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**COMMON-POOL RESOURCE (CPR) CONSERVATION AND
MANAGEMENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN
THE TAGUIBO WATERSHED**

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

This edition of The Light Journal features compelling research articles presented during the 8th Mindanao Peace Studies Conference, which carried the theme ***“Resilience and Harmonization for Peace and Development in Mindanao”***. The selected contributions in this volume reflect the rich diversity of narratives and methodologies that collectively promote the ethos of peacebuilding grounded in resilience, community engagement, and critical inquiry.

The opening article by Jessa Marie B. Sabado and Joseph Ian B. Sabado explored the perceptions of Indigenous Peoples on the conservation and management of the Taguibo Watershed—a vital resource for Butuan City. Through qualitative methods, the study underscored the community's belief in the effectiveness of indigenous-led stewardship, emphasizing the importance of inclusive

participation and sustained efforts toward environmental resilience.

In the second article, Mark Bon G. Basadre and Isaias S. Sealza investigated the resilience of municipalities and their capacity for crisis response, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing on household-level data and municipal competitiveness indicators, the study highlighted how institutional resilience contributes to public awareness and strengthens peacebuilding efforts at the grassroots level.

Joshua Michael C. Ascaño, in his article, presented an innovative pedagogy rooted in mentorship through the Madaris Volunteer Program. His work documented how online mentorship during the pandemic became a venue for meaningful dialogue, friendship, and intercultural understanding between educators—reinforcing the idea that peace can be nurtured through shared learning experiences and human connection.

The fourth article, authored by Arlyn M. Floreta, Rheomie O. Hallazgo, and Hermicila C. Semblante, shed light on the experiences of children with incarcerated parents. The study provided a sensitive and timely account of how these children navigate disrupted family dynamics and socio-economic instability. Remarkably, the study also surfaced their stories of survival and resilience, offering recommendations for more responsive social support systems.

Closing the issue is Hanna Ruth A. Bonggot's article on color politics in the Indigenous Peoples' barangays of Butuan City. Focusing on political behavior during the 2022 national elections, the study examined how symbolic elements such as color shape political identity and electoral choices among IP communities. The findings revealed the influence of narratives around leadership, continuity, and unity in shaping democratic participation at the margins.

Collectively, the articles in this issue provided nuanced perspectives on peace and resilience in Mindanao whether through environmental stewardship, governance and service delivery, educational dialogue, socio-emotional healing, or political participation. It is hoped that this edition invites continued reflection and discourse, and affirms our shared commitment to peace, justice, and inclusive development in Mindanao and beyond.

Shirlene Medori T. Alegre, PhD

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The views, opinions, and conclusions contained in this journal are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Publisher and the Editors.

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**Common-Pool Resource (CPR) Conservation and
Management Perceptions of the Indigenous People in the
Taguibo Watershed**

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Abstract

The Taguibo Watershed, a key biodiversity area in the Caraga Region, provides fresh drinking water to Butuan City. In 2009, a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) was issued to the indigenous cultural community, aiming for robust local institutions through decentralized resource management. This study, using a descriptive-qualitative method, explores the community's perceptions of current conservation practices. Data were gathered via surveys, key informant interviews, field observations, and validated through focus group discussions. The study highlights that natural weather systems, such as storms and typhoons, frequently damage the watershed, making the communities vulnerable to disasters. Despite this, respondents believe the watershed is in good condition, though some worry about its future. They think that continued direct management by the indigenous community can achieve sustainable outcomes. Many respondents affirm good

management practices and emphasize the importance of active participation by all actors to influence sustainable outcomes.

Key Words: Common-pool resource; Conservation; Environmental management; Indigenous Peoples; Perception; Taguibo watershed

1. Introduction

A common-pool resource (CPR) is “a natural or man-made resource system that is sufficiently large to make it costly (but not impossible) to exclude potential beneficiaries from obtaining benefits from its use” (Ostrom 1990). As a natural resource system, the governance of CPR is directly affected by biophysical conditions and attributes of the community where it is located (Ostrom, 2011). Each person’s use of such resources subtracts benefits that others might enjoy, hence the need for cooperation. In the Philippines, watersheds and forest reserves are considered crucial CPR, the protection, conservation, and management of which have gathered considerable attention.

Environmental governance in the Philippines can be described as “multi-sectoral, multi-level, and problem-focused” (Magallona and Maglayang 2001). This has been shaped by the country’s vast experience of colonization and decentralization, which created a changing trend in natural resource management over time. Indeed, one significant and perhaps the most sweeping, trend of natural resource management in the country is decentralization (Catacutan, et al. 2001; Pulhin 2002; Sugimoto 2011; Pasicolan and Pasicolan 2005; Contreras 2000), setting its form with local communities as partners for environmental protection and conservation in the uplands. The increasing concerns for sustainable management and utilization of natural resources “has led to a reappraisal of local people’s environmental knowledge and resources management skills” (Prill-Brett 2007).

Decentralization of CPR governance entails loosening up the traditional hold of regulation, monitoring, and control over natural resources in favor of local communities (Kappor, 2001; Blaike, 2006), banking on the “equity, empowerment, conflict resolution, knowledge and awareness, biodiversity protection,

and sustainable utilization” the local communities have a competitive advantage with (Kellert et al., 2000: 705). The field research of Garcia-Lopez (2013) in the community forest of Durango, Mexico, for instance, proves that forest associations in communities “can be crucial for the provision of services, goods and infrastructure related to the protection and enhancement of community forests, the economic development of community enterprises, and the political representation of these communities.”

Despite the arguments for decentralization of natural resource management, many authors cautioned against the swift treatment to simplify local problems. For instance, in one study, it was found that while “national governments in almost all developing countries have begun to decentralize policies and decision-making related to development, public services, and environment...most analyses, especially where environmental resources are concerned, have been less attentive to the political conditions that prompt decentralization and the role of property rights in facilitating the implementation of decentralized decision making” (Agrawal and Ostrom 2001). The study

concluded that the understanding of local conditions is necessarily essential for the decentralization procedure to commence. Decentralization in CPR management works on the assumption that given improved autonomy to manage natural resources, the local institutions are in a better position to ensure sustainability (Sabado 2015; Kellert et al. 2000).

The recognition of the rights of the local communities to manage local CPRs came in full force and effect with the passage of Republic Act 8371, or the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) in 1997. The said decree was trailblazing as it "signaled a legal breakthrough that recognized the rights of the more than ten million indigenous peoples (approximately fifteen percent of the country's total population of around seventy million) to claim their traditional lands" (Ballesteros 2001). To a certain degree, this landmark piece of legislation addresses the perceived historical injustice (Sabado, 2015), which is relatively advanced compared to neighboring countries (Prill-Brett, 2007), and thereby serves as a recognition of local communities' de facto resource management activities (Guiang and Castillo, 2006).

Ancestral lands, in relation to ancestral domain, have to be understood under the light of the indigenous concept of ownership characterizing it as “private but community property which belongs to all generations and therefore cannot be sold, disposed or destroyed,” and “likewise covers sustainable traditional resource rights” (Sec. 5, RA 8371). More importantly, these rights are recognized regardless of whether the indigenous communities concerned formalized their title through an application for, and issuance of, Certificates of Ancestral Domain Titles (CADTs) (Sec. 11, RA 8371). Ballesteros (2007) made a gist of these rights: “to claim ownership over lands, bodies of water traditionally and occupied by ICCs/IPs, sacred places, traditional hunting and fishing grounds, and all improvements made by them at any time within the domains; develop, control and use lands and territories traditionally occupied, owned, or used, and the natural resource therein; to stay in the territory and not be removed therefrom; regulate the entry of migrant settlers and organizations into the domains; access to safe and clean air and water, and of access to integrated systems for the management of their inland waters and air

space; resolve land conflicts by customary laws of the area where the land is located” (p.40).

In 2009, the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) issued a Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title (CADT) to Indigenous people known as the Manobo where huge portions of the Taguibo watershed are located. The Manobos, a Hispanicized form for "people" (Felix and Leny, 2004), are one of the most populated indigenous communities in the Philippines, clustered in various parts of the Mindanao archipelago with distinct cultural traditions and medicinal practices (Dapar et al, 2020).

This preliminary study aims to gather and analyze the views and perceptions of the Manobo indigenous cultural community on the status, conservation, and management practices within the Taguibo watershed.

2. Methodology

This research follows a descriptive design with qualitative and quantitative methods of gathering and interpreting data. It undertakes a careful description, recording, analysis, and

interpretation of the perceptions of the indigenous institutions in the Taguibo watershed.

The study area comprised of eight (8) *sitios* of barangay Anticala (Bungadman, Dugyaman, Zigzag, Suong, Sinaka, Mahayahay, Tagkiling, Iyao) and portions of barangay Pianing, all within the Taguibo watershed in Butuan City, Philippines. Barangay Anticala has a coordinate of 9.0040, 125.6472 (9° 0' North, 125° 39' East), and an estimated elevation above sea level of 73.5 meters (241.1 feet). Barangay Pianing has a coordinate of 8.9870, 125.6413 (8° 59' North, 125° 38' East), with its corresponding estimates of elevation above sea level at 46.5 meters (152.6 feet).

The same watershed area also situates the ancestral domain of the Manobo indigenous cultural community (ICC), covered by CADT 135. At present, about 2,510 individuals and 647 households are under the same ancestral domain, covering both barangays Anticala and Pianing in Butuan City. The map below shows the political boundaries of the two barangays, where CADT 135 overlays (see Figure 1).

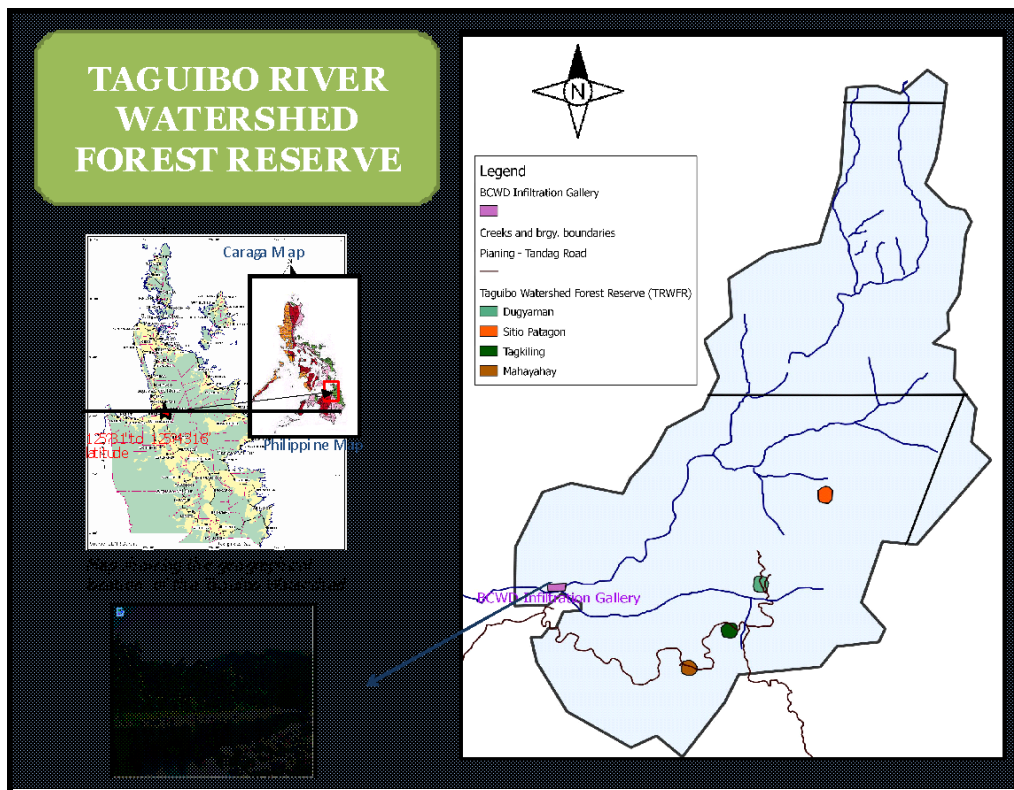


Figure 1: Map Showing the Location of Taguibo Watershed.

Source: BCWD Watershed Symposium Presentation

The respondents of the study were members of the Manobo indigenous cultural community under CADT 135 within the Taguibo watershed. Using purposive sampling, there were three hundred twenty-three (323) identified respondents for the guided interview or exactly 12.8% of the total population of the members of the Manobo under CADT 135. The same sample constitutes around 49.9% of the total households in the area.

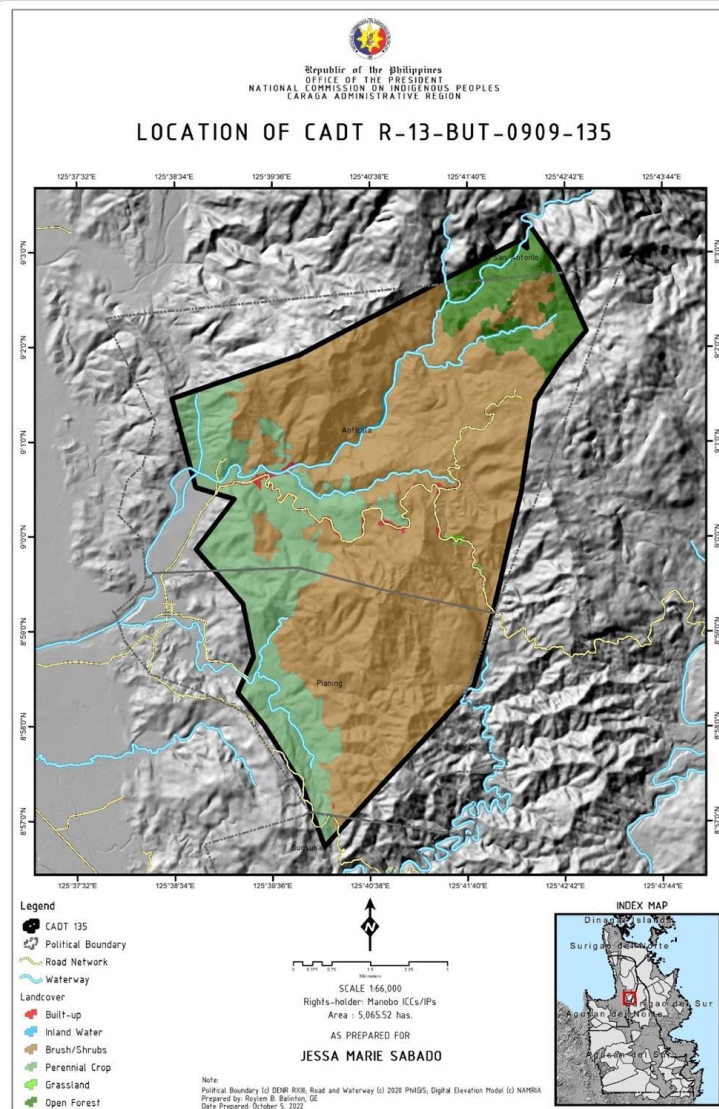


Figure 2. Location of sampling area Barangay Anticala and Barangay Pianing, Butuan City. Source: National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) - Region XIII Regional Office

Primary data were gathered from field observations, surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions conducted from March until April 2022. The researchers conducted interviews

with the respondents using a guide questionnaire. The guided questionnaire was structured into three parts, and the same was also translated into the Bisayan dialect. The first part reflects the informed consent of the respondents, while the second part focuses on their demographic profile. The last part touches on the perception of the respondents concerning the conservation and environmental management practices within the Taguibo watershed. To validate and provide a deeper analysis of the responses, the researchers conducted key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussions (FGD). The researchers identified seventeen (17) respondents for the KII, comprising of barangay and community leaders. After the data gathering, focus group discussions were conducted with the indigenous community leaders for the data validation. Specifically, the researchers conducted the FGDs during the monthly meeting of the Anticala Tribal Council of Elders and Leaders Association, Inc. (ATRICELAI).

Before engaging with the community, the researchers obtained the informed consent of the respondents and the leaders of the indigenous community, with the assistance of the

National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). Their spiritual leader performed a traditional ritual before the start of the data gathering.

3. Results and Discussions

The surveys were conducted from March 25 to April 27, 2022 in barangay Anticala (sitio Bungadman, Dugyaman, Zigzag, Suong, Sinaka, Mahayahay, Tagkiling, and Iyao) and barangay Pianing. There were three hundred twenty-three (323) respondents from the indigenous cultural community who filled out the survey questionnaire and seventeen (17) of them also were the respondents for the key informant interviews. Data collection continued to take place even while the pandemic was in full swing (COVID-19 or Coronavirus disease 2019). Due to strict movement regulations, researchers faced challenges in obtaining data collection permission. In addition, some of the identified respondents declined to participate in the survey. Lastly, huge portions of the watershed area are difficult to access. Even though the houses of the respondents are vastly dispersed, the researchers continued the data-gathering activity, putting in

mind the wise words of the Manobo chieftain: (in vernacular transcribed to English) *"Do not go any further stay on the road and always have a companion (Manobo) for your own safety."*

3.1. Demographic Profile

The pie graph below shows the distribution of the total respondents from the barangay Pianing and eight sitios of barangay Anticala (see Figure 3).

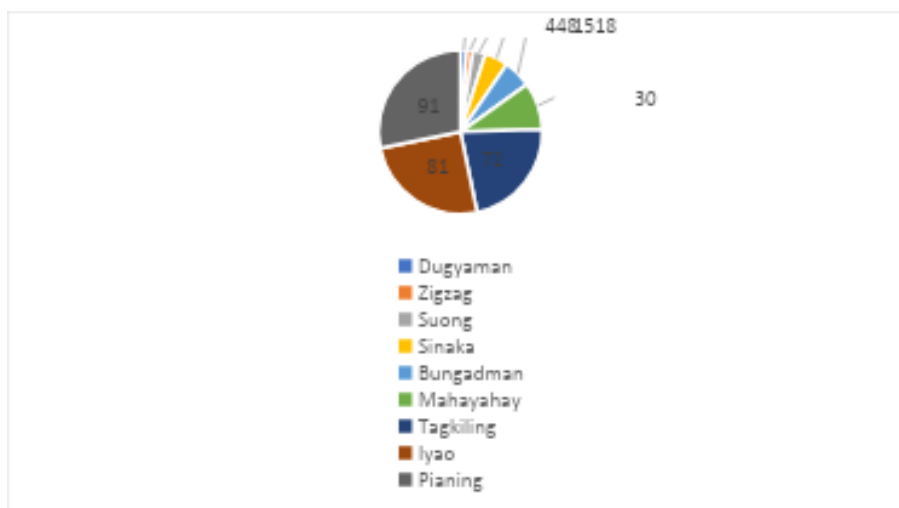


Figure 3. The total number of respondents distributed in the Pianing and sitios of Anticala

As shown in *Figure 3* above, ninety-one (91) of the respondents come from barangay Pianing (28%), followed by the eighty-one (81) respondents from Sitio Iyao in Barangay Anticala

(25%), seventy-three (73) respondents from Sitio Tagkiling (22%), thirty (30) respondents from sitio Mahayahay (9%), eighteen (18) respondents from sitio Bungadman (6%), fifteen (15) respondents from sitio Sinaka (5%), and eight (8) respondents from sitio Suong (2%). Lastly, both sitios Dugyaman and Zigzag were represented by four (4) respondents each (1%). The majority of respondents reside in Brgy. Pianing and sitio Iyao, which explains why those two places have the highest response rates in the graph.

