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FOREWORD

Journal publication is the pinnacle of research dissemination. It is through publishing of scholarly works where the research culture can thrive in an academic institution such as the University of the Assumption.

The Summit, the official journal of the University of the Assumption (UA), publishes doctorate dissertations and masters' theses. It is composed of editors who carefully select written manuscripts using standards in research in its issues. Its published annual issue showcases the best research outputs for the duration of the whole year.

The 16th (2022) issue of "The Summit" is a compilation of five masters' theses. These papers were first defended in front of esteemed panelists prior to submission as final requirement for the graduate school degree. In response to the challenge of publishing quality researches, "The Summit", with pride and joy, presents the following studies:

"Overcoming the blows, conquering the lows": exploring the challenges, coping strategies and positive attributes of high performing children raised by solo mothers is the thesis of Ysabelle Marie E. Curay for the degree of Master of Arts in Guidance Counseling. It is qualitative research that used a phenomenological process in exploring the challenges, coping strategies, and positive attributes of high performing children raised by solo mothers.

Perceived English language's power and attitude toward it: basis for the intensification of the oral English language teaching is the thesis of Christopher F. Torio for the degree in Master of Arts in Education, major in English. This mixed method investigation analyzed the perceptions of randomly selected grades 7 to 10 students and teachers of a national comprehensive high school on the importance of the spoken English language and their attitude toward it.

Matching degree program requirements and industry needs: A systematic review of the Business Administration major in Marketing Management is the thesis of Mharee Joie Shynne P. Gomez for the degree of Master of Arts in Public Administration. This mixed- method research principally aims to investigate the level of congruency between the competencies set by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) for the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) major in Marketing Management (MM) with that of the needs of the industry.

"Scoping the 8Cs of 21st century learning in a Catholic elementary school in the context of the k to 12 curriculum" is the thesis of John Denver A. Desolo for the degree in Master of Arts in Education major in Educational Management. This study looked into the curricular program of the participating Catholic elementary school with the objective of describing the means and methods of how said institution nurtures the eight 21st Century Skills (8Cs) as identified by the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) and adapted by the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) through its Revitalizing Teaching-Learning for Highly Effective K to 6 Classrooms (ReTEACH) Program.

Exploring the experiences and insights on "pagpapatawad" (forgiveness) of successful professionals who were victims of childhood bullying is the thesis of Lianne C. Calma for the degree in Master of Arts in Guidance Counseling. This mixed method study ultimately aimed at deriving inputs to recommend for designing or enhancing a guidance program for young adults particularly on helping them overcome bullying experiences.

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Overcoming the blows, conquering the lows: Exploring the challenges, coping strategies and positive attributes of high performing children raised by solo mothers

Ysabelle Marie E. Curay

Master of Arts in Guidance and Counseling

Abstract

This phenomenological study explores the challenges, coping strategies and positive attributes of high performing children raised by solo mothers. The participants in the study are 11 high performing children of solo mothers, whose mothers have separated with their spouses through legal separation. The data gathered underwent the phenomenological analysis of Hychner which consisted of nine stages. The internal challenges of the high performing children are longing for paternal affection and witnessing maternal struggles while the external challenges are financial pressure and limited maternal guidance. The coping strategies of these children are turning to prayer (spiritual), maintaining optimism (cognitive), striving hard academically, diverting attention and allocating financial resources (behavioral), and seeking social support (social). The positive attributes of the participants are prayerfulness (spiritual), friendliness (social), determination and optimism (cognitive), and diligence in study and responsibility (behavioral). A program for children of solo parents is proposed due to the increasing number of children of solo parents in schools. This program serves to assist these children and help them adjust, cope, and reach their full potentials and abilities despite the various challenges they have to face that are caused by their family situation.

Keywords: challenges, coping strategies, high performing children, positive attributes

INTRODUCTION

Individuals enter into a state of life through marriage where they establish their rights and obligations not only between them but to their children as well. However, over the course of a relationship, conflict happens which can lead to separation. Thus, a solo parent is left to survive and take care of the children. These solo parents, especially their children may face great risks due to the various 'blows' or challenges and 'lows' or adversities that is caused by their family set-up. Their family set up may also considerably influence the children's academic and overall well-being.

