during the face-to-face interview with participants. To supplement the audio-recorded interview, I also took down notes during the course of the interview, which underscored their experiences as young fishermen and their performance in school. All pertinent documents gathered after the course of the interview and observation were placed in a large archival envelope properly labeled for safekeeping and retrieval purposes.

Data Analysis. This study made use of thematic analysis in analyzing the collected data. After the interview with the participants I transcribed and translated the data with the help of a translator. The translated data were encoded onto trial version of computer software, for proper coding of the themes and subthemes and finding the word frequencies. The software had limitations in identifying patterns, so as I also identified more specific themes or codes known as "nodes" for analyzing and drawing conclusions from the data.

A separate within-case analysis was made for each case followed by cross-case analysis. Each one of the with-in case analyses was given detail and rich descriptions of the case. In the cross-case analysis, the research questions were addressed by using all the data that were gathered from all the case studies and were summarized into major themes or core ideas. The presentation of the major themes and the core ideas was patterned after the study of Amparero (2011) making use of three classifications: general, typical and variant responses.

Trustworthiness of the Study and Ethical Considerations. To achieve credibility, I requested my friend to do peer debriefing by listening, prompting, and recording my insights through the entire conduct of the research. I did persistent observation in the conduct of the face-to-face interview with the participants. I checked my analyses and interpretation to ensure that all accurately reflected the documents and recordings and interview notes. I provided each participant with

copies of the transcripts and translations for checking and giving feedbacks to avoid conflicts and contradictions. I asked my friends and adviser to do a review and examination of my data findings, specifically on the themes and subthemes that were generated from the interview transcripts (Smith, 1998; Denzin & Guba, 2000; Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2006). The last part was a member checking process of providing copies of the transcripts and translations to the participants. They were asked if the descriptions were correct, complete and realistic (Creswell, 2007).

I collected sufficient detailed and rich description of the experiences of the participants by conducting an in-depth interview in order to come up with similarities between situations to ensure that the result of the study could be transferred into another context or with other situation by reporting with sufficient detail and precision. In order to meet this criterion a comprehensive descriptive data was collected by conducting an in-depth interview with the young fishermen beneficiaries of 4Ps.

I organized and kept in large archival envelopes all my field notes, transcripts, translations, and audiotapes of all the in-depth interviews conducted from each participant to ensure that the data gathered were true and real.

Audit trail was accomplished by involving classmates and co-researchers as well as my adviser and teacher to examine the process of collecting, analyzing and interpreting my data. Moreover, my concrete form of audit trail was a written detailed description tracking the progress of each of the in-depth interview to be done in this study. I made sure that findings were the results of the experiences and ideas of the participants. To avoid bias, triangulation was emphasized. I analyzed the experiences of the participants consistent to what they shared and did through the interview and observations and artifacts

First, I asked initial permission from the student fishermen verbally, if it they would be willing to be my participants in my study and to inform their parents. Second, I asked permission from the school principal to conduct a study about the 4Ps student-beneficiaries specifically those young fishermen. Third, I informed the chosen student-fishermen the voluntary nature of their participation. I also explained the nature and the objectives of the study so they would understand my purpose.

To avoid biases, I was open to see their world differently because they had unique experiences and these experiences had particular meanings. As suggested by Crotty (1998), in order to discover the true experience that is being studied, the researcher must "lay aside" any preceding understanding of the phenomenon, so I refrained from personal persuasion in the investigation. Total anonymity was assured to each participant.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Profile of the young fisherman student beneficiaries of 4Ps

Name of participants	Present age	Age started fishing	Educational level became a 4Ps beneficiary
Dipper	16	6	Grade 5
Hull	15	14	Grade 6
Mast	5	11	Grade 3
Outrigger	15	12	Grade 6
Paddle	17	8	Elementary level

Profiling Young Fishermen Beneficiaries of the 4Ps Program. Participants' profile is shown in table 1. Table 1 reveals that the participants are high school students aged 15 to 17 years old. Dipper, Hull, Mast, and Outrigger are Grade 9 students and Paddle is a senior high school. Among them Hull is the only participant who started fishing when he was a sophomore student while the rest started in their elementary years. Moreover, Dipper and Paddle started fishing in their most tender years. All of them became 4Ps beneficiaries since elementary.

The young fishermen beneficiaries of 4Ps who participated in this qualitative study were Dipper, Hull, Mast, Outrigger, and Paddle (pseudonyms). All participants were high school students and living in Barangays Santo Rosario and Basiawan in the municipality of Santa Maria, Davao del Sur. Based on this data, it revealed that the participants were high school students aged 15 to 17 years old, and posed relevance to the estimate of the International Labor Organization (ILO) in 1999 that around 215 million children between the ages of five and 17 work, sixty percent of whom were employed in the agricultural sector including fisheries and aquaculture. Dipper, Hull, Mast, and Outrigger were Grade 9 students and Paddle was a senior. Among them, Hull was the only participant who started fishing when he was a sophomore student while the rest in their elementary years. Moreover, Dipper and Paddle started fishing in their most tender years. Finally, it can be inferred that, even if they received a monthly subsidy, they continued fishing. All of them became 4Ps beneficiaries since elementary.

Fishing as a Way of Living. The participants described their fishing activity as, first, a foundation of economic stability by providing additional income and support for the family to meet their basic needs. All of them assisted their family in buying things intended for daily survival. The main reason why the participants had to fish was to have money. The decisions of these participants were in resonance to the study according to the U.S. Department of Labor (1995) that children most commonly work in poor rural agricultural regions in which families believe that the employment of their children will increase total family income. Children are prone to work when they receive wages and wages have a very significant impact on the number of hours children work. Such is the case of the participants who have all found it in themselves to add to their family income because they recognize their own poverty. The small contribution that children make to their parents meager income could spell the difference between nothing and bare sufficiency (UNICEF, 1994). This made the participants eager to work because they felt it is their obligation to help their own parents and families. This in turn makes them view their fishing activities as their means of their share in helping their family.

Second, fishing is a source of fun and living. All the participants were happy and contented when they caught plenty of fishes. It was also a form of recreation and bonding with friends and members of the family. Typical responses included feeling of goodness when they saw fishes and excitements to catch big fishes. As a source of living, it was a necessity that they should fish in order to earn and have something to eat, basically. The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (2015) explained that fishing offers a chance to improve self-esteem through respect for the environment, mastering outdoor skills and achieving personal goals. Fishing caters one's personal and social development. Indeed, it is a source of recreation and self-fulfillment like Hull who was happy because fishing has given himself an experience. In addition, fishing is fun because there is thrill and excitement in it. Mast was excited to go with her father; much more with Hull who thought he got addicted to fishing, and while in school his mind craved to catch during a season of thicker swarm of fish. On the other hand, fishing is a source for living among the participants the fact that they were involved in it since kids. For Dipper, fishing is a necessity in order to have food to eat and to buy things. Aside, the participants were living nearby the sea, so fishing became part of their daily existence. By selling their catch they can earn for their living. In the case of Hull and Outrigger, they mentioned about selling their catch or share out of fishing.

Third, fishing is learned in various ways. Dipper, Mast and Paddle were influenced and taught by their respective fathers, initially. Their fathers invited them to their fishing activity at night. On the other hand, Hull and Outrigger learned it because of their desire to learn brought about by financial crisis in their family. Dipper, Mast and Paddle were influence by their parents or members of the family, while Hull and Outrigger learned fishing because of their innate desires. This kind of activity is enshrined within the context of Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977). Since the participants were living near the sea, it is implied that they were exposed to the various means of fishing that the fisher folks had practiced. Based on observations and direct instructions from their parents and friends and acquaintances along the shore, they perfected a certain skill of fishing.

Perils of a Fishermans Life. Fishing is a dangerous activity because a fisherman is prone to injuries and accidents brought by natural and man-made disasters which included being smashed by big waves and blown by strong winds, sleepless nights, sea sickness, collision and capsizing of boats, and having wounds and bruises caused by pointed objects like hooks, rocks, sea creature like shrimp and the bantol or stonefish, being attacked by sharks, or being entangled in rope, and drowning. These experiences are linked to the studies of Smith (1998) that sea fishing has long been considered a risky profession due to natural hazards and technological failures, and Kissling (2005) talked about high occupational hazards such as accidents while hauling in nets (Lincoln et al., 2002), health risks such as those from disease. Additionally, being immersed in water constitutes danger. Onboard a vessel, fishers are exposed to physical strain and fatigue, same as the experiences of Outrigger who slipped into the hole of the platform and Hull who almost fell. Fishermen depend on their vessels for their survival. If the vessel is lost, it is probable that some or all of the crew will lose their lives too. The most common causes of fishing vessel casualties include capsizing, breakdown, fire/explosion and collision. However, it was a terrifying episode on the lives of Mast, Dipper and Outrigger who survived when their boats capsized and collided with another vessel.

Fifth, fishing requires extra caution to avoid injuries and accidents. Bringing of extra shirts, jackets, tools, paddle, match, flashlight and pale was the fundamental measure the participants practiced. Staying alert, focus and vigilant was always manifested. Typical responses were call for help from other fishers when they were in trouble and by praying to God. Resting and having an early sleep is a variant response.

Impact of Fishing Livelihood on the Schooling of Young Fishermen.

The informants shared that their fishing activity had a positive and negative implication to their academic pursuit. Through fishing they paid school fees, allowance for lunch and snacks. The only variant response was the zest to learn if their earning is high even though they were tired; the feeling of sleep would be gone. On the other hand, the negative implication it had to their academic pursuit was disruption. The participants missed some of their lessons and assignments. They could not make the projects at home because fishing became their priority. They also felt exhaustion and fatigue due to the strenuous works they went through which resulted to absences. They felt sleepy which resulted to their lack of concentration in class. Sometime, one participant said would sneak out from classes in the afternoon session. Similar findings were reported by Heady (2000) about the links between child labor and poor school performance, using data gathered in Ghana. The study implied a relationship that children who are already contributing economically to their family income may be less interested in academic achievement, resulting in lack of motivation that affects both their learning and their future prospects. The negative impact of fishing in their education is like a current that hampers their movement towards the attainment of a particular goal encompassing their academic pursuit. Fishing resulted to a scholastic derailment among the participants.

Fishing Skills of Young Fishermen. At a younger age they already knew at least three methods of fishing, and among them Outrigger has experienced numerous ways of fishing. Among the fishing methods or activities they had known were crab fishing, lampornas, pamaling (drag netting), pamukot (trawling), pahawin, palangre, pamasol (rod fishing), squid fishing, panapay, panginhas (gleaning for shellfish), panudsod (pushnetting), panumbol (ramming), patuloy, torch fishing, and undak. Dipper, Mast, and Paddle were doing palangre and pamukot (trawling), while Hull and Outrigger were common in terms of panapay. The participants. The participants were extraordinary because they have developed in them the desire to learn forms of fishing and used it for a particular fishing expedition.

Balancing the Need for Survival and Getting an Education. Their roles as fisherman and as a student were difficult tasks, considering their age, yet they managed to perform both tasks passionately and persistently by having a positive attitude and realistic belief, taking others as helping hands, perseverance, and tuning in their tasks finely. Striving to finish studies, accepting the responsibility,

and thinking positively encompassed their positive attitude and realistic belief that entails the first theme generated in the study with regards to coping with their roles. Variant responses included praying to God and staying away from bad guys and vices. One typical response was dreaming of a better future. Based on this, I could describe that they were optimistic. Thus, the young fishermen participants converged a bigger picture into the lens of their vision of the beautiful possibilities they would acquire someday.

Another way of coping with their roles was to have a positive thinking. Amidst the challenges they encountered, they believed that things would come right and better. They have envisioned the bright side of life and expect positive results. They anticipate happiness, health and success, and believe they can overcome any obstacle and difficulty. All the participants carried with them the power of positive thinking while they fished. The third theme that was generated as a way of coping with their roles was by taking others as helping hands. Through this gregarious mechanism the participants were able to continue their academic pursuit by asking assistance from their sibling and friends in making assignments and projects, negotiating with teachers and reconsider late submission of requirements, and taking a free ride to school by kind motorists. Another thing was the encouragement and cheer by friends in times of enervation. This coping mechanism comes in the form of Social Support, which is categorized and measured in several different ways such as emotional support, tangible support, informational support, and companionship support (Wills, 1991; Uchino, 2004). This theory is categorized and measured in several different ways such as emotional support, tangible support, informational support, and companionship support.

In terms of their fishing activity, they ask help from fishers when they encountered trouble in the sea. Two of the participants were given the opportunity work with tapay so as to cater its desire to fish and to earn money. One participant collaborated with friends to fish nearby the shore just to have a catch in times when they have a zero catch at night. Moreover, perseverance is also the derived theme from the study as a way of coping with their roles. The participants continued to fish and study by developing the virtue of perseverance. Typical responses include walking in going to school and in returning home. Two participants endured hunger twice a day. Variant responses were acquiring strength from parents to fish and study, while the other was self-control not to be drawn to bad influences.

The fourth theme generated from the study is fine-tuning. In this case, the participants were able to have time management by arranging their schedule

of study and fishing. One participant brought a notebook with her in times of examination so she can study while at sea. Two participants had to use the vacant period in the afternoon to study and make the projects. This in relation to the theory developed by Maslow (1943) about hierarchy of needs which combined time management with one's needs that comprised focusing on understanding one's needs, differentiating them, and setting time limits on getting each done so that one does not encroach on other essential areas of his or her life. Ideally, the first motive of the participants was to earn money in order to meet their own needs and those of their family. They also aimed to improve their standard of living by venturing into fishing as often as they could. The insights that can be obtained from the experiences of the young participants were categorized into three themes: fighting poverty through fishing, engagement in fishing like having a subsidy, and showing a wavelength of might.

Fishing and Education as Young Fishermen's Way of Poverty Alleviation.

Poverty is linked with culture. These young fishermen had the desire to break the culture of poverty they have. They made this poverty as positive sense in attaining their goals. They wanted to build a way of life that is remarkably stable and persistent that they can be proud of. This will be their pride to be passed to the next generation.

In the desire of eliminating the culture of poverty, they made use of all the resources that they have. They engage in fishing as means to fight poverty. In their combat to alleviate poverty, all the participants lent support to their family by providing additional income through their earnings out of fishing. In that way, they could buy something to attain their basic needs and other needs.

Children work when their family cannot meet its basic needs otherwise, regardless of how large or small the return to child labor is and will find means to gain earnings through their own capabilities to fill in the needs of family members (Basu & Van, 1998). In these study, the participants attained subsidy through their earning. They wanted to have extra money so they could buy personal things and used for their schooling. They showed a wavelength of might by conquering their roles and responsibilities and their inner selves towards the fulfillment of their dreams and their family as well. The participants continually fish despite of the risks it brings. They also showed endurance in attaining the academic pursuit.

Families from low socio-economic communities are less likely to have the financial resources or time availability to provide children with academic support (Kaylor & Flores, 2008). Therefore the young fishermen hold on to

their fishing activity because it is also another form of subsidy coming from their own effort. One reason, which is a variant response, is that the 4Ps subsidy is consumed in just a few days, so they involved in fishing because there is a fast flow of money out of it. Wages have a very significant impact on the number of hours that children work children are prone to work when they receive wages (Ray, 2000). If the government has done something for them, they must also have their initial input for them to become successful. Changes in consumption behavior are not predictable, then, it can be inferred that children will have to find means of earnings so as to anticipate future expenses, particularly in their studies (Friedman, 1957).

Finally, the third theme is that the young fishermen had shown a wavelength of might. They were able to bear their self-imposed responsibilities and to their family as well. They unleashed their capabilities to help and provide their family members additional income to be used in attaining their daily needs. They conquered their weaknesses and fear by continuously fishing in dangerous sea. They strived to go to school even if they were exhausted.

Implications of the Study. Through this study I have learned and understood the present situation underlying the activities of young fishermen who were students and beneficiaries of the 4Ps. I found out that poverty is the main reason why should they fish at night most often after schooling, or even on weekdays, except during the occurrence of weather disturbances. In their tender age they risked their lives in the dangers of this endeavor for the betterment of their living and the realization of their dreams. It is revealed further that they continued the fishing activity even though they were subsidized financially in their schooling.

The study revealed that the participants had a love for education, but fishing disrupted their academic activities. Furthermore, the study indicated that most of the time they lack concentration inside the classroom. It is important that for schools which are located nearby the sea to identify and be familiarized with the students who are involved in fishing. A school's learning atmosphere or climate and discipline policies have an effect on school attachment among students (Heilbrunn & Seeley, 2003). When a student feels an attachment to school through a web of relationships with other students, teachers, or a caring adult, it can help overcome many of the causes of truancy. An action plan may be made to assist these young fisherman-students, who have the probability of dropping-out and be absent from classes, acquire the basic education by coping up with the lessons that they would miss. Schools may look into ways of strengthening

relationships between students and teachers (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). The school may establish group of learning support like student teachers in every classroom to teach them about a particular lesson they have not understood.

Moreover, the school may monitor students' attendance more closely and evaluate their academic performance in every subject monthly or periodically. In this case the teachers can give feedback and the desired actions to be done. Thus there is a need to intensify the Drop Out Reduction Program of the Department of Education so that students can complete their high school education even if they find themselves in circumstances that would not allow them to continue going to school under the regular system; the School Initiated Interventions (SII) such as remedial classes, modular approach can be a better way of mentoring by a teacher to a learner. Mentoring is defined as a one-to-one, caring, supportive relationship between a mentor and a mentee that is based on trust. Tutoring, which is also a one-to-one activity, has its focus on academics and is an effective practice for addressing specific needs such as basic skill development. Furthermore, this action will support the EFA 2015 that no one must be left behind in attaining the basic education (Smink & Reimer, 2005).

Moreover, the participants had developed some mechanisms to cope with challenging roles. I could say that their manifestation of such qualities is very remarkable because they have unleashed their potentials to survive the test of times that occur in their lives. Cohen and Wills (1985) stressed out that people who receive more social support should display a weaker correlation between the amount of stress and health problems than those who receive less social support strongly put forward the building of social network of support that involves the parents, the school and the immediate sector in the community. By building a social network of support, the participants can bear the challenges in life and have the capability to flourish in their ambitions in life.

Based on this study it is implied that parents gained substantial support from their children's fishing. It seems that parents somehow gave due importance to the fishing activities of their children for the earnings to be derived at it, and did not give full emphasis to the education of their children. Thus, I advocate that schools may conduct family development seminar because there is a positive relationship between family engagement and the education of the child. Other studies have found similar insights (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Mapp, 2004; Smink & Reimer, 2005) finding that there is a positive relationship between family engagement and improved academic achievement. This relationship is the true across socioeconomic, racial or ethnic, and educational background for students of all ages. When a family is engaged in a student's education, there

is a positive effect on achievement, and family engagement is one of the most accurate predictors of a student's success in school.