Figure 4 below shows the apportionment of respondents in terms of gender. Most of the respondents were female (n=218, 67%).

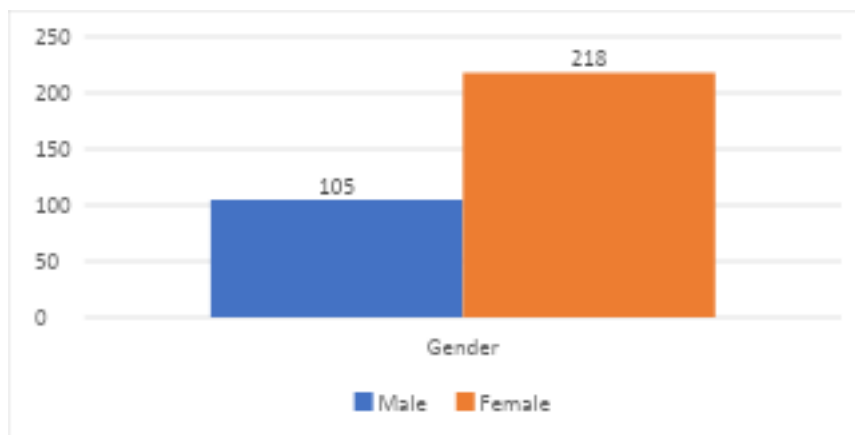


Figure 4. The gender distribution of respondents

The bar graph in *Figure 5* below shows the age distribution of the male and female respondents. When ranked, respondents

with ages 20–30 took the first spot (n=110, 34%), followed by respondents with ages, 31–40 with a total of 74 (23%), then respondents with ages 41–50 with a total of 60 (18%), then similar rank for ages 51–60 with the total of 41 (13%), and lastly, ages 60–up with the total of 38 (12%) respondents. Despite having different numbers, they responded to the survey with the same answers. Some of them possess the necessary knowledge to properly respond to the survey's questions, especially the elders of the community. Within their community, they frequently discussed their involvement in Taguibo watershed management and conservation.

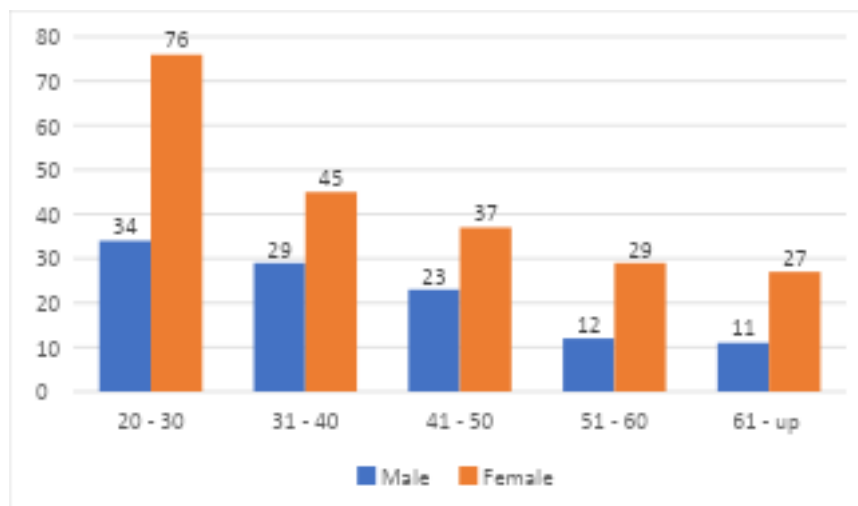


Figure 5. The age range of the respondents

The researchers conducted fieldwork during the day when male household members typically went to their farms or performed other daytime jobs. Meanwhile, the wives and other female family members stayed home to care for the house, children, and elderly. This schedule led to a notable disparity in respondents' age and gender distribution. Responses varied by age group: most 20-year-olds lacked knowledge about the community and relied on the household head's opinions, while the majority of 40-year-olds responded well but without much insight. In contrast, elders (aged 51 and above) provided detailed accounts of their experiences in managing and conserving the watershed. Despite these differences, KII respondents offered valuable information for all survey and interview questions.

Figure 6 below shows the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of educational attainment:

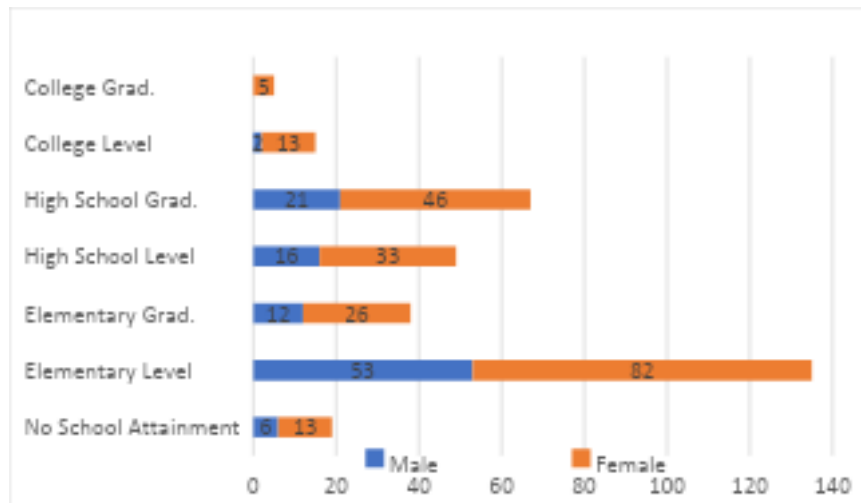


Figure 6. Highest Educational Attainment

As indicated, the highest educational attainment of the respondents is mostly elementary level (n=135, 42%), followed by high school graduate (n=67, 20%), and high school level (n=49, 15%). Several respondents indicated that they are elementary graduates (n=38, 12%), followed by no school attainment (n=19, 6%). Very few respondents indicated that they are College level (n=15, 4%), or that they are college graduates (n=5, 1%). Since the indigenous cultural community is dependent on agriculture and forest plants as the primary source of livelihood and income it showed that 70% of the respondents are farmers while 30% of them are business and public/private employees such as

barangay officials, labor, driver, guard, army, and nurse as shown in the very small percentage of college graduates of the members of the tribe (1%).

Most middle-aged to elderly respondents are in the elementary school grade levels; they based their answers on the expertise, knowledge, and beliefs that they inherited from their ancestors, while most college-level to college-graduate respondents are in their 20s; they based their answers on knowledge from school. Additionally, because the KII respondents were middle-aged or older, their responses were very detailed as opposed to the generalizations made by respondents in their 20s. They may differ on the source of the information, but they share the same views on the value of conservation and good management in preserving the sustainability of the Taguibo watershed.

3.2 Perceptions on the overall state of the Taguibo Watershed

In the middle of December 2021, the Taguibo watershed experienced the most recent damage to its biophysical conditions during the onslaught of typhoon Odette. The area was placed under Typhoon Signal No. 2. According to the five (5) KIIs,

after typhoon Odette several trees were uprooted, huge landslides were observed, and the river stream was filled with *bajri* or river sand, causing excessive turbidity to the water sourced from the Taguibo. Because of this, the water users of the Butuan City Water District (BCWD) suffered waterless days for almost two months. Table 1 below shows the summary of the respondents' views on the Taguibo watershed.

A key informant stated: (in dialect transcribed to English) *"We need to evacuate from our home for safety in high grounds since the water from Taguibo river is so high and some parts of the mountain got a landslide. The situation during that time was very dangerous, after that the situation of the Taguibo watershed was very poor and damaged, and the entire Butuan City was affected."* Typhoon Odette left a huge negative impact on the Taguibo watershed, this can be shown by the summary of the responses in Table 1 below.

About four months after typhoon Odette, *Table 1* below shows the summary of the perceptions of the respondents on the physical condition of the watershed in its current state, and for ten or twenty years after:

Table 1. Summary of Perception in the Taguibo Watershed

	Current State of Taguibo watershed	Percentage (%)	Taguibo watershed in 10 years	Percentage (%)	Taguibo watershed in 20 years	Percentage (%)
Very poor	42	13	9	3	9	3
Poor	40	12	27	8	19	6
Fair	109	34	78	24	45	14
Good	93	29	152	47	119	37
Very good	39	12	57	18	131	40

In its current state, most of the respondents believe that the condition of the Taguibo watershed is just fair (n=109, 34%), as compared to the increasingly good condition (n=57, 18%) in ten years after, and very good condition (n=131, 40%) in twenty years after. This is better illustrated by *Figure 7* below:

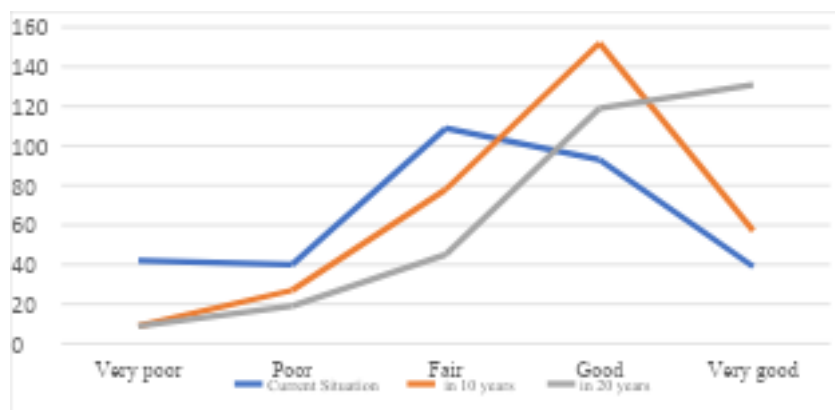


Figure 7. Summary in perception for the condition of the Taguibo watershed

The key informants believe that the Taguibo watershed will be in good condition, more than the current situation, especially if they continue the conservation and protection efforts, and have good environmental management practices for the next ten to twenty years. According to Key Informant 1 (in dialect transcribed to English): *“The cooperation in government agencies is a big help to improve the management strategies of managing the Taguibo watershed.”* Key Informant 8 also stated (in dialect transcribed to English): *“It is important to advocate the Manobo tribe regarding conservation in flora and fauna to protect the endemic species. Advocacy in waste disposal and waste segregation will help Taguibo watershed to have clean and healthy water.”*

Global deforestation such as illegal logging, illegal trade in wildlife, and kaingin causes serious environmental problems that can lead to degradation of biodiversity, lowering of water quality, and unsustainable forest management (Reboredo, 2013). Accordingly, these illegal activities affect the optimum utilization of the natural resources found within the Taguibo watershed. The

table below shows the responses of the respondents to the effect of illegal activities.

Key Informant 17 stated that (in dialect transcribed to English) *“illegal activities like illegal logging, hunting of endemic species, and deforestation cause loss of biodiversity that can affect both flora and fauna including us the consumer, our health, and livelihood.”* Key Informant 6 succinctly put it: *“every living organism in the ecosystem have roles to play, excessive utilization and overexploit them leads to the extinction of species”*.

Despite threats of CPR degradation, studies have shown that humans can collectively organize, develop robust institutions, and sustainably manage the commons. Over the years, environmental degradation has become an important political discourse concerning sovereign nation-states sharing a common space called Earth (Sabado, 2015). At the world stage, this has been a critical governance agendum, given prime importance with the popular articulation of the term ‘sustainable development’ (Sabado 2015). From the 1987 report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) entitled

“Our Common Future”, societies and human institutions are recognized to possess the ability to address overarching issues of sustainable development, proclaiming that “humanity has the ability to make development sustainable to ensure that it meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (WCED 1987). It has then propelled high hopes for humans and its institutions to organize and engage in governing commons and shared ecosystems (WCED, 1987), now commonly termed as ‘common-pool resource’ (Sabado 2015).

This high hope for humanity to solve environmental degradation manifests in the case of the Taguibo watershed. *Figure 8* below shows some alternative ways to solve environmental degradation within the Taguibo watershed according to the respondents. When ranked together, reforestation obtains the highest responses (n=132, 41%), followed by stopping illegal logging (n=95, 29%) and implementation of new rules (n=49, 16%) concerning conservation and management. Other responses include advocating clean-up

operations, waste segregation, conservation, preservation, and protection activities (n=47, 14%).

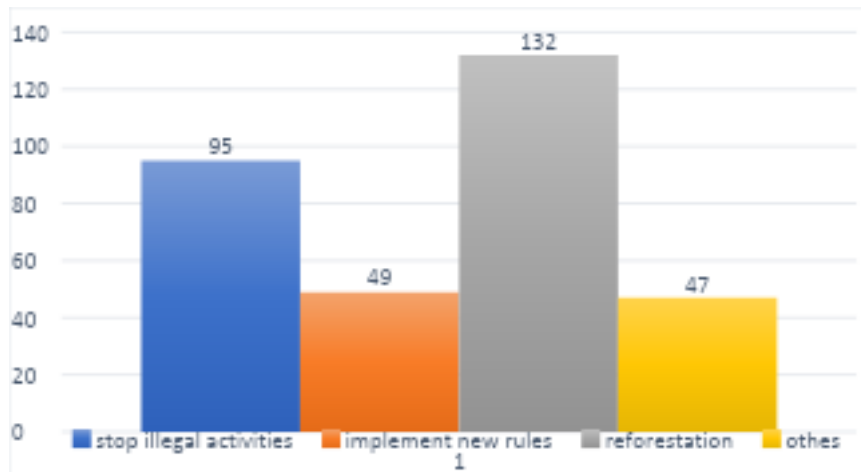


Figure 8. The Solution for Illegal Activities

According to Key Informants 6, 9, 12, and 14 (in dialect transcribed to English): *“Illegal activities cause landslide and flooding in our land, and decrease the number of species that live in the forest because of illegal hunting of endemic species. Illegal activities should stop and rules and regulations to secure the natural resources must be followed.”* Key Informants 2 and 8 said: *“It is important to advocate the people, especially the Manobo, the proper waste disposal and segregation to have clean water, air and environment”.*

3.3 Perceptions on the Management of Taguibo Watershed

Water resources have been widely managed and used for all kinds of utilities, such as drinking, food production, flood control, energy, industry, nature, and recreation. These management and utilization have subsequent effects on water quantity. In recent years, the importance of watershed management and water resources development has become crucial in both developed and developing countries. This shift is due to the growing awareness that the long-term sustainability of water projects is vital for human welfare (Biswas, 1990) *Figure 9* below shows the respondents' perception of the management by the community leaders of the Taguibo watershed.

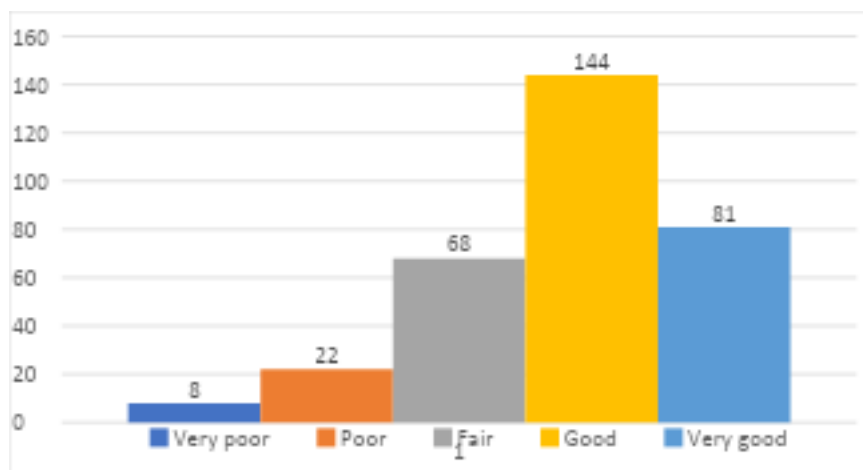


Figure 9. The management by community leaders of the Taguibo watershed

The figure above reveals that several respondents perceive good management (n=144, 45%) by the community leaders of the Taguibo watershed, followed by responses “very good” (n=81, 25%). According to Key Informant 10 (in dialect transcribed to English), *“the management of the leaders in Taguibo watershed is not perfect, but they are trying to do their best to continue the preservation in the area and to conserve the flora and fauna around the watershed. There are activities such as tree planting and clean-up operations to have clean water and environment. With this, everyone can influence and help the condition of the Taguibo watershed.”*

According to Ostrom (1990), sustainable CPR management entails the ability of local institutions, that are affected by the operational rules, to participate in modifying and improving the same set of operational rules. A related study argued that local institutions within the Taguibo watershed have developed rules governing the common-pool resource over time (Sabado, 2016). These rules, it can be observed, are both direct and subtle responses to the biophysical conditions of the resource system, as well as reflective of their community practices. Accordingly,

there is little showing of autonomy in implementation, when placed together with the externally sanctioned and imposed rules by the government (Sabado, 2015). For instance, the selection of plant species, planting design, and even the selection of leaders are not isolated from impositions from government agencies. While they have supplied operational rules, they only have little autonomy (choice and constitutional rules) to change these operational rules that fit the peculiarity of local settings and experience (Sabado, 2016).

Leadership and autonomy truly matter for watershed management. Understanding the human-nature relationship is an interdisciplinary concept because it concerns the various issues to human activities affecting the natural environment, from natural resource extraction and environmental hazards to habitat management and restoration (Seymour, 2016). Watershed management helps to control pollution of the water and other natural resources in the watershed by identifying the different kinds of pollution present in the watershed and how those pollutants are transported, and recommending ways to reduce or eliminate those pollution sources. The implementation

of land use and water management practices to protect and improve the quality of the water and other natural resources within a watershed should be done comprehensively. (DEEP, 2021).