The family is the most important unit in the society. It is the community in which a person will learn and discover the values and morals in life (Guy, 2013). The family is considered to be one of the main ingredients to the formation and growth of the personality and one of its main responsibilities is to rear and teach the children with the values in the society (Mabuza, Thwala & Okeke, 2014; Pakistan Council on Family Relations, n.d.). Moreover, it was also found that the family and the environment at home greatly impact the personality development and educational achievement of children (Cole, 2011). In the Philippines, Filipino families showcase the culture, traditions, and the traits and values of Filipinos which emphasizes the importance of family

closeness (Morillo & Mendoza, 2013). However, there are unfavorable circumstances within families that will require the parenting to be left in the hands of solo parents (Mabuza et al., 2014).

Solo parenthood is a role of the increasing number of men and women who are experiencing the absence of their partner or spouse (Foronda, n.d). The Philippine Republic Act No. 8972 states that a solo parent is an individual who takes the responsibility of being both a mother and a father to a child due to categories (p.1).

On a global scale, there are 320 million children or 14 percent of the 2.3 billion children worldwide that are currently living in a solo parent household which is most often headed by solo mothers (Chamie, 2016). Even developed western countries are experiencing an increase in solo parent families. In fact, the United States has the highest percentage of solo families worldwide followed by Canada and Australia (International Encyclopedia of Marriage and Family, 2003). On the other hand, in Asian countries, Japan has the highest prevalence of solo families followed by South Korea and Taiwan (Yeung & Cheung, 2015). Ostensibly, it was also found that among these solo parent families, mother-headed households are the most common (International Encyclopedia of Marriage and Family, 2003).

In the Philippines, the Trade and Union Congress (TUC) in 2012 revealed that there are at least 14 million Filipinos who are solo parents who took the responsibility of raising their children all by themselves. Statistics shows that solo parents composed of about 14 to 15 percent which is approximately 94 million Filipinos and that 83.1% of the population of solo parents are solo mothers and 16.9% are solo fathers.

McLanahan and Sandefur in their 1994 study (as cited in the International Encyclopedia of Marriage and Family in 2003) found that in the first few years of separation of parents, children display antisocial behavior, anxiety, and experience school problems. In addition, children with solo parent households, particularly children who live with their solo mothers, have low self-confidence, have feelings of abandonment, and have difficulty in socializing with their peers (Dava, Kantonya, Tamika & Sandee, 2014).

Children raised without fathers are seen to have discipline and conduct problems, and low interpersonal skills (Allen & Daly, 2007). Consequently, Bogenschneider (1993) found in her study that male adolescents from solo mother families are likely to be dependent in alcoholic beverages and prohibited drugs and are more likely to join in criminal acts. On the other hand, females who grew up without fathers display promiscuous behavior and are eight times more likely to be pregnant during their teenage years than girls who have fathers (Mancini & Briggs, 2010).

Aside from these negative effects of the fathers' absence on children, another difficulty that solo mother households face is financial instability. It is evident that families with absent fathers experience economic difficulty due to the lack of income (Mancini & Briggs, 2012). In fact, a study of Huang and colleagues in 2016 found that compared with the other types of family set-up, solo mother families are more likely to be at risk in facing poverty and have a higher possibility to be poor and remain poor for a long time. With this situation, it is very difficult for solo mothers to provide for the needs of their children such as child care, health costs, and even child's education which considerably affects the emotional and educational stability of children (Kunz, 2015; Mather, 2010).

The study of Rani in 2006 among Indian children raised by solo mothers revealed that compared to children with two parents, children of mother-headed households acquire fewer years of education and are more likely to drop out of school due to poverty and lack of parental involvement. Also, children from mother-headed households reveal receiving less assistance and

help in their school works due to the lack of supervision and involvement from their mothers which led to the decrease of their academic performance in school.

Additionally, it is reported that the absence of a father causes a decline in the achievement of children in school and created an increased reports of truancy and repetition of grade levels among children (Wood, n.d.). This implies that fathers portray a vital role in the intellectual and academic well-being of children (Ward, 2008).