Although the Philippine government through the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), which supervises the 4Ps, developed initiatives to help poor students to attain basic education, this study found that it is not enough to sustain the family or prevent young children from becoming additional breadwinners of the family. The beneficiaries of the program are grateful for the subsidy but admit that it the subsidy runs out in only a few days. In connection to this, the DSWD must design another approach to encourage the beneficiaries to give importance to education, like giving of rewards when they will be included in the top 10 of their class or having a complete attendance in a month. People are pulled toward behaviors that offer positive incentives and pushed away from behaviors associated with negative incentives (Bernstein, 2011). Behavior is motivated by the "pull" of external goals, such as rewards, money, or recognition. It is easy to think of many situations in which a particular goal, such as a promotion at work, can serve as an external incentive that helps activate particular behaviors (Hockenbury & Hockenbury, 2003).

Future research into the fishing and academic activities of these young fishermen beneficiaries of 4Ps may be advantageous when the number of participants is increased as this may give different patterns of similarities and differences and perhaps a vivid illustration will be generated. Based on the results of this study, one of the participants is a female. It would be a basis to study about female young fishers who are also schooling and recipients of the 4Ps. Then it may lead to comparison (relationship and differences) among male and female young fishers about their exposure to fishing, academic performance, and contributions to their family. Researchers may also study the young fishermen 4Ps beneficiaries in urban and rural areas. The study revealed further that the participants were fishing since they were kids. It would be of great interest to study about their impact to their family, quantitatively.

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Folk Epics: An Exploration of Kagan Culture

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ABSTRACT

The primary aim of this study was to analyze and interpret Kagan folk epics using different theories in relation to culture. This study is beneficial to the Kagan tribe because their oral tradition would be preserved in print. Ethnographic research was used with anthropological tools to study the Kagan oral folk epics, “The Epic of Dimanlod” and “The Epic of Bontungan”. The researcher stayed in the Kagan community for almost two months as a participant-observer to carefully study the Kagan culture. The researcher further used cultural theories and literary analysis to view the cultural practices present in the folk epics. Results showed that the Kagan tribe is rich in imagination and inspiration because the community was able to produce a craft that has a cultural significance. The beliefs and values possessed by their tribesmen are deeply rooted as seen in their ancestor’s experiences which were passed orally down to the generations that came after them.

KEYWORDS: Folk epics, Kagan folk literature, qualitative

INTRODUCTION

Globally, the most celebrated folk epics are that of Great Britain such as Beowulf of England, The Song of Roland of France and many others. The epics and countries mentioned are but a minuscule of the real picture. There are still countries to be read about and appreciated by the way of a proper understanding of their oral traditions.

In the Philippines, there is a dearth of collected Filipino folk epics in the libraries, when in fact; the country is very rich in culture. The languages spoken almost reach a hundred and each represents a culture. The folk epic is a picture of people bound by one way of life, but there are only few tribes identified to have a folk epic. Hence, there is still a need to explore more oral traditions in the tribes that live in this archipelagic region (Eugenio, 2007). Locally, Mindanao region unveiled only a few numbers of epics portraying Philippine cultural practices. These are the following: Ilianon Agyu of the Manobos, Maranao Bantugan of the Maranaos and Tuwaang of the Bagobos. Thus, there is again truth in the claim that recorded literary epics are still wanting and needing to be explored and preserved.

The folk epics that this researcher has searched and discovered, in most ways, were aimed to contribute to the greater body of literary knowledge which the whole world awaits to read and understand. In the case of the Kagan culture, the folk epics that are subject for this study may raise the level of awareness of the whole world needing proofs that the Kagan culture really exists.

Study Objectives. This study aimed to conduct an investigation to find out about the Kagan culture through the folk epics, that may result to socio-cultural awareness among the contemporary society and to consider the changes that may arise in this modernized world threatening the existence of the Kagan culture. This study intends to know folk epics of the Kagan Tribe found in Compostela Valley Province and Davao Oriental. Furthermore it also seeks how do these folk epics of the Kagan tribe reflect a culture in terms of the tribe's religious, social, cultural, political, and their economic practices as well as the imageries, symbols and figurative languages found in the Kagan folk epics.

Theoretical Framework

Cultural Theories. Tylor (1964) defines culture as “a complex whole which is made up of cognitive (intangible) and material (tangible) components. However in his ideology theory on culture, Tylor (1964) emphasizes that culture is primarily a cognitive organization of mental phenomena, and the material or the tangible components are just the bi-products of the cognitive or the intangible components. In Tylor (1871) culture or civilization, taken in its widest ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. Kaplan (1972) concurs by saying that, “the cognitive or intangible components shape the norm of behaviours of the members of a certain cultural group.

The shaping of the standard pattern of behaviours by the cognitive or the intangible components of a culture involves a “dynamic thinking process” (Dundes, 1965). Dynamic mental processing in a culture, as Boas (1962) explains, serves to rationalize, exhort or assail certain forms of cultural behaviours like customs and practices. In effect it gives the cognitive or the intangible components their definite pattern of thoughts as they are raised into a discriminate level of rationalization. Matsumo (1996) points out that as the cognitive or the intangible components are conceived into pattern of thoughts; they take seemingly concrete forms as seen and heard from the oral traditions and lifestyle of a culture.

Malinowski (1973) states that mental dynamism involves sensory experiences with natural environment by the members of a culture. These sensory experiences are then transformed into a body of ideas, knowledge and beliefs. The process of transformation requires perception and subjective conviction of the members in a sensory experience. The things perceived and believed are rationalized to give reasons to experiences with the natural environment. Hence, patterns of behaviour with the natural environment are justified.

According to Geertz (1973) anthropologists may choose anything in a culture that interest them, fill in details, and elaborate to inform their readers about meanings in that culture. Meanings are attached to symbolic forms, including words, rituals and customs.

In general, experimental anthropologists see ethnographies as work of art as well as work of science. Ethnographic text may be viewed as literary creations in which the ethnographer, as mediator, communicates information from the “natives” of a place to readers. Some experimental ethnographies are “dialogic”

presenting ethnography as a dialogue between the anthropologist and one more native informant. Interpretivist view culture as a meaningful text that natives constantly “read” which ethnographers must decipher (Geertz, 1973).

Five pertinent values are outlined below using the value matrices of Andres (1996) and Buazon (1994). The five values are: religious, cultural, human, socio-political and economic.

Religious values are expressions of faith and of man’s conviction of the existence of a supreme being who owns and governs all things. Buazon (1994) qualifies the term by referring it to people’s spiritual practices and a folk’s belief in one Supreme Being who intervenes. According to him, people share their faith and confidence in a supreme ruler who is described as the creator, defender and over-all authority of all things.

Cultural values according to Andres (1996) pertain to love of beauty, the arts or the aesthetics like music, dance, painting and literature. Cultural values are manifested to enliven the human spirit. Buazon (1994) says that human values are the inherent goodness of men. These values display man’s virtue of love, kindness, compassion, sympathy and others. Socio-political values as stated in Andres (1996) refer to the rule of conduct that a member of a cultural community must adhere in his dealings with others. Meanwhile, Buazon (1994) explains that this rule of conduct establishes order, responsibility, and social relationship in the community. These relationships are parental (paternal or maternal) relationship, filial relationship and communal relationship.

Literary Theory. Form and content analysis flourished from the 1940s to the 1960s in the analysis of unsophisticated documents such as oral tradition. To the extent that close reading was the major goal of all readers who rely on formal devices, such as imagery, figurative language, symbols, diction, characterization and narrative techniques, to understand the meanings of a literary text. It is the task of readers to analyze how these elements contribute to give a coherent shape and meaning to a literary work (Gillespie, 2005).

According to Tan (2001), folk epics can be considered as narrative poetry which shares an experience with the reader through vivid images. In other words, a folk epic is often painting a picture in words and it suggests colors, sounds and movements. Words from the folk epic can contain an image when it appeals to the senses, when it calls to mind the sensations described. These words are called images because they are joined to actions or things in the physical world to illustrate the mental duplication of a sense impression. The main quality of the imagery is its vividness and its specific visual representation of a concrete object

in reality. This element can be specifically extracted from the folk epic.

Symbolism as emphasized by Tuban (2009) deals with symbols representing either by a concrete object, an event or a character of the story. It may be an abstract idea of love, obstacle, desire and success. Further, she gives details to figurative language as words that are used to express meaning that is more than the literal denotative meaning. However, figures of speech are different from the denotative words because they are intended to achieve meaning and effect.

METHODS

Research Design. The researcher made use of the qualitative method in order to deeply engage in a descriptive type of study. The researcher also used anthropological tools such as interviews with the key informants and free group conversation about Kagan folk epics to direct the investigation. However, the manifestation of ethnographic research process was also applied to identify the folk epics of Kagan Tribe of Pantukan, Compostella Valley, Banay-Banay, Lupon, San Isidro and Mati Davao Oriental.

According to Wiersma (1995), an ethnographic method is an in-depth and qualitative research, which stress careful, accurate and adequate description of the phenomena from the perspective of the subjects or key informants based on how they conceptualize and interpret their own experience with concern on sequencing specific procedures (Estremos, 1999).

As explained in the research of Marvin Harris and Orna Johnson (2000), the ethnographic method is a written description of a particular culture, custom, belief, and behaviour-based on information collected through field work.

Research Instrument. The researcher produced almost a hundred copies of the survey questionnaire which were given to the informants. In a series of interviews, the researcher made use of the video camera to have a clear record of the conversations and to get images as a proof of the interview.

Research Participants. The subjects of this study were the full-blooded Kagans that lived in Pantukan, Compostela Valley, Banay-Banay, Lupon and Mati Davao Oriental who have never been engaged in intermarriages of other tribes. The key informants were old folks of the tribe chanting and singing with the purpose of passing the epic from one generation to another.

Data Sources. Davao Gulf is the legitimate place where the members of the Kagan tribe are residing. The numerous numbers of associates in Pantukan, Compostela Valley, Banay-Banay, San Isidro, Lupon and Mati Davao Oriental became the reason why the researcher chose such places to gather factual evidences for the existing culture that needed preservation especially in terms of oral tradition. There were four basic criteria that the researcher considered in selecting the sites for the study: availability of the resource persons that acted as a guide; the accessibility of the area; peace and order situation, and population of Kagans in the area.

Data Collection Procedure. The following procedures were done: first, the researcher explained the intentions of this research and asked the permission of the Sultan, Priest (Imam), head of the Kagan tribe foundation and the leader of the Kagan tribe theatre arts collective on the intent of a gathering information about folk epic in their specific area of responsibility which included the preservation and study of their hidden culture, tradition, customs and beliefs particularly in the land of Pantukan, Compostela Valley Province Banay-Banay, Lupon, San Isidro and Mati Davao Oriental. Second, the guidelines were prepared. They consisted of structured questions to gather information about their folk epics transmitted orally through the cultural system presided in the locality.

Third was the classification of the qualified key informants. The selection of the key informants was based on their capacity to impart knowledge about their own folk epics; another qualification was their social standing in the tribe. Simultaneously, in the fourth part, questionnaires were distributed during the actual Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and interviews with the qualified respondents. The fifth process was the archiving and transcribing of the given data.

The meeting with the respondents were in their residences to ensure their convenience during the interviews. After the (FGD), each respondent was given a one-on-one opportunity to reassure they were comfortable.

The story-telling stints of the key informants were video recorded, captured by a camera and transcribed. Note-taking was done concurrently while the discussion was ongoing. After the transliteration, translations and revisions of the valid data gathered, the last procedure done was the stages for interpretation, criticism, and analysis by the researcher from recordings of the collected information for this study.

Selection and Interview of Key Informants. The most important role in this study was played by the qualified respondents, for the main reason that they were the ones who shed light on essential information regarding folk epics and the latter's connection with the revolving culture, tradition, customs and beliefs. They also provided preliminary analysis of their oral tradition based on their own tribal understanding.

In this study of Kagan folk epics, the total number of credible key informants were 30. All of the chosen respondents showed their efficiency and efficacy in terms of reasoning ability with critical thinking skills that enabled them to take a part in the study. Their biographical backgrounds were also considered to test their ability and quality to relay their folk epics, this trajectory made an assurance in the explicit outcome of the study. Following were the things that the researcher looked for: level of ethnicity, educational background, sex, age, civil status, occupation, and land ownership.

In this particular study, the only way to come with a faultless output was to cautiously follow the specific procedure of selecting key informants. They should be a pure-blooded Kagans who never engaged in an intermarriage of cultures, of different tribes and they should be capable of expressing their thought in the language, Kinaagan or in Bisaya and Tagalog. Given data should be interrelated with the Kagan tribe folk epic reflected in their cultures, traditions, custom and beliefs.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The (FGD) is a technique that was used to save time and loss in the gathering of data. All the respondents were gathered together in a meeting place to conduct the (FGD) (Estremos 1999). The authentication of the informants was observed throughout the group discussions.

As cited by Estremos (1999), the term "focus" with focus group refers to the topic or concept to be discussed to allow in-depth discussions to develop. The selection of the participants was also focused, targeting individuals who meet specific criteria that made them interested in the topic under study (Knodel et al., 1990).

As cited in Denzin and Lincoln (2000), in Merton et al. (1956), the term "focus group" applied to a situation in which the interview asked a group very specific questions about the topic after considerable research was completed.

The technique of the focus group discussion was intended to obtain the exactness of the data gathered from the interviewees. The advantage of this style showed that if one of the respondents suffered from mental block or tongue tightness, the help of the group was always ready.

Through the help of Focus Group Discussion (FGD), the researcher take hold of the confidence of the participants and their assurance in terms of credibility, authenticity and validity of every datum collected. They were also solicited for ideas with a tendency for the topic to branch out to other connected matters making discussion beneficial for the development of the study. And furthermore, the answers of the respondents served as a common knowledge. Producing greater convenience and advantage for the researcher.

The data collection for this folk epics study lasted for eight weeks equivalent to 62 days. The study covered the period February 22, 2014 up to February 23, 2014. Follow-up interviews were established for March 1, 2014 up to March 30, 2014. The last date of gathering information was done from April 1, 2014 to April 30, 2014 obtaining more information about the culture under study and collect more folk epics.

Data Analysis. The data underwent processing before the application of cultural approach and literary analysis in form and content. The data of folk epics chanted or sung was first transliterated and translated into English language in written form. This was religiously done line by line in the existing folk epic.

After the exaltation of the oral tradition into literary form from preliminary processing, the result underwent interpretation, criticism and analysis until it reached the final step letting the expert readers give their attention to the output for their opinions and interpretations on the resurrected literature, by this, making the text rich.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the data collected, a systematic identification and notation of the specific patterns of behaviour that occurred singly or in conjunction with other observable behaviour in varied uncontrolled situations were closely undertaken as suggested by De Jesus et al. (1984).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Kagan tribe called their folk epic as Dawot; Kagans have transferred this long narrative poem from generation to generation orally using the art of chanting and singing. In the finest days of ancient life there was no presence of the printing press, therefore in order to transmit this folk epic to their young, the existence of a chanter was needed. This lyric poem was sung to reminisce the experiences of the past through the replication of the epic hero. The chanters

have claimed that the incidents described in the folk epic are historical having happened in the past. Nowadays, however, there remain only a few of human media chanting as magdadawot. Only the old folks can perform the craft. This narrative poetry tackles about life, love, death, journey and sacrifice. This folk epic is sung by chosen persons from the tribe like the balyan, an expert on rituals.

The categorization and description of the folk epic of the Kagan tribe is quite easy to determine oral poetry corresponds to the Western types of the folk epics. There are two extracted folk epics that can be discovered for this study. These are: "The Epic of Dimanlod" and "The Epic of Bontungan".

Cultural Analysis of "The Epic of Dimanlod"

Social Practices	Economic Practices	Political Practices	Religious Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Courtship ➤ Playing of tribal instrument ➤ Witchcraft and Sorcery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Slavery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Supremacy of the Princess or Ba'i ➤ Presence of the Allang or Slave 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Presence of a fairy

The Epic of Dimanlod. The epic reflected the social practices the Kagan tribe still do in these present times. The courtship of a young man towards a woman was totally replicated in the epic. The practice was done to test the sincerity of the male for the female Kagan because Kagans value their women. In this sense, it was natural for the Kagan woman not to immediately give in so that the man would show his respect for the woman. A lower-class male Kagan cannot succeed with his love and affection for a higher-class female Kagan, a distinct practice not present in any other ethnic group in the country. Playing of the musical instrument Kudyapi or a traditional guitar is native to the Kagan. The music that comes from the Kudyapi would project the feeling of a Kagan musician; to show love, affection, happiness, hatred or pain. In primitive times, only the Kagans showed their emotions through playing musical instruments. The Witchcraft and sorcery are supernatural powers reflected in the epic as the narrator prays to the gods and goddesses, asking for them to inspire her in chanting the epic. This practice was so important to pay a tribute to the owner

of the epic, which the chanter believes as her Anituan or deity. This illustrates that even nowadays Kagans still have the respect for their old gods and ancestors.

There are also political practices mirrored in the epic that Kagans still practice today. In the epic, there is the presence of a Ba'i which is equivalent to a Princess. She should possess a strong personality: considered as one of the supreme rulers in his place. In this sense, Kagans believed that women could also become good leaders in society a belief somewhat absent in all tribes in the Philippines. On the other hand, there was also the appearance of an "Allang" or a slave, who should always follow the will of the authorities because he is considered to being to the lowest rank of society. He could never show his love and affection for those of the higher ranks but only to a slave like him. This is a cultural practice by few tribes in the country, one of them is that of the Kagans.

The epic also depicts an economic practice which Kagans did in the beginning of their existence. Slavery was one of the ancient traditions that Kagans avoid to do in these modern times. This practice suspends the freedom of an individual. Fostering limitations around one's entire life as a human being. The selling of slaves is distinctly known as a practice of the Kagans.

The story also relates the idea among the religious practices of the Kagan tribe in their pagan years. They used to believe in the presence of the fairies that dwelt around them. These giving an implication that Kagans believe that once in their life-time the fairies lived with them. They also think such creatures were part of them and consider these supernatural beings as their ancestors. At the outset of modernization the other tribes already embraced, only the Kagan people managed to maintain their belief towards gods and goddesses.