Figure 10 below shows the responses of respondents when asked who among the stakeholders can better influence the conditions of CPR management:

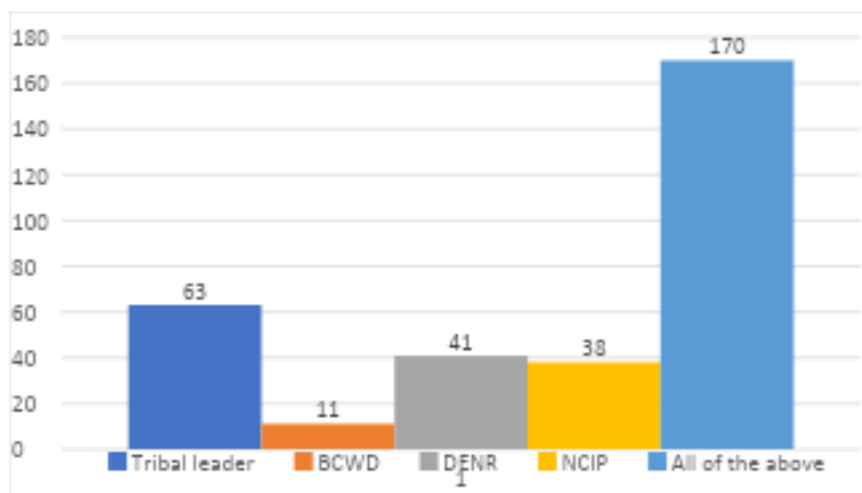


Figure 10. Stakeholders who can influence the condition of natural resources

The responsibility to sustainably manage the Taguibo watershed must be shared by every actor, especially those who possess influence in the management and outcome of the

watershed. The figure above shows the stakeholders who can influence the condition and management of the Taguibo watershed. Overwhelmingly, one hundred seventy (170 or 53%) of the respondents believe that all actors – whether government, community, or civil society – can influence and affect not only the current and future condition of the Taguibo watershed but also its sustainable management. Sixty-three (63 or 19%) of the respondents said that the leaders of the indigenous cultural community influence the condition and the sustainable management of the watershed. The respondents also identified the Butuan City Water District (BCWD) (11 or 3%), the DENR (41 or 13%), and the NCIP (38 or 12%) to possess the influence in the condition and sustainable management of the Taguibo watershed. Thus, the figure above reveals that all of the identified stakeholders are perceived to influence the condition of CPR management.

Thus, the figure above clearly reveals that all of the identified stakeholders are perceived to influence the condition of CPR management. These findings emphasize the need for an inter-sectoral approach to managing the Taguibo watershed

CPR. It must be stressed that while the Taguibo watershed was declared a protected area for protection, maintenance, and improvement of the water yield for the people of Butuan, the same forest cover is vital for community forest farmers under the Community-based Forest Management (CBFM) program of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) (Sabado 2016). This program is a social forestry program of the national government, where utilization and protection of the forests are decentralized to local communities, while the state retains ownership. It must also be remembered that the same forest was also claimed by the *Manobo* indigenous cultural community (ICC) as part of their ancestral domain. Under the contemplation of the Indigenous People's Rights Act of 1997, the said ICC has been granted autonomy and exclusive right to exploit, manage, and utilize resources found within their ancestral domain by their customs and traditions (Ballesteros 2001). To sum it up, the Taguibo watershed is a case where one particular shared ecology cuts across many tenurial instruments and has been directly managed by different institutions, and supervised by different government agencies with varying

operational rules. These operational rules are often ambiguous and conflicting (Sabado 2016).

As one study puts it, the course of the relationship among different local institutions in the area is heavily affected by exogenous institutions, i.e. government agencies, and non-government organizations (Sabado 2016). The formation, organization, and operation of these local institutions are always attached to the objectives and mandates of government institutions that foster them. Operative and structural qualities of institutions are superimposed by a larger whole of the community; where institutions are held completely by attributes of the community, operative and structural qualities of institutions, as fueled by interventions of government agencies, are somehow diluted and are easily interfaced into the consciousness of the community (Sabado 2016).

As all of the stakeholders can influence CPR management, the boundaries delineating access, use, and management become unclear. This is the popular articulation of the commons

or common-pool resource: since everybody owns it, then nobody owns it. However, the Taguibo watershed exists within various ranges of appropriations. On one hand, the indigenous community and the farmers extract resources directly from the watershed forest and, therefore, enjoy proximate gains. On the other, the rest of the Butuan population are water consumers benefiting from the clean water produced by the watershed. One can also imagine disproportionate concern, and a varying degree of vigor in protecting the watershed (Sabado 2016). For groups with high stakes in managing commonly shared ecology, the burdens of conserving resource systems outweigh the benefits (Lebel et al. 2008). Differing appreciation and degree of concern created strain between different users (Sugimoto 2011). A previous study made this observation:

“In one reforestation program, implementers identified one partner group to become the main end-receiver of engagement funds. While there is a default appropriation of financial and technical resources to all institutions, various exogenous actors pooled together supplemental resources for the appointed people’s

organization. Considering that all institutions have identical costs entailed for each seedling production, site preparation, out-planting, maintenance, and enrichment planting, the said people's organization gains a considerable advantage. This is being practiced in a condition where all institutions, could enjoy virtually equally and fairly from the benefits later on. Inequality in production cost caused by the introduced incentives of the exogenous institutions produces identical gains for similarly situated actors. This condition is conducive to rent-seeking and free-riding behaviors. The presence of exogenous institutions changes the rule structure of the scenario in terms of incentives and distribution of economic gains and costs." (Sabado 2016)

Some authors argue that the unequal allocation of resources from commonly managed ecology is not a by-product, but a necessary consequence of institutional sustainability (Agrawal 2003). After all, engagements to sustainably manage

shared resources are but an expression of an idealized, eccentric, and simplified construction of reality (Sabado 2016). Supplying incentives to one group, arbitrarily or otherwise, cut shortly the mechanism for fairness and equality of sharing risks and benefits, thus propelling non-cooperative, defect-oriented strategies of action.

4. Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendation

This study is a preliminary research engagement conducted to describe the perceptions of the members of the Manobo indigenous cultural community on the current management and conservation practices of the Taguibo watershed. Using a descriptive qualitative and quantitative approach, semi-structured survey interviews were conducted between as well as the interview were carried out between March and April April 27 in the year 2022, with three hundred twenty-three (. The questionnaire for the survey was translated into Cebuano, and semi-structured interviews were also conducted. There have been 323) people who respondents coming from the indigenous cultural community. The number of respondents in the survey represented 13% of the IPs living

under in CADT 135, are 12.8% of the total population of the Manobo tribe, and representing fifty percent (5049.9%) of the total householdshave at least one ation per household.

The study revealed critical fragilities of the common-pool resource to the natural calamities and disasters. Typhoon Odette, which occurred between December 12 and 22, 2021, had negatively impacted the biophysical condition of the Taguibo watershed. In effect, ~~This information was provided by the respondent.~~ the high level of turbidity in the Taguibo watershed can be attributed to the presence of Bajri, also known as river sand and silt, which can be found throughout the watershed during the onslaught of the typhoon. At the time, the situation of the Taguibo watershed was described by respondents as “very poor.” The study also reveals the vulnerability of the local community to natural disasters, as people hugely depend on the resources found within the CPR.

Despite the current condition of the watershed, the community remains hopeful for an improved management and

conservation of the Taguibo watershed. During the survey, the in the current situation of the Taguibo watershed, but respondents were steadfast in their view that the Taguibo watershed will be in good condition in the coming ten to twenty years.

The community closely linked the sustainable management and conservation of the Taguibo watershed to the leadership of the community and the influence of engaged stakeholders. While recognizing the efforts of their tribal leaders, they also put a premium on the influence of all stakeholders within and outside the watershed. of managing the Taguibo watershed. Following good management with 144 (45%) of the respondents voting for very good management with 81 (25%) votes from the respondents, fair management with 68 (21.05%) of the respondents voting for it, poor management with 22 (7%) of the respondents voting for it, and in last place very poor management with 8 (2% of the votes from the respondents). The management of the Taguibo watershed is an essential responsibility of all Butuanons. It is essential to understand the connection between human activity and the natural world because human activity can affect, whether positive or negative,

the natural resources, especially those shared resources. This study reveals that the tribal leaders, BCWD, DENR, and NCIP have a strong potential to influence the Taguibo watershed in terms of managing, conserving, protecting, raising awareness, and providing livelihood, among others.

As a preliminary study, it reveals a positive outlook for the sustainable management of the Taguibo watershed in the coming years. However, natural weather systems, such as storms and typhoons, have frequently posed serious threats and caused damage to its environs. The study also highlights the perception of the respondents that the active and direct management of the watershed by the ICC can result in sustainable and robust outcomes. This is grounded on the belief that all actors must actively participate in conservation efforts, especially when they can influence sustainable outcomes.

In conclusion, certain aspects of CPR management must be delineated. The individuals or communities authorized to withdraw resource units from the CPR must be clearly defined, as must the boundaries of the CPR itself. The Taguibo watershed cannot be partitioned and detached from the indigenous

community that directly utilizes and conserves it. The same community is capable and has the proximate motivation to sustainably manage and conserve the CPR.

The researchers recommend the conduct of quantitative research on the conservation and environmental management practices in the Taguibo watershed. The quantitative research should focus on comparing primary and secondary data including geophysical and satellite images using remote sensing technologies. The goal of this comparison is to provide information and reliable resources for readers and future researchers on sustainable management and environmental conservation.

As a final note, this study echoes the call of the previous work of one of the researchers. We argue for the respect and integrity of the ecology. The treatment of the 'people' and 'community' within a shared natural resource system should be as a collective whole. It should not be disintegrated into different institutions, cooperatives, groups, etc. The ecology cannot be partitioned and detached from the people who directly utilize

and conserve it. The ICC should not only change the operational rules but also revise the constitutional and choice rules.

All deliberative discourse on the Taguibo watershed must confront the challenge of complexity head-on. The danger of putting aside the puzzle of complexity is that it dilutes the beauty and plethora of analytic space for dissent. It leads one to think that nothing can be done about it, thus, legitimizing the silence as superficial acceptance and repose. A good starting point is recognizing and accepting that the Taguibo watershed does not exist in isolation, and that its appreciation does not solely rest to appease our ecological guilt. A good start is to be conscious of other valid discourses and always put them into the equation.

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Municipalities' Resilience and Crisis Response Awareness for Peace in Mindanao, Philippines

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Abstract

Several discussions on peacebuilding and government-community relations emphasize the importance of effective service delivery during conflicts and crises. Peacebuilding, as a form of state-building, aims to strengthen public perceptions of the government, enhance legitimacy, and foster peaceful government-community relations. As one of the government's local tiers closest to the people, municipalities play a critical role in crisis response, maintaining community ties by ensuring informed and responsive service delivery. Few studies provide empirical evidence, despite the widespread discussion of this role. Thus, this study investigates whether municipalities' resilience influences crisis response awareness in the context of

peacebuilding in Mindanao, specifically during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study uses T-statistics to look at data from 1,050 households in seven municipalities chosen by the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) for the 2021 Citizen Satisfaction Index System (CSIS) survey. It also looks at data from the 2021 City Municipality Competitiveness Index (CMCI) by the Department of Trade and Industry to see how resilient the municipalities are. Results indicate municipalities' resilience positively affects crisis response awareness, despite minimal awareness among most household respondents regarding specific crisis responses. Therefore, the study recommends strengthening municipal resilience to enhance community awareness of crisis responses and potentially reinforcing government-community relationships in Mindanao.

Keywords: Crisis response awareness; Government-community relationship; Mindanao peace; Municipality; Resiliency

I. Introduction

In times of crisis, people in democratic societies increasingly have the power to demand services and actions from their governments. As communities convey their needs to their respective governments, this pressure requires the latter to respond effectively to avoid dissatisfaction, which can hinder efforts toward state-building and peace. The COVID-19 pandemic, an unprecedented global crisis, highlighted this challenge, placing immense pressure on governments to address health and socio-economic needs swiftly and efficiently.

In Mindanao, Philippines, where conflict-prone areas and fragile contexts are common, the impact of COVID-19 was especially pronounced. The rapid spread of the pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns-imposed quarantine measures heightened public insecurity and fear (Leguro, 2020). During this period, residents faced disruptions in employment and education and had concerns about accessing basic services such

as banking, healthcare, and food. Additionally, contact-tracing activities led to heightened suspicions and tensions within communities. Even as lockdowns eased, uncertainties about health safety persisted, fueling anxieties and relational problems within communities. Poor households, especially those in conflict-affected and displaced populations, faced severe food insecurity due to limited financial means and restricted access to markets, which exacerbated conflicts and posed challenges to the government's role in safeguarding peace and protecting the rights of citizens.

To strengthen community-government relationships and support state-building amid crises like COVID-19, addressing community needs has become essential. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2008), state-building involves deliberate efforts to develop the state's capacity, institutions, and legitimacy to foster effective political processes and address demands from societal groups. Over the years, peacebuilding efforts have focused on strengthening government-community ties, particularly through effective service delivery and timely strategy

implementation during conflicts and crises. In this context, the COVID-19 pandemic provides a relevant backdrop to examine how municipalities, as local government units (LGUs), play a crucial role in crisis response and in maintaining public trust through resilience and efficient service delivery.

The Local Government Code of 1991 (RA7160), empowers municipalities in the Philippines by decentralizing governance and directly addressing community needs. Decentralization expects municipalities to better understand their communities' conditions than the national government, enabling them to communicate more effectively and promptly address local concerns. This empowerment emphasizes the importance of public service delivery and demonstrates how municipalities can contribute to resilience during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, this study aims to examine whether municipalities' resilience, as a critical component of local government initiatives, influences crisis response awareness among communities during the COVID-19 pandemic. By focusing on COVID-19 response strategies, the study contributes to a deeper

understanding of municipal resilience and its impact on government-community relations in times of crisis.

For vulnerable groups to remain informed, prepared, and resilient during crises, effective communication between government and community members is essential. Despite efforts to enhance service delivery and awareness, there remain gaps in access to basic services and information (UNHRC Philippines, 2020). Communication is crucial in sustaining community-government relationships and in building trust that can last beyond the crisis (Agi et al., 2018).

As the pandemic underscores the importance of resilience, this study explores how municipalities' resiliency capacities contribute to crisis response awareness, especially in the context of COVID-19. We hypothesize that resilience, considered here as the independent variable, influences crisis response awareness (the dependent variable), thereby impacting government-community relations. While existing literature emphasizes the role of service delivery in fostering government-community ties, empirical research on resilience during COVID-19 remains

limited. This study seeks to fill this gap by investigating how municipalities' resilience influenced crisis response awareness during the pandemic.

The resilience of municipalities is an independent variable (x).

One of the propositions on the advantages of decentralization by Osborne and Gaebler (1992) stated that decentralized institutions generate higher productivity for the benefit of the stakeholders who are affected by the works of the local institutions. The present study examined this advantage by describing the state of resilience using the total resilience scores from the City Municipality Competitiveness Index (CMCI) 2021 for the participating cities and towns. Using the CMCI framework, the variable (x) described the municipalities' outputs per unit of inputs, thereby enhancing their productivity and resilience in challenging and unprecedented circumstances. This study defines productivity, as captured by CMCI's measurement of resilience, as a municipality's ability to efficiently utilize limited resources to implement initiatives that strengthen community awareness and readiness during crises. Porter's (1985) theory

reinforces this advantage by highlighting the expectation of local institutions to produce multiple final products with a limited number of inputs and to demonstrate efficient outputs that hold value in the community.

Crisis response awareness is the dependent variable (y).

As revealed in the output indicators, particularly the crisis responses listed in the DILG's CSIS 2021 survey, crisis response awareness serve as the study's primary variable (y). The study utilized and analyzed these indicators to understand their outcomes, using the ratings of the community's households as the unit of analysis. These output indicators represented the support and services the municipalities provided during times of crisis, as well as the strategies they enforced through their policies. The idea of identifying crisis strategies as part of the essential services of the municipality lies in the definition and concept of public service itself, with emphasis on "services of general interest." Anderfuhren-Biget et al. (2014) and EESC (2012) consider any activity, including the formulation of public policy (and not just its enforcement), in the public's interest and with its

motivations, as a type of public service. The list below presents the specific indicators of the crisis response.

The analysis focused on household awareness of the crisis response using the average index of the output indicators per respondent. Hence, from the foregoing objectives and the theory and concepts on which they are anchored, the study tested this null hypothesis:

Ho: The resilience of municipalities does not influence their awareness of crisis response.

II. Materials and Methods

This study utilized a quantitative approach with a correlational research design, employing secondary analysis of primary data and T-statistics for relationship testing.

The study used the 2021 City Municipality Competitiveness Index (CMCI) to measure general resilience through productivity and output efficiency during crises. In contrast, the 2021 Citizen Satisfaction Index System (CSIS) was used to measure crisis response awareness, indicating people's understanding of how

LGUs manage crises. However, despite their complementary perspectives, the study acknowledges the limitations of the two indicators' differing focuses—general resilience versus specific awareness.

Moreover, the correlation focuses on the influence of municipal resilience, measured through the CMCI resiliency index, on crisis response awareness, as gauged by CSIS data during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study utilized simple linear regression to test the relationship between municipal resilience (independent variable) and crisis response awareness (dependent variable), as the primary focus was on examining a direct and linear influence between these two variables.

The empirical study focused on seven (7) municipalities in Mindanao, Philippines. The Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) selected these municipalities based on the 2021 Citizens' Satisfaction Index System (CSIS) Survey criteria, emphasizing their alignment with the COVID-19 response measures. The selection may represent each administrative region in Mindanao, except the BARMM. The CSIS 2021 Policies

and General Guidelines prioritized selection to areas that met all the following qualifications:

This includes: 1. Places covered by Executive Order No. 70, Series of 2018, which is about "Institutionalizing the Whole-of-Nation Approach in Attaining Inclusive and Sustainable Peace, creating a National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict, and Directing the Adoption of a National Peace Framework," as decided by the right authorities; and 2. Places where the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) and the Regional Interagency Task Force (RIATF) agree that the COVID-19 risk level is low.

Using the aforementioned criteria, the study investigated the municipalities listed below. The table presents the municipality's profile and the distribution of the sample.

Code	Region	Province	Municipality	Income Class	Samples
01	Region IX	Zamboanga Del Sur	Mahayag	3rd	
02	Region X	Camiguin	Catarman	5th	
03	Region X	Camiguin	Mahinog	5th	150 per municipality
04	Region XI	Davao Del Sur	Matanao	2nd	
05	Region XII	North Cotabato	President Roxas	1st	150 x 7
06	Region XII	Sultan Kudarat	Sen. Ninoy Aquino	3rd	
07	Region XIII	Surigao Del Norte	Sison	5th	
Total Samples					1,050

The study utilized primary data from the 2021 CSIS, comprising 1,050 household responses, as well as the resiliency scores of the municipalities from the 2021 City Municipality Competitiveness Index (CMCI). Hence, the table below presents the variable and its corresponding data (including its type and source) for treatment and analysis.

Variable and Data for Treatment and Analysis

Variable	Data	Type of Data	Offices
Resilience (x)	2021 City Municipality Competitiveness Index (CMCI)	Index from website	Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Regional Office

Crisis Response	2021	Citizens Satisfaction	CSIS	raw	DILG - Bureau of Local Government Supervision (BLGS)
Awareness (y)	Index System (CSIS) Survey			data	

A sampling procedure generated the CSIS 2021 data, which provided public feedback on LGUs' crisis responses, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. While CMCI data captures overall resilience indicators, these metrics enable a multifaceted analysis. However, the study acknowledges that CMCI assesses broader institutional resilience, which may not directly represent specific public-facing crisis response activities as captured by CSIS. Future research could benefit from DILG's specific COVID-19 response indicators as direct measures of municipal resilience. These indicators, which focus explicitly on interventions such as contact tracing, isolation facility management, and public health initiatives, may offer a more targeted understanding of resilience and its correlation with community awareness. A study incorporating these measures could provide clearer insights into how LGUs' COVID-19-specific strategies influence public perceptions and crisis preparedness.