Moreover, Qureshi and Ahmad (2014) highlighted the importance of fathers when it comes to the academic achievement of children. It was mentioned in the study that fathers are the ones that provide and maintain a good and healthy home and school environment for children that greatly influence children's academic motivation which leads to acquiring achievements in school. A positive correlation was also found between father involvement and children's academic and overall well-being in the study.

Parental involvement is a key in the performance of students in school. Higher involvement of parents in children will result into a lot of benefits. When parents are active and supportive in the education of their children, children will have higher grades, will display good behavior in class and will have better skills in socializing (Mwirichia, 2013). Pinantoan in 2013 also mentioned in his study that the involvement of parents in their children's education must not be taken for granted. It was found that children whose both parents are involved within their education are 52% more likely to achieve and behave in school than children whose parents lack time and supervision with the education of their children. In solo parent households, children often receive limited parental involvement and less academic and emotional stimulation which results in poor social skills and poor performance in school (Kunz, 2015). The lack of guidance, nourishment, and encouragement from parents indeed damages the condition of the development of children (Kunz, 2015).

It is no doubt that solo mothers and their children experience struggles and problems, but that does not mean that they cannot cope and function well in the society (Vangorodska, 2012). It is important to note that the problems these children are experiencing are not solely caused by solo parenting but are caused by the combination of factors such as economic pressures, instability of the family, and conflict between the parents (Kelly, n.d.).

There are also few studies that tried to identify the positive effects of this family set up to their children. In Wolf (2017), it is revealed that children of solo parents also acquire positive traits despite their family situations. With sufficient resources, solo parents may also give their children with secured and nurturing homes in which these children grow and develop holistically just like children with two parents (Kelly, n.d.).

Due to the several studies that emphasized the negative effects of being raised by solo mothers, people frequently miss the strengths of this family set up that enables children of solo mothers to thrive and blossom despite their family situation. It is in this regard that this research attempted to explore and focus on the challenges, coping strategies, and the positive attributes of children of solo mothers, specifically, the high performing and outstanding children of solo mothers. According to Guadalupe (n.d.), children are considered to be high performing when they display high levels of capacity in their intellectual, creative or artistic, and leadership aspects. This being said, the research focuses on children who excel not only in the academic aspect but also are manifesting excellent conduct in school, and are active in their extra-curricular activities.

The research investigated about the usual challenges that these children experience, their ways of overcoming these challenges, and the positive characteristics that helped them be high performing students despite the challenges they face caused by their family set-up.

With the study's overarching objective of utilizing the inputs for a specialized guidance program for school children who are raised by solo mothers, the study aims to achieve the following specific objectives: (1) identify the different challenges faced by the high performing children of solo parents, (2) describe the coping strategies that they do in facing these challenges, and (3) identify the positive attributes of children raised by solo parents that made them outstanding despite their family situation.

Moreover, the inputs and findings that were gathered are hoped to be of help to the school administrators and teachers, guidance counselors, and other researchers. The findings of the study may shed light about the situations of children who are coming from solo parent families that may guide school authorities and teachers who are considered as the second parents in school. On the other hand, the guidance counselors may utilize the findings of the study to plan inputs for a specialized program for children raised by solo mothers that may assist and help such children to reach their full potentials and abilities while overcoming the 'blows' and 'lows' of their family situation. Finally, other researchers may also use the findings to augment the study they aim to explore.

METHOD

The study employed a qualitative method approach that used a phenomenological process in exploring the challenges, coping strategies, and positive attributes of high performing children raised by solo mothers. The main goal of this research method is to gather sufficient information and insights from the participants through inductive and qualitative methods such as discussions, interviews and participant observations (Lester, n.d.).

The participants in the study are 11 high performing children of solo mothers, whose mothers have separated with their spouses through legal separation. These participants are currently enrolled in the grade school level among private basic education institutions. The study focused in the late childhood stage which is defined as ages 9 to 12 or the children in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade.

In addition to this, participant-children are those who excel in academics, conduct, and extra-curricular. In particular, the 11 participant-children are those who are: (1) Honor students with a general point average of 90 and above with no grade lower than 80 in the final rating in any subject area; (2) have excellent conduct record with no record of disciplinary problem or disciplinary action taken against them; and lastly (3) participant-children are also student-leaders and are active in their extra-curricular activities. Tables 1 and 2 present the participants' profile and accomplishment, respectively.