Literary Analysis of "The Epic of Dimanlod"

Imagery	Symbol	Figurative Language
"I will carry her, sitting in my arms" (Kinesthetic)	Light (hope and aspirations)	"She is just like that light" (Simile)
"Princess Adabas will listen to my song that comes from the heart of mine" (Kinesthetic)	Fairy (dominion and superiority)	"She is a fairy from heaven" (Metaphor)
"Together we will have happiness if I play that kudyapi" (Auditory)	Heart (everlasting love)	My heart always remembers here" (Personification)
	Arms (physical strength)	"No any other woman that is always in my mind" (Hyperbole)
	Kuydapi or traditional guitar (changing of emotions)	

The epic of Dimanlod mirrors the characteristics of the Kagans in the process of courtship, through the epic hero, Dimanlod, he undeniably portrays the character of goodness that most of the Kagan people possessed. This attitude highlights the epic hero, Dimanlod, because even if he is not wealthy, he still manages to become morally upright. On the other hand, the epic reflects the opposite character of Princess Adabas as she totally rejects the love of the slave Dimanlod. This character is the usual actuation of a certain Barabangsa or Kagan of the higher rank. They need to act with firmness because they are destined to become leaders of the tribe. The Barabangsa also need to have a strong character so that the Kagan people will serve, respect, love and praise them. The Kagan community believes that this epic is a true account that took place in the past. This epic gives them the lesson that as human beings they have their limitations. It also manifests that the Kagan tribe of Pantukan, Compostella Valley Province, Banay-Banay, Lupon and Mati Davao Oriental already have their ways in life prior to the modernization. This epic is considered by their community as antique and sacred, only the "balyan" is authorized to chant the epic. This is because they believe that they need to ask permission from deities before chanting a poem. Old Kagans believe that Dimanlod was the direct ancestors of the people of low ranks and the Princess Adabas of those in the higher ranks.

Literary Form of the Epic Dimanlod. The form of the story is that of an epic because it is a narrative with sustained length that is based on oral tradition revolving around heroic deeds and chanted. It has seriousness of purpose validating the beliefs, customs, ideals or life values of the tribal people. The story about Dimanlod and Adabas through chanting is a repertoire of the ways in the life of Kagans.

The imagery that can be seen in the epic replicates the culture and tradition of the Kagan people. The lines “I will carry her, sitting in my arms” and “Together we will find happiness if I play that kudyapi” refers to a kinesthetic movement of a male Kagan courting a female. “Princess Adabas will listen to my song that comes from the heart of mine” is an appeal to the auditory senses of the woman and for the male to invoke his feelings.

There are symbols revolving around the epic that gives a significant meaning in the cultural belief of the Kagans. The “light” in the line, “she is just like that light” symbolizes the hope and aspirations of the slave Dimanlod for the Princess Adabas. The “fairy” in the line “she is a fairy from heaven, the beauty that she has” means dominion and superiority that the Princess had. The “heart” in the line “Princess Adabas will listen to my song that comes from the heart of mine” signifies the everlasting love of Dimanlod for the Princess Adabas. The “arms” in the line “I will carry her, sitting in my arms” implies the physical strength of Dimanlod as he carries the Princess. The “kudyapi” in the line “together we will have happiness if I play that kudyapi” represents the change in the emotions of the epic hero.

The epic also has figurative languages in the form of simile, metaphor, personification and hyperbole to catch the attention of the listeners while the chanter is in the verge of delivering the epic. An example of simile is the line “she is just like that light”. For the metaphor “she is a fairy from heaven”. A personification is exemplified in the lines “my heart always remembers her”. Finally, a hyperbole can be seen in the lines, “no any other woman who is always on my mind”.

Cultural Analysis of “The Epic of Bontungan”

Social Practices	Economic Practices	Political Practices	Religious Practice
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Courtship ➤ Pangayaw or tribal war ➤ Usage of warring material “Kampilan” ➤ Playing of tribal instrument 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Taking good care of nature as a source of life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Influence of the Datu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Existence of heaven and eternity

The Epic of Bontungan. The epic replicates the social practices in terms of courtship in the life of the Kagans of ancient time their. One of this was the idea of courtship prevalent in their society until now. A suitor needed to win first a girl’s heart of the parents in order for him to marry the woman that he loved. It was evident that parents did not want the man for their daughter, if she would give a difficult and impossible challenge to the male suitor. In the early days, this happened if the admirer came from other tribes, because Kagans disliked intermarriage with other tribal communities. In general, Kagan people were one of those few tribes of the Philippines who wanted to preserve the purity of their culture by preventing other races from marrying someone of their own tribe. There was also the presence of “pangayaw” or tribal war. In this practice, there was a “mangangayaw” or “bagane” that would attack other tribes and capture the hearts of the beautiful woman that he would see. Most of the ethnic groups that can be found in Mindanao is practicing this activity except the Kagans. Weapons can be gears for war, the spear or tribally known as “kampilan” was used by the epic hero in the story. This warring tool was used by the Kagans to show resistance against the presence of the attackers. The playing of the tribal instrument “kudyapi” was also presented in the epic. The music from this traditional instrument of the Kagans reflects the height of their emotions. Among the ethnic groups found in Davao Oriental only Kagans give expressing when they play music.

The story mirrors ancient political practice of the Kagan tribe that still manages to survive. The appearance of the “datu” as the most powerful being in terms of responsibility shows that he was valued, respected and honoured by everyone in his domain. He was the one in charge in protecting all the people in

his area. For the Kagans, the responsibility of the “datu” ceases only in the face of death.

The epic was is an evidence of the economic practices of the Kagans. They knew how to take good care of nature, especially the trees. This was because they knew that trees were the primary source of their lives. Kagans take good care of the trees even if they were already old. Up to these present days, Kagans still value the importance of nature.

The epic depicts a religious practice in that they still manage to preserve pagan times. They believe in the existence of heaven after death. If a Kagan dies, there is still a chance that loved ones will see him or her in eternity.

Literary Analysis of “The Epic of Bontungan”

Imagery	Symbol	Figurative Language
“If I can make that Balete tree fall using only a needle” (Kinetic)	“needle” (challenges)	“Make the Balete tree fall using only a needle” (Hyperbole)
“You need to run now, go away now because you will be killed by the Datu Bontungan” (Kinetic)	“tree” (cycle of life)	“Like the birds and like the animals” (Simile)
“I am the one that they want to be with them, all the women are seeking for me” (Kinetic)	“mountains” (obstacles)	
	“birds” (freedom)	
	“forest” (evil)	
“There is the Mangangayaw coming from the forest, rise up Datu Bontungan” (Kinetic)	“spear or kampilan” (strength or power)	
	“Kudyapi or the traditional guitar” (changing of emotions)	
“I will get down from here, I will get my spear, call all of them” (Kinetic)		
“I will get that Kudyapi so listen to my music” (Auditory)		

The epic of Buntungan reflects the deviation of Kagans from the existence of intermarriages. As seen in the epic, the mother gives an impossible task to a male Mandaya before giving the hands of her daughter. This actuation of the mother is a clear manifestation that she did not like the admirer for her daughter. As a matter of fact, Kagan people do not go for acculturation. They strongly believe that in order to preserve their culture, one should marry someone of their own race. Another for the characteristic of the Kagans is contrary the attitude to some major tribes towards intermarriage: for them their race has pride, honor and prestige. They also submit to the supremacy of the Datu. The discrete thing about the Kagan chief or “datu” that is not observable in other tribes is that they cannot pass the demands leadership unless they die in a battlefield. Kagans believe that a Datu is the leader and protector of their community.

Therefore, they were meant to give their full respect to his power. In the early days, the appearance of the tribal war pangayaw, was evident in the indigenous communities. In the epic, the appearance of Tipo-Tipo the fearless mangangayaw gave terror to Sinosok, the sister of Datu Bontungan, because she did not want to marry him. In the battle, when the old Datu Bontungan was almost defeated, he decided to kill his own sister Sinosok, a resemblance of pride and dignity of the Kagans. It’s best for them to die rather than be married with one belonging to other race. The Kagan tribe firmly believes that the epic is a truthful account taking place in a remote past. The essence of the story is imprinted in the mind of every Kagan that is, having somewhat cultural differences against the Mandaya tribe even up to the present days. Until now, the Kagans still honor the bravery of Datu Botungan, who fought and was killed by Tipo-Tipo, the mangangayaw from Mandaya tribe. The epic gives the idea that Kagans in Pantukan, Compostela Valley Province, Banay-Banay, Lupon, San Isidro and Mati Davao Oriental maintain territorial resistance and stand firm over the ownership of ancestral domains acquired from olden times.

This epic is already becoming extinct in the new generation of Kagans because right now there are few old folks who can chant this epic. But the listeners cannot deny the fact the this epic is something which they can be proud of because it entails the story of goodness and bravery.

Literary Form of the Epic of Bontugan. The form of the story is considered to be an epic due to the fact that it has the characteristics of the following: sustained and lengthy narratives based on oral tradition, revolving around heroic deeds, in the form of verses that are chanted. This epic also has the seriousness in purpose validating the beliefs, customs, ideals, or life-values of a people. The epic

relays the fact that Datu Buntongan is one of the heroes recognized in the past.

The elements imagery present in this folk epic are in sync with the cultural traits of the Kagan tribe. The line “if I can make that balete tree fall using only a needle” is a kinetic imagery that deals with the difficult test in the quest of a male Mandaya for the love of a female Kagan. The lines “you need to run now, go away now, because you will be killed by the Datu Bontungan” is also a kinetic imagery, serving as a warning to the male Mandaya and the protection given by the greatest warrior of the Kagans. The line “I am the one that they want to be with, all the women are seeking for me” is another kinetic imagery that tells about the goodness of Datu Bontungan. It also seems to be a mark of a culture of polygamy among the Kagan people. The line “there is the Mangangayaw coming from the forest, rise up Datu Bontungan” is still a kinetic imagery that gives the hint of the arrival of the Mangangayaw that resolve to a tribal war against the Kagans.

The line “I will get down from here, I will get my spear, call all of them” is a kinetic imagery that shows the reliance of the Kagan warrior on the spear or Kampilan, a famous warring material of the Kagans. The line “I will get that Kudyapi so listen to my music” is an appeal to the auditory sense, a proclamation of a last melody before death, in the case, that of Datu Bontungan.

There are also symbols that are present in the folk epic that are incorporated in the culture of Kagans. The “needle” from the line “if I can make that balete tree fall using only a needle” symbolizes a challenge that the courtier needs to use in order to win the heart of the woman.

The “tree” from the line “just keep trying on that balete tree” represents the Kagan people. The “sea” from the line, “those journey the way of life on the sea” means all the adventures of the epic hero.

The “mountain” from the line “Those on the top of the mountain” was the obstacle that Datu Buntongan was facing against the fearless mangangayaw, Tipo-Tipo.

The “birds” from the line “that voyage of mine like the birds” hold the symbol of freedom that the Kagan people want to achieve against the dominance of the other tribes.

The “forest” from the line “there is a mangangayaw coming from the forest, signifies the evil plan of the mangangayaw against Sinosok. The “spear or Kampilan” from the line “I will get my spear” is represents the strength and power the Kagan warrior possesses. The “Kudyapi or the traditional guitar” from the line “I will get that kudyapi” is a symbol of emotion as it reveals the feeling of the musician.

The folk beauty epic is enhanced by the presence of figurative language that

enhanced the creativity of this particular oral tradition. The figurative languages that are present are hyperbole and simile. An example of hyperbole is the line “make the Balete tree fall using only a needle” reflects the culture of courtship of the Kagan tribe. The example of simile is the line “like the birds” and “like the animals” describing the Kagan people’s adventurous nature on several journeys of the Datu to other places to share the culture of goodness that they have.

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Sero-Positivity for *Histoplasma capsulatum* among the Nearby Residents and Workers of Bat Caves

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ABSTRACT

This study determined the seropositive rate of nearby residents and workers of bat caves for *Histoplasma capsulatum*, a dimorphic fungus that causes severe to fatal opportunistic infections among immunocompromised individuals. One hundred sixteen (116) respondents who were residents and workers in the area for not less than 6 months and within 100-200 meter radius from the bat caves were collected with blood samples for the serologic testing for specific anti-*H. capsulatum* antibodies using Histoplasma Dxselect ELI700 Enzyme Linked Immunoassay. Overall result showed that 26 (22.4%) were positive for antibodies. Statistical analysis of the data showed that the length of occupational exposure is significantly associated (p-value <0.005) with seropositivity and the length of environmental exposure is not significantly associated (p-value>0.005) with seropositivity. With these, the researchers concluded that *Histoplasma capsulatum* is present in the environment. However, since antibodies against the fungus were detected, the result does not indicate the presence of active and symptomatic infection among the respondents.

KEYWORDS: *Histoplasma capsulatum*, bat caves, immunoassay, seropositivity, Davao City, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Histoplasma capsulatum is a dimorphic fungus that thrives mostly in soil enriched with bird or bat guano and is endemic in the Mississippi and Ohio rivers in the United States. Outbreaks associated with this organism usually occur following the disturbance of soil of old roosting site for birds, or a visit to a bat-inhabited cave (Lyon et al. 2004).

Bats and their guanos play an important role in the cultivation of *Histoplasma capsulatum*. The nutrients present in the guano along with that of the soil; and the environmental conditions support the ecological niche of this fungus. Bat colonies also contribute to the physical parameters necessary for the survival and reproduction of this fungal species by raising the environment's temperature and humidity (Taylor et al. 2005). In the last decades, several investigation for the presence of *Histoplasma capsulatum* in soil. The latest was in 1999, wherein detection of the fungus in the soil was done using polymerase chain reaction (Reid & Schafer, 1999).

Infection caused by this saprophytic fungus is known as histoplasmosis which is acquired from inhalation of aerosolized fungal spores from areas of high organic content such as soil contaminated with bird droppings or bat guanos (Huhn et al. 2005). Most of time, histoplasmosis is asymptomatic, but it can pose a greater risk among immunocompromised persons and the elderly (Weinberg et al. 2003). Majority of the cases of histoplasmosis usually presents as a mild to flu-like disease requiring only supportive therapy, however, if diagnosis and treatment is delayed, it can progress to a more severe pulmonary and extra-pulmonary diseases that are potentially life-threatening (de Matos et al. 2003).

Exposure to this opportunistic fungus is exceedingly common among persons living in endemic areas. Typical clinical manifestations include acute pulmonary symptoms characterized by presence of fever, malaise, headache and weakness; substernal chest discomfort and dry cough. Dermatologic manifestations such as erythema nodosum and erythema multiforme may also be exhibited in 5% of infected patients. These primary manifestations of histoplasmosis are often times self limiting especially among immunocompetent individuals (Kauffman, 2007).

In immunocompromised hosts, progressive dissemination is common. Clinical manifestations usually include persistent fever, weight loss, hepatomegaly or splenomegaly. Organs and tissues considered as frequent sites of dissemination are the oropharyngeal and gastrointestinal mucosa, skin and adrenal glands. This disseminated histoplasmosis can further complicate into shock, respiratory distress, hepatic and renal failure, and coagulopathy. There is also evidence of central nervous system (CNS) involvement in 5-20% of cases which is presented as chronic meningitis

or focal brain lesions (Wheat et al. 2000).

Generally, the mortality rate of histoplasmosis is low with most cases spontaneously resolve. However if the infected patients are immunocompromised either because of an immune system debilitating disease or those undergoing immunosuppressant therapy, the infection can lead to a progressive, disseminated disease with a high mortality rate of 7-23%. If treatment is not immediately administered, the disseminated disease is usually fatal (Dighe et al. 2009).

Several outbreaks of *Histoplasma capsulatum* infections associated with bat-inhabited caves have been reported. In June, 2001 in Nicaragua, 5 adult persons who have participated in a geology-biology community college class trip in a bat-inhabited cave exhibited symptoms of febrile respiratory illness. An investigation was conducted by the CDC revealed that they were suffering from an infection caused by *Histoplasma capsulatum* (Weinberg et al. 2003). In Costa Rica, a group of 6 children and 14 adults explored a popular tourist cave, and two weeks after returning home, some of them experienced febrile, respiratory illness. A serologic test using immunodiffusion for the detection of *Histoplasma capsulatum* antigen in the patient's serum was done. It was revealed from the result of the serologic testing that the patients were positive for *Histoplasma capsulatum* infection (Lyon et al. 2004).

Studies show that occupational exposure and length of exposure are significant factors in acquiring histoplasmosis. In May 2008 six persons employed in a landfill in Macon County in central Illinois were hospitalized after exhibiting fever, chest pain and shortness of breath. They were heavy-equipment operators whose job is to remove topsoil from a trash deposition cell and cleared trees at a new land fill under construction. The sera of the six workers were positive for antibodies to *Histoplasma capsulatum* by immunodiffusion and complement fixation (CF) tests. Additionally, In August 2003, five ill workers exhibited fever and respiratory symptoms. They observed bat guanos while removing large concrete beams from a bridge. A urine test conducted by the Illinois Department of Public health showed that three of the five workers were positive for *H.capsulatum* antigen by enzyme immunoassay (EIA) (Huhn et al. 2005). A histoplasmin sensitivity survey conducted among persons constantly exposed to bat caves in Africa showed cutaneous reactivity (Gugnani, 2000). Although studies related to the contribution of occupational exposure and length of exposure to histoplasmosis are limited, but these findings support the correlation of these variables to the occurrence of the disease.

Today, histoplasmosis is still considered a rare disease in Asia. Although there were reports of *Histoplasma capsulatum* infections in China and Taiwan, but the cases were low (Hung et al. 2005). In Japan where in histoplasmosis is rare, most diagnosed cases are usually observed from travelers to countries where the fungus is endemic.

In 2007, three women were tested positive for antibodies to *Histoplasma capsulatum* after they complained flu-like symptoms. All three of them reported to have travelled to Langkawi Island in Malaysia and stayed there for 5 days (Ohno et al. 2010). In the Philippines, a histoplasmin skin test for *Histoplasma capsulatum* was conducted to 143 electric company workers (MERALCO). Among the 143 respondents, 37 (26%) were skin test positive. From the survey conducted, it was found out that half of the respondents reported extended contact with chickens. The findings of the study implied that even though histoplasmosis is rare in the country, but it is present (Bulmer & Bulmer, 2001).

In Davao region, there are numerous bat caves that were frequently visited by tourists, and has been one of the sources of living of nearby residents by collecting bat guanos and sold it as fertilizers. Although there were no reported cases of histoplasmosis in the region, the threat of *Histoplasma capsulatum* infection is still at large since the vector is abundant, and the susceptible hosts are present.

Because there are no reported cases of *Histoplasma capsulatum* infection in Davao region, there are also no existing studies about its prevalence. It is therefore, the researchers' interest to conduct a pioneering study on the seropositivity for *Histoplasma capsulatum* among those nearby residents and workers in bat caves.