Furthermore, we described the data from the CMCI 2021 and CSIS 2021 to provide a specific context for the variables used in relationship testing. We then interpreted the index scores using the matrix below.

This study uses cross-sectional data from the 2021 CMCI and CSIS datasets. The choice of cross-sectional data reflects the study's focus on a snapshot of resilience and awareness during the COVID-19 pandemic, rather than trends over time. Future research could incorporate time-series or panel data to explore longitudinal effects and dynamic interactions between resilience and awareness.

Adjectival Rating for describing the variables

Binary Variable	Adjectival Rating	Range	Interpretation for Variable (x)	Interpretation for Variable (y)
1	Maximal Level	0.51–1.00	The households resided in municipalities with a maximal level of resiliency. Maintain productivity or the number of outputs per unit of input for more resiliency.	The household has a maximal level of crisis response awareness. Maintain strategies to communicate the initiatives effectively to the community.

0	Minimal Level	0 – 0.50	The households resided in municipalities with a minimal level of resiliency. Improve productivity or the number of outputs per unit of input for more resiliency.	The household has a minimal level of crisis response awareness. Improve strategies to communicate the initiatives effectively to the community.
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The service delivery model of Shin and Jhee (2021) and the arguments about the benefits of decentralization from Osborne and Gaebler's (1992) theory guided the analysis.

III. Results and Discussions

In line with the study's objectives, we conducted a relationship test to determine whether the resilience of municipalities affects the awareness of crisis responses for peace in Mindanao. This study focused on government-community relationships, as supported by various types of literature. Additionally, we described each variable's condition to provide context for the relationship testing. The study presents the results, analysis, and interpretation below.

Table 1. Municipalities' Resiliency Profile

Index Score	Adjectival Rating	Percentage of Resiliency
$x \geq 0.51$	Maximal Resilience	71.43
$x \leq 0.50$	Minimal Resilience	28.57

The table indicates that the majority of household respondents, approximately 71%, have resided in municipalities with maximum resiliency, which aligns with the expectations of the theory and related concepts.

This study applies Porter's (1985) theory to determine whether municipalities could generate higher productivity than anticipated. When COVID-19 and other types of crises affected the localities in Mindanao in 2021, many of the selected municipalities were able to provide multiple initiatives using only a limited number of inputs, as indicated by their maximal rating on resiliency. Osborne and Gaebler (1992) posit that decentralized institutions enhance productivity, thereby benefiting the

stakeholders they belong to. This result exemplifies the fourth advantage of decentralization.

Table 2 Crisis Response Awareness Index

Index	Adjectival	Percentage of Crisis Response Awareness			
		SAP	Covid-19 NAP Response	Disaster/ Crisis-Related Response	Other Mean
$y \geq 0.51$	Maximal Awareness	3.76	68.63	70.75	47.71
$y \leq 0.50$	Minimal Awareness	96.24	31.37	29.25	52.29

As presented in Table 2, 52.36% of the community households have minimal awareness. This rating contradicts one of the advantages of decentralization, as highlighted by Osborne and Gaebler (1992). The results suggest that many municipal LGUs in Mindanao face difficulties in communicating with their locals about necessary actions, a situation that goes against the principles of effective communication. Along with false information, which makes crisis response more difficult (WHO,

2020), a lack of awareness is also caused by a lack of resources and the ability to put strategies and services into action, which is not helped by decentralization according to Osborne and Gaebler's (1992) theory. This study also reveals that the CMCI index demonstrates the strength of municipalities. However, given the limited knowledge of respondents regarding crises, it is plausible that the CMCI may not encompass all crucial aspects of the COVID-19 crisis response, particularly those that entail direct public communication.

Furthermore, one of the factors affecting the mean in the awareness index is the experience of community households with the delivery of social amelioration programs (SAP) by the national government. LGUs are mandated to deliver this crisis support to the community on behalf of the national government, following the decentralization system, and they are considered an effective partner of the national government (Talabis et al., 2021). Table 2 reveals that 96.24% of the household respondents possess minimal awareness. We can interpret this as a lack of information-driven engagement in the community by national and local governments, which is crucial for communities to

participate in democratic governance and service provision (Brinkerhoff & Azfar, 2006). Tekin (2014) has cited municipalities' ostensible failure to inform locals about their initiatives, whether strategies or services, to elicit community participation and cooperation with the LGU during crisis response.

We also expect decentralized institutions to have a deeper understanding of the situation than the national government. This will enable the local government units (LGUs) to effectively receive the people's concerns and demands during the crisis and communicate local strategies and services to them. The failure of many selected municipalities to effectively communicate with their community contradicts Osborne and Gaebler's (1992) theory about the advantages of decentralization. This could potentially impact the relationship between the municipality and the community, necessitating ongoing interventions. Rocha-Menocal & Sharm (2008) report that these interventions have positively impacted awareness-raising efforts. As part of empowerment, the interventions should prioritize enhancing information access (Brinkerhoff & Azfar, 2006).

Table 3. T-statistics results on the influence of Municipalities' resilience to Crisis Response Empowerment

Variable	DV	
	Crisis Response Awareness (y)	
	t	Sig.
IV Resilience (x)	2.211	0.027

Furthermore, we analyzed the dependent variable (y) alongside the municipalities' resiliency (x). As presented in Table 3, the result shows the influence of the municipalities' resiliency (x) on their crisis response awareness (y), with a p-value less than 0.05. The coefficient for municipalities' resilience was 2.211 ($p < 0.05$), indicating a statistically significant positive relationship with crisis response awareness. This suggests that higher resilience scores are associated with an increase in public awareness of crisis responses. Consistent with the expectation, the result exhibits a strong positive relationship of (x) to (y), as seen through the t-statistics result of 2.211. The findings align with Shin and Jhee's (2021) concept of public service perception, which posits that effective local government management

capacity enhances citizen satisfaction and engagement. Similarly, municipal resilience, as a form of management capacity, influences public awareness of crisis responses, suggesting that improved resilience could positively shape public perceptions and trust in local governments. This suggests that generating multiple outputs in municipalities to enhance resilience during unprecedented circumstances could raise community awareness of crisis response.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the results and analyses, the study concludes that the resilience of the municipalities significantly influences crisis response awareness. Therefore, given the current crisis response conditions where the data shows that the majority of households have minimal awareness, it is imperative to improve it. Increasing municipalities' resilience can achieve such purpose. According to the theories and concepts discussed, enhancing awareness of the crisis response could lead to better communication, thereby strengthening the government-community relationship,

particularly in the context of peacebuilding in Mindanao, Philippines.

Based on the results and analysis, the DILG's Bureau of Local Government Supervision (BLGS) likely has a comprehensive understanding of the conditions in the selected municipalities, particularly regarding how their resilience could impact crisis response awareness. Since their mandate is to supervise governance and assess and encourage LGUs to perform well, the results may provide an opportunity to set recommendations on how to sustain or enhance crisis response awareness in the municipalities. This could be achieved through improving performance in the resiliency indicators set in the City Municipality Competitiveness Index (CMCI) and ensuring that municipalities communicate their resilience efforts effectively to their people, thereby translating into public service awareness and providing better access to the benefits of services and strategies. Additionally, the outcome suggests that the DILG-BLGS should monitor how municipalities are disseminating information about public services and strategies. They should also develop initiatives to help more municipalities equip their

LGUs with the necessary skills to achieve the highest level of crisis response awareness

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**Bridge for Peace: The Mentorship Session as Teaching
Pedagogy for Dialogue and Friendship in the Bangsamoro
Region**

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Abstract

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Madaris Volunteer Program (MVP) developed the MVP Mentorship Session to address educational challenges faced by volunteer teachers in the Bangsamoro Region. This initiative aimed to enhance the quality of education by connecting volunteer teachers with experienced mentors from Jesuit schools and the Philippine Science High School, fostering improvements in contemporary and contextualized teaching methodologies. The mentorship sessions, conducted online due to pandemic restrictions, not only focused on educational development but also led to the

formation of meaningful relationships and cultural exchanges between mentors and teachers. This initiative exemplifies the call for a culture of dialogue, promoting peace and understanding across different faith traditions. Ultimately, the MVP Mentorship Session serves as a vital component in the peacebuilding process within the Bangsamoro Region and possibly with the Lumad communities of Mindanao, reinforcing the importance of collaboration and dialogue in achieving educational and social progress.

Keywords: Peace Education, Human Fraternity, Bangsamoro, Signs of the Time, Peacebuilding

Introduction

During the pandemic, the Madaris Volunteer Program (MVP) limited its engagements and operations due to the strict implementation of lockdowns and other health and security protocols by various Local Government Units (LGUs). Before the pandemic, the program regularly recruited individuals to serve as volunteer teachers at different schools across the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). Moreover, it conducted onsite capacity enhancement training for organic teachers and administrators. The program also carried out regular monitoring visits to strengthen the partnership between the program and partner communities. However, during the pandemic, the program paused recruiting external volunteers and began accepting organic teachers recommended by school administrators as Madaris volunteers. The program also resorted to conducting training and monitoring online. Despite the setbacks brought by COVID-19, the Madaris Volunteer Program continued its mission of advocating peacebuilding through

education and friendship in Bangsamoro by exploring different strategies for engagement.

One of the program's initiatives during the pandemic was conceptualizing the MVP Mentorship Session. The program carefully designed the mentorship session as a response to the volunteer teachers' request for intervention so that they could become more effective and efficient. It was proposed that the Madaris Volunteer Program would connect the volunteer teachers from the partner communities to the mentors that the Jesuit schools and the Philippine Science High School – Main Campus would provide. These mentors, experienced educators from reputable institutions, were tasked with providing guidance, sharing best practices, and offering support to the volunteer teachers. Given the limitations posed by the pandemic, mentorship sessions between the volunteer teachers and mentors were done online.

The program received positive feedback from the Madaris volunteers and mentors during the evaluation and interviews. It

was reported that the mentors and volunteer teachers developed friendship through personal sharing and a healthy exchange of cultural and religious perspectives. This was an unexpected outcome of the mentorship session as the program expected the engagement to be limited to educational mentorship only. Thus, the outcomes of the mentorship sessions became a living testament to the possibility of achieving peace and friendship in Mindanao.

Madaris Volunteer Program: Peacebuilding through Education and Friendship

On October 15, 2012, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Aquino administration signed the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro (FAB). The agreement aimed to create another entity to replace the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). The framework led to the signing of the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB) on March 27, 2014, which included plans for establishing a new autonomous region in Muslim Mindanao. During the Duterte

administration, a new draft of the Bangsamoro Basic Law (BBL) was legislated into law, as the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL), paving the way for the inauguration of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) on March 29, 2019, with Murad Ebrahim as the first chief minister.

Records from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) indicate that the Bangsamoro Region has the lowest literacy rate in the Philippines, with only an average of 86.4% as of 2020. Indeed, the educational problem in Bangsamoro has a multifaceted dimension. For instance, Gamon and Tagoranao (2022) mentioned that the forced integration of the Western educational system in Muslim communities disregarded Islamic culture and values and would qualify them as "backward" due to the failure to adopt the Western educational system. Furthermore, corruption also remains one of the factors that caused the educational system in the Bangsamoro Region to lag. Additionally, the decades-long conflict in Muslim Mindanao is also a leading factor in the erosion of the educational system in the region.

On the Good Friday of 2014, Fr. Joel Tabora, SJ – then president of the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines and Ateneo de Davao University – met with Dr. Ombra Imam of the National Association for Bangsamoro Education, Inc. (NABEi) and Chairman Ebrahim Murad of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in Camp Darapanan, Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao. There was a discussion about the declining education status in Muslim Mindanao, and the concerned parties agreed to collaborate to elevate education status in the Bangsamoro Region. The Madaris Volunteer Program (MVP) was established in the same year.

The Madaris Volunteer Program (MVP) is the creative initiative of the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP), a leading advocate for quality education in the country, in partnership with the National Association for Bangsamoro Education, Inc. (NABEi), and implemented by the Ateneo de Davao University (AdDU). Through this collaboration, the program envisions a peaceful Muslim Mindanao, which will

be achieved through its mission of peacebuilding through education and friendship. Moreover, the CEAP, with its extensive network of educational institutions, plays a crucial role in the program's operations and advocacy efforts. As a result of this partnership, the program engages in:

1. **Volunteer Deployment.** The Madaris Volunteer Program deploys volunteer teachers to its partner communities in the BARMM. The Madaris volunteers serve as teachers in integrated madrasahs teaching DepEd-mandated subjects. Madaris volunteers also serve as community organizers and advocacy workers, promoting peace through quality education and friendship.
2. **Capacity Enhancement Training.** As a way of empowering the partner communities, the Madaris Volunteer Program regularly conducts a series of online and onsite capacity enhancement training. The training is given to the school administration, organic teachers, and students to further capacitate them in updated teaching pedagogies and philosophy.

3. Peace Advocacy. With the mission of peacebuilding through education and friendship, the Madaris Volunteer Program aspires to contribute to achieving peace in the Bangsamoro Region.

Since its conception in 2014, the Madaris Volunteer Program has worked with 40 partner schools across the Bangsamoro Region. Nine batches of volunteer teachers were also sent to the program's partner communities. Numerous engagements were done in the community to alleviate the status of education in BARMM and, in the process, create meaningful friendships and relationships.

The Madaris Volunteer Program and Covid-19

In March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the coronavirus a global pandemic, although the first case of COVID-19 was identified in the Philippines as early as January 2020. In March 2020, nationwide lockdowns and other quarantine protocols were enforced to contain the virus.

Much of the country's operations were halted during the height of the pandemic. The education sector was greatly affected as the country shifted from traditional face-to-face classes to modular and online modalities. Given the country's status then, most academic institutions struggled to keep up, particularly in the Bangsamoro Region.

Volunteer recruitment was also problematic as the lockdowns and quarantine protocols prevented the program from recruiting volunteers outside the Bangsamoro Region. Given the logistical challenges, the program shifted its recruitment process from accepting volunteers outside the Bangsamoro Region to recruiting organic teachers from the partner communities. The school administration endorsed the volunteers, and upon acceptance, they underwent a series of online training sessions to prepare them for volunteer service.

Online classes were expensive as teachers and learners had to pay additionally for internet load. The lack of gadgets such as

cell phones and laptops among Bangsamoro families also prevented the students from attending online classes. The weak internet connection, particularly in rural areas, was likewise a significant setback.

Conducting modular classes posed significant challenges, particularly in private madrasahs where learners struggled to afford the costs of modular materials. The requirement to pay for printing these materials further exacerbated the financial burden on families. Additionally, in remote areas, the accessibility of these modular resources became a pressing issue, limiting students' ability to participate fully in their education.

This was the context of the program's operations during the pandemic. In response, the MVP initiated the Volunteer Tutorial Sessions, wherein the volunteer teachers conducted tutorial classes for the academically and financially least performing students. These mentorship sessions were also specifically designed to equip volunteers with better teaching strategies and

resources, ensuring they could provide high-quality tutorial support while continuing their own professional growth.

Responding to the Signs of the Time: The MVP Mentorship Sessions

The MVP Mentorship Sessions established by the Madaris Volunteer Program created a strategic partnership between Jesuit schools and the Philippine Science High School – Main Campus to support volunteers working in the program's partner communities. Through these structured mentorship sessions, each volunteer teacher was paired with an experienced mentor who provided guidance and support to enhance the volunteer's teaching methods and classroom effectiveness. This mentoring relationship was specifically designed to strengthen pedagogical skills and improve educational outcomes in the communities being served. The following were the goals of the program:

1. Promote quality education. Through the MVP Mentorship Sessions, the Madaris Volunteer Program promotes quality education in the Bangsamoro Region. The collaborative effort between the mentor and volunteer teacher is hoped to benefit the learners.
2. Professional Development. The Madaris Volunteer Program commits itself to the professional development of its volunteer teachers. Through the mentorship sessions, the volunteer teachers and mentors are expected to exchange different views on contextual learning, hoping to improve their efficiency and effectiveness as educators.
3. Network Expansion. Through the mentorship session, the program aims to expand the network of partners by connecting the schools in the program's partner communities with Jesuit institutions and the Philippine Science High School. Through the mentorship sessions, the program expects a collaborative effort between its

stakeholders to advance quality education in the Bangsamoro Region.

The Madaris Volunteer Program crafted guidelines for mentors and volunteer teachers to ensure professional conduct. The following were the general guidelines for the mentorship session:

1. Regular Mentorship Sessions. The mentors are instructed to conduct a regular bi-monthly mentorship session with their assigned volunteer teacher. The mentor and the volunteer teacher will determine the schedule and platform for the mentorship session. Both parties may also have the option to conduct special consultations anytime within the month if both parties recognize the need for additional mentorship sessions.
2. Online Mentorship Program. Mentorship sessions will be done online through synchronous and asynchronous sessions. The mentors and volunteer teachers can identify the platform for their online engagement.

3. Focus on Science and Mathematics. The mentorship session will focus on mathematics and science courses, which are identified as areas of concern during the consultation period. However, volunteer teachers may also ask for assistance from their mentors if there are concerns about non-mathematics and science courses, given the mentor's expertise.

The Madaris Volunteer Program also created a set of guidelines for engagement for both the mentors and the volunteer teachers.

For the mentors:

1. The mentors will assist volunteer teachers in mapping out the lessons and activities. Mentors are encouraged to help the volunteer teachers deliver instructions or if there is a

need for clarification and consultation on the part of the volunteer teacher.

2. The mentors are responsible for the academic growth of the volunteers assigned to them. Mentors are given the task to critically evaluate the performance of the volunteer teacher and assign additional activities that will further capacitate the volunteer teacher.

For the volunteer teacher:

1. The volunteer teacher will regularly provide a copy of their daily lesson plan (DLP) or daily lesson log (DLL). The volunteer teacher should furnish other documents that the mentor will ask for. The volunteer teacher must submit the necessary documents to the mentor by the agreed deadline.
2. Volunteer teachers are required to submit a monthly progress report to the mentor. The monthly progress report will serve as a basis for the mentor's evaluation and

intervention. Volunteer teachers must also submit any activities and assessment tools deemed necessary by the mentor for evaluation and feedback.

Expected Outcomes: Improvements in Teaching Performance

The mentors were required to submit a monthly progress report indicating the performance of the volunteer during the mentorship session and the volunteer's classroom engagement. According to the reports, the volunteer teacher improved in delivering science and mathematics lessons.