Table 1 below shows the demographic profile of the participant-children in terms of their gender, grade level, number of years living in a solo parent home set-up, parents' marital status, the people with them at home, and their achievements. There are 11 participant-children in the study. Seven of them are female and four are males. Four of them are currently in the fourth grade, five are in the fifth grade, and two are in the sixth grade. All of the participant-children's parents are separated by legal separation. Moreover, four of the participant-children are in a nuclear family arrangement while seven are in an extended family arrangement.

Table 1
Participant-children's profile

Participants	Gender	Grade Level	No. of Years Being Raised by a Solo Mother	Parents' Marital Status	Family Arrangement
1	F	6	5	Legally separated	Extended
2	F	5	4	Legally separated	Nuclear
3	F	5	7	Legally separated	Extended
4	F	5	5	Legally separated	Extended
5	F	5	7	Legally separated	Nuclear
6	M	4	6	Legally separated	Extended
7	F	4	4	Legally separated	Extended
8	M	4	5	Legally separated	Nuclear
9	M	6	5	Legally separated	Nuclear
10	M	4	4	Legally separated	Extended
11	F	5	5	Legally separated	Extended

In terms of the participant-children's accomplishments, Table 2 below presents all their achievements and the numbers of years they were achievers. All of them are academic achievers, students with honors, student leaders, and are very active in extra-curricular activities. Additionally, the participant-children have good conduct record and have never been subjected to any disciplinary actions.

Table 2
Participant-children's achievements

Participant	Achievements	No. of Years as Achievers
1	Consistent academic achiever, Student with honors, Class Officer, Varsity player	5
2	Consistent academic achiever, Student with honors, Class Officer, Represents school in dance competitions	3
3	Consistent academic achiever, Student with honors, Class Officer, Represents school in dance competitions	4
4	Consistent academic achiever, Student with honors, Class Officer, Academic Team member	5
5	Consistent academic achiever, Student with honors, Class officer, Varsity player	5
6	Consistent academic achiever, Student with high honors, Class officer, Varsity player	4
7	Consistent academic achiever, Student with honors, Class officer, Girl Scout member	4
8	Consistent academic achiever, Student with honors, Class officer, Represents school in singing competition	4
9	Consistent academic achiever, Student with honors, Musician, Varsity player	5
10	Consistent academic achiever, Student with honors, Class officer, Science club member	4
11	Consistent academic achiever, Student with honors, Class officer, Theater member	5

The instrument that was used was an interview guide formulated by the researcher. The instrument was utilized to gain in depth knowledge about the challenges, coping strategies, and the positive attributes of the participant-children. Furthermore, the instrument was checked and validated by three experts with sufficient knowledge about qualitative research.

During the data gathering procedure, the research observed the following steps: Three professionals with sufficient knowledge and experience about qualitative research were requested to check and examine the interview guide used in the study. Since the study involved minor participants, it was necessary to obtain a clearance form coming from the institutional ethical review board before proceeding to the data gathering part. Fortunately, a clearance form was obtained from the institutional ethical review board committee. This means that the methods and procedure that were intended to do were correct and ethical.

After obtaining the approval of the ethics board committee, selection of participant-children in the study was observed. When potential participant-children were identified, a letter for the administrators of the schools was written to seek for permission to allow the researcher to conduct the study. The mothers of the participant-children were invited to the Guidance Office of the school and were asked for their permission to allow their children to participate in the study.

An informed consent was given to the mothers of the participant-children which includes the purpose of the study, the process of the interview, the possible risks and benefits of their participation in the study, their right to confidentiality, their right to withdraw from the study anytime, and their right to know the results of the study and to have a copy of the study. After obtaining an informed consent from the mothers of the participants, the participant-children were individually invited in the Guidance Office of the school to obtain their consent and ask for their willingness to take part in the study by giving an assent form. This was also the opportunity to build rapport and to gain the trust of the solo mothers and the participant-children.