Study Objectives. The study aimed to identify the sero-prevalence of *Histoplasma capsulatum* among workers and nearby residents of bat caves in Island Garden City of Samal, Davao del Norte. First, the study aimed to gain a demographic profile of the respondents. Second the researchers measured the seropositive rate of the respondents that were tested for *Histoplasma capsulatum* antibodies. The researchers also measured the seropositive rate of the respondents that were tested for *Histoplasma capsulatum* in terms of their length occupational exposure and their length of environmental exposure. The researchers then tested for significant association between length of exposure and occupational exposure and the seropositivity of the respondents to *Histoplasma capsulatum*.

Conceptual Framework

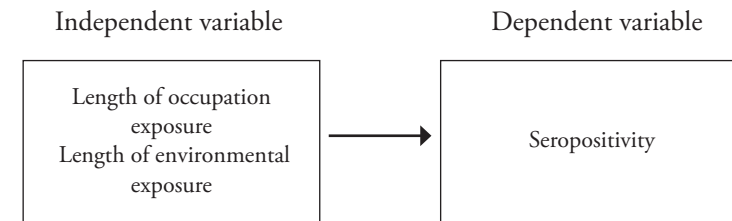


Figure 1. Framework of the study

In any type of microbial infection, time is an important element since it requires longer exposure for the body to mount an immune response and produce specific antibodies against the offending pathogen, thus length of occupational exposure and length of environmental exposure of the respondents were used as the independent variables of this study. The dependent variable was the seropositivity of the respondents for *Histoplasma capsulatum* which was detected through enzyme linked immunoassay (EIA) test. The seropositive rate was determined by calculating the percentage of the respondents who tested positive for antibodies to *Histoplasma capsulatum*.

METHODS

Research design. This study utilized a cross-sectional descriptive research design wherein the perceived factors and outcomes are studied and at the same time correlated. The factors were evaluated are the respondents' length of exposure and occupational exposure which are contributory to the occurrence of histoplasmosis. The result of the serologic test for antibodies against *Histoplasma capsulatum* in the serum of the respondents was correlated with the length of exposure and occupational exposure of the respondents.

Research locale. The locale of the study is Island Garden City of Samal, Davao del Norte wherein the caves are located. The bat caves in this area are inhabited by over a million of bats, and it is presently visited by people from different parts of the country. Furthermore, there were many residents living in

close proximity to the cave. Lastly, since the caves are home to millions of bats, many people in the area used guano collection as their source of income.

Research participants. The respondents of this study were 116 residents near the bat caves. Purposive sampling was employed wherein only those residents who have occupational exposure as either guano collector or caretaker and those who lived in the area within 100-200 meter radius not less than 6 months were selected to participate in this study since seroconversion usually takes 6 months to 1 year. Recruitment of respondents was spearheaded by the barangay captain and was channeled to the purok leaders in the barangay. The purok leaders were instructed to gather those who have occupational exposure and length of exposure for more than 6 months.

Research instruments. A standardized questionnaire for the demographic profile of the respondents as well for the evaluation of their medical history was given to the respondents. Prior to blood collection, an informed consent was given which contains information about the procedure, how it is done and, and stated in there their right to withdraw from the procedure anytime they want and if deemed necessary. The respondents' identity and other important information were maintained confidential all throughout the duration of the study.

Ethical considerations. Before the study was conducted, a letter was submitted to the barangay captain asking permission for an ocular visit to the research locale. The letter also contained the criteria for the desired respondents. Informed consent was also used specifying voluntary participation and freedom of withdrawal from participation. Also, this research protocol has gone through an ethical review to ensure that no ethical considerations are violated during the conduct of the study.

Specimen collection and processing. Five ml of blood samples were collected using a sterile 5 ml syringe and placed in a non-anticoagulated tube to facilitate clotting. The collected blood samples were placed in an ice bucket to preserve its integrity during transportation. Upon arrival in the laboratory, the blood samples were centrifuged at 3000rpm to separate the serum from the packed red blood cells. The serum samples were tested for the presence of antibodies for *Histoplasma capsulatum* using Histoplasma Dxselect EL1700 Enzyme Linked Immunoassay. The results obtained were analyzed to assess the seropositivity of the disease in the research locale. After performing the procedures blood samples

were discarded in a leak free container with appropriate disinfectant. Syringes used during collection were also placed in a separate, puncture resistant container for disposal.

Difficulty in gathering respondents was the primary challenge the researchers faced in this research. Most of the residents in the study area have low educational attainment, which was considered as a reason for their inability to grasp the significance of the investigation. Also their misconceptions and fears about blood collection which they associated to their religious beliefs hindered the researchers in optimizing the possibility of getting blood samples from those Muslim residents who have occupational exposures.

The results of this investigation do not indicate active infection with *Histoplasma capsulatum* since what the researchers are specific antibodies produced after long term exposure.

RESULTS

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 1. Demographic profile of the respondents

Gender	Number of respondents
Male	46
Female	70
Number of years living near the bat caves	
6 months to 1 year	12
2 years	13
3 years and up	91
Number of Years Working in Bat Caves	
6 months to 1 year	10
2 years	3
3 years and up	9

From the data presented in table 1, it is shown that majority of the respondents are females. Most of the respondents were residents in the study area for more than 3 years. It is also revealed from the data presented that among those respondents who worked in the bat cave, 12 were employed for more than 3 years.

Seropositivity of *Histoplasma capsulatum* among the Respondents

Table 2. Overall seropositive rate of *Histoplasma capsulatum* among the respondents

Number of respondents	Number of respondents positive for <i>H.capsulatum</i> antibodies	Number of respondents negative for <i>H.capsulatum</i> antibodies	Prevalence rate
116	26	90	22.4%

Table 2 shows the seropositive rate of *Histoplasma capsulatum* antibodies among the respondents. Form the data; it is revealed that there is a 22.4% seropositive rate among the 116 respondents of the study.

Table 3. Seropositive rate for *Histoplasma capsulatum* among the respondents with occupational exposure

Years of Occupational Exposure	Number of Respondents	Number of Respondents with Positive Antibody Test	Seropositive Rate
6 months to 2 years	13	0	0%
3 years and up	9	8	88.9%
Total	22	8	36.4%

Table 3 shows the seropositive rate of the respondents based on their occupational exposure. From the data shown, it is revealed that among those respondents with 3 years occupational exposure 8 (88.9%) were positive for *Histoplasma capsulatum* antibodies. None of the respondents that have 6 months to 2 years occupational exposure were positive for *Histoplasma capsulatum*

antibodies. The overall seropositive rate of the respondents based on length of occupational exposure is 36.4%.

Table 4. Testing for the association of length of occupational exposure to seropositivity to *Histoplasma capsulatum*

Paired being associated	Chi-square value	Df	p-value	Decision
Occupational exposure and Seropositivity	18.159 ^a	1	.000	Significantly Associated

Table 4 shows the association of length of occupational exposure of the respondents' seropositivity to *Histoplasma capsulatum*. Results indicate the length of occupational exposure is significantly associated (p-value < 0.005) with seropositivity. This means that persons who are working in the bat caves as care takers or guano collectors are at risk of exposure to this fungus.

Table 5. Determination of the seropositive rate for *Histoplasma capsulatum* among respondents in terms of their length of environmental exposure

Number of Years	Number of Respondents	Number of Respondents with Positive Antibody Test	Seropositive Rate
6 months to 2 years	25	9	36%
3 years and up	91	17	18.7%
Total	116	26	22.4%

Table 5 shows the Seropositivity rate of *Histoplasma capsulatum* in terms of length of environmental exposure. From the data presented it is revealed that seropositive rate of those respondents with 6 months to 2 years length of exposure is 36% (9 out of 25) and 18.7% (17 out of 91) for those with 3 years length of exposure respectively. Overall, there was a 22.4% seropositive rate among respondents based on their length of exposure.

Table 6. Testing for the association of length of environmental exposure to seropositivity to *Histoplasma capsulatum*

Paired being associated	Chi-square value	Df	p-value	Decision
Length of environmental exposure and Seropositivity	3.383 ^a	1	.101	Not Significantly Associated

Table 6 shows the association of length of environmental exposure of the respondents' seropositivity to *Histoplasma capsulatum*. Results indicate the length environmental occupational is not significantly associated (p-value > 0.005) with seropositivity. This means that persons who were environmentally exposed to bats have the same risks of exposure to this fungus.

DISCUSSION

Even though *Histoplasma capsulatum* infection is considered very rare in the Philippines, the results of this study clearly indicate that the infection is present and that extensive investigation must be done to detect new cases. Because the infection is mostly asymptomatic, this study utilized antibody detection to determine positive exposure to the fungus. Since antibodies to *Histoplasma capsulatum* were being detected in this study, the results obtained do not mean there was an existing active infection among the respondents

Based from the data presented, length of occupational exposure and occupational exposure played as important risk factors associated with the acquisition of histoplasmosis. In the study area, majority of the respondents worked in the bat caves for quiet sometime already (2-3 years and up). Their work in the bat caves usually involves collection of bat guanos to be sold as fertilizer. Some of the respondents worked as care takers of the bat caves. Since the fungus grow best in nitrogen rich manure such as bird droppings and bat guanos, those who persons whose occupation involves collection of bat guanos are at risk of acquiring the infection (Lenhart, Schafer, Singal & Hajjeh, 2004).

Length of environmental exposure of the respondents also correlates with seropositive results although not significantly associated as shown in the statistical data presented. Most of the respondents have lived within the vicinity of the bat caves for 3 years and up. They observed bats flying at night reaching

their area, and these bats often excretes guano that may have contaminated their surroundings. In addition, most environmental exposure was due to frequent visits to bat caves.

These factors are supported by several reported cases of histoplasmosis associated with occupational and lengthy environmental exposure to areas where bats and other birds are endemic. In May 2008 six persons employed in a landfill in Macon County in central Illinois were hospitalized after exhibiting fever, chest pain and shortness of breath. They were heavy-equipment operators whose job is to remove topsoil from a trash deposition cell and cleared trees at a new land fill under construction. The sera of the six workers were positive for antibodies to *Histoplasma capsulatum* by immunodiffusion and complement fixation (CF) tests. Additionally, In August 2003, five ill workers exhibited fever and respiratory symptoms. They observed bat guanos while removing large concrete beams from a bridge. A urine test conducted by the Illinois Department of Public health showed that three of the five workers were positive for *H.capsulatum* antigen by enzyme immunoassay (EIA) (Huhn et al. 2005). A histoplasmin sensitivity survey conducted among persons constantly exposed to bat caves in Africa showed cutaneous reactivity (Gugnani, 2000). Although studies related to the contribution of occupational exposure and length of exposure to histoplasmosis are limited, but these findings support the correlation of these variables to the seropositivity of the respondents since sero conversion in histoplasmosis occurs months or years after initial exposure (Aide, 2009).

According to the Centers for Disease Control any one working at a job or present in areas where material contaminated with *Histoplasma capsulatum* becomes airborne can develop histoplasmosis if enough spores are inhaled (Lenhart et al. 2004). However, due to the limited number of respondents, the high seropositive rate (36%) for those with 6 months to 2 years length of environmental exposure and (88.9%) for those with 3 years and up length occupational exposure do not necessarily represent actual seropositive rates. These results only indicate that these respondents were infected in the past, maybe symptomatically or asymptotically. Those respondents with occupational exposure that tested positive for antibodies to *Histoplasma capsulatum* were involved in the collection of bat guanos from the bat caves.

Aside from length of exposure and occupational exposure, there are several other risk factors associated with *Histoplasma capsulatum* infection. Infants, young children, and older persons especially those with underlying conditions such as chronic lung diseases and cardiovascular diseases are at greater risk. Immunosuppressed patients such as those with HIV are also at risk of acquiring *Histoplasma*

capsulatum infection (Lenhart et al. 2004). Individuals with competent immune response when exposed to the fungus are usually asymptomatic. This means that the fungus is an opportunistic pathogen that affects mostly hosts with immunocompromised status (Fayyaz, 2014 & Weinberg et al. 2003).

There are numerous bat inhabited caves in the Philippines. These caves are now among the popular tourist destinations in the country, and have become one of the sources of income by nearby residents. In the research locale for example, people collect the guanos inside the cave, and sell them as fertilizers. Since bat guanos play an important role in the cultivation of *Histoplasma capsulatum* and transmission of the disease associated with it, the risk of acquiring the infection by nearby residents and cave workers is significant (Taylor et al. 2005).

To sum up, *Histoplasma capsulatum* infection was present in the locale of the study. Although the results obtained do not indicate that the respondents were suffering from an active histoplasmosis infection, it does indicate, however, that they were exposed in the past symptomatically or asymptotically and were able to mount an effective immune response resulting to the detection of antibodies specific to the organism. While these findings may not pose significant dangers to the respondents who were mostly adults, other members of the populations are significantly at risk, especially young children, pregnant women and those with underlying immune system debilitating conditions.

The researchers recommend that extensive monitoring of the health status of the nearby residents must be implemented by the local and national health department, especially those who are at risk of acquiring the infection. Furthermore, the researchers also recommend that national and local health department should create policies to protect the nearby residents and those occupationally exposed from acquiring the infection. Caretakers for bat caves that are frequently visited by tourist should include also in their protocol the wearing of personal protective equipment such as face masks for both their workers and visitor.

In addition, the researchers also recommend to future researchers to investigate the occurrence of Histoplasmosis in other areas where bat caves are present and in areas wherein chicken and other birds are being cultivated to establish the prevalence of the infection.

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Risk and Brand Equity as Predictors of Consumers' Buying Behavior Towards Supermarket Retailers

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ABSTRACT

Understanding the dynamics of consumer buying behavior is an important aspect of market players to better respond to consumer needs, minimize cost of operations and consequently help businesses flourish. This study responded to the apparent lack of investigation into risk and brand equity as predictors of the buying behaviors of Region 11, Philippines. Utilizing survey questionnaires and appropriate statistical methods, the study found that the respondents' overall perceived level of risk when buying in the supermarket was moderately high. The respondents' level of brand equity was high in terms of brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality and brand associations. The respondents' level of consumer buying behavior towards supermarket retailers was high. Perceived risk was found to have a significant moderate correlation with buying behavior ($r=.512$, $p<.05$). Result implies that 26.2% of the variation of the buying can be attributed to the perceived risk of the consumers. While brand equity had a significant high correlation with implementation ($r=.701$, $p<.05$). Separately perceived risk has a significant influence on buying behavior ($p<.05$). Also the study found that brand equity, treated solely, has a significant influence on buying behavior that for every unit increase in buying behavior results to a .591 increase in brand equity.

KEYWORDS: Marketing, consumer, buying behavior, risk, brand equity, quantitative

INTRODUCTION

Consumers' buying behaviors are considerably influenced by the risks perceived by them towards purchased products. Risks include the fear of failure by the products in question to meet expected physical properties or the avoidance of getting a social reaction after buying the product in question. The presence of risks as perceived by the consumers would be detrimental to every retailer's effort and aim to gain sustainable competitive advantage. Risks as perceived by the consumers and the brand equity fostered by retailer can affect consumer buying behavior, negatively and positively. Pradhan and Misra (2014) mentioned also that a strong brand helps the organization connect with customers and elicits a different response from them. When customers develop a positive attitude towards a brand it leads to brand equity. Brand equity, along with trust, consistently appears as the most influential factor in cultivating both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty. More and more companies are realizing that brand equity is one of their most valuable intangible assets (Liaogang, Chongyan & Zi'an, 2007).

Brand equity cultivates behavior and attitudinal loyalty. However, consumer's behavior is influenced by the perceived risks in purchasing products and services (Dick et al., 1995 cited by Arslan, Geçti & Zengin, 2013). Every retailer wants to operate profitably and lead the industry. On the other hand, consumers have perceived risks that influence their buying behavior. With the presence of risks, a retailer's business goal is to ensure a strong brand and develop brand equity. This provided an avenue for the researcher to conduct a study on the how risk and brand equity influence the buying behavior of consumers specifically among supermarket shoppers.

Retailing businesses, particularly supermarkets, have flourished these days as evidenced by the increasing number of malls, supermarkets and convenience stores. Apparently, this growth has given shoppers or customers the option to choose where they want to purchase in accordance to their needs and wants. Therefore, satisfying customers is not an easy task for any supermarket. With the presence of competitors, the more supermarkets need to strategize on how to persuade customers or consumers to buy from them. Now more than ever before, they must strive to develop positive brand equity.

In the Philippines, a brand image study of Philippine brands by Garcia (2002), showed that some Philippine brands have gained brand equity through their rational and emotional attributes as perceived by their consumers. The author mentioned that with these results, the brand image is clearly perceived by the target consumers as a result of advertising campaigns done by the company

the look it projects as one sees the product in the marketplace or in the retail outlets, and product experience. Therefore, brand image is a major determinant in the equity of the brand, making the brand a recognized product in the category where it belongs. Risks perceived by customers when purchasing products from retailers has not been studied up until now.

The Philippines, which continues to urbanize, has a large and rapidly growing young population—a big market for branded foods and modern retail channels. The changing lifestyle of the average Filipino with an increasing emphasis on convenience points to further growth potential, too. Filipinos have a preference for affordable goods indicating it's too early for premium-priced products because living standards are still low. There is an evident growth of convenient stores and supermarket branches of big retailers in Davao City like Shoe Mart (SM), Robinsons and New City Commercial Complex (NCCC) Malls. However the choice of supermarket retailers, in particular, will be dependent on the customers with respect to their buying behavior. There are many things to consider in choosing a supermarket retailer and mostly, per experience, will be influenced by proximity, convenience, service, atmospherics, loyalty, satisfaction and the like.

Building brand equity is an important strategic issue for retailers, generating multiple benefits such as ability to leverage one's name by launching private label brands and increase revenue and profitability by insulating them from competitors (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004). Competition is very tight among supermarket retailers in the city considering Filipinos are opting for convenience and have much preference for affordable products. Therefore a market study is very necessary to identify market needs for supermarket retailers to stay competitive and find out how they have gained brand equity and to ascertain the risks perceived by the consumers towards them.

Published studies about how the retailer as a brand is perceived by the shoppers and the risks that might be experienced by the customers out of purchasing from such supermarket conducted in Region 11 are practically non-existent. This prompted the researcher to determine if risk and brand equity influence consumers' buying behavior towards supermarket retailers in Davao Region. The results of this study broaden the literature on brand equity, risk perceived by the customers and consumer behavior. This is a source for investigating the relationship between risks, brand equity and consumer behavior in any business organization in different industry. However, the scope was only limited to Region 11. Further this only established the relationship of risks, brand equity and consumer behavior towards supermarket retailers, not the different brands of products they are selling.