1. The volunteer teachers improved in terms of crafting their daily lesson plans (DLP) and daily lesson logs (DLL) following the prescribed Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELC) Guidelines.
2. The volunteer teachers improved in terms of delivering the lessons. According to the report, the volunteer teachers were able to improve lesson contextualization, that is,

appropriating the lessons, examples, and activities based on the historico-cultural context of the community and the community's lived experience.

3. The volunteer teachers improved in terms of delivering the lessons systematically. The volunteer teachers achieved the lesson objectives and met the expected learning outcomes.

4. The volunteer teachers were able to conceptualize and implement different classroom strategies appropriate to the context and experience of the learners. The volunteer teachers and the mentors were able to conceptualize activities that suited the needs of the learners.

During the program's quarterly monitoring visit, the volunteer teachers were also able to report to the program the following outcomes of the mentorship sessions:

1. The mentors provided additional learning materials such as modules, activity sheets, and other materials for the volunteers. The volunteer teachers mentioned that these materials were essential in their teaching as the mentors could provide updated learning materials for the school.
2. The mentors were able to guide the volunteer teachers in appropriating their lesson plans according to the MELC guidelines. The mentors were able to provide feedback and recommendations to improve the volunteer teachers' teaching performance.
3. The mentors provided assessment tools for evaluating the volunteer teacher's least-performing students. The mentors assisted in determining the proper intervention given to the learner.

Based on the reports submitted by the mentors and the volunteer teachers' testimonies, there had been an improvement

in the volunteer teachers' performance. In other words, the expected outcomes of the mentorship sessions were met.

Unexpected Outcomes: Dialogue and Friendship

Ideally, the mentorship sessions should guide the volunteer teachers in their pedagogy. However, the engagement between the mentors and volunteer teachers went beyond the expected duties and responsibilities. It was reported – by both the mentors and volunteer teachers – that through the mentorship session, they could discuss their personal lives, their cultures, and their faith traditions.

A Muslim volunteer assigned in Talayan, Maguindanao reported that the mentorship sessions enabled her to express her faith and religion with confidence to her Christian mentor. It is also reported that her mentor also respectfully shared her culture in Luzon as well as the mentor's Christian faith. During the interview with the volunteer, she mentioned that, "dahan dahan nawala ang bias ko sa mga Christians at na-realize ko na kagaya

lang naming sila. Dati wala akong maituturing na kaibigan na Christian kasi umiiwas ako kahit sa paaralan kasi hindi ko sila mapagkatiwalaan.”

Another volunteer from Datu Piang, Maguindanao, also shared that her relationship with the mentor changed her perspective on religion and culture. The volunteer mentioned, “umabot kami sa punto na naipakilala naming ang isa’t isa sa mga pamilya namin” and it entailed mutual trust and respect from both parties. The volunteer mentioned that she could share her life story with her mentor, and this started their friendship.

A Christian volunteer assigned in Tawi-Tawi also mentioned that his engagements with his Muslim mentor made him realize that friendship between Muslims and Christians can be achieved through education.

One of the mentors from Ateneo de Manila University revealed that prior to her involvement with the program, she had been unaware of the diverse ethnolinguistic groups that make

up the Bangsamoro region. Through her participation, she developed a genuine admiration for their rich culture and traditions. The mentor specifically noted how meaningful conversations with volunteers provided valuable insights into Bangsamoro identity, allowing her to better understand the community's dreams and aspirations. The mentor stated, "But who cares about the religion when you can freely talk about each other's life and aspirations? Who cares about our differences when we laugh at the same jokes and show mutual respect's view in life? We share the same love for our communities and our mission in life."

Another mentor from the Philippine Science High School shared that through the mentorship session, he was able to learn the culture and tradition of the Maguindanaon people and their Islamic faith. He pointed out how they would incorporate Islamic values in science lessons. The mentor also mentioned that he learned about Ramadan while also sharing what he knows about the Holy Week for the Catholics.

It is evident then that through the mentorship session, the volunteers and mentors were able to create relationships beyond their expected duties. The mentorship program served as a bridge for connecting people from different cultures and faith traditions.

Pope Francis' Call for a Culture of Dialogue

In the papacy of Pope Francis, dialogue and human fraternity are among the major themes. Several papal documents and speeches are centered on promoting a culture of dialogue, believed to be the pathway to peace. Pope Francis believes that “sincere and respectful dialogue between Christians and Muslims is a duty for us who wish to obey God’s will.” (Lubov, 2024, para. 6).

In the papal message during the 55th World Day of Peace, the Pope clearly emphasized that “All honest dialogues, in addition to a correct and positive exchange of views, demands basic trust between the participants.” (Pope Francis, 2022, para.

6). In the following paragraph of the same speech, Pope Francis creatively discusses the dynamics of dialogue:

Dialogue entails listening to one another, sharing different views, coming to an agreement, and walking together. Promoting such dialogue between generations involves breaking up the complex, barren soil of conflict and indifference to sow the seeds of lasting shared peace. (Pope Francis, 2022, para. 7).

During the historic meeting between Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, all the believers are reminded that “Dialogue among believers means coming together in the vast space of spiritual, human and shared social values and, from here, transmitting the highest moral virtues that religions aim for.” (Pope Francis, 2019, para. 30). Based on the testimonies, the mentorship session became an avenue for dialogue of faith and culture between Christians and Muslims. The friendship between the Muslim and Christian mentors and volunteers was formed through dialogue during the mentorship session.

Reflecting on the outcomes, I see that the mentoring program served as a bridge connecting people from diverse backgrounds. Through these sessions, participants formed bonds despite cultural and faith differences. This approach reflected Pope Francis' call for a dialogue culture between different communities. As both mentors and volunteer teachers noted, the sessions created a safe space for critical and healthy exchange of perspectives without reservation or judgment.

In an article, Lubov quoted the Pope saying, "The world, especially at this moment in history, needs believers who are consistent and strongly committed to building and maintaining social and world peace." (Lubov, 2024, para. 1). The Pope emphasizes on the necessity of dialogue as a means of achieving peace and human fraternity. Peace and social justice are only possible if and when authentic dialogue exists.

Trajectory and Recommendation:

As of the school year 2023-2024, the Madaris Volunteer Program continues to conduct mentorship sessions. Volunteer mentors from different Jesuit institutions and the Philippine Science High School continue supporting the program by mentoring its volunteer teachers. It is reported that 15 volunteer mentors enlisted for the school year 2023-2024 mentorship sessions.

The mentorship sessions also expanded in terms of participants. In previous years, the focus was on the volunteer teachers deployed, but recently, organic teachers from the program's partner communities were also included. Plans are also made to invite non-Jesuit academic institutions to the mentorship sessions. This initiative hopes to expand the network of volunteer mentors and strengthen cooperation among Catholic institutions in the peace process in Mindanao and Sulu. Through the collaborative mentorship session, one can also hope

for cooperation between Catholic and non-Catholic denominations to contribute to lasting peace and friendship in Mindanao and Sulu.

For future research and potential areas for engagement, it is highly recommended to explore the possibility of conducting mentorship sessions with the Lumad communities in Mindanao. The Lumad were considered among the poor and the oppressed in the society. Historically, the Lumad people and the Moros had a long-shared history of social exclusion, discrimination, and dislocation. The mentorship sessions could serve as another opportunity for the deepening of the relationship between the Lumad and non-Lumad inhabitants of Mindanao and even an avenue for those who are in Luzon and Visayas to critically engage with the Lumad communities in Mindanao. It is also hoped that through the mentorship session, the lived experiences and struggles of the Lumad people will be authentically acknowledged; that is, the historical injustices committed against them will be tackled and addressed.

Conclusion

The MVP Mentorship Session is a response of the Madaris Volunteer Program to the challenges posed by COVID-19. Discerning the signs of the time, the program was able to conceptualize the mentorship sessions to ensure that quality education would be given to the program's partner communities despite the irregularities during the pandemic.

The MVP Mentorship Session, conducted entirely through virtual platforms, established meaningful connections between the program's partner communities and various Jesuit institutions across the Philippines, as well as the Philippine Science High School. Through this collaborative effort between mentors and volunteer teachers, the program successfully maintained educational continuity, ensuring that Bangsamoro learners continued to receive the high-quality education they deserve despite pandemic-related challenges. This virtual approach eliminated geographical barriers while preserving the program's commitment to educational excellence.

As the mentorship sessions progressed, they naturally evolved into a forum for healthy cultural and interfaith dialogue between mentors and volunteer teachers. Both groups reported that their interactions transcended the typical mentor-mentee dynamic, developing instead into meaningful personal connections. What began as a professional relationship focused on pedagogical improvement gradually transformed into genuine and lasting friendships that bridged cultural and religious differences, creating bonds that extended well beyond the program's formal structure.

The success of the MVP Mentorship Session points to its potential as a valuable teaching pedagogy beyond the Bangsamoro Region. In the broader Mindanao context, this model could deepen dialogue with the Lumad population, ensuring continuous and constructive engagement.

Ultimately, the MVP Mentorship Sessions embody the papal call for a culture of dialogue between faiths and religions. This

initiative created an avenue for individuals from Islamic and Christian traditions to engage in healthy discussions about their differences in faith and practices. The mentorship sessions effectively demonstrated the program's core principle: peacebuilding through education and friendship.

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Children of Incarcerated Parents: Stories of Survival and Resilience

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ABSTRACT

Children are silent casualties of parental incarceration. The increasing number of incarcerated parents in the Philippines is reflected in the overcrowded prison cells. This paper tries to document struggles and evidence of resilience of children whose parent/s are incarcerated. The study used two sets of survey questionnaires, one for the teachers and one for the child participants. It also used interviews to gather the qualitative data of the study. Proper protocols were followed to obtain consent from respondents and participants. The data reveal that

incarceration disrupts family structures, distorts family dynamics, causes financial instability, and poses survival challenges. Interestingly, respondents in this study manifested resilience as shown in their effort to find means to survive and continue schooling. Positive behaviors were more prevalent than the negative ones, by a wide margin. Older children seem to perform more satisfactorily in school over the younger ones who need help academically. It is recommended that children of incarcerated parents be given priority in social services by the government. Non-government organizations and educational institutions can consider creating extension programs to support this vulnerable sector of society.

Keywords: Academic performance; Positive and negative behavior; Parental incarceration; Survival; Resilience;

1. Introduction

Parental incarceration represents a significant and inequitable adversity that increases the risk of adjustment problems among children and adolescents, as highlighted by Johnson and Arditti (2023). Children often suffer in silence when their parents are incarcerated. Their lives can be profoundly disrupted, leading to emotional, psychological, and social challenges. They also face stigmatization, financial instability, and a lack of support, all of which can impact their well-being and development. Unfortunately, their struggles often go unnoticed and unaddressed by society. What used to be a rare experience has become a nearly common happening among children at present. In the US, estimates suggest that around 8 percent of American children will ever have their father imprisoned (Wildeman and Andersen 2015). In the Philippines, there is a dearth of literature on the number of children with incarcerated parents. However, data on the

rising number of parental incarceration in the Philippines is evident in overcrowded prison cells. Figures from the Philippine Bureau of Jail Management and Penology reveal an average of 370% congestion rate nationwide as of September 30, 2022. Reuters reported in 2017 that according to the London – based Institute for Criminal Policy Research, the Philippines is third in the most congested prison system in the world after Haiti and El Salvador. This overcrowding suggests a growing number of children with an incarcerated parent—whether a father, a mother, or both. Such circumstances can severely impact families, not only financially but also socially, leading to conditions that are prejudicial and detrimental to children’s development. Moreover, the Philippine judiciary has long struggled with court congestion, with a high volume of pending cases and severe delays in case disposition, depriving citizens of swift and fair justice (Orbeta, Paqueo and Siddiqui, 2021).

Incarceration can put a family in dire financial difficulty especially when it is the earner who gets imprisoned. It may

lead to children lacking support in basic and educational needs. Parental incarceration can even alter household and relationship dynamics quite dramatically (Turney, 2019). It may result in severed relationships among husbands and wives, and children may have to deal with the consequences of the separation, even to the extent of change in living arrangements. Often, children stay with their mothers when the father is incarcerated or the other way around. But in some cases, some children have to move to relatives, or worse, to a social welfare and development center when both parents are incarcerated, or when the other parent cannot support the children.

The stigma, strain and separation as a result of paternal incarceration may have an impact on children (Fostand Hagan, 2015). This can possibly lead to psychological and behavioral problems. These problems may interfere with the youth's adjustment at home and school, and ultimately compromise their academic performance and school outcomes, (Shlafer, Reedy and Davis, 2017). Research shows that parental incarceration

negatively affects children's educational outcomes and opportunities. (Turney, 2019). In addition, the study of Wildeman, et.al, (2017) reveal that the stigma of paternal incarceration shapes teachers' expectations of students, leading to a 10% to 40% increase in teachers' expectations of children's behavioral problems. Further, parental incarceration is significantly associated with students' poor school-based outcomes (Shlafer, Reedy and Davis, 2017), leading to more behavioral and mental health problems (Hardy, 2018), and higher levels of delinquency, criminal activity, and criminal justice contact (Porter and King 2014). Moreover, having a father or a mother being imprisoned can also be stigmatizing to children. This may cause isolation and shame, impeding social interaction with teachers and peers, further missing educational opportunities and leading to poor outcomes (Turney, 2019). The statistics can go further but more important than the numbers are the untold and undocumented stories of how children go through their experience daily, given one or both parents are incarcerated. This adversity disrupts family dynamics

and can lead to negative outcomes, but it also provides a context for understanding resilience. Research has shown variability among children with incarcerated parents, challenging the deficit perspective that views these children and families through a lens of inevitable dysfunction. Instead, resilience-focused studies, such as those by Miller et al. (2022), emphasize the importance of sensitive, responsive caregiving and supportive relationships with teachers and other adults. These relationships can foster positive adjustment and mitigate the adverse effects of parental incarceration. Bowlby's attachment theory (1973) supports this by underscoring the critical role of secure attachments in a child's emotional and social development. The presence of stable, supportive figures can thus act as a buffer against the stressors associated with having an incarcerated parent.

Resilience is viewed as a dynamic process involving interactions with one's environment, according to the Resilience Research Center. Miller et al. (2022) emphasize that these bidirectional interactions continuously impact

access to support and resources. This perspective suggests that resilience involves both the ability to navigate to necessary resources and negotiate for them in culturally meaningful ways. Sensitive caregiving and supportive educational environments highlight the crucial role of social-ecological contexts in resilience. Thus, understanding resilience in children with incarcerated parents requires considering their broader social and environmental contexts and the quality of supportive relationships, allowing them to adapt positively despite adversity.

Given the scant foreign and local studies that document struggles and coping stories of children having a parent in prison, this case study hopes to present one. This paper hopes to present how these children manifest resilience and hope in their day to day life. Additionally, it is of interest to explore how the child participants perform and behave in school as described by teachers in respective public schools. Ultimately, from the findings of this case study, the researcher hopes to instigate programs and

community extension services that may be helpful to alleviate situations of children with incarcerated parents.

2. Literature Review

This literature review explores resilience among children of incarcerated parents, synthesizing key studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of how parental incarceration affects child adversity, behavior, education, and resiliency.

Parental Incarceration on Children

Parental incarceration is a significant issue that impacts a wide array of child outcomes, including mental health, emotional well-being, behavioral adjustment, and academic performance. It has greatly impacted children in different ways. According to Turney (2019), the incarceration of a parent can disrupt family structures significantly. Children of incarcerated fathers often remain with their

mothers, while children of incarcerated mothers frequently live with extended family or are placed in the foster care system. In the United States alone, parental incarceration is a widespread issue affecting an estimated 2.7 million children, equivalent to 1 in 28 children under 18 years of age. This is a potent stressor that can lead to long-term consequences for children's health and well-being. Children in these situations are at a higher risk of experiencing psychological distress, behavioral problems, and social stigmatization. The absence of a parent due to incarceration can also disrupt attachment processes and stability in the child's life, leading to increased anxiety and depression (Turney, 2019). Similarly, Davis and Schlafer (2017) explored the mental health of adolescents with currently and formerly incarcerated parents. Their study found that these adolescents exhibit higher levels of depression, anxiety, and behavioral problems.

The study also highlighted that the stigma associated with parental incarceration exacerbates these mental health

issues, calling for more comprehensive mental health support systems.

Further, incarceration has been shown to increase divorce rates significantly. Lind (2014) noted that incarceration during marriage is strongly correlated with higher rates of divorce. However, if a spouse was incarcerated before marriage, the likelihood of divorce does not increase, suggesting that the disruption caused by the absence of a spouse during incarceration is a critical factor leading to marital breakdown. Hardy (2018) provided a qualitative analysis of the effects of parental incarceration on family members, focusing on mothers, fathers, marriage, children, and socioeconomic status. The study found that parental incarceration leads to increased risk of divorce, mental health issues in children, and a decline in socioeconomic status. It also noted that while academic performance might not always be directly affected, the overall family dynamics and parent-child relationships suffer significantly.

On the one hand, Jackson et al. (2021) utilized a strategic comparison approach to investigate the link between parental incarceration, child adversity, and child health. Their study highlights the multifaceted nature of adversities faced by children with incarcerated parents. By employing a robust methodological framework, the researchers were able to isolate the effects of parental incarceration from other confounding variables. Children of incarcerated parents experience significantly higher levels of adversity compared to their peers. These adversities include economic hardship, social stigma, and disrupted family dynamics. The study found a direct correlation between parental incarceration and poor health outcomes in children. These include higher rates of physical health issues and mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression. Also, Bradshaw, Creaven, and Muldoon (2021) conducted a longitudinal cohort study on the emotional and behavioral outcomes of children with incarcerated parents.

The study found that parental incarceration at age 9 is associated with increased difficulties and reduced prosocial behavior at age 13. The study identified primary caregiver depression and the quality of the caregiver-child relationship as mediating factors, suggesting that interventions should focus on supporting caregivers to improve outcomes for children. Further, Herreros-Fraile et al. (2023) conducted a developmental systematic review to examine the broader impacts of parental incarceration on children's development and well-being. Their study provides a holistic overview of the developmental challenges faced by these children. The impact of parental incarceration varies across different developmental stages. Early childhood exposure is associated with attachment issues and developmental delays, while adolescence is marked by increased risk of delinquency and mental health problems. The quality of relationships with caregivers is crucial in buffering the adverse effects of parental incarceration. Supportive and stable caregiver relationships can significantly enhance

children's resilience and coping mechanisms. Gifford et al. (2019) examined the association between parental incarceration and psychiatric and functional outcomes in young adults. Results of their study found that young adults with a history of parental incarceration are more likely to experience psychiatric disorders, substance abuse, and functional impairments compared to their peers without such history.