The data gathering part was consisted of three interview sessions. The first session was the discussion about the purpose of the study, the risks and benefits in participating in the study, their right to confidentiality and, their right to withdraw at any time. This was also the time where the researcher tried to build and gain the trust of the participant-children in the study by interviewing them in a play room and by keeping the conversation with them as light as possible.

The second interview session with the participant-children focused on obtaining the necessary data that is needed in the study. This interview session was also done in a play room to maintain the friendly atmosphere between the participant-children and the researcher. Lastly, the third session focused on follow up and the clarification of the accounts of participant-children. Moreover, six parents and six classroom advisers of the participant-children were also individually interviewed to substantiate the accounts of the participant-children.

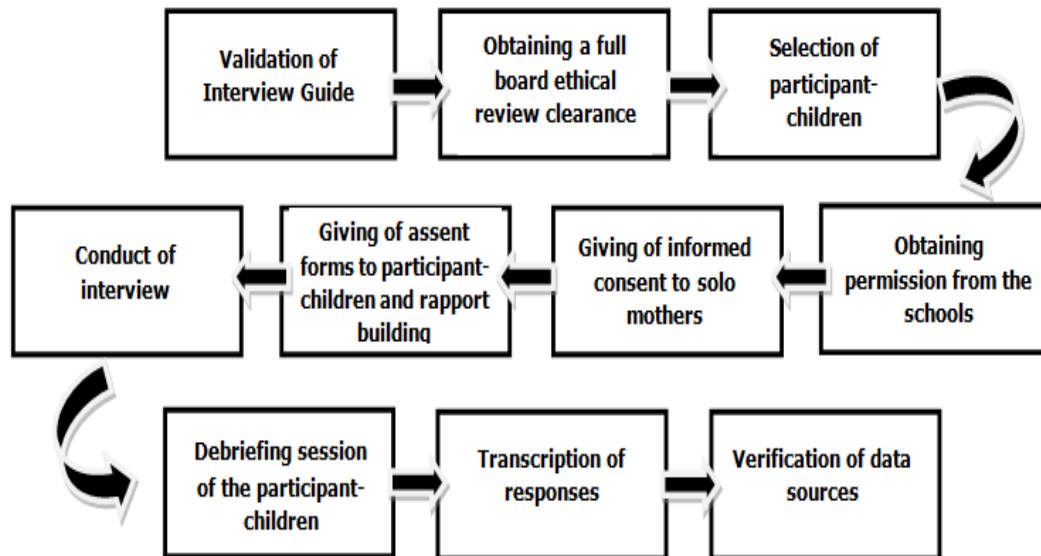
All interviews of the participant-children, their solo mothers, and classroom advisers lasted for 30 to 45 minutes. Participant-children in the study underwent a debriefing session with the help of their guidance counselor in the school and the partner psychologist of the school to help the participants process and manage their emotions after the interview sessions.

The responses of the participant-children, solo mothers, and classroom advisers were recorded and were transcribed. The participant-children, solo mothers, and classroom advisers were given copies of their transcribed responses and were asked to sign for the authenticity and veracity of the transcripts.

Figure 1 below illustrates the summary of the described data gathering procedure.