Study Objectives. The study examined if risk and brand equity influence consumers' buying behavior towards supermarket retailers in Davao Region. It first measured the level of risk that consumers perceive towards buying in supermarket retailer stores specifically financial, social, physical, functional and psychological aspects.

Second it measured the level of brand equity of supermarket retailers as determined by consumers in terms of brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality and brand associations. It also measured the level of cultural, social, personal and psychological factors driving consumers' buying behavior towards supermarket retailers. Then it tested whether or not there is a significant relationship between risk and consumers' buying behavior as well as brand equity and consumers' buying behavior. Lastly, the study tested whether risk and brand equity significantly influence consumers' buying behavior towards supermarket retailers.

Theoretical Framework. The study was anchored on the study of Zheng et al. (2007) that consumer buying behavior involves risk in the sense that any action of a consumer will produce consequences which cannot anticipate with anything approximating certainty, and some of which at least are likely to be unpleasant. A risky situation is one in which the outcome of a decision depends on the results of future events with known probabilities.

One of the present fundamental presumptions for the consumer behavior research is the fact, that people often buy products not because of their main function but for their subjectively perceived value. Keller (2008), stated that Brand equity, as the added value endowed on products and services, may be reflected in the way consumers think, feel, and act with respect to the brand, as well as in the prices, market share, and profitability the brand commands. Consumers are able to reduce risk through information and experience to make optimal choices (Hoyer et al., 2012) in making purchase decision about a brand.

Conceptual Framework

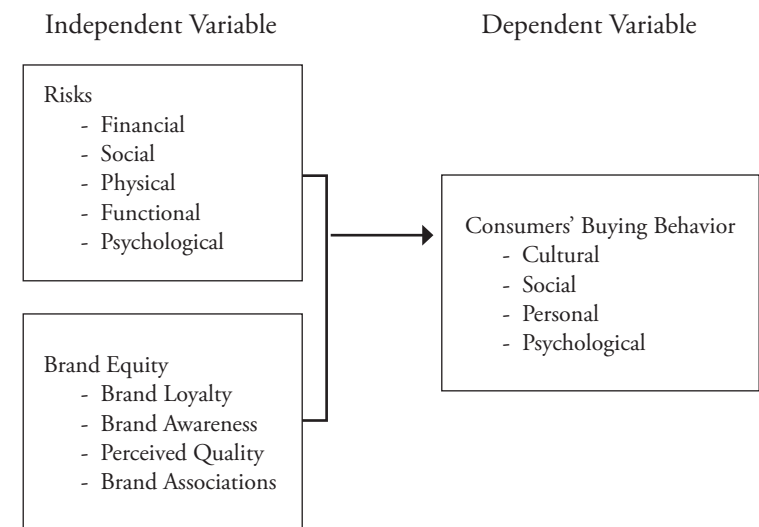


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

The predictors of Consumer's Buying Behavior (dependent variable) are risk and brand equity (independent variables). Risk has five indicators namely: financial, social, physical, functional, and psychological; while brand equity has four indicators which are brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality and brand associations. Consumer's buying behavior four indicators, on the other hand, are cultural, social, personal and psychological.

Consumer buying behavior or buyer behavior is the concept which answers what, why, how, when, and where an individual makes purchase. As a result, the outcome of buyer behavior is the buyer's decision. Consumer decisions and behavior are often affected by psychological core factors such as one's levels of motivation, ability, opportunity, exposure, attention, and perception. Consumer decisions and behavior are often affected by external influences such as culture, social class, regional and ethnic influences, age, gender, household circumstances, and reference groups (Hoyer et al., 2012). The importance of understanding consumer buying behavior and the ways how the customers choose their products and services can be extremely important for manufacturers as well as service providers as this provides them with competitive advantage over its competitors in several aspects (Kotler & Keller 2011).

METHOD

Research Design. The study made use of descriptive research design to evaluate the behavior of consumers towards supermarket retailers considering the underlying risks of purchasing products or services and the supermarkets' brand equity. This facilitates better understanding of the behavior of consumers in view of the consumer's perceived risk and the brand equity the supermarket creates in the minds of consumers.

Research Locale. The study was done in Region 11 where supermarkets are now mushrooming. It is then fitting to study the behavior of consumers in the region for the supermarket retailers to respond to the market needs of the population. The region is located on Southeastern portion of Mindanao which encloses Davao Gulf and consists of 5 provinces namely: Compostela Valley, Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Davao Oriental and Davao Occidental, and its regional center is Davao City. To represent each province of the region, the researcher considered Malita which is the capital of Davao Occidental; Mati, the only city and the capital of Davao Oriental; Digos, the capital of Davao del Sur; Nabunturan, the first class municipality of Compostela Valley; Tagum, the capital city of Davao del Norte; and Davao City, the center of Metro Davao and the third most populous area in the Philippines.

Sampling and Respondents of the Study. Purposive sampling was employed to select the research respondents. They were the male and female working individuals from all walks of life and occupations who frequently visit or patronize the supermarket to buy household products' for their specific needs. They were chosen as the respondents of the study because of their capacity to pay. Four Hundred Eighty (480) respondents was the sample size for the five provinces of the region including Davao City. The sample size was based on maximum sample of 400 using the Slovin's formula with a margin of error of .05. However, an allowance of 80 was added in case some of the survey questionnaires would not be returned. The researcher only retrieved four hundred sixty six (466) of the distributed survey questionnaires: eighty (80) answered survey questionnaires each from Digos, Davao City and Tagum City, seventy five (75) each from Nabunturan and Malita, and seventy six (76) from Mati.

Research Instrument. The questionnaire was made up of four parts where some of the items were adopted and modified. The first part gathered a demographic profile of the respondents. The second, third and fourth parts of the questionnaire required the respondents to answer according to their degree of judgment, determining the risk, brand equity and consumers' buying behavior towards supermarkets. Risk has five indicators, specifically financial, social, physical, functional and psychological. Each risk indicator is composed of five questions. Financial Risk questions 1, 2 3 and 4; Social Risk questions 1, 2 and 3; as well as Physical Risk question 1 are adopted and revised from the study of Arslan, et al. (2013).

Each indicator also was composed of five questions which are adopted and revised from the study conducted by Lee & Leh (2011). Consumer's buying behavior has four indicators, namely cultural, social, personal and psychological. Each of the indicators is composed of five questions as well. Cultural Factor questions 1 and 2 are adopted and revised from the research done by Durmaz, et al. (2003). The rest of the questions for this investigation are researcher-made. The questionnaire was validated and reliability tested with Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .954. It is patterned from a Likert Scaling Technique using a five-point scale identifying 5 as the highest and 1 as the lowest.

Data Gathering Procedure. Six enumerators with marketing research experiences from different provinces were employed to collect data, including Davao City. Respondents were chosen purposively and randomly who were the male and female working individuals in the identified offices of friends and referrals. The researcher observed the following procedures: The enumerators went to the offices of the respondents asking permission from the manager to conduct the study. Full consent from the respondents or participants was obtained before the administering the survey questionnaires. The enumerators administered distribution of questionnaires personally during the actual survey. The researcher did the retrieval of the questionnaires when the respondents had finished their evaluation. The data were then tallied, tabulated and collected for statistical analysis.

Statistical Tools. Mean Score was used to determine the level of risk, brand equity and consumers' buying behavior towards supermarkets. T-test was used to determine if there was a significant difference of consumers' buying behavior towards supermarket retailers was ascertained by this particular test when grouped by Sex. Correlation was used to analyze the degree of relationship of consumer

buying behavior and risk as well as consumer buying behavior and brand equity. Multiple Regressions tested if risk and brand equity are considered predictors of consumers' buying behavior towards supermarkets. Further, this proved which variable is the best predictor of consumer's buying behavior towards supermarkets.

Ethical Considerations. The UIC Research Ethics Committee evaluated the paper before conducting the survey. Thus participants' full consent was obtained before the survey questionnaires were distributed and their privacy protection was ensured assuring them of the confidentiality of their answers. The participants were asked to sign the informed consent form during the data gathering. Likewise, the enumerators collected the questionnaire at the most convenient time of those respondents who were not able to give the questionnaire at once as indicated in the form. The study cited all sources properly and the paper was stored online. Whereas the filled up survey questionnaires were kept in a safe place for future reference.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presented in Table 1 is the level respondents' perceived level of risk when buying in a supermarket. The overall perceived level of risk as evaluated by the respondents got a mean of 3.20 which is moderately high, meaning risks are sometimes observed in the supermarket purchase experience.

Table 1. Respondents' perceived level of risk when buying in the supermarket

Indicators	Mean	Description
Financial Risk		
1. Buying from this supermarket is a waste of money.	2.75	Moderately high
2. I often have poor purchase from this supermarket because the products are of low quality and the brands are unfamiliar.	2.64	Moderately high
3. I am forced to choose substitute products due supermarket's insufficient stocks.	2.75	Moderately high
4. The products I am buying from this supermarket are overpriced.	2.64	Moderately high

5. I am uncomfortable shopping at this supermarket because its product benefits are limited and inequitable for the money I spent.	2.57	Moderately high
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Sub-mean	2.67	Moderately high
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Social Risk

1. I would like to be sure that I receive positive comments from the people I knew when buying from this supermarket.	3.50	High
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2. People's opinion on me is positively affected when I buy from this supermarket.	3.30	Moderately high
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3. Buying from this supermarket gives me prestige.	3.20	Moderately high
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4. Buying from this supermarket gives me a sense of belongingness.	3.36	High
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5. Buying from this supermarket fits my lifestyle.	3.50	High
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Sub-mean	3.37	Moderately high
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Physical Risk

1. This supermarket can be trusted.	3.86	High
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2. This supermarket is maintaining a clean environment to keep its products display fresh and uncontaminated.	3.64	High
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3. The supermarket is promoting eco-friendly products.	3.51	High
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4. The supermarket's products are reliable in terms of quality.	3.58	High
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5. The atmospherics (store's layout, noise level, temperature, lighting and decorations) of the supermarket ensures consumer's safety	3.44	High
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Sub-mean	3.60	High
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Functional Risk

1. The products I bought from this supermarket meet my expectations.	3.73	High
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2. The products I bought from this supermarket are durable.	3.62	High
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3. The products I bought from this supermarket have satisfied my needs.	3.85	High
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4. The products I bought from this supermarket are easy to use.	3.75	High
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5. The products I bought from this supermarket are effective in terms of function or performance.	3.67	High
Sub-mean	3.72	High
Psychological Risk		
1. I am disappointed with this supermarket because their product categories are few.	2.72	High
2. I am discontented with the products of this supermarket.	2.61	High
3. I dislike promoting this supermarket to my friends.	2.58	High
4. I resent buying from this supermarket.	2.75	High
5. I will refrain from using products from this supermarket even if recommended.	2.59	High
Sub-mean	2.65	Moderately High
Overall mean	3.20	Moderately high

A mean of 2.57 was registered in terms of the perceived financial risk which translates to moderately high meaning it is sometimes observed that buying from the supermarket is a waste of money hence poor purchase will be experienced due to low quality, overpriced products as well as unfamiliar brands; the respondents also are forced to choose substitute products due to the supermarket's insufficient stocks and they are uncomfortable shopping at the supermarket because of the limited product benefits which are inequitable for the money they spent.

Social Risk was also moderately high as registered by a mean of 3.37. However there was a high level of risk when buying from the supermarket as it was often observed that the consumer would like to be sure that they receive positive comments from the people they knew; and it gives them sense of belongingness and it fits their lifestyle.

Functional risk was high which garnered a mean of 3.67 among the and it was often observed that the products the respondents bought from the supermarket met their expectations; they were durable; they had satisfied their needs; they were easy to use; and they were effective in terms of function or performance.

Psychological risk was high which gained a mean of 2.65. It was also sometimes observed that the respondents are disappointed with the supermarket because their limited product categories; they were discontented with the

products of this supermarket; they disliked promoting this supermarket to their friends; they resented buying from this supermarket; and they refrain from using products from the supermarket even if it is recommended to them.

In view of the buying behavior of the respondents, physical and functional were often perceived. Likewise trust for the supermarket, clean and organized atmospherics, effectiveness and reliability of the products, as well as consumer's satisfaction really matter for them. They were more concerned of what the supermarket and its product can do for them. This confirms the study of Arslan, Gecti, and Zengin (2013) that physical risk is the most reliable indicator that represents perceived risk however, there was no valid result found in functional risk. Arslan, Geti and Zengin (2013) further cited that risks involved are the fear of the failure by the products in question to meet expected physical properties or the avoidance of getting a social reaction after buying the product in question. Risks that consumers encounter during purchase may develop negative attitudes towards retailers' private labels. On the other hand, Liang and Tu's (2006) study showed that perceived risk does not influence consumer decision process.

Table 2. Respondents' level of brand equity

Indicators	Mean	Description
Brand Loyalty		
1. I will definitely buy from this supermarket again.	4.00	High
2. I will only buy from this supermarket although other supermarkets have wider categories of products.	3.50	High
3. After buying from this supermarket, I grow fond of it.	3.57	High
4. I will definitely buy from this supermarket although their products are priced a bit higher compared with the others.	3.37	High
5. Only this supermarket can satisfy my needs.	3.42	High
Sub-mean	3.57	High
Brand Awareness		
1. This supermarket comes up first in my mind when I need to purchase products for my household needs.	3.75	High
2. This supermarket is the only supermarket recalled when I need to buy products for my household needs.	3.64	High
3. I can recognize this supermarket among its competitors.	3.70	High

4. Speaking of quality, I can easily recommend this supermarket.	3.66	High
5. Value for money is always associated with this supermarket.	3.70	High
Sub-mean	3.69	High
Perceived Quality		
1. This supermarket is better in terms of products compared to its competitors.	3.64	High
2. It is easy for me to find the products that I need because of the supermarket's friendly staff and organized directions.	3.59	High
3. This supermarket is strategically located and very much accessible.	3.88	High
4. This supermarket is superior in terms of its services.	3.57	High
5. This supermarket carries consumable brands that are well regarded.	3.53	High
Sub-mean	3.64	High
Brand Association		
1. I can quickly recall the logo of this supermarket.	3.75	High
2. This supermarket matches my personality.	3.48	High
3. The management and staff of this supermarket are very trustworthy.	3.56	High
4. The management and staff of the supermarket are experts in handling customers.	3.47	High
5. I am satisfied buying products from this supermarket because of its tidy labeling, packaging and organized category arrangement.	3.59	High
Sub-mean	3.57	High
Overall mean	3.62	High

Table 2 shows the respondents' level of brand equity has a high overall result, which gathered a mean of 3.62. The respondents ascertained that the brand equity assets of their chosen supermarket such as brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality and brand association are high and often observed. Brand Loyalty was evaluated high with a mean of 3.57. The respondents bought

from their preferred supermarket again; they will only buy from the supermarket although other supermarkets have wider categories of products and they grow fond of it; they will definitely buy from the supermarket although their products are priced a bit higher compared with the others and only their preferred supermarket can satisfy their needs.

Brand Awareness was also high with a mean of 3.69. The respondents assessed that their preferred supermarket comes up first in my mind when they need to purchase products for their household needs; the supermarket was the only supermarket recalled when they need to buy products; they can recognize the supermarket among its competitors; they can easily recommend this supermarket in terms of quality; and the value for money was always associated with the supermarket.

Perceived Quality was high with a mean of 3.64. The respondents preferred supermarket is better in terms of products compared to its competitors; it was easy for them to find the products that they need because of the supermarket's friendly staff and organized directions; the supermarket is strategically located and very much accessible; the supermarket is superior in terms of its services; and the supermarket carries consumable brands that are well regarded.

Brand Association was high as well with a mean of 3.57. The logo of the preferred supermarket can be quickly recalled by the respondents; the supermarket matches their personality; the management and staff of the supermarket were very trustworthy and are experts in handling customers; as well as the respondents were satisfied buying products from the supermarket because of its tidy labeling, packaging and organized category arrangement.

Brand equity then is essential for a certain supermarket to sustain in the market. When brand equity assets are built up, consumer's satisfaction follows which leads to delight, not only meeting consumer's expectation but exceeding what has been expected. Likewise, when a consumer or consumer's needs are exceedingly met, he or she will value the brand (supermarket) consistently despite the presence of the competitors. Supermarkets have to work on developing a strong brand, being the top of the mind, for total the recognition and recall of the consumers or customers. This substantiate the study of Jorgensen (2013) that branding of products and services is of great importance for both consumers and companies; for consumers, branding can reduce search and time costs and for companies branding, helps set them apart from competitors in the same industry. Brands add value to products. Branding and brand management principles can be applied to retail brands with slight variations (Ailawadi & Keller, 2004, Kamau & Oloko, 2014).

In table 3, consumer buying behavior factors such as cultural, social, personal and psychological have high evaluation from the respondents (mean, 3.52). It was also often observed in the following factors that in cultural factor (mean, 3.45), approval of family was the most important thing for the respondents in choosing a supermarket, and suitability to their culture, tradition, customs and belief were the most important factors in their supermarket preference. The respondents' family also usually bond in the supermarket while having their grocery shopping; and their friends shared the same fulfillment when buying from the supermarket. However, it was sometimes observed that shopping in their preferred supermarket differentiates them from other social group.

In social factor (mean, 3.41), they are buying from the supermarket because a significant somebody influenced them; and their family has been buying from the supermarket despite the presence of competitors. On the other hand it was sometimes observed that their friends introduced the supermarket to them and they were buying from the supermarket together; they preferred the supermarket because of the loyalty card their organization or group availed; and it reflected their status in the society.

Table 3. Respondents' level of buying behavior

Indicators	Mean	Description
Cultural Factor		
1. Approval of my family is the most important thing for me in choosing a supermarket.	3.48	High
2. Suitability to my culture, tradition, customs and belief is the most important factor in my supermarket preference.	3.45	High
3. Our family usually bond in this supermarket while having our grocery shopping.	3.46	High
4. My friends share the same fulfillment when buying from this supermarket.	3.46	High
5. Shopping in this supermarket differentiates me from other social group.	3.37	Moderately high
Sub-mean	3.45	High
Social Factor		
1. I am buying from this supermarket because a significant somebody influenced me.	3.43	High

2. My family has been buying from this supermarket despite the presence of competitors.	3.56	High
3. My friends introduced this supermarket to me and we are buying from this supermarket together.	3.39	Moderately high
4. I prefer this supermarket because of the loyalty card my organization or group availed.	3.26	Moderately high
5. I chose this supermarket because it reflects my status in the society	3.39	Moderately high
Sub-mean	3.41	High
Personal Factor		
1. I prefer this supermarket because they supply all my needs.	3.63	high
2. I am buying from this supermarket because of its fair price.	3.51	high
3. I am buying from this supermarket because of its accessibility and convenience.	3.83	high
4. I like this supermarket better because of its credit or debit facility.	3.21	Moderately high
5. I am in favor of this supermarket because it speaks about my occupation and economic status.	3.54	High
Sub-mean	3.54	High
Psychological Factor		
1. I am motivated to buy in this supermarket because the personnel are warm and friendly.	3.71	High
2. I go for this supermarket because I am aware of its cleanliness and safety.	3.57	High
3. I prefer this supermarket the most because I learned that their management and staff are well trained and professional.	3.62	High
4. I believe that this supermarket values all its consumers.	3.74	High
5. I believe that this supermarket offers quality brands of products.	3.79	High
Sub-mean	3.69	High
Overall mean	3.52	High

In terms of personal factor (mean, 3.54), they preferred the supermarket because it supplied all their needs and because of its fair price as well as they were buying from the supermarket because of its accessibility and convenience. Yet it was sometimes observed that they liked the supermarket better because of its credit or debit facility; and it spoke about their occupation and economic status.

In psychological factor (mean, 3.52), the respondents preferred and were motivated to buy in the supermarket because the personnel were warm and friendly; they were aware of its cleanliness and safety; the management and staff were well trained and professional; the supermarket valued all its consumers; and they believed that the supermarket offers quality brands of products.

According to Hoyer et al. (2012), Consumer decisions and behavior are often affected by psychological core factors such as one's levels of motivation, ability, opportunity, exposure, attention, and perception. Consumer decisions and behavior are often affected by external influences such as culture, social class, regional and ethnic influences, age, gender, household circumstances, and reference groups. Kotler and Armstrong (2004) highlighted the characteristic that influence the consumer buying behavior, they define cultural, social, personal and psychological are strongly influencing the consumer behavior (cited by Gianie Abdu, 2013). Consumer buying behavior is a confluence of at least three streams of social science, i.e., individual psychology, social psychology and cultural anthropology (Ramachander, 1988, cited by Khaniwale, 2015).

Table 4. Test of significant correlation between risk and behavior and between brand equity and behavior

Variables paired	R	r ²	p-value	Interpretation
Risk and Behavior	.512	.262	.000	Significant moderate correlation
Brand equity and Behavior	.701	.491	.000	

Correlation is significant at 0.01 level.

Data in table 4 shows that perceived risk has a significant moderate correlation with buying behavior ($r=.512$, $p<.05$). Result implies that 26.2% of the variation of the buying can be attributed to the perceived risk of the consumers. Arslan, Y., Gecti, F. and Zengin, H. (2013) mentioned in their study

that minimizing the risk factor in the course of the generating attitude process shall affect the change in behaviors towards the product. According to the result of their study physical risk is the most reliable indicator that represents perceived risk, next financial risk then social risk.

Moreover, brand equity has a significant high correlation with implementation ($r=.701$, $p<.05$). It means that 49.1% of the variation of the buying can be attributed to the brand equity of supermarket retailers. This confirms to the study of Taylor, Celuch, and Goodwin (2004) which proposes that brand equity, along with trust, consistently appears as the most influential factor in cultivating both behavioral and attitudinal loyalty More and more companies are realizing that brand equity is one of their most valuable intangible assets (Liaogang, Chongyan & Zi'an 2007).

Table 5. Predictors of buying behavior

Predictors	Standardized Coefficient B	p-value	t	Interpretation
risk	.266	.000	7.777	Significant
Brand equity	.591	.000	17.237	Significant
r ²		.551		
F		283.64		
p-value		.000		

As a model, 55.1% of the variation in the buying behavior can be attributed to the combined influence of perceived risk and brand equity ($p>.05$). It can be gleaned from Table 5 that separately the perceived risk has a significant influence on buying behavior ($p<.05$). Data implied that for every unit increase in the buying behavior, there corresponds .266 increase in the perceived risk. Also, brand equity treated solely has a significant influence on buying behavior. Data revealed that every unit increase in buying behavior results to a .591 increase in brand equity. One of the main factors leading to reduced risk perception has been the nature of the shopping experience. The more positive the past shopping experience the lower the perceived risk and therefore the greater the purchase probability (Samadi, M., & Yaghoob-Nejadi, A. 2009).

The study also shows that in supermarket preference and shopping, the respondents are likely to choose supermarket retailers in accordance to brand equity than risk because of the physical presence of the store and its visible products as well as

the respondents' experienced services. The brand equity of the store and its products are what the consumers care about, as such they became patrons of the supermarket. As revealed in the findings, the level of brand equity is high and can greatly influence buying behavior. This is what supermarkets need to enhance and cultivate through marketing strategies to gain consumer's trust. The supermarkets therefore need to work on their brands so that customers can trust them. This will result into customer loyalty which can lead to growth and long term benefits for the supermarkets.

Marketers must understand the factors that provoke a feeling of risk in consumers and provide information and support to reduce it (Kotler, P. & Keller, 2012). In Filipino culture, family, friends and relatives and their beliefs are great influencers of their behavior including supermarket preference and shopping. This has an implication to supermarket retailers where the psychological core and culture including the personal and social factors have to be thoroughly studied for them to offer products and services suitable to their target market.

This is not only in accordance with the market's demographic profile but most importantly the psychographics which include social class, lifestyle and personality characteristics, of such market. The study confirms that risks affect consumer buying behavior. Moreover, brand equity has a high impact on consumer buying behavior. Research may be conducted to determine which of the risk factors and brand equity assets may affect or change consumer buying behavior.

Recommendations. Based on the findings and conclusions, the study recommended supermarket retailers should capitalize on brand equity to minimize the consumer's risks perception. In capitalizing brand equity, safety, cleanliness, value for money and quality products and services should be the retailer's priority in order to gain more consumers or customers. Delighted consumers will spread the brand through others by word of mouth, thus increasing the market share, sales and profit. This will also result to happy and engaged employees because employee benefits will be improved once a retailer or a company is profitable. Buying behavior factors like culture, social, personal and psychological should be thoroughly evaluated, through market study, in order to respond to the needs and wants of consumers. Proper segmentation also should be done to tailor fit its offerings to the segments they are serving. Consequently, they will not only be satisfied but delighted with the products and services of the retailers. The atmospherics of the supermarket should be tidy and organized. Staff and front liners should be customer oriented. Depth and breadth categories of quality products as well as services should be offered to meet the consumers' expectation lest they will not go to other competing brands. This will give supermarket retailers sustainable competitive advantage.

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An Exploration of the Illocutionary Acts in Barangay Mediation and Conciliation

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to explore the speech acts, particularly the illocutionary acts used by the parties and the conciliators in barangay mediation and conciliation proceedings. This endeavour particularly used the qualitative research design and textual analysis in analyzing the data. Moreover, it used Austin's (1962) and Searle's (1969) Speech Acts Theory focusing on illocutionary acts to describe the emerging illocutionary acts found in the minutes of the proceedings and how these illocutionary acts reveal the intentions of parties in barangay mediation and conciliation. The results showed that the uttered illocutionary acts in the minutes were most dominant of assertives which commit the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition, declaratives which change the reality in accord with the proposition of the declaration, directives that cause the hearer to take a particular action, commissives which commit a speaker to some future action and the least dominant of expressives which express on the speaker's attitudes and emotions towards the proposition. The intentions of the parties were revealed through assertives like stating, affirming, informing, suggesting, concluding, reporting, agreeing and complaining; directives like advising, inquiring, commanding, ordering and requesting; declaratives like declaring and naming; commissives like promising, offering and threatening. The least used was expressives like hoping, disappointing and blaming.

KEYWORDS: Illocutionary acts, barangay mediation and conciliation, qualitative research, textual analysis, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

All linguistic communication involves linguistic acts (Austin, 1962). These linguistic acts refer to the utterance or sequence conveyed by a particular speaker of a language. Thus, the use of these speech acts in a communication, conversation, or any interaction, measures the constraints that Goffman (1976) claimed. Speech acts are utterances that serve a function in communication. One category of speech acts is the illocutionary act, which is defined as the minimal complete unit of human linguistic communication. It is further defined as the making of a statement, by conventional force associated with it or with its explicit performative paraphrase (Levinson, 1983). Whenever a person talks or writes to others, illocutionary acts are performed; they are expressed with intentionality (Searle, 1969). As Bach (1994) and Harnish (2005) explained, people do not speak merely to exercise their vocal cords. Some reasons always exist, and these reasons are called the communicative presumption: the mutual belief that whenever a person says something to another, the speaker intends to perform an illocutionary act. Further, an illocutionary act is communicatively successful if the speaker's illocutionary intention is recognized by the hearer. These acts must take place in a specified context of situation in order to be performed successfully (Murphy & Neu, 1996).

One communicative situation and language which interests me more as a linguistic and law student, is the language of conciliation. For the past seven or more years I have had this desire to examine how speech acts are portrayed in external and internal courtrooms. In my readings, I have come across research on illocutionary acts in the examination of 'away messages' a form of digital communication by Natri, Pena, & Hancock (2006). Their results showed that assertives and expressives were more numerous than commissives. Directives on the other hand were rarely used because 'away messages' are constructed for international and entertainment purposes.

With the interest, I ventured into examining the minutes of the proceedings of real mediation and conciliation which took place at the barangay level. Mediation and Conciliation in the barangay level is an important innovation in the judicial system of any country or state which aims to mitigate the congestion of cases pending in the courts – from the circuit courts to the highest judiciary court. Barangay mediation and conciliation was instituted to give way to any trouble that may have a chance to be settled at the barangay level. The role of barangay mediation and conciliation is undeniably crucial in the settlement of any trouble. Because of this important role, arbitrators must be equipped

with communication skills and techniques to guide the parties reach a certain compromise. More often than not, conciliators are obliged to understand the underlying meaning of utterances spoken by either party or even by conciliators, themselves (Lim, 1978). The committee on mediation and conciliation has to be composed of people who are knowledgeable and experienced in the delivery of justice in their respective area. These people settle simple civil and criminal cases through mediation and conciliation processes. If this process is undertaken by people who understand speech inflection and are knowledgeable of speech acts, perhaps the number of cases that are supposed to be brought to court are diverted into appropriate community services.

In the Philippines, the adoption of pre-trial determination procedure that may lead to the clarification of the issues involved in court cases could lead to settlement of the cases or to the defendants pleading guilty. There is however a problem of preliminary investigation procedures to be established in both the fiscals and the municipal courts. Davao City (Sun Star Davao, March 2014) had been recognized as having the best prosecution success and case disposition rates in 2013. The prosecution offices in Davao Region had one of the shortest age of cases in the country last year.

A number of researches were made on the procedure compulsory conciliation and its effectiveness in the settlements of disputes but no research has yet focused on the discourse structure in the use of illocutionary acts and how the parties involved in the conciliation understood the underlying meanings of statements, and how the speech structures help them in the settlement of disputes or complaints.

Study Objectives. This study aimed to explore the illocutionary acts evident in the minutes of barangay conciliation proceedings from 2012-2014. Particularly, this aimed to analyze the role of illocutionary acts used by the parties involved in mediation and conciliation especially in the settlement of complaints or disputes in the barangay level.

Theoretical Lens. This study was based on the Speech Act Theory of Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). According to Searle, speakers can attempt to do an innumerable number of things with their utterances. The theory of speech acts is partly taxonomic and partly explanatory. It systematically classifies types of speech acts and the ways in which they can succeed or fail. It reckons with the fact that the relationship between the words being used and the force of their utterance is often oblique. In general, speech acts is concerned with the ways in

which speakers/ hearers and writers-readers – create and derive meaning from non-literal interpretations of spoken or written discourse. To communicate is to express a certain attitude, and the type of speech act being performed corresponds to the type of attitude being expressed. For example, a statement expresses a belief, a request expresses a desire, and an apology expresses regret.

Austin (1962) identifies three levels of speech acts: locutionary act, illocutionary act, and perlocutionary act. Locutionary act is the content of the utterance itself, while the illocutionary act is the meaning intended by the speaker, and perlocutionary act is the interpretation of the message by the listener which produces certain effects on a real action. And illocutionary act is an utterance with some sort of effect on the addressee.

Locutionary act is the literal meaning (Grundy, 2000). It means that locutionary act is the actual words uttered (Ni'mah, 2009) or uttering of words, for example: "Im hungry." This utterance just means that the person who is saying is hungry. Locutionary act is simply uttering sounds, syllables, words, phrases and sentences of language (Renkema, 1993).

Illocutionary act is what it counts as doing (for those in the know) (Grundy, 2000). It means that the illocutionary act is the force or intention behind the word (Ni'mah, 2009) or what is constituted by the rules or what the speaker is doing in relation to the hearer with words, like suggesting, apologizing and advising, for example: "I'm hungry." This utterance is assertive. It is also indirect request that has an intention meaning, the speaker asks the listener to take or buy some food for him (Ni'mah, 2009).

The concept of illocutionary act is central to Searle's understanding of speech acts. An illocutionary act is the expression of proposition with purpose of doing something else. This is more complex than a simple locutionary act because an illocutionary force is attached to the utterance that indicates how the expression should be taken.

METHODS

Research Design. Qualitative Research Design and Textual Analysis were used in this study. A text is a unit larger than a sentence (clause) and in fact it is a combination of a number of sentences (clauses) or a number of elements of structure and each made of one or more sentences (clauses). Whether texts are analysed in terms of some elements of structure or a number of sentences (clauses) that can then be broken down into smaller units or in terms of smaller units such

as morphemes and words that can be put together to build the larger unit of text, we are dealing with an approach to text analysis. The contents of the collected minutes of barangay mediation and conciliation were analyzed descriptively using the Speech Act Theory of Austin (1962); Searle (1969) focusing on the illocutionary acts.

Data Sources. This study made use of the written minutes of barangay mediation and conciliation as its main source of data gathered from the three (3) identified barangays in Davao City. The researcher coded the three barangays as Barangay 1 (B1), Barangay 2 (B2), and Barangay 3 (B3). The three (3) barangays gave me fifteen documents of the written minutes of barangay mediation and conciliation per barangay as my sample size. The sample size which is only fifteen artifacts per barangay is in line with Polkinghorne's (1989) suggestion of fifty (50) artifacts to meet the theoretical saturation (Creswell, 2007).

Data of this study were taken from the minutes of the barangay mediation and conciliation in barangays 1, 2 and 3 of Davao City. There is only one type of data source which was analyzed and interpreted by this researcher and the researcher's debriefer.

Data Collection. Prior to the data collection, a letter of permission to conduct the study was sent to the Dean of the Graduate School of the University of the Immaculate Conception Graduate School Program. When the approval from the Dean of the Graduate School was given, letters of permission to conduct the study to the different barangays in Davao City were personally brought by this researcher to the barangay captains of the three barangays identified for this study. Part of the letter mentioned the ethical standard which serves as an assurance to the three barangays on the confidentiality of the data sources that were extended to the researcher. After the approval, the researcher started to gather the necessary documents needed for this study through the assistance of the barangay secretaries.

Data Analysis. In the analyses of the data, I looked into the Speech Acts of Searle (1969) particularly on the illocutionary acts in the minutes of barangay mediation and arbitration in the three (3) identified barangays of Davao City. Looking into the data meant that I had to categorize all the illocutionary acts found in the data source into its themes and sub-themes in order to identify the illocutionary acts that would lead me to answer the statement of the problems of this research.

Trustworthiness of the study. In order to achieve validity and reliability in conducting this study, I employed the techniques of Lincoln and Guba (1985) in Creswell (2007) credibility, confirmability, transferability and dependability. To ensure that the data are credible and dependable, the researcher employed the following processes: I first asked permission from the Dean of Graduate School to conduct my study from the three identified barangays in Davao City. After getting the approval of the Dean of Graduate School, I wrote a letter of request for the three barangay captains of the three identified barangays. The letter contained the intent of my requesting the written documents of the minutes of barangay mediation and conciliation and the letter of consent. When the barangay captains gave their approval, I went to the barangay secretary for the release of the documents. Upon receipt, important names and addresses were already concealed by the barangay secretary. Then, I read and coded the documents. Next, I analyzed and interpreted the data using the theoretical lens of the study and the other authorities in the review of related literature. Lastly, I enlisted the help of a debriefer who reviewed the analyses vis-à-vis the extracted lines from the printed documents and the cited authorities.

In order to address the dependability issue more directly, the processes within the study will be reported in detail, thereby enabling future researchers to repeat the work and the reader to assess the extent to which proper research practices have been followed. I did this by describing the research design and its implementation, the operational detail of data gathering, and reflective appraisal of the research. Such in-depth coverage also allows the reader to assess the extent to which proper research practices had been followed.

In achieving transferability of the study, the researcher ensured that sufficient contextual information will be provided to the readers to relate the findings to their own studies. These will encompass the procedure in gathering of the written documents of the barangay mediation and conciliation proceedings, transcribing and presenting the language data as well as describing the transcribed documents which contains the illocutionary acts in the form of the barangay minutes of mediation and conciliation. With detailed description, readers can transfer information to other settings and determine whether the findings can be transferred because of shared characteristics (Byrne, 2001).

Lastly, to address confirmability, Lincoln and Guba (1985) stress that it is the measure of how well the research findings are supported by the data collected. However, in the data that I have collected, I already admitted the weakness employed in the study. (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2013). Moreover, I specifically did each of the transcriptions of the collected minutes of the barangay

mediation and conciliation which were coded; hence, could easily be accessed for reviewing purposes. These codes are indicated by the different colors labelled in the dialogues in the minutes of the barangay arbitration.

The entire transcriptions are kept as part of my personal files which could be easily accessed in case of audit. All these were done to assure validity and reliability of the study. I saw to it that sufficient data through the documents gathered were analyzed by the researcher and the debriefer. Moreover, the results and discussion were carefully ensued through the aforementioned method and technique.

Role of the Researcher. As the researcher, I took the role of gathering the documents and thoroughly examining them. I personally performed the analysis, the coding and the cross-analysis, the interpretation of the texts and their implications in order to bring out the intentions of the parties/ interactors involved in the barangay mediation and conciliation proceedings. I detached myself from the context by inviting a debriefer who can validate my coding and interpretation.

Ethical Considerations. In the conduct of this study, I considered Silverman's (2016) suggestions to follow guidelines of professional association. I first sought the permission of the Dean of the Graduate School of the University of the Immaculate Conception in order to conduct the study covering the three barangays in Davao City. After the letter was approved, I personally delivered the letters of request for the written minutes of the barangay mediation and conciliation to the Office of the Barangay Captains of each barangay wherein part of the letter stated an assurance of confidentiality. I also attached the letter of consent which informs them of the purpose of the research, stating particularly what document is needed for the research, including the amount of time likely to be required for participation, expected risks and benefits, how confidentiality will be protected, the name and contact of the researcher to be contacted for questions and problems related to the research as well as the name and contact information of any appropriate person to contact with questions about the intricacies of the research. When the documents were released through the barangay secretary and to maintain anonymity of these barangays and the important/confidential entries found in the document, the researcher asked the barangay's respective secretary to personally make the concealment of every part of the documents that may yield recognition to a particular barangay. However, the concealment was made after the researcher read all the contents of the document from the different

barangays. In addition, to protect the anonymity of the key-informants, I made use of pseudonyms or aliases and respect “off the record” information. Moreover, I also ensured the barangay captains that no personal experiences were shared to people not directly responsible or related to the study.

When approval from the barangay captains were given, I started with the gathering of documents through the barangay’s respective secretary. However, the succeeding months was a challenge since I was not right away given the approval to have the said documents. I had to come back two to five times in a particular barangay so as to have the consent from the barangay captain and the release of the documents. But I had to be steadfast in order to get the required number of documents for the said study so I patiently waited for the barangays captains to give its approval.

The researcher worked on the documents which were released first while waiting for the other documents to be released subject for the approval of the barangay captain.

After the transcription and analysis, I sent a copy of the manuscript to the respective barangay captains who shared their data for the completion of this research in order for them to comment whether they have anything against it, or if they agree with my interpretation based on the given minutes of barangay arbitration.

In addition, peer debriefing certification was also employed. This was done by having a peer debriefer who is a credible qualitative researcher to check on the research results and interpretations. The peer debriefer signed a letter certifying that she has indeed done the debriefing.

In textual analysis (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), a peer debriefer’s assistance is solicited. The help of a competent Peer Debriefing (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) who will pose questions regarding the research question, methodology, ethics, trustworthiness, and other research issues is highly needed. He may also pose “Devil’s Advocate” questions throughout the process. And a letter from him detailing his experiences as Peer Debriefing will appear in the appendix.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For Searle, the basic unit of language is the speech act or illocutionary act, the production of a token in context of the speech act (not the word, not the sentence type, or the theory). For a token to be an instance of communication, the audience must take it as being produced by a being with certain intentions.

Thus, the five classifications of illocutionary acts Austin (1962) and supported by Searle’s (1969) are assertives, directives, commissives, expressives and declarations.

From the given minutes of barangay mediation and conciliation proceedings from the three identified barangays, the five illocutionary acts are evident. The following tables one to five show the occurrences of the illocutionary acts classified according to the five themes and its sub-themes.

Table 1. Assertives

Assertives	Affirming	19
	Suggesting	5
	Stating	28
	Denying	5
	Concluding	6
	Informing	34
	Claiming	3
	Complaining	8
	Reporting	45
	Forecasting	0
TOTAL		153

Assertives are speech illocutionary act that commits the speaker to the truth of the expressed proposition. The table shows of 153 assertives, the most dominant is reporting and the least is claiming.

Table 2. Declaratives

Declaratives	Declaring	33
	Naming	12
	Arresting	0
TOTAL		45

Declaratives are speech illocutionary acts that change the reality in accord with the proposition of the declaration such as baptisms, pronouncing someone guilty or pronouncing someone as husband and wife. It is the second most dominant of the illocutionary acts found in the written documents. Table shows of 45 declaratives from declaring and naming.

Table 3. Directives

Directives	Inquiring	3
	Commanding	8
	Requesting	8
	Challenging	3
	Advising	1
	Recommending	1
	Asking	2
	Demanding	3
	Ordering	13
	TOTAL	42

Directives are speech illocutionary acts that are to cause the hearer to take a particular action such as requests, commands and advice. Directives are the third most dominant of the illocutionary acts found in the barangay mediation and conciliation with a total of 42, ordering as the most dominant and the least is advising.

Table 4. Commissives

Commissives	Promising	3
	Threatening	5
	Guaranteeing	5
	Offering	2
	TOTAL	15

Commissives are speech acts that commit a speaker to some future action such as promises and oaths. It is the next least used in found from the written documents. It has a total of 15.

Table 5. Expressives

Expressives	Praising	0
	Thanking	0
	Pardoning	0
	Apologizing	0
	Disappointing	1
	Blaming	1
	Hoping	1
	TOTAL	3

Expressives are speech acts that express on the speaker's attitudes and emotions towards the proposition such as congratulations, excuses and thanks. It is the least speech act found in the barangay mediation and conciliation proceedings. It has a total of 3 illocutionary acts.

Table 1 shows that illocutionary acts of assertives has 153 examples which means that the speaker is committed to the truth of the proposition (Searle, 1962 in Munawaroh, 2007). In this study, it was found out that among the assertive speech acts, affirming has 19. According to Munawaroh (2007), affirming is stating firmly or publicly that something is true or that someone supports something strongly. The result of this study showed that not all information of the proposition was affirmed by the parties involved. Also, in times when either complainant or respondent asked the arbiter about something, they checked its accuracy by restating it without any doubt or by confirmation.

In addition, it was found out in the study the use of other assertives such as the following: suggesting with five speech acts or telling the respondent to pay the loan in installment or selling a property so that a sum of money be paid; it is also putting an idea to the complainant or respondent's mind; stating with 28 speech acts or writing formally a reached agreement for the settlement of the case or saying something carefully and clearly towards each other; denying with five speech acts or saying that something is not true; concluding with six

speech acts, or deciding or believing something as a result of what the teacher has heard or seen; informing with 34 speech acts or telling the respondent about something, especially in an official way; claiming with three speech acts or saying something as true although it has been proved and the other party may not believe it; complaining with eight speech acts or saying that the complainant is annoyed, unhappy or not satisfied about somebody or something; reporting with 45 speech acts or giving the respective parties information about something that someone has heard, seen, or done; and forecasting without any speech act or is saying what someone thinks will happen in the future based on the available information. Forecasting has none since a proceeding of mediation and conciliation is something that is realistic and must be based on what the parties are capable of doing at the present so it can be realized at present or in the future and not just by forecasting.

There are also declaratives found in the study as shown in table 2. Declaratives, according to Searle (1962) in Munawaroh (2007), mean that the speaker declares about the correspondence between the proposition content and reality. Declaring got the highest among the components of declaratives with 33 speech acts. This means that most complainants proclaim the truth about everything they complain about.

Other components of declaratives were found in the study such as naming with 12 speech acts or giving something to someone, or saying the name of somebody or something; and arresting without any speech acts or stopping the process or development, or making somebody notice something and paying attention to it. Arresting may be absent since arbiters are present to go in between the parties; thus, the expectation from both parties to behave in front of the arbiters.

The theme directives with its sub-theme of ordering as shown in table 3 has 13. Directives mean that the speaker tries to get the hearer to do something (Searle, 1962 in Munawaroh, 2007) which can be followed least by inquiring with three. Arbiters asks questions to the parties involved in the hearing as found in the minutes of the barangay mediation and conciliation to get information about the case at hand, listening to both the complainant and the respondent. By inquiring through questioning, the arbiters could assess whether or not the complainant or the respondent understood why they are both summoned in the barangay. More so, the arbiter could give back the information to the complainant or to the respondent for purposes of clarity. For example, the arbiter can ask a question for inquiry which will lead to active response of the party concerned for the hearing of the case.

This is followed by commanding with a total of eight speech acts, which is telling the respondent to do something; then, requesting with eight speech acts or asking for something formally and politely; challenging with three speech acts or questioning whether a statement or an action is right; this could mean also refusing or accepting; and advising with one speech act or telling the respondent what he thinks he should do in particular situation.

There were commissives found in this study as shown in table 4. Commissives, according to Searle (1969), mean that the speaker is committed to some future actions. Among these components of commissives are promising which has three occurrences or that means telling somebody that an event or the like will definitely happen. The parties involved in the arbitration are committed to do something to the resolution of the case.

Another commissive found in this study is offering with two speech acts or saying that the arbiter is willing to do something for somebody; threatening and guaranteeing goes with five speech acts or saying that both parties may do something evil towards somebody or can be assured that something is to be done for the betterment of somebody, respectively.

It was found out that in a barangay mediation and conciliation, it has expressive speech acts as shown in table 5. Expressives mean that the speaker expresses an attitude about a state of affairs (Searle, 1962). There is no speech act for praising which means that parties involved in the mediation and conciliation do not have the intention to praise each other particularly in answering questions or queries.

Other expressives speech acts not found in this study is telling somebody that a party is grateful for something; nothing found as well in pardoning or asking a party to repeat something because the other did not hear it or did not understand it; and nothing also for apologizing or saying that a party is sorry for doing something wrong or causing a problem. This may be so since the parties involved in the mediation and conciliation are at "war" with each other; thus, the absence of expressives.

However, this study found out another type of expressive not included in Searle's theory. Since expressives function to express an attitude about a state of affairs, then, 'hoping' could be a component of it. This study found one speech acts under hoping, "I am hoping that the purpose of selling the area is for goodness sake". Since the word hope means 'to cherish a desire with anticipation' or 'to desire with expectation of obtainment', then this implies that there are complainants or arbiters who are really expressive in showing their desire to make their member in the community learn something good by letting them know

how much they want them to know and understand the case at hand. Two other expressives found are blaming and disappointing.

Based on the analysis drawn, it is found out that every word produced by the parties involved in the minutes of barangay mediation and conciliation has illocutionary acts. The most used or dominant is the assertives followed by declarations, directives, commissives and expressives.

The illocutionary acts which reveal the intention of the parties involved in the barangay mediation and conciliation are mostly from assertives which are stating, reporting, affirming, informing, suggesting, agreeing, concluding and complaining. It is followed by declaratives with the intentions of declaring and naming. Third is the directives with intentions of ordering, commanding, inquiring, advising and requesting. Last is the commissives with intentions of promising, offering and threatening. Finally, the expressive with intentions of disappointing, blaming and hoping.

As Bach (1994) and Harnish (2005) explained, people “don't speak merely to exercise their vocal cords.” Some reasons always exist, and these reasons are called the communicative presumption which is a mutual belief that whenever one person says something to another, the speaker intends to perform an illocutionary act. Further, an illocutionary act is communicatively successful if the speaker's illocutionary intention is recognized by the hearer. These acts must take place in a specified context of situation in order to be performed successfully (Murphy & Neu, 1996). With this, I agree so.

Moreover, the greatest person who is always challenged by everyday's communicating skills is the teacher; may the teacher be an administrator or a professor in a university or college or that of a mother or father at home. Teachers follow a lesson plan or a syllabi which would facilitate and direct students in the paths that they would like them to follow. Thus, it is but very important and significant for the communication process to have a high fidelity. In everyday activity inside or outside of the classroom, teachers play a very vital role of good modelling to student. However, we see teachers hurting students physically and verbally, nowadays. Hence, the illocutionary acts must be the right one for the right context of situation. More so, the choice of words to reveal the real intention must be accurate so as not to have different interpretations coming from the hearer.

The findings in this study reveal that in mediation and conciliation proceedings, assertives are used most often to report, state, inform and deny. This may be so since parties in the proceedings would like to establish their stand on the given issue. On the other hand, expressives are the least since parties in

the proceedings rarely would apologize, hope and praise. This may be so since nobody in the mediation and conciliation would admit readily to ones own shortcomings.

I hope that administrators, teachers and the barangay captains, and other barangay officials design seminar-workshops on how to go about improving identification of illocutionary acts in their day to day communication particularly in the workplace. If parties or members of an organizational community are conscious about the intentions of the statement they speak or they utter, there could be less arguments, misunderstandings or disputes that may happen.

The administration of the different schools may have seminars for their teachers on the use and effect of the speech acts inside the classroom to further enhance the teachers' ability in handling classes, especially in handling hurdles in classroom discussions, how to make a students participate in different ways, how to get the attention of the students, answering students' needs, through involving them actively in the classroom discussions and other classroom activities.

Moreover, the language and literature teachers should give focus onto the strategies they are using inside the classroom, especially during interactions in discussion with their students which could make or break the learning process of the students. Also, students of the Graduate School Program should engage in the study of the like such as forensic linguistics which after all is a branch of linguistics. This is to further researches on how we could produce competent court interpreters or officers of our barangays.

After knowing the results of this study, not only are the arbiters in the barangays given pointers as to how they have carried on well with their functions in the mediation and conciliation but this would give an idea to the members of the community in the barangay that officers in the barangay are competent in their work; thus, confidence and trust is built-up which will eventually lead to peace and order in the community. Lastly, that the Undergraduate Students may use the appropriate speech acts to reveal their real intention in dealing with people from different walks of life from their day to day interaction so as to become more courteous and polite and refrain from getting into trouble if an occasion asks for it. Finally, since the researcher used qualitative research design and textual analysis on this study, it could also be better if there will be researches like this which should focus on speech acts using different methods and design.

In the barangay level, the barangay captains may design programs that would enhance and intensify the mediation and conciliation process through the use of appropriate speech acts particularly that of the illocutionary acts. The results of which may eventually lessen if not prevent the elevation of cases in

the courts by filing the said unresolved cases in the barangay level. In addition, employees of the barangay may consider in a case to case basis their discourse pattern depending on the personal background of the complainant or respondent and come up with a resolve wherein intentions will be displayed appropriately by employing the correct speech acts.

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Negative Media Portrayal of Politicians and Public Trust Towards Governance among Voters in Davao City, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

The trust of constituents towards its public servants and their governance is essential to progressive nation building. The media, having a constant and pervasive presence in the lives of people takes an active role in shaping the public's consciousness and perception. Through their portrayals, the media cultivates in its audiences a particular way of looking at the world which may or may not be affirmed through actual experience. In television and film, politicians are often portrayed in a negative light, being shown as unscrupulous, money and power hungry corrupt and dishonest. This study sought to determine whether there is a relationship between the extent of negative media portrayal of politicians and the level of public trust among voters. Anchored on the Cultivation Theory of media, the study used a researcher- developed questionnaire administered to 400 voters living in the three voting districts of Davao City, Philippines. A negative significant low correlation ($r = -.306$; $p < .001$) was established between negative media portrayal and public trust. The study also found that 10.4% of the variation in the level of public trust is attributed to the combined influence of the respondents' profile and negative portrayal. The study found that excessive negative and undiversified media portrayal of politicians has affected the level of public trust towards politicians.

KEYWORDS: Mass communication, media portrayal, public trust, voters, correlation, pearson- r, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Political trust or public trust could be easily defined as the trust of the citizens towards the government as it from this trust from which obedience and cooperation on citizens springs from. Political trust is the anticipation that politics operate fairly even in the absence of constant inspection (Zmerli & Hooghe, 2013, p.16). However, political trust is generally an idea that people think they might have understood already until they are told to define it (Hetherington, 2005, p.9). The act of voting itself could be considered an act of bestowing trust upon a person running for public office. With casting one's vote in favor of a candidate, a citizen is for all intents and purposes, also bestowing their trust. Levels of public trust fluctuate from time to time as seen in public surveys and are often held as an indicator of their performance while in office. Eventually public trust ratings serve as predictors of success in securing succeeding terms in office.

The media has long been known to be a shaper of public opinion and a part of every individual's everyday existence (Lyengar & McGrady, 2007). Whether in news or in fictional portrayals, the media has the power to influence perception about people and issues as well as what is perceived as important, including matters of politics and governance. Playing a major factor in the varying opinions of the public towards the government leaders is the media since it has an enormous effect and control over the lives of the masses (Dixon, 2007). Through the slanting and presentation of news stories, public trust levels rise and fall for public figures as public opinion changes. News stories either serve to crucify or celebrate public figures and with media coverage comes either fame or infamy. In the United States for example, media coverage is probably the most important factor of the success of a Presidential candidate. Political advertisements on TV as well as the internet play big roles in electoral processes (Pištěková, 2008).

Aside from news, fictional portrayals also have a role to play in shaping public perception. Television, for example can convey different sounds, gestures, attitudes and behaviors to its viewers and it can put emphasis to different subjects such as objects, incidents, occasions, actors, entrepreneurs and political figures (Sultana, 200; Hasan, 2010). In countries all over the world, television has become the most accessible and the most dominant medium since it has been introduced in the country in the 1950's. This influence could be attributed to its being the public's main source of information, news, entertainment and its being capable of influencing perception, attitude, and behavior in areas like politics, education, health, economics of people across different geographical locations, genders, and ages (Timoteo & Ubońgen, 2012). In the Philippines where serialized

television drama or teleseryes are popular primetime entertainment, fictional portrayals of various characters are seen by a massive audience on a daily basis including portrayals of politicians. Top rated serialized television drama's such as "Honesto", "May Bukas Pa", and "Ikaw Lamang featured character villains which exhibited specific detestable traits such as being greedy, deceptive, manipulative, ruthless, and abusive of power which fit the popular Filipino "trapo" stereotype. Impunity, misuse of public funds, abuse of power, being extremely wealthy as a result of stealing from public coffers are also associated with the trapo stereotype.

The "traditional politician" or trapo stereotype is the complete opposite of what ideal politicians or public servants are expected to be which Gini and Green (2013) description to ideal public servants outline as having deep honesty, moral courage, moral vision, compassion and care, fairness, intellectual excellence, good timing, creative thinking, aesthetic sensitivity and deep selflessness. Notably the portrayal of politicians as having these admirable traits are not as visible on Philippine primetime drama series is not as visible as the portrayal of the trapo stereotype. This imbalance in the presented perspective to audiences by entertainment media could be considered unhealthy as it only promotes the negative traits that public servants and politician could have and could cultivate or reinforce negative perceptions in the audience. Potentially unhealthy media messages and content have been at the center of many studies as there are many academics who consider entertainment media an integral player in educating the public.

Since fictional television is an aspect of entertainment media it also has an important influence in shaping public images of certain issues (Turow & Gans, 2002), the balance of positive and negative portrayals on entertainment television should be examined as part of the ethical production of media content. Although audiences of today are significantly more media literate than audiences of the past, it is always within the public's interest to get a wider perspective through varied portrayals instead of narrow, shallow, stereotypical portrayals. Looking at the greater picture of nation building, audiences saturated with only negative portrayals of politicians could potentially undermine public trust and subsequently affect cooperation and ultimately the progress of a nation.

Theoretical Framework. This study was anchored on the Cultivation Theory of Gerbner & Gross which states that regular television viewers are more vulnerable to the belief that media portrayals are real and legitimate. Such individuals who are heavy television viewers when exposed to negative media content such as violence tend to get the idea that the world is meaner

that it actually is. This theory advocates long standing and cumulative effects of television since media content cultivates conceptions about reality to audiences which eventually become mainstream conceptions when reinforced by firsthand experience. The saturation of negative media portrayal of politicians on primetime television drama could possibly propagate a negative generalization of politicians that could possibly undermine efforts to nation building by sowing distrust towards politicians and public servants among voters or constituents. Determining the extent of negative portrayal of politicians on media and whether it has a relationship to public trust, is another measure that may be taken to examine the effects that media content has on the way society thinks as well as shed light on knowledge that could help in developing balanced media content that imparts a pluralistic view of the world to its audiences as opposed to narrow, stereotypical perspectives

Conceptual Framework

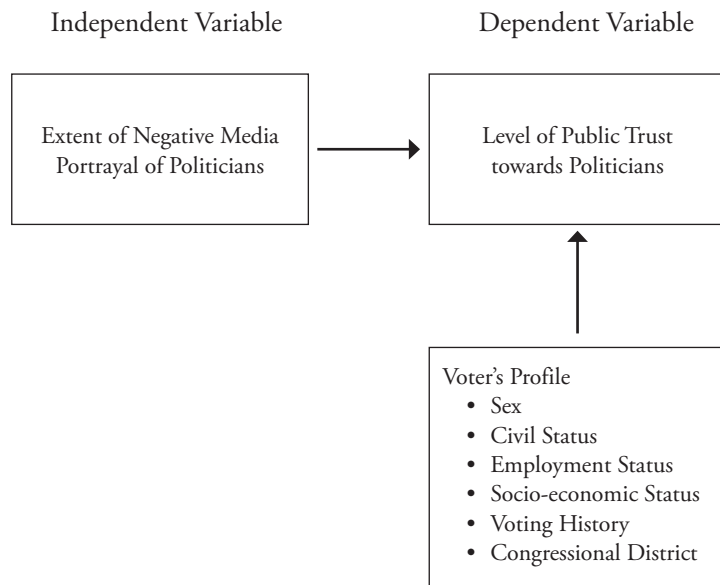


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

Study Objectives. The objective of this study was to determine the effects of negative portrayal of politicians to the public, to find out if whether or not the negative portrayal of politicians has compromised the public's trust towards them, and if compromised, determine the extent of the negative portrayal of politicians in media. In order to do this, the study sought to profile the respondents who are registered voters and part of the viewing audience according to sex, civil status, employment status, socio-economic status, their voting history and the congressional district to which they belong. The study also sought to measure the extent of negative portrayal of politicians in terms of their characteristics as well as the level of trust, which the respondents had towards politicians. Finally, from these metrics, the study wanted to investigate whether there is a significant relationship between the extent of negative media portrayal of politicians and the level of public trust and whether or not negative media portrayal significantly influences the level of public trust towards politicians.

METHOD

Research Design and Respondents. This study utilized the descriptive correlation method. The researcher conducted a survey among 400 voters coming from the three (3) congressional districts of Davao City. The respondents of the survey were people who are employed, within the discerning age range of 18-60 years old, were registered voters in their respective congressional districts, held no position/s in public office, and were established viewers of three (3) serialized primetime television dramas which had politician character villains. These serialized television dramas were: *May Bukas Pa*, *Honesto*, and *Ikaw Lamang*. The three television dramas were chosen for being consistently top-rating television dramas.

Research Locale. The research locale for this study was Davao City. The researcher conducted the survey in various barangays in the three (3) congressional districts of Davao City namely the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Congressional Districts. At least one hundred-thirty (130) registered voters per Congressional District took part in the survey, namely the 1st Congressional District (Sub-Districts Poblacion & Talomo) 2nd Congressional District (Sub-Districts Agdao, Buhangin, Bunawan & Paquibato) and 3rd Congressional District (Sub-Districts Baguio, Calinan, Marilog & Tugbok).

Table 1. Allocation of samples per district of study

District	Percent	Sample
1 st District	26.1	130
2 nd District	36.2	130
3 rd District	37.7	140
TOTAL	100	400

This study included four hundred (400) respondents who met the established respondent criteria. This sample size is an adequate representative sample size for infinitely large populations. The total sample was distributed among the three (3) congressional districts in the city. Purposive or selective sampling was used to determine participants to be included in the study.

Research Instrument. This study made use of a researcher- made survey questionnaire for its data gathering purposes. The medium of instruction of the questionnaire was English. The first part of the questionnaire included socio-demographic profiling questions and a checklist of the inclusion criteria. The second part of the was composed of a ten (10) item survey for measuring the level of negative media portrayal of politicians in serialized television dramas as perceived by the respondents. A negative portrayal is constituted by a character on the television drama who is identified as a politician in the story line and in the course of the plot is shown to manifest negative actions and morals such as being corrupt, greedy, dishonest, boastful, etc. The items were statements that encapsulated various depictions that could be seen through a characters speech, actions, choices, and agenda as the television series progresses. The respondents were asked to rate the statements on a four- point scale.

Table 2. Rating scale for extent of negative media portrayal

Scale	Description	Interpretation
3.25-4.00	Always Exhibited	High Extent
2.50-3.24	Often Exhibited	Average Extent
1.75-2.49	Rarely Exhibited	Low Extent
1.00-1.74	Never Exhibited	Very Low Extent

Table 2 contains the verbal description that measures the extent of negative media portrayal of politicians as seen by the respondents on selected serialized primetime dram. Each description has a corresponding rating and interpretation. The verbal descriptions are the responses of the participants in the survey to the statements given in the survey questionnaire which are further arranged from Strongly Disagree which describes negative portrayals of politicians as being Never Exhibited in the television series, (1.00-1.74) to Strongly Agree which describes negative behaviors as being Always Exhibited by the politicians (3.25-4.00 rating). Correspondingly, the interpretations are likewise arranged for Very Low Extent to High Extent of negative media portrayal.

Table 3. Level of public trust among respondents

Scale	Responses	Description	Interpretation
3.25-4.00	Strongly Agree	Always Perceived	High Public Trust
2.50-3.24	Agree	Often Perceived	Average Public Trust
1.75-2.49	Disagree	Rarely Perceived	Low Public Trust
1.00-1.74	Strongly Disagree	Never Perceived	Very Low Public Trust

Table 3 contains the verbal descriptions that measure the level of public trust towards governance among the respondents. Verbal descriptions for interpretation are arranged from Strongly Disagree (1.00-1.74 rating) to Strongly Agree (3.35 -4.00 rating). Correspondingly, the interpretations are likewise arranged for Very Low Public Trust to High Public Trust.

Data Gathering Procedure and Analysis. The survey questionnaire underwent content validation from three academicians from the field of mass communication, sociology and psychology to ensure that the crafting of questions would glean the information it intended to gather. After content validation, the data gathering tool then underwent pilot testing among 30 Davao City residents who also met the respondent criteria of the study. Items for the measurement of negative media portrayal of politicians registered a Cronbach's alpha score of .790 which means the items have an acceptable internal consistency. Items which were designed to measure the level of public trust towards governance of the politicians registered a Cronbach's alpha score of .870 which means the items had good internal consistency. Once the data gathering tools had been validated and tested for reliability, the researchers proceeded with the administration of the survey. Frequency Distribution was used to tabulate the responses from the survey questionnaires of the study. Weighted Mean was used to determine the level of negative media portrayal as well as the levels of public trust towards governance. Pearson- r was used to determine the relationship between level of negative portrayal and level of public trust towards governance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Out of the four hundred (400) respondents, 60% (240) of the respondents were female, 57.8% (231) were single, 96.5% (386) belonged to the middle class bracket, 68.3% (273) participated in the most recent election, and 35% (273) belonged to the 3rd Congressional District. There was a good representation of the sexes and of the three congressional districts because of the adequate number of samples for both categories. However there was no equal representation in the other categories because of the dominance of particular sub- groups, specifically, in civil status where 57.7% (231) are single, which is a big percentage compared to the 25.8% (103) representing the married respondents; and also in socio-economic status where 96.5% (386) belongs to the middle class subjugating the upper class at 3.5% (14). Also in terms of voting history, the overpowering group were those who participated in the most recent election, composing 68.3% (273) of the sample, overpowering the other group with people who did not participate on the most recent election represented at 31.7% (127).

Table 4. Demographic distribution of respondents

Demographic Profile	Categories	Frequency F	Percentage
Sex	Male	160	40.0
	Female	240	60.0
	Total	400	100.0
Civil Status	Single	231	57.7
	Married	103	25.8
	Separated	54	13.5
	Widowed	12	3.0
	Total	400	100.0
Socio-Economic Status	Middle Class	386	96.5
	Upper	14	3.5
	Total	400	100.0
Voting History	Did not participate in the most recent election	127	31.7
	Participated in the most recent election	273	68.3
	Total	400	100.0
Congressional District	1 st Congressional District	130	32.5
	2 nd Congressional District	130	32.5
	3 rd Congressional District	140	35.0
	Total	400	100.0

Extent of Negative Portrayal of Politicians. Table 5 shows the data on the extent of negative media portrayal of politicians on specific serialized television dramas on recent primetime programming. The result registered a mean of 3.48 with a descriptive rating of High Extent meaning portrayals of politicians on the selected shows always exhibited negative traits. 10 out of 10 or all statements with negative characteristics projected to be having similar descriptions and interpretations. The outcome indicates that the politicians in serialized television series are presented to the viewing public above the rest of characteristics as corrupt (M=3.77), greedy (M=3.56), and boastful (M=3.52). Even the other depicted qualities (deceptive, murderous, liar, irresponsible, adulterous, grandstanding, and selfish) also give equally high mean ratings.

Table 5. Extent of the negative portrayal of politicians

	Teleseryes portray politicians as:	Mean	Interpretation	Description
1.	The 'mind' behind unlawful use of public funds. (CORRUPT)	3.77	Always Exhibited	High extent
2.	Having selfish desires over wealth and power. (GREEDY)	3.56	Always Exhibited	High Extent
3.	Someone who encourage people to believe on something which is not true. (DECEPTIVE)	3.40	Always Exhibited	High Extent
4.	Likely to murder someone who would go against him/her. (MURDEROUS)	3.42	Always Exhibited	High Extent
5.	Someone who tells lies to his/her people. (LIAR)	3.50	Always Exhibited	High Extent
6.	Someone who does not take full responsibility of his/her actions. (IRRESPONSIBLE)	3.39	Always Exhibited	High Extent
7.	Persons having intimate relationships with people other than their respective partners. (ADULTEROUS)	3.44	Always Exhibited	High Extent
8.	Likely to indulge in extravagant or grandiose display of wealth in any form. (BOASTFUL)	3.52	Always Exhibited	High Extent
9.	"Epal" or someone who is overly trying hard to broadcast his good deeds to gain popularity. ("MAPAPEL" or GRANDSTANDING)	3.51	Always Exhibited	High Extent
10.	Someone who put himself/herself first before his people. (SELFISH)	3.35	Always Exhibited	High Extent
	Overall Mean	3.48	Always Exhibited	High Extent

Level of Public Trust among Respondents. Table 6 shows the level of public trust among the respondents. The respondents alarmingly registered low to very low trust towards governing politicians. The respondents' feedback based on the provided statements implies that voters in Davao City do not fully trust those serving in the government. The lowest mean which was 1.65 registered pertained to the respondents trust towards politicians and their families leading modest lives appropriate to their position. Aside from this, trust towards politicians being dedicated and devoted to their duties and people together with items pertaining to truthfulness, efficient and effective use of government resources and having upstanding ethics and morals also registered means that fell within the Very Low range. The rest of the items registered low trust levels specifically items which pertained to extending public service (1.75), justice and sincerity (1.76), upholding public interest (1.77), as well as impartiality in extending public service (1.78), and professionalism in discharging their duties (1.89). These levels of public trust echo public sentiment on the credence which they give to people in government. The data paints a grim picture of the Philippine experience in governance. These findings could be attributed to a myriad of factors including allegations of massive acts of betrayal of public trust which have been uncovered in recent memory. It worth noting that this sentiment is held by voters who, were the ones who elected these officials to public office. In a three year Philippine trust index starting 2012, the government consistently experienced a consistent decline in public trust including trust ratings for government agencies and other branches of government especially for the Senate and the Office of the President.

Table 3. Level of public trust among respondents

Statements	Mean	Description	Interpretation
Politicians....			
Perform and discharge their duties with the highest degree of excellence, professionalism, intelligence and skill.	1.89	Rarely Perceived	Low public trust
Uphold public interest over and above personal interest at all times.	1.77	Rarely Perceived	Low public trust
Are dedicated and devoted to their duties and people.	1.72	Never Perceived	Very low public trust
Remain true to their people at all times.	1.66	Never Perceived	Very low public trust
Refrain from doing acts contrary to law, good morals and good customs.	1.70	Never Perceived	Very low public trust
Extend prompt, courteous and adequate service to the public.	1.75	Rarely Perceived	Low public trust
Utilize government resources efficiently, effectively, honestly and economically.	1.74	Never Perceived	Very low public trust
Act with justness and sincerity and doesn't discriminate against anyone, especially the poor and the unprivileged.	1.76	Rarely Perceived	Low public trust
Provides service to everyone without unfair discrimination regardless of party affiliation or preference.	1.78	Rarely Perceived	Low public trust
.. and their families lead modest lives appropriate to their positions and income.	1.65	Never Perceived	Very low public trust
Overall Mean	1.74	Never Perceived	Very low public trust

Test of Significant relationship. Table 4 illustrates a negative significant low correlation ($r = -.306$; $p < .001$) has been established between negative media portrayal and level of public trust. This relationship implies that the more they are being negatively portrayed in the media, the lower is their level of public trust. Further, the coefficient of determination of .09 indicates that 9% of the variation in their public trust can be attributed to its linear relationship with negative portrayal.

The pairing of the variables resulted to the interpretation of significant low negative correlation. It indicates that negatively-portrayed politicians in serialized television drama are believed by the audience to be manifesting in reality. The results project that what people saw on media was perceived in real life.

Table 4. Test of significant relationship

Variables being paired	R	r ²	p-value	Interpretation
Media portrayal and public trust	-.306	.09	.000	Significant low negative correlation

Table 5 shows the results of multiple regression as shown in table 5 reveal that a female respondent would more likely to evaluate his public trust on politicians .015 lower as compared to a male counterpart. It means that it is more difficult to please females than males when it comes to politicians... More so, a married participant would more likely to evaluate his public trust on politicians .071 lower as compared to a single participant. It means that married individuals are more stringent in assessing their public trust to a politician as compared to a single counterpart.

On the other hand, an upper class respondent would more likely to evaluate his public trust on politicians .065 higher as compared to a lower class respondent. It implies that the upper class constituents have higher tolerance or are more broadminded when it comes to the issues being raised about a particular politician. However, it can be noted that the data gathered are not enough to support the significant influence of profile to public trust. The results are just merely providing the tendencies. The results illustrate that gender, civil status and socio-economic status doesn't make much of a difference in a individual's opinion and perception towards politicians. However portrayal, for every unit increase in the negative portrayal of politicians there is a corresponding decrease in the public trust rating ($B = -.315$; $p < .001$).

The predictors have significant influence ($r^2 = .104$; $p\text{-value} < .001$) to public trust which means that 10.4% of the variation in the level of public trust is attributed to the combined influence of the profile and negative portrayal. It further implies that 89.6% can be attributed to other factors not covered in the study.

Table 5. Multiple regression analysis of profile and media portrayal with public trust

Predictors	Standardized Coefficient B	T	p-value
Sex	-.015	-.316	.752
Civil status	-.071	-1.482	.139
Socio-Economic Status	.065	1.336	.182
Portrayal	-.315	-6.531	.000
r	.323		
r ²	.104		
F	11.488		
p-value	.000		

The sample size of 400 is enough to represent the opinions of respondents regarding the probable effect of negative portrayal of politicians by serialized television dramas or teleseryes on public trust towards governance. In terms of the demographic factors considered for this study, the researchers believe that although there are dominant sub-groups in terms of proportion, generally the composition of the sample will give statistically valid results. The imbalance in terms of the number of cases per subgroup in the sampling is an unintentional result of the sampling method implemented. As shown in table 1, majority of the respondent were single, middle class females. Considering the focus of the study, the dominance of other sub- groups would not necessarily compromise the findings since there is no literature that asserts demographic factors can strongly affect perceptions on negative portrayal of a character in a serialized television drama or teleserye much more so on the level of public trust; although these probabilities are not discounted in this study.

Conclusions and Recommendations. Based on the results of the study, the respondents evidently were able to perceive the negative portrayal of politicians on the selected television dramas based on highly exhibited negative traits and actions. A consistency in the responses in all of the portrayed qualities indicates that in the television dramas *May Bukas Pa*, *Honesto* and *Ikaw Lamang*, politicians are projected as having a particular stereotypical image. Although this stereotypical image is fictional, there seems to be a sweeping generalization of politicians as far as these three television dramas are concerned. Given this

concentration of negative portrayal along with the occurrences of real life act of betrayal of public trust among government officials there is a saturation of negative portrayal not only in entertainment media but also in news media. Nevertheless, the researchers are also aware that there are politicians who are true to their professions as public servants and evidently, they are not fairly represented in current media portrayals.

Based on the results of the study, the level of public trust among the respondents is evidently very low. People nowadays, particularly the audience, tend to perceive television as a reflection of the society. But the declining or low level of public trust must not only be blamed entirely to the media, apparently, the public may be seeing a lot of problems regarding our political leaders or towards our political system in general. The people right now are apparently not satisfied on the performance of the people in the government. The declining level of public trust is deeply saddening and the government must do something to counter the declining level of public trust.

The extent of negative media portrayal of politicians and the level of public trust has established a significant relationship. The results imply that the more the media negatively portray politicians or the higher the extent of negative media portrayal, the lower the level of the public trust is. What people saw in media was perceived in real life which resulted to a low level of public trust. However, the results only suggest that the negative media portrayal would only contribute to the declining of public trust, that the extent of negative media portrayal could contribute to the high tendencies of lowering the level of public trust.

Based on the results of the study, the negative media portrayal of politicians has a major effect on the level of public trust. People may not necessarily believe in everything that they see on TV, but through television as a primary source of entertainment of the people, the viewers have big chances of perceiving television depictions as reality. The constant portrayal of politicians on television drama in a negative manner has somewhat dictated their perceptions towards real life politicians. Apparently, media has so much power in changing the people's perception about the happenings in the society. The researcher believes that media has committed mistakes in terms of overly portraying the politicians negatively and the government officials must look on the perceptions of the public towards them. For the media, they should be balanced on portraying things. For the politicians, they must observe honesty, dignity and trueness to their duties, to their people and their country

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