In terms of educational outcomes, Nichols, Loper, and Meyer (2015) explored the impact of parental incarceration on educational resilience among youth. Their research examined how school characteristics and connectedness influence school outcomes for these children. A strong sense of connectedness to school was found to be a critical factor in promoting educational resiliency. Children who felt supported by their teachers and peers exhibited better academic performance and engagement. Schools with supportive environments, including access to counseling and extracurricular activities, played a pivotal role in

mitigating the negative effects of parental incarceration on educational outcomes.

Despite the adverse effects of parental incarceration, emerging evidence of positive outcomes is possible. Cassidy, Giles, and McLaughlin (2014) provided evidence that child caregivers can experience positive effects or benefits from their caregiving roles, in addition to the well-documented negative outcomes. The study emphasized that young caregivers might find benefit in their roles when the demands are not excessively high and when their caregiving role is socially acknowledged and supported. The study by Cassidy et al. (2014) highlighted that young caregivers who receive social recognition for their caregiving efforts are more likely to experience benefit finding. These benefits can include increased maturity, enhanced empathy, and a stronger sense of responsibility. The recognition and support from social networks play a crucial role in mitigating the adverse effects and promoting resilience among child caregivers. The relationship between siblings is also very important. Sidhu (2019) underscored the

importance of healthy sibling relationships in the development of children and teenagers. Sibling relationships can promote empathy, pro-social behavior, and academic achievement. Healthy sibling bonds serve as a significant source of emotional support, especially in adverse situations such as parental incarceration. Healthy sibling relationships provide a buffer against the stress and trauma associated with parental incarceration. Sidhu (2019) found that siblings can offer emotional support, help each other cope with the challenges, and engage in pro-social behaviors that benefit both siblings. These positive interactions contribute to better psychological outcomes and promote resilience.

On Resilience and Parental Incarceration

Southwick et al. (2014) discussed resilience definitions, theory, and challenges from an interdisciplinary perspective. Their article highlighted the complexity of resilience, defining it as healthy, adaptive functioning over time in the face of adversity. The panel emphasized the

need for a multi-level analysis, including genetic, developmental, and socio-cultural factors, to understand and enhance resilience. Johnson and Arditti (2023) reviewed factors contributing to positive adjustment in children of incarcerated parents. They identified child-level factors such as resilience, ethnic identity, and a resilience mindset, as well as family-level factors like sensitive caregiving and family connectedness. School and community-level factors, including school connectedness and supportive relationships with teachers and other adults, were also highlighted. The review emphasized the importance of comprehensive intervention programs tailored for children with incarcerated parents, including parenting programs, reentry services, and school-based resources. Kjellstrand et al. (2019) used growth mixture modeling to study internalizing problems, like anxiety and depression, in youth aged 10 to 16. They found that over half of the children who experienced parental incarceration fell into a low-risk category, meaning, they had fewer internalizing problems over time. However, children with incarcerated parents

were less likely to be in this low-risk group and more likely to be in groups with higher levels of internalizing problems. This suggests that these children face significant early risk factors and are more likely to have negative psychological outcomes. This also implies that they face increased risk for developing internalizing problems, necessitating targeted interventions and support.

Luther (2015), on the one hand, explored how social support contributes to the resilience of adult children of incarcerated parents. Through in-depth qualitative interviews with 32 college students, the study found that support from caring adults, including caregivers, incarcerated parents, grandparents, older siblings, teachers, and coaches, facilitated success despite parental criminality and incarceration. Social support promoted resilience by providing access to conventional activities, supporting a vision of a better life, and encouraging turning points. Further, Luthar and Eisenberg (2017) reviewed resilient adaptation among at-risk children in *Child Development*, highlighting mechanisms such as supportive relationships,

cognitive flexibility, and a sense of purpose as critical to fostering resilience.

Parental Incarceration and Intervention programs

Merhi, Demou, and Niedzwiedz (2024) conducted a systematic review of mental health and behavioral interventions for children and adolescents with incarcerated parents. Published in the *Journal of Child and Family Studies*, this review highlighted effective interventions that include therapeutic programs, peer support groups, and family therapy. The review emphasizes the importance of early intervention and tailored support to address the unique needs of these children. A 2023 study published in *The Chronicle of Evidence-Based Mentoring* explored the voices of children of incarcerated parents and their implications for policy and practice. This qualitative study underscored the importance of listening to children's experiences to inform policies that support their well-being. It further recommended integrating mentorship programs

and improving communication between incarcerated parents and their children.

Parental incarceration poses significant challenges to children's development and well-being. However, the studies reviewed demonstrate that with the right support systems in place, these children can develop resilience and achieve positive outcomes. Future research should continue to explore innovative strategies to support this vulnerable population, ensuring that they have the resources and opportunities needed to thrive. The integration of findings from these studies highlights a complex interplay between the adverse effects of parental incarceration and the potential for positive outcomes such as benefit finding and resilience. While parental incarceration poses significant challenges, supportive sibling relationships and the recognition of caregiving roles can provide critical support to children. These factors can foster resilience and mitigate some of the negative impacts of parental incarceration.

Resilience is increasingly understood as a complex, dynamic process involving the interaction between individuals and their environments. This literature review explores the theoretical and empirical underpinnings of resilience, particularly among children of incarcerated parents, through the lens of several key studies. These studies examine various factors influencing resilience, including social support, caregiving, and the broader social-ecological context.

Materials and Methods

This study borrows the resilience theory advanced by the Resilience Research Center which described resilience as a “both the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways.” Additionally, the American Psychological Association (2014) as lifted in the study of Southwick et al., (2014) defines resilience as “the

process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress.” In particular, this paper would like to find out how resilience is displayed in the context of children whose parents are incarcerated. This study aims to concretely describe Luthar and Eisenberg's (2017) concept of a resilient child. According to them, a resilient child is one who exhibits positive adaptation in circumstances where one might typically expect a significant degradation of coping skills due to atypical levels of stress.

Simultaneously, this study used survey questionnaires to gather profiles of the respondents and child participants, including their performance in school and their behavior as observed by the teachers. A one-on-one interview was conducted to learn about the children’s struggles and how they cope with their suffering. Data gathering started with asking permission from the CSWD with the intention of considering children under their care as participants. Permission was granted. However, there were only three children there whose parents were incarcerated. Thus, the

researchers proceeded to the Bureau of Jail Management in Butuan City to seek permission and ask thirty inmates who would be willing to participate in the study by giving their consent and have their children as participants of the case study. The permission was granted and the researchers were allowed to meet thirty inmates. The researchers explained the purpose of the study and promised that the identity of their children will be protected and that data gathered will be held confidential and shall be used solely for the purpose of the study. Twenty – five inmates gave their consent. They gave the name of their children and the schools where their children are studying. The researchers then proceeded to the schools within Butuan City where the potential child participants are studying. Permits from respective principals were also sought. Each School looked into their Learner Information System (LIS) to find the child participants. However, only 12 of the children with parent’s consent from the inmates were found. This suggests a number of things. First, it implies that some incarcerated fathers were no longer informed that

their children have transferred or have already left school. This can be proven by statements of some inmates during the meet up that they were not sure where their children are currently studying or what grade levels they are in since a lot of them have no longer visited their father.

Di jud ko sigurado ma'am kung naa pa siya diha nga school ug unsa nay grado kay dugay na sila wa ka bisita." (I am not sure where my child is studying now and what grade level he is now because it has been a while since he has not visited me).

Second, it could also be that incarcerated fathers have not seen their children for quite a length of time. This was corroborated by most of the child participants during the interview; they affirm that they seldom visit their father because they do not have even fare in going to the jail.

"Panagsa ra kaayo makadalaw sa jail kay wa may plete (we seldom visit our father at the jail because we do not have money for fare). Moreover, they could not bring presents. *"Wa poy mada para kang papa"* (we have nothing to bring for our father). Even their mother

or any member of the family could hardly visit because of financial difficulty. Consequently, the researchers had to consider this situation as a limitation of the study, having gathered only 12 out of the 20 target participants.

The researchers, upon meeting child respondents, conducted certain verifications before giving the instrument. The child must identify whether a particular name of the inmate is known to him and affirm that he is his or her father. Then, the researchers explained the purpose of the study and informed the child that his/ her father has given consent in his / her participation in the study. The child was asked for his/her consent in the participation of the study. Once the child agreed, the child would respond to the instrument provided by the researcher; meanwhile, his/her teacher would also be asked to respond to a different questionnaire. A total of thirteen (13) teachers were involved in the study.

Instrumentation and Data Analysis

Two sets of instruments were prepared. The first set was for the child participants, from whom basic information was collected while ensuring their anonymity was maintained. The important part of the profile was only the age, grade level, number of siblings, their knowledge of the length of time when their parents have been incarcerated and the story of coping, struggles met as a result of having a parent in prison, and the source of support that helped them to survive.

The second set was for the teachers, who were asked to describe the child-participants in terms of academic performance and observable behavior. The academic performance is described as follows:

Outstanding (90-100) Satisfactory (80-84)

Fairly satisfactory (75-79) Very satisfactory (85-89)

Needing help (75 and below)

Conversely, negative behavior is categorized as either internalizing or externalizing, based on the findings of Wildeman et al. (2017) and Li (2022). An internalizing behavior is directed inwardly toward self, such as being withdrawn, anxious and depressed. Externalizing behavior on the other hand is an outer-directed type of child problem behavior such as aggression, defiance, and conduct disorder. Some positive behaviors were also added by the researchers, such as being attentive, and adaptable; teachers were given a leeway to describe the behavior of the child participants and use more appropriate descriptors.

Results and Discussion

On Profile of Child-Participants

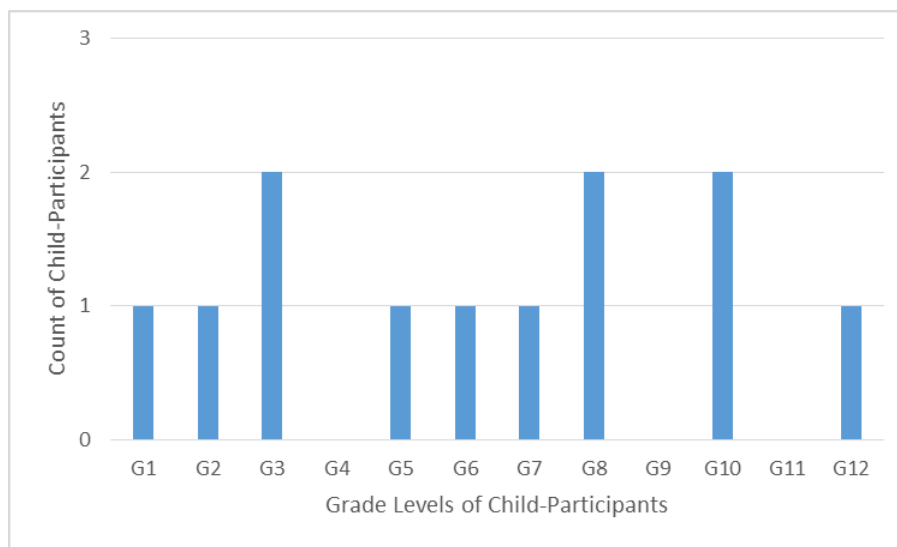


Fig 1. Grade Level Distribution of the Child-Participants

Figure 1 reveals that six (6) child participants were in the Grade School. Five (5) are in the Junior High School and one (1) is in the senior high school. This presents a good representation of the basic education levels where child participants were enrolled in. This further shows that the

child participants are diverse both in age and level of education.

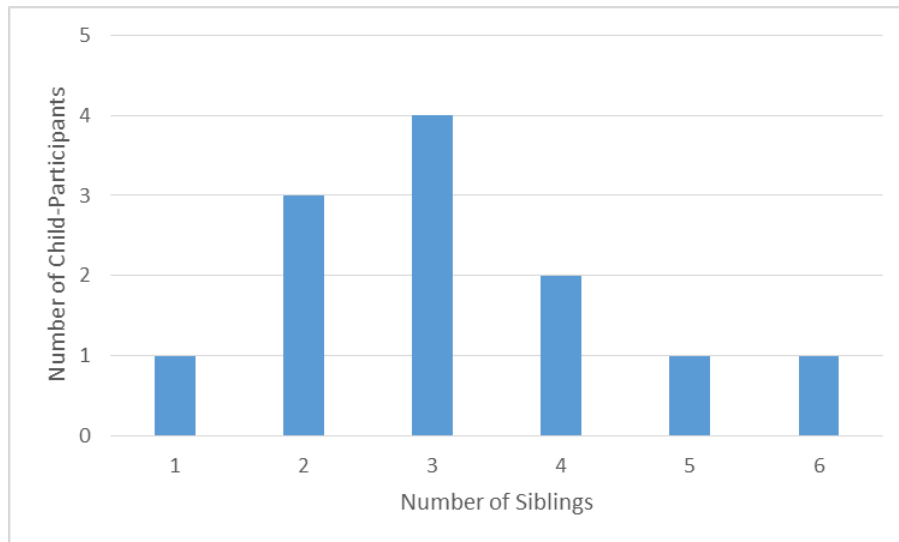


Fig 2. Number of Siblings of the Child-Participants Involved

The graph shows the count of siblings for the child participants. It can be seen that the number of siblings ranges from one to six, with three (3) having the highest count. This shows the number of children left to the care of the parent or guardian when the mother or the father or both are incarcerated. Raising these children entails responding to their needs, not only the basic ones but also psychological, emotional and educational needs. This entails the need for support from family members and

relatives to ease out the burden of this concern. With this data, the researchers are hopeful that relationships between siblings remain intact as they need to stay strong in the midst of adversity. Sidhu (2019), mentioned that, there is evidence to suggest that healthy sibling relationships promote empathy, pro-social behavior, and academic achievement. Further, healthy sibling relationships can be an incredible source of support.

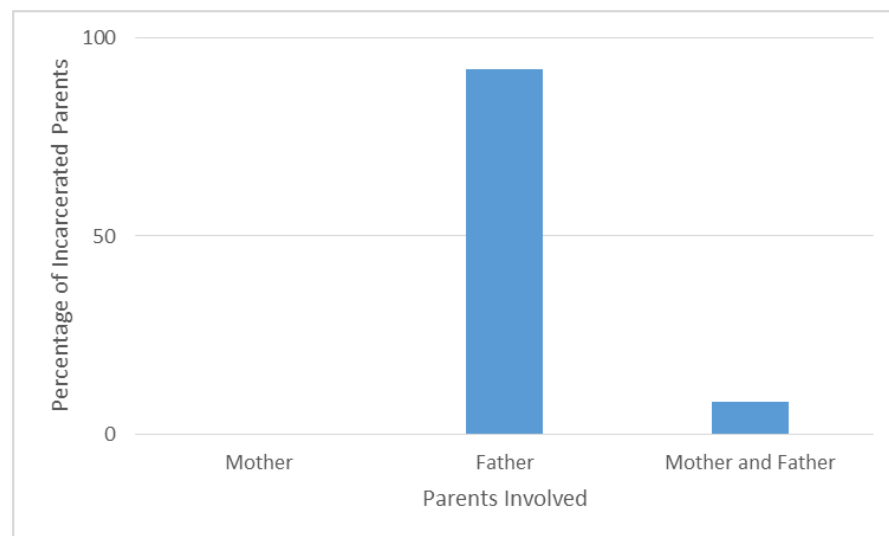


Fig 3. Percentage of Incarcerated Parent in Terms of Family Roles

Figure 3 shows the proportion among incarcerated parents. It is clear that the percentage of incarceration among fathers is the highest; however, there is also an instance where both parents are incarcerated. This implies that the children are left to the care of family guardians or to institutions such as the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). This is similar to the study of Kaeble and Glaze (2016) in the study of Charles et al. (2019) in the United States of America, which states that children affected by incarceration will have at least one parent involved in the justice system. Glaze et al. (2018) mentioned that fathers account for 92% of incarcerated parents. Moreover, fathers are more likely than mothers to be in prison for violent crimes (45% versus 26% in state prison; 12% vs. 6% in federal prison). In the Philippines, according to the statistical data from the Bureau of Jail Management (September 30, 2022) 89.28% accounts for male and 10.72% accounts for female detained individuals both sentenced and not. In the case of Caraga, 93.97% are male and the remaining 6.03% are female. Therefore, the table is reflective

of the national situation in terms of the percentage of incarcerated men and women in the country and even abroad such as the USA.

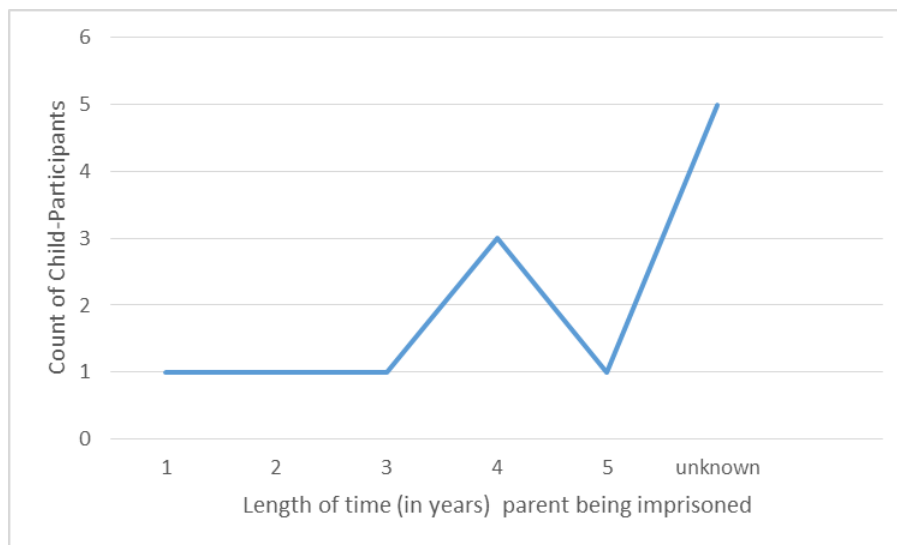


Fig 4. Length of Incarceration (in years)

Children who participated in the survey were asked how many years their parents have been behind bars. Seven (7) out of twelve (12) of them are aware of how long their parents have been incarcerated, which is between one (1) to five (5) years. This can be seen in Figure 4. It can be noted that some child participants are unsure of the exact number of years when their parents have been incarcerated. This could possibly mean that they no longer count the length

of time that their parents have been there and they have tried to find ways to survive while acknowledging the situation of their loved one. This is further supported by their revelation that some have to look for means to survive, like working to earn for food and help support the other members of the family. Some may have forgotten to count because they haven't visited for a length of time due to poverty.