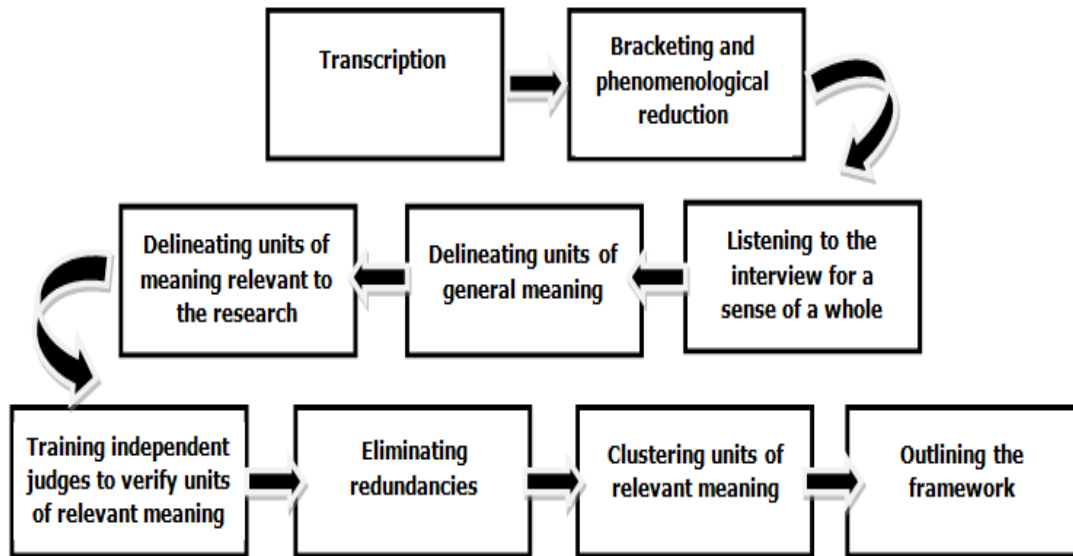
Figure 1

Flowchart of the data gathering procedure



The data gathered underwent the phenomenological analysis of Hychner (cited in Madlambayan, 2014) which consisted of nine stages: *Transcription*- This was the process which involved collating and transcribing all the interview data together with the notable non-verbal cues responses; *Bracketing and the phenomenological reduction*- this procedure involved in listening to the audio-taped interview and reading the transcripts with openness and without judgment to whatever meanings appear. This was a way to bracket and classify the meanings and interpretation of the responses of the participant-children in the study. During this process, the matrices of the views of the participant-children were used in order to understand what they wanted to say instead of the researcher's expectations of the participant-children's responses; *Listening to the interview for a sense of the whole*- this procedure required to repeatedly listen and read the transcripts of the participant-children to discover the essence of their experiences; *Delineating units of general meaning*- this thorough process involved going to every word, phrase, sentence, and non-verbal cues in the transcripts of the participant-children in order to extract the meanings of their responses. This is the process of obtaining the essence of the meanings of the word, phrase, sentence, and non-verbal cues of the participant-children; *Delineating units of meaning relevant to the research question*- once the units of the general meaning were been acquired; it was the time to inspect if the responses of the participant-children were aligned with the objectives of the study; *Training independent judges to verify the units of relevant meaning*- this process is done for reliability check. Trained professionals were asked to validate and verify the units of relevant meanings; *Eliminating redundancies*-this process involved the elimination of redundancies in the units of relevant meanings; *Clustering units of relevant meaning*- This step required the merging of all the clusters that were identified to establish the themes that will encapsulate its essence. The last procedure was *Outlining of the framework*- this final step involved the creation of the framework that will represent the emerging themes of the study. This procedure is summarized in Figure 2.

Figure 2
Flowchart of the phenomenological analysis of Hychner



For the validation of the findings of the study, the following validation strategies were used: *Correspondence*- the transcribed responses were given to the participants, their solo mothers, and their classroom advisers to authenticate the transcripts; *Critical Friend Technique*- three experts that were not involved in the study were asked to check and validate the categories and themes that were formulated. The last validation strategy employed was the *Member checking procedure*-this procedure was done with the assistance of another person involved in the data analysis of the study to determine the trustworthiness of the data being explored in the study.

FINDINGS

Challenges faced by Children raised by Solo Mothers

Table 3 shows the challenges that the participant-children encountered due to their family set-up. Longing for paternal affection, witnessing maternal struggles, experiencing financial pressure, and limited maternal guidance are the adversities that the participants face.

Table 3
Participant-children's challenges

Category	Themes	No. of Responses
Internal Challenges	Longing for paternal affection	6
	Witnessing maternal struggles	3
External Challenges	Financial pressure	4
	Limited maternal guidance	2

Table 4 presents the responses of the solo mothers when they were asked about the challenges that they think their children experiences. Both the participant-children and their solo mothers perceived longing for paternal affection, witnessing maternal struggles, and experiencing financial pressure. However, solo mothers did not mention maternal guidance as a challenge for their children.

Table 4

Participant-children's challenges as perceived by their solo mothers

Category	Themes	No. of Responses
Internal Challenges	Longing for paternal affection	5
	Witnessing maternal struