

Withstanding Pandemic through Education, Economic and Health Policies

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Abstract:

COVID-19 is not yet under control. The more that the government must make informed decisions through policies to address the needs of the people better. Hence, this paper examines current reports and studies on the impacts of COVID-19 and designed policy initiatives to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on education, health and safety, and economic dimensions. Among the enormous data gathered and reviewed worldwide and, in the Philippines, only five research articles were included. With these research articles, twelve policy statements were formulated. Policy statements on education includes non-contact education and enhanced competency-based curriculum. On the other hand, policy statements on health and safety covers strengthening research and technology, highlighting healthcare system capacity and budget prioritization in the acceleration of the construction of health facilities. As to the economic dimension, the recommended policy statements expands to local production for local consumption, encourage home or urban gardening, initiate hydroponics, aquaponics and horticulture gardening, institutionalize the "Farm Food Box", clustering of barangays, strengthen transparency, and amendment on global tariff policy. These policies might help in mitigating the impacts of these three interrelated sectors of the pandemic in the Philippines. Further, it is suggested to conduct additional studies related to other sectors.

Keywords: COVID-19, Policy Statement, Education, Health and Safety, Economics

1. INTRODUCTION:

COVID-19 continues to spread across the world with unknown projection as to when it would end. The Philippines is one of the countries greatly affected by the pandemic. National and local leaders have expedited much-needed interventions compelling government policies to contain the virus, thereby protecting them from this pandemic. The pandemic impacts have been felt in various interrelated sectors such as health and safety, economy, and education. This scenario calls for actions to mitigate the short- and long-term adverse effects of this health emergency.

The COVID 19 outbreak proved to be the litmus test for the Philippine health care system in dealing with pandemics. The government's weak spots in the health delivery system are the resource and capacity limitations (WHO, 2020). In terms of economy, even countries considered to be significant players are already bracing for the worse. The economy is one of the dimensions where countries take drastic changes to save and to gain Global and local GDP (NEDA, 2020). Another sector that is considerably affected was education. The majority of the global educational system has already shut down. Most of the governments around the world have decided to temporarily close schools to lessen local transmission. It has affected several individuals, including students, teachers, and families. With this, the increasing number of positive cases in the country is problematic since it has implications for the country's available services.

Clearly, the Covid-19 pandemic is not yet under control, having a significant effect on the economy, health and safety, and education. When it is over, policymakers will face a transformed landscape. To date, there has been little research regarding policies as combat on the impact of COVID-19 in the Philippines. Hence, the results of this study can be used as a guide by the policymakers in formulating policies and strategies to address people's needs better.

2. Objectives

Generally, this study aimed to (1) review current reports and studies on the impacts of COVID-19 and (2) on what policy initiatives can be designed to address the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on education, health, and safety, and economic dimensions.

3. Conceptual Framework

This study is mainly anchored on the notion that these three key areas are correlated because of the pandemic experienced by most countries. A country's health crisis directly caused an economic crisis and disrupted the educational system. Health performance and economic performance are interlinked. Wealthier countries have healthier populations for a start. National income has a direct effect on the development of health systems, through insurance coverage and public spending, for instance (Frenk, 2004).

On the other hand, there are negative effects and positive effects on educational outcomes during an economic crisis. A review of the empirical evidence suggests that the negative effects are more vital, causing national educational outcomes to deteriorate during an emergency. In particular, the deterioration in adult labor markets and school quality dissuade parents from supporting their children's schooling (Shafiq, 2010). Lastly, education creates better health opportunities, such as income/resources, social/ psychological benefits, health behaviors, and healthier neighborhoods. In reverse, poor health can put education at risk (Center on Society and Health, 2015). In this consideration, a policy is therefore vital to put these dimensions in balance.



Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

4. Methodology

This is an exploratory type of research which followed a literature review approach. A literature review is a unique method of comprehensively critiquing and synthesizing research findings in meta-level to generate new knowledge (Snyder, 2019). Specifically, this study will follow the Integrative Literature Review by Tarraco (2005). As a result of this study, the review tells a story by critically analyzing the literature and arriving at specific conclusions about it.

The steps in the Integrated Literature Review described by Whittemore&Knafl (2005) were applied.

1. Problem Identification - the researchers formed a research agenda about the phenomenon being studied.
2. Literature search - the researchers comprehensively searched eligible studies related to the problem.
3. Data evaluation - the researchers identified the final sample of the studies to be included. Here, the retaining and discarding process occurs to ensure the quality of the primary sources.
4. Data analysis - the researchers extracted categories from the research findings.

5. Presentation - in this stage, finally, the researchers formed a model portraying the process of integration.

5. Results

Among the enormous data gathered and reviewed worldwide and, in the Philippines, only five research articles were included. With these research articles, eight policy statements were formulated.

A. Education

Objective

1. To design an educational program that achieves skills and abilities necessary for job clusters.

Research Findings:

2. Close the borders of Region II, IX, XI, & XII, banning travel outside its Region. (Caballero, B.G., et al., 2020)
3. Maintain and Extend the ECQ classification indefinitely in Cebu and the 26 provinces identified in the degree centrality. (Caballero, B.G., et al., 2020)
4. The flattening of the curve is still not happening at present. Maureal, Z, et al., 2020)
5. Teachers and students need strong technological support from the concerned authorities for learning to effectively take place using the digital modalities (Bicar et al., 2020).
6. Curricular programs can be redesigned to consider the offering of **core courses** focusing on the essential disciplines that will develop the skills necessary for global citizenship (Kim, 2005).
7. **Specialized courses** that will equip the students in their chosen career tracks; and **electives** that allow them to explore their 'other' interests may also be offered to complete a particular program (Kim, 2005).

Policy Statement

New learning environment (New Normal when it comes to education)

1. Policy on non-contact education
 1. Paperless (Instruction)
 2. Cubicle set-up
 3. Modules
 4. Offline education
 5. Intelligent system (no need for internet)
 6. Adapting voice assistant technology (wired and non-wired)

*Face-to-face classroom lecture; in the event of vaccine is discovered and approved for utilization.

2. Enhance policy on competency-based curriculum (synchronous and asynchronous)

B. HEALTH AND SAFETY

Objective

1. Improve the health and sanitation standards to ensure good health condition

Research Findings:

1. Close the borders of Region II, IX, XI, & XII, banning travel outside its Region. (Caballero, B.G., et al., 2020)
2. Maintain and Extend the ECQ classification indefinitely in Cebu and the 26 provinces identified in the degree centrality. (Caballero, B.G., et al., 2020)
3. The economic and health measures are highest in NCR, having the maximum risk of economic loss and COVID 19 infection. The safety measures for both economic and health are most stringent for NCR, but these measures may not be applied to the rest of the regions. (Garcia, H. et al., 2020)
4. The flattening of the curve is still not happening at present. Maureal, Z, et al., 2020)

Policy Statement

1. Policy on the strengthening of Research and Technology
 - Resource and Budget Allocation
 - Virology (Vaccine)

2. Policy on strengthening the Healthcare System Capacity

- Mass testing
- Revise Methodology in Contact tracing
- Equity of Healthcare facilities
 - ✓ Testing Centers
 - ✓ Hospitals

3. Realign budget to accelerate the construction of more general hospitals, construction of more specialized hospitals, and build spacious outpatient and inpatient complex.

C. ECONOMY

Objective

1. To ensure a well- functioning economy in the presence of pandemic.

Research findings:

1. Close the borders of Region II, IX, XI, & XII, banning travel outside its Region. (Caballero, B.G., et al., 2020)
2. Maintain and Extend the ECQ classification indefinitely in Cebu and the 26 provinces identified in the degree centrality. (Caballero, B.G., et al., 2020)
3. The economic and health measures are highest in NCR, having the maximum risk of economic loss and COVID 19 infection. The safety measures for both economic and health are most stringent for NCR, but these measures may not be applied to the rest of the regions. (Garcia, H. et al., 2020)
4. There is no difference in the category of economic health measures during community quarantine in the country. There are only two evident groupings: maximum and minimum economic health measures. Thus, except for NCR, all regions may consider opening all its business establishments in full, carefully applying minimum health standards required. (Garcia, H. et al., 2020)
5. The flattening of the curve is still not happening at present. Maureal, Z, et al., 2020)
6. Experts have warned and continued to war that zoonotic diseases will continue to pose a threat to the lives of millions of people with potentially significant disruption to an integrated world economy. The idea that any country can be an island in an integrated global economy is proven wrong by the latest outbreak of COVID-19. Global cooperation, especially in the sphere of public health and economic development, is essential. All major countries need to participate actively. (Mckibbin& Fernando, 2020)

Policy Statement

1. Local production for local consumption policy.
 - Establishment of factories catering essential goods
 - Manufacturing plant
 - Production plant
2. Local policies (ordinance) to promote and encourage home gardening (may include rooftop gardening)
3. Local initiatives on hydroponics gardening, aquaponics gardening, and horticulture gardening
4. Institutionalizing the “Farmers Food Box” (the LGUs will buy the products of the farmers in their locality)
 - Enhanced Zoning Ordinance and utilization of unused land for agricultural purposes (tilapia fishpond, vegetable garden)
 - Policy initiative to fund the purchase of software for online/offline operation
 - Establishment of Mini-market for the community: (government will buy products of farmers, hire residents to deliver goods, etc).
 - Public-Private-Partnership for quick and efficient delivery of services.
 - Standardize guidelines on Barter for those with very limited buying capacity
5. Policies on clustering barangays
 - Identify what barangay has the available land, has a network of transportation, and has enough funding.

- Technology transfer. Assessment of the LGU on what is the capacity and availability of resources of residents that might be needed by the LGU (Welder, Mason, Painter, etc.)
- 6. Policy on Transparency (Amendment: During any Pandemic) - During the pandemic, essentials should not hamper due to any pandemic. Countries may look into amending some policies on transparency, no hoarding, no panic buying, or even less export restrictions in terms of essential trade. WTO may gather data on health, food, and other supplies from each country. This may help each country access supplies from other countries.
- 7. Global tariff policy (Amendment: During Pandemic) - Remove or lessen tariffs to lessen countries' expenses.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The impact of COVID-19 is a crucial issue now as many countries still struggle to recover. The purpose of this study was to review the research findings of the impacts of COVID-19 in the Philippines and recommend policies to address these impacts. The three dimensions were education, health and safety, and economy. The reviewed research findings suggest that COVID-19 in our country is not yet contained. Thus, the results of this study recommend twelve policies. These policies might help mitigate the impacts of these three interrelated sectors of the pandemic in the Philippines. Further, it is suggested to re-examine and highlight the public policy features of planning and key measures for rural and urban development, promoting the optimization of land and space planning, and governance from various aspects such as enhanced healthy and safety community guidelines, and smart plan for education, economy, social and other aspects of recovery and revitalization.

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