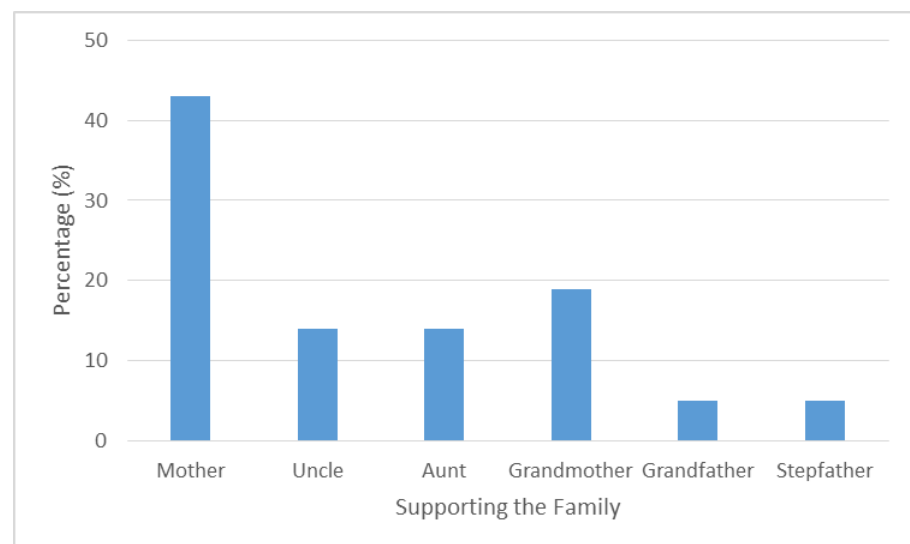


Fig 5. Percentage of support from family members

Figure 5 shows the proportion of family members who show support when a parent gets incarcerated. It reveals that mothers become the primary support in cases where

the fathers are incarcerated, as seen in Figure 3. It is also notable that other members of the extended family showed support to the incarcerated children. Turney (2019) said that an estimated 2.7 million children—or 1 in 28 of those under the age of 18—have a biological mother or father who is incarcerated in a local jail, state prison, or federal prison. When this happens, children must be in the custody of a parent or a responsible legal guardian. There are six on the list, starting with the mother, who is over 40% as the primary caregiver when it is the father who gets incarcerated. The support of aunts, uncles, grandparents, and stepfathers comes next, in varied degrees. The assistance from aunts, uncles, and grandmothers accounts for 14% to 19% of the total. It is remarkable to note how an extended family helps a mother who is left with children whose partner is in prison. The nuclear family and the extended family are two sources of support that are becoming more prevalent. This exhibits strong family ties which greatly speaks of the Filipino spirit. Further, this is an inherent Filipino culture of being supportive to one another, especially during difficult times.

The report of Dr Masten in the study of Southwick et al. (2014) states that resilience in humans is distributed across many interacting systems. As social species, there are fundamental adaptive systems that have come down to each person which interact continuously with the environment. When it comes to children, they are products of evolution and they are very adaptive but part of that capacity is embedded in the caregiver bond. This is evident in the table where relatives help provide for the children's needs.

On Stories of Struggle

The researchers documented the child-participants' struggles. Recurring themes are reflected in Table 1.

Table 1. A. Stories of Struggle

Major Theme	Narratives
<p><i>A. Finding shelter in local government units for the disadvantaged individuals, and finding shelter among the relatives</i></p>	<p>Puyo sa CSWD pila ka bulan, 8 months with no allowance, mingaw, lisod (<i>found shelter under City Social Welfare and Development for eight (8) months having no allowance, lonely and in a difficult situation</i>)</p>
	<p>2 years in CSWD shelter undergoing holistic formation</p>
	<p>puyo sa CSWD pila ka bulan, uli sa lola, usahay lakaw (<i>found shelter under City Social Welfare and Development for few months, sometimes went home to grandmother and sometimes left home or the CSWS shelter</i>)</p>
	<p>balhin - balhin mig puyo (<i>we keep on moving from one place to another</i>)</p>

When one of the parents of a child is imprisoned, there is a likelihood that children will face changes when it comes to living arrangements. Table 1.A shows the first theme which is about finding shelter in local government unit for the disadvantaged individuals along with the related narratives. Turney (2019), puts it that

“In the wake of parental incarceration, families experience a variety of challenges, including economic insecurity, altered household and relationship dynamics and routines, changes in parenting, and changes in parental health”.

This assertion is seen by the data in Table 1.A on changing routines and dynamics in the home and in relationships. However, it is remarkable that our local government unit through City Social Welfare and Development (CSWD) of Butuan extends help to the needy. It is also the CSWD's service mission to provide excellent quality interventions and opportunities to the disadvantaged sectors for social protection and development through the delivery of enhanced basic social

services (<https://ligaocity.albay.gov.ph/>). On one hand, changes in the home environment or seeking shelter in government units with other children facing difficulties like abandonment and separation can be very challenging and painful for growing-up children. On the other hand, these challenges can also provide opportunities for building resilience and forming supportive connections. Adjustment and adaptability are necessary to endure and survive in such an environment.

Other than support from the government, it is also good to note that children receive care from their grandparents and relatives. Cassidy et al. (2014), state that there is emerging evidence that child caregivers experience some positive effects or benefits from their caring despite the demands of the role. Their presence reduces negative outcomes. Moreover, Nichols et al. (2016) said that maintaining a family's warmth, connection, support, and presence of role models during and following incarceration increases potential resiliency. Having to dwell in government shelters and with relatives can be an

opportunity to develop positive adaptations when children experience caring relationships that will allow them to move on positively.

Table 1.B. Stories of Struggle continued

Major Theme	Narratives
<i>B. Distorted family structures</i>	kada Domingo mi bisita kang papa (<i>we visit father every Sunday</i>)
	nagbulag sila mama ug papa (<i>our parents got separated</i>)
	Pag gawas ni papa natao pod among manghud sa lain (<i>when father was released from prison, our brother from another man was also born</i>)
	Sad ko kung naay mga occasion kay di mi complete (<i>I am sad when there are occasions because we are not complete as a family</i>)

	Akong mga cousins kay complete family sila (<i>my cousins are complete as a family</i>)
	Si mama niadto ug Manila mao akong mga manghud tua na ila lola (<i>Mother left for Manila leaving my sister to my grandmother</i>)

The second recorded theme is distorted family structures. In the study of Johnson and Arditti (2023), along with the thoughts of Casey et al. (2015) and Muentner et al. (2019), parental incarceration intersects with residential instability and homelessness in ways that further marginalize families. In a similar vein, Adler (2021) also said that housing insecurity both precedes and follows incarceration. Frequent changes in life circumstances essentially deny children the necessary stability, security and support to develop stable relationships, self-esteem, personal autonomy and resilience. Table 1.2 reflects the associated narratives of the child- participants experiencing

a lot of changes in family relationships and dynamics. Visiting their father every Sunday implies that they have the means to do so. To some extent, communication is maintained although family dynamics have been altered.

Nevertheless, longing for a complete family when special occasions are celebrated implies a very Filipino value of having families together on special occasions. This longing is intensified by an implied envious feeling of having to see cousins enjoy with members of the family together on special occasions. More painful to hear is a sharing that their younger brother was born when their father was released from prison, which implies that fidelity among partners or spouses was not sustained while the husband was incarcerated. Studies consistently show that incarceration during marriage is correlated with higher divorce rates. (Lind, 2014). This is also reinforced by the findings of Kreiger et.al 2018 that couples rated relationship happiness significantly lower during post release. This indicates that obstacles during incarceration reverberates

even during the post release. Moreover, distorted family structures and relationships caused separation from loved ones, having to move to other places, and leaving children for various reasons. Needless to say, incarceration did not only lead to separation but to broken homes and relationships.

Table 1. C. Stories of Struggles continued

Major Theme	
<i>C. Financial Hardships</i>	Lisod way pang gasto sa school. di mi kabisita kang papa kay wa may plete. wa pod mi mada pag dalaw (<i>we have difficulty providing for our school needs and we can not visit father because we do not have fare, we can not also bring him something</i>)
	usahay tabang pod gikan ila lola, usahay sa mga amigo pod (<i>sometimes we get help from grandmother and from our friends</i>)
	financial support gikan sa igsoon sa akong stepfather (<i>received financial help from the siblings of my stepfather</i>)

Table 1.C shows the third recorded theme. It is possible to see the financial impact when the incarcerated parent is the one providing for their needs. The children and the other parent left can also face financial hardship. This is evident in the case studied as one has to do hard labor without a regular pay. It is also corroborated by the earlier statements that they could not visit their father as often because they do not have money for fare and to buy goods for their incarcerated father. Financial difficulty has a rippling effect among children in school. The findings of the study conducted by Nichols et al. (2016) supports the view that incarcerated children have difficulty accessing education due to socioeconomic adversities. This could be due to the fact that education really needs materials, supplies and even gadgets to support learning. In the report of Garcia et al 2016, they stated that students in poverty and trauma always lag behind in their academic performance and would likely drop out. If poverty and pain remain

unabated, the long-term effect could be that students' gifts go undeveloped due to a lack of education. This may perpetuate the same cycle of a difficult life rather than fostering transformation.

Table 2.A. Stories of Resilience

Major Theme	Narratives
<i>A. Thriving in life through different ways and means of survival</i>	maglabor (find a piece-work)
	<i>mag referee para pangkaon (becoming referee in games to earn something from the game)</i>
	<p> <i>mata kog alas 2 para mangispat anang magdeliver ug mga shell sa merkado. Usahay witkan pod ko pangkaon. Ang mga tagak nga shell akong tigumon usahay ibaligya usahay pangkaon pod (sometimes I wake up at 2:00 am to wait for those who will deliver shells in the market. I will help them carry the deliveries and they would spare me some coins. Sometimes they give me some shells which I also sell for food)</i> </p>

paghuna-huna na positibo sa kinabuhì (*I think on the positive side of life.*)

Table 2.A displays the child-participants' own accounts of what it is like to have a parent in prison when it comes to ways and means of survival. This is the fourth recorded theme. This can very well be supported by their narratives at the right side of the table. Turney (2019), mentioned that children with an incarcerated mother or father face new economic challenges that stem directly from the incarceration of their parents, in addition to the economic challenges that may have led up to the arrest. In this case, having to work at dawn without being paid but to hope for some sort of tip or to be spared with some coins just to be able to get something to buy food is grueling. The fact that these children continue to attend school, despite their basic

needs not being met by their parents but by the children themselves, is a testament to their remarkable strength at such a young age. Although they face numerous difficulties, it is commendable that they continue to live as simply as possible. Their methods of sustenance demonstrate their hopeful outlook on life. It is truly impressive to see that, despite the challenging circumstances, they are still thriving. This can be supported by the study of Turney (2019) that children who have caring adults in their lives are likely to be resilient in the face of challenges such as parental incarceration. The children said that their stepfathers, friends, siblings, and grandparents provided them with financial assistance. Additionally, this is consistent with Table 4, which shows the percentage of family members that express support when a parent gets incarcerated.

Table 2.B. Stories of Resilience continued

Major Theme	Narratives
<i>B. Having a strong determination to pursue studies despite the odds</i>	Padayon pag eskwela para matabangan si Mama <i>(continue studying to help my mother)</i>
	maningkamot, magtarung skwela pra matabangan ang pamilya puhon <i>(strive hard and study well to help my family someday)</i>
	padayon sa pag eskwela, gitabangan sa igsoon na babae sa akong papa <i>(continue schooling while receiving help from my aunt)</i>
	mag-focus sa pag eskwela <i>(focus on studies)</i>

The fifth recorded theme is a strong determination to pursue studies despite the odds. Children who have a parent in prison, whether it's their father or their mother, have a lot of challenges. However, it is important to

highlight that they chose to continue their studies. Their narratives, which are heart melting, can be seen in Table 2.B. Looking at their desire to continue their studies and be able to help their families despite their hardships and suffering, demonstrate a positive hopeful attitude which empowers them to chart a course of themselves moving forward rather than choosing to despair and succumb to helplessness and fail even more. It is also important to note that child participants believe that by continuing their studies would liberate their hardships one day. They hope that education will make their lives better in the future.

Meanwhile, Arias (2016) said that one trait of resilience by individuals is the ability to cultivate and sustain supportive relationships with those around them. The participants' narratives imply that they get help from relatives which shows that they can maintain good relationships with relatives despite separation from incarcerated parents. Similarly, Luthar and Eisenberg (2017) shared the importance of supportive relationships with parents and caregivers of children. Miller

et al. (2022) explored how intersecting social ecologies within family, school, and community networks contribute to the development of identity and a sense of belonging can form a resilient system that provides resources for well-being. These findings are of particular interest as they point to how the quality of the parenting relationship and the wider support networks can build childhood resilience. Linking this to Table 1.E, the researchers can infer that child-participants in this study have such strong family ties that they are able to adjust to the challenging situation they are in. On the other hand, this also reflects that children have seen meaning in their situation and are bound to move forward rather than languish and dwell on their difficult situation.

On Observable Behavior Data

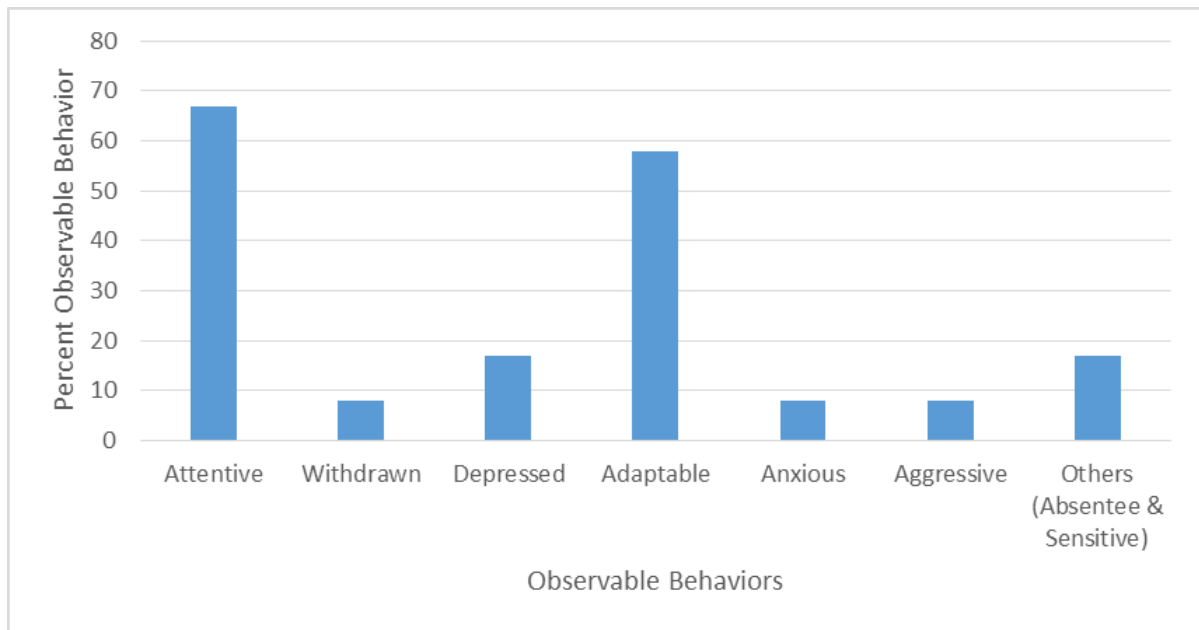


Fig 6. Observable Behaviors Manifested by the Child-Participants as Perceived by their Advisers

It is thought that children may experience emotional stress due to their parents' incarceration. Johnson and Arditti (2023) explored the impact of parental incarceration on children's behavior and mental health. They found that children with incarcerated parents are more likely to exhibit antisocial behaviors and face mental health challenges such as anxiety and depression. The study emphasizes the

importance of considering the broader context of adverse childhood experiences and the role of supportive environments in mitigating negative outcomes. Additionally, Jackson et al. (2021) conducted research highlighting that parental incarceration is a significant risk factor for children's adverse health and behavioral outcomes, reinforcing the association between parental incarceration and increased antisocial behavior in children. The study also discusses the critical need for supportive interventions to help these children cope with their unique challenges. This statement can be verified based on the data gathered in this study and is reflected in Figure 6. These behaviors are described as positive behaviors and negative internalizing or externalizing behaviors and are picked out from the study of Wildeman et al. (2017). Positive behaviors include being (a) attentive; and (b) adaptable. While negative internalizing behaviors include being (a) withdrawn; (b) depressed; (c) anxious; and externalizing includes being (d) aggressive. Among these observable behaviors, it is clear that positive behaviors showed a high

percentage over the negative internalizing and externalizing behaviors. As illustrated in Figure 6, 58%-68% of the child participants were attentive and adaptable. In contrast, around 8% to 18% of them were observed as withdrawn, depressed, anxious, aggressive, and sensitive. In their study, Nichols et al. (2016) discovered that children of jailed parents are frequently perceived as having a higher chance of behavioral problems. Parental incarceration has also been linked to externalizing behaviors and delinquency in children, according to Johnson & Arditti (2023) and Antle et al. (2020).

However, in a separate study conducted by Johnson and Arditti (2023), along with Bomysoad & Francis (2022), they found that children with incarcerated mothers who felt confident in their ability to overcome challenges had fewer internalizing and externalizing problems than children who were less hopeful and optimistic; adolescents who were perceived by their parents as being high in resilience, operationalized in terms of whether children stay calm and in control when faced with a challenge were less likely to

have current diagnoses of depression, anxiety, behavioral/conduct problems, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Such is found similarly in this study when more positive behaviors were displayed over the negative ones. This case at hand negates the findings of Gifford et al. (2019) that parental incarceration leads to more aggressive and antisocial behaviors. Further, the data holds untrue on the findings of Wildeman, et.al, (2017) that the stigma of paternal incarceration shapes teachers' expectations of students, leading to a 10 percent to 40 percent increase in teachers' expectations of children's behavioral problems. It turned out that teachers observe more positive behaviors than negative ones.

On Academic Performance

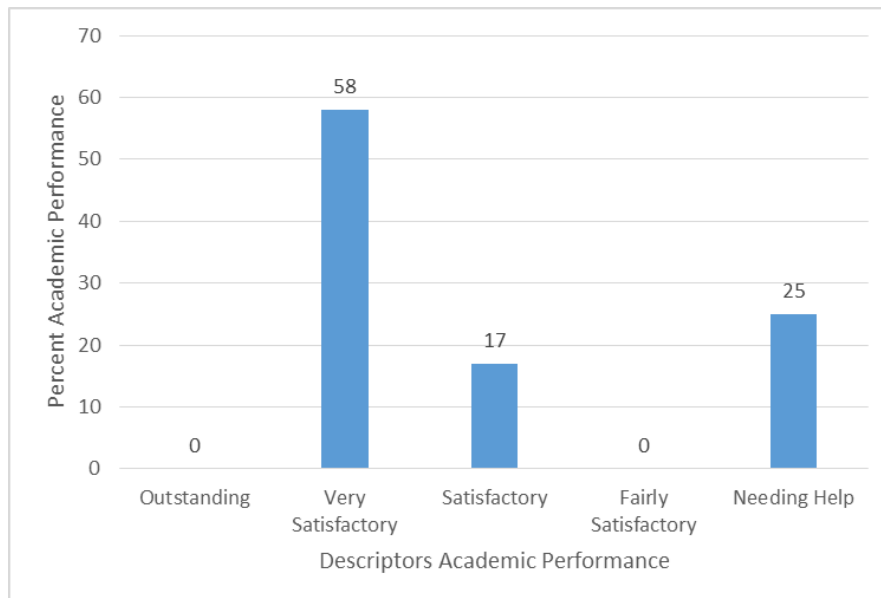


Fig 7. Academic Performance of Child-Participants by Descriptors

The academic performance of each child-participant was sought from his/her respective teacher-adviser. This was done to check if children of incarcerated parents continue to go to school and if so, this study would like to see how far these children are performing academically. It is good to note that these children still continue to go to school despite the existing problem they are experiencing. Figure 8 shows the

academic performance by descriptors of the sampled child-participants as assessed by their advisers. It can be gleaned from the figure that more than 50% performed at the “Very Satisfactory Level”. This descriptor means that the children have grades ranging from 85 to 89. This is quite an impressive academic performance for children who are in the situation of instability and adversity. Although they may not be seen performing at the “Outstanding Level”, their being in school allows one to see that they value education. This is further substantiated by their narratives, which detail how they cope with their struggles. Their academic performance, with “Very Satisfactory” at the peak, is a notable mark for the child-participants. The academic performance exhibited by the children is a good indicator of showing resilience. The support they got from their immediate parents or relatives has also played an important factor in this. This can be supported by the work of Nichols et al. (2016), emphasizing parent-family connection, where a close bond with a loving, supportive, and effective caregiver is an important factor in supporting positive development,

both in typically developing and high-risk youth. Even while they may be vulnerable, especially in terms of achieving good education and academic performance, they tend to moderate the situation internally by their personal coping strategies and externally by the stable support from family members. These give them the motivation they need to progress, see the value of education, perform well in school, and lead regular lives.

However, positive measures are recommended for children who are really needing help. It is said that parental incarceration puts children at increased risk for school-related problems (Nichols et al., 2016; Shlafer et al., 2017; Johnson & Arditti 2023). This can: compromise the academic functioning of the children (Shlafer et al., 2017); lead to poor school performance (Gifford et al., 2019); and, negatively affect children's educational outcomes and opportunities (American Educator, 2019). Indeed, this holds true for our data, indicating that around 25% of the child participants are in need of academic assistance.

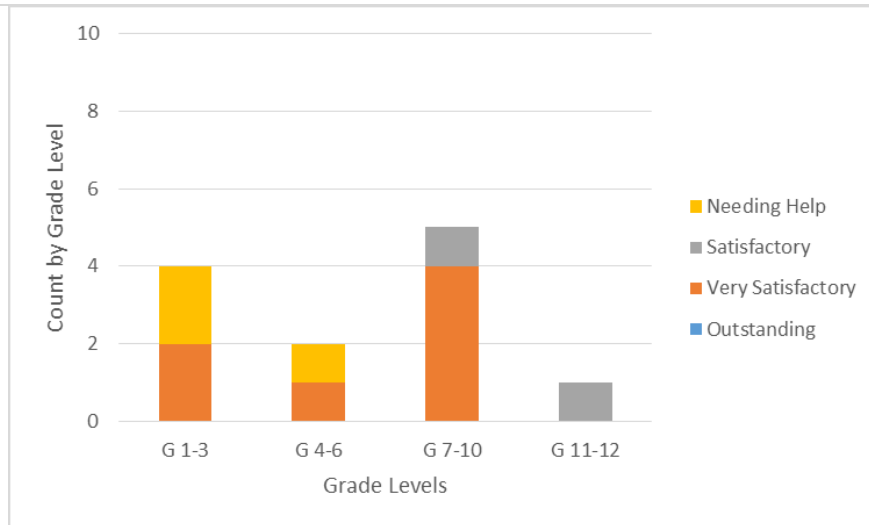


Fig 8. Descriptors-based Academic Performance of Child-Participants by Grade Levels

Driven by the desire to extend help in the future, the researchers would like to know which among the grade levels have performed better. Figure 8 depicts the descriptors-based academic performance of child-participants by Grade Levels. It can be seen that most of the children needing help come from the lower grade levels (G 1-6). However, it can also be noted that half of the participants falling in that grade level have done fairly well in their academics as some have very satisfactory descriptors. But it is evident that children belonging to G7-

10 are the ones able to perform better academically as most of them are in the “Very Satisfactory level”. Grades 11-12 children are able to thrive in their academics with a descriptor of “Satisfactory”. In view of this actual trend, the researchers infer the following: (a) *the possible adaptability of the older ones than the young ones considering that their developmental characteristics are directed toward increased independence as one progressed to higher developmental stage* (Simmons, 2000); (b) *presence of family member either nuclear or extended* (Fig 4); *stability of the caregivers that can give secure attachments* (Family Matters, 2003); and, (c) *awareness of the children that their parents are imprisoned.*

Conclusion

Children whose parents are in prison have undoubtedly experienced hardships, but it is encouraging to see that they have also demonstrated resilience in small ways. Children often struggle to find shelter, either through

local government help or by staying with relatives. Complicated family situations and financial difficulties make these challenges even harder. Nevertheless, children in this case have shown resilience and hope as seen in their positive outlook in life, performance in school and creative yet laborious ways to survive and thrive. Support from family and relatives promote resilience, aiding children to develop positive adaptation from their difficult situation helping them to move forward finding ways and means to survive. The study found that resilience is not only an individual capability to adapt and bounce back but it is also a collective effort among the significant others surrounding the individual to navigate the situation and respond in meaningful ways to sustain well - being.

Recommendations

It is recommended that children of incarcerated parents be given priority in social services by the government. Non-government organizations and

educational institutions may consider supporting this sector of the society through extension programs. Academic institutions such as FSUU can consider the incarcerated children as their recipient for Tulong Dunong Program. This program is a community extension service provided by the FSUU - Teacher Education Program (TEP) in coordination with the Community and Involvement and Advocacy (CINA) office to specific adopted schools. It allows student teachers to assist in teaching reading and numeracy to pupils, enhancing their foundational skills through practical teaching experiences. Mapping of their location can be done to point out schools where they are more in number to prioritize them for tutorial help especially among the lower grade levels. They may also be considered for support and donations, such as school supplies and other school needs. They may also be provided with psychosocial support to help them transition from their difficult situation to find meaning and reach self-efficacy. It is recommended further that this study be expanded to include more participants and a deeper

analysis of their needs be drawn or identified. Finally, this study may be considered one of the inputs for policies in the local government and programs of the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

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Color Politics in the IP Barangays of Butuan City

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The electoral process in the Philippines plays a vital role in its democratic framework, empowering citizens to choose their leaders. The May 2022 elections revealed the significant influence of political color preferences, especially among marginalized groups such as Indigenous Peoples (IP). This study explored the political color preferences in two IP barangays in Butuan City—Barangay Anticala and Bonbon—focusing on whether their color choices reflected broader electoral trends in the city. It also examined the socio-political factors influencing these preferences and how they shaped the voting behavior of these communities. Data were collected through key informant interviews and analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings

indicate that the color red, associated with Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., was the dominant preference among IP communities in both barangays, mirroring the broader trend in Butuan City. Several factors influenced this preference: Marcos's strong leadership image, association with the Duterte legacy, the selection of Sara Duterte as his running mate, and his message of national unity. The study highlighted the role of symbolic elements like color in shaping political identification and voter behavior, underscoring the importance of leadership, continuity, and unity in engaging marginalized communities in the electoral process.

Key Words: Election, Color politics, Indigenous peoples, Social media, Voting behavior, Marcos, Duterte

I.Introduction

The electoral process in democratic systems plays a vital role in shaping a nation's political landscape. In the Philippines, elections enable citizens to choose leaders who will influence the country's political and social direction. Political campaigns in the Philippines, like in many other democracies, involve various strategies such as advertising, celebrity endorsements, jingles, rallies, and speeches to influence voter behavior. A key element in these campaigns is the strategic use of political colors. These colors symbolize political allegiance, facilitate voter identification with candidates, and create strong visual recall that aids decision-making (Sawer, 2007).

The primary objective of this study is to examine the influence of political color preferences on the voting behavior of Indigenous Peoples (IP) communities in Barangays Anticala and Bonbon, Butuan City, during the May 2022 elections. Specifically, the study aims to: (1) determine whether the political color

preferences in these IP barangays aligned with broader electoral trends in Butuan City; (2) explore the socio-political factors influencing these preferences; and (3) investigate the role of symbolic elements, such as color, in fostering political identity and participation among marginalized groups. Furthermore, this study intends to contribute to a broader understanding of how political symbolism intersects with voter behavior, particularly in marginalized communities.

The 2022 Philippine elections also saw an increased reliance on social media platforms, such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, as tools for political communication. This shift occurred especially because traditional campaign methods like rallies, were limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the accessibility of digital media raised concerns about inclusivity, particularly among marginalized communities such as Indigenous Peoples (IPs), who often face challenges in accessing technology and media. These challenges were especially prevalent in rural areas like Barangays Anticala and Bonbon, where limited access to modern communication tools hindered

IP communities to fully engage with mainstream electoral discourse (Dyson & Underwood, 2006).

Despite these barriers, the IP communities in Barangays Anticala and Bonbon actively participated in the May 2022 elections. A striking observation was the widespread preference for the color red, which symbolized the candidacy of Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr., and mirrored broader electoral trends in Butuan City. This study explores how political color preferences in these IP communities align with city-wide trends and investigates the factors influencing these preferences.

The concept of "color politics" posits that political colors serve as visual symbols of political identity, evoking emotional responses and reinforcing group allegiances (Marini, 2017). Previous studies have demonstrated that political colors are not only for aesthetics but are also strategically used to communicate ideological stances and rally support (Palatino, 2022). In the Philippines, colors such as yellow, pink, and red have become deeply embedded in electoral discourse, with each color symbolizing distinct political affiliations. Notably, red, in

particular, has come to represent the political alignment with Ferdinand Marcos Jr. and his supporters (Colcol, 2022).

For IP communities, the strategic use of color in political campaigns extends beyond its symbolic value. Colors function as mnemonic devices, simplifying political identification for voters who may not have had access to the complex political discourse of urban elections. The use of red, associated with Marcos Jr., acted as an easily recognizable cue, allowing voters to align with his candidacy without needing to engage deeply with political platforms or policies. In this way, political colors served as both a tool for mobilization and as means of simplifying electoral choices for marginalized groups (Jayma & Porquis, 2017).

Thus, this study aims to delve deeper into the role of political color preferences in shaping voting behavior among IP communities in Butuan City. By examining the factors contributing to the dominance of red as the preferred political color, this research seeks to provide insights into the intersection of color symbolism, political identity, and voter behavior in marginalized communities. Ultimately, this exploration aims to contribute to understanding color politics in the Philippines and

highlight the unique challenges Indigenous Peoples face in contemporary electoral processes.

II.Methods and Materials

This study employed a qualitative research design to assess the political color preferences of Indigenous Peoples (IP) in Barangays Anticala and Bonbon, Butuan City, The primary method for data collection was key informant interviews, which were conducted with influential community leaders, including Baes and Datus. These leaders were selected due to their authoritative roles in shaping the political views of their communities, particularly during elections. Their insights were crucial for understanding how political color preferences developed in these areas and how they might reflect broader electoral trends.

The interviews were conducted in July 2022, two months after the May 2022 national elections. This timing allowed for the collection of relevant data that captured the political climate and attitudes of the community leaders following the election,

providing a reflective analysis of how political color preferences were formed and their impacts on the community.

Ethical considerations were central throughout the research process. The study adhered to established ethical guidelines to ensure the protection of participants. Informed consent was obtained from all interviewees, ensuring they were fully aware of the purpose of the study and their role in it. Moreover, the confidentiality of participants was maintained, with personal identifiers removed from all transcripts. Additionally, respect for cultural norms and privacy was emphasized, ensuring that the study was conducted with sensitivity to the community's values and traditions.

The data from the interviews were transcribed verbatim, and a thematic analysis approach was used to analyze the responses. This method allowed for the identification of recurring themes related to political color preferences, the factors influencing these preferences, and the broader socio-political context shaping voting behavior within marginalized communities. The analysis was guided by the conceptual framework that underscored the relationship among color

symbolism, political identity, and social influence, which helped to uncover patterns and offered a deeper understanding of how political symbols, such as color, were used as tools of political identification and expression within the IP communities of Butuan City.

III. Results and Discussion

The thematic analysis of the interviews revealed several key factors influencing political color preferences among the Indigenous Peoples (IP) communities in Barangays Anticala and Bonbon, Butuan City. Notably, the dominant political color preference was red, closely associated to the candidacy of Ferdinand Marcos Jr. This preference mirrored broader political trends observed throughout Butuan City, where Marcos was also the favored candidate. The findings highlighted various themes, including perceptions of leadership, the Duterte legacy, the appeal of unity, and the strategic use of color in Marcos' campaign. Each of these factors played a significant role in shaping the IP communities' electoral choices.

Perception of Strong Leadership

One of the most significant reasons for the preference for red was the perception of strong leadership associated with Marcos Jr. Many community leaders compared Marcos to his father, Ferdinand Marcos Sr., emphasizing his strength and authoritative leadership style. This perception of strength resonated deeply with the IP communities, who value strong leadership, particularly in the context of their marginalized status. For these communities, the desire for stability and direction in the face of socio-political challenges made red an effective symbol of leadership. The color became more than just an aesthetic choice; it was imbued with meaning that signified security, stability, and the hope of leadership that could address their concerns (Sawer, 2007).

Association with the Duterte Legacy

Another crucial factor influencing the preference for red was Marcos's alliance with Sara Duterte, the vice-presidential candidate in the 2022 elections. The IP communities, having

benefited from the policies of President Rodrigo Duterte, were inclined to support the continuation of these policies through Marcos. Many of the community leaders noted that Duterte's administration had positively impacted the IP communities, particularly through infrastructure projects and social governance strategies aimed at marginalized groups. As a result, Marcos, as a candidate closely associated with Duterte, symbolized not just a new political figure but the continuation of the policies that had already begun to uplift their communities. The color red, in this case, represented not only Marcos' candidacy but also the continuation of the Duterte legacy, reinforcing a sense of political continuity that was seen as essential for further progress (Welle, 2022).

Appeal for Unity

The theme of unity emerged as another central reason for the IP communities' preference for Marcos. Many community leaders highlighted that Marcos's campaign slogan, "Unity," resonated strongly with IP voters, who have historically felt politically and socially isolated. The appeal of unity offered a vision

of inclusion, signaling hope for greater political representation for marginalized communities. The color red, which was closely associated with Marcos and his message of national cohesion, symbolized not just political alignment but also a sense of belonging within a unified national vision. The color thus took on additional significance, representing the IP communities' desire for social and political inclusion, and providing hope for a future where their voices would be heard and respected (Dimaano, 2022).

Symbolic Use of Color

The symbolic use of color was another significant finding in the study. In a community with limited access to modern media, the color red acted as a powerful mnemonic device, simplifying political choices for voters who might not have had access to detailed political platforms or information. Given that many IP communities have restricted access to diverse media channels, including digital platforms, the use of color became an effective tool for political identification. The color red in Marcos' campaign served as a visual cue that allowed voters to easily associate him

with leadership, continuity, and unity, bypassing the need for deeper engagement with the more complex aspects of political discourse. As noted by Marini (2017), political colors are not merely aesthetic; they function as symbolic tools that shape voter perceptions and reinforce political identity. In the case of the IP communities in Butuan City, red was a simplified yet powerful method of political mobilization.

The Role of Social Media and Information Accessibility

While social media platforms played a significant role in shaping the political discourse during the 2022 elections, the study revealed challenges the IP community faced due to their limited access to digital media. Many IP voters in Barangays Anticala and Bonbon relied on traditional forms of media, such as television and radio, to gather electoral information. This digital divide made it difficult for these communities to engage fully with the modern electoral campaigns disseminated primarily through social media. However, despite this limitation, the color red helped bridge the gap, allowing voters to make informed choices based on visual symbols alone. In this context, the color served not just as a symbol of Marcos' campaign but as

a vital tool for political participation, enabling voters to identify with a candidate despite not having access to the broader digital discourse of the election (Pearce et al., 2020).

Despite these challenges, the symbolic use of color in political campaigns helped bridge the gap between the voters and the candidates. Political colors, like red, served as accessible markers that simplified the decision-making process for IP voters who were less exposed to the complex dynamics of electoral campaigning. The thematic analysis revealed that color acted as an effective tool for simplifying political participation in these communities, enabling voters to identify with a candidate even without in-depth knowledge of the candidate's platform or policies. This finding aligns with that of Palmer and Schloss (2010), who argue that political colors can effectively communicate ideologies and rally support, even in communities with limited access to media.

IV. Conclusion & Recommendations

This study concluded that the color red, associated with Ferdinand Marcos Jr., significantly influenced the political engagement of Indigenous Peoples (IP) in Barangays Anticala and Bonbon, Butuan City. Despite challenges such as limited access to information technology and traditional media sources, these communities actively participated in the electoral process, aligning their political preferences with broader trends across the city. The preference for red reflected deeper socio-political influences, including a desire for strong leadership, the continuity of policies initiated during Duterte's administration, and an overarching appeal for unity. Red therefore became more than a political symbol; it was a powerful tool for mobilization and identity formation in these marginalized communities.

While color symbolism alone could not fully explain voting behavior, it serves as an effective mechanism for political identification and engagement, especially in areas with limited access to campaign information and digital media. The thematic

analysis in this study reveal that red, as a visual marker, simplified the decision-making process for IP voters, helping them identify with Marcos's candidacy and align with the broader political landscape. Moreover, the findings highlighted the importance of symbolic elements in political campaigns and their effectiveness in fostering voter participation within marginalized groups. However, despite color symbolism playing a crucial role in shaping voter behaviour, it is essential to acknowledge that a more profound understanding of electoral issues remains critical for informed decision-making.

Based on this study's findings, several recommendations are proposed to enhance political engagement among marginalized communities. First, it is vital to improve information accessibility in rural and Indigenous communities. Strategies should include leveraging traditional media, such as radio and local newspapers, in tandem with digital platforms, to disseminate electoral information effectively. Community meetings could also serve as platforms for discussion and education regarding electoral processes.

Second, civic education programs should be tailored specifically to the needs of Indigenous communities. These programs should focus on the importance of voting, critical political engagement, and how to evaluate candidates. Collaboration between local governments and civil society organizations is essential to deliver these programs effectively and empower Indigenous communities to engage in the electoral process.

Finally, political campaigns must adopt inclusive strategies that recognize the unique challenges that hound marginalized groups. A better understanding of the symbolic power of colors can help political campaigns design more accessible messaging and engaging platforms that resonate with various community demographics. Additionally, it is crucial to ensure the active participation of Indigenous communities in the electoral process, empowering them to contribute to shaping the future directions of the nation and guaranteeing that their voices are included in the democratic process.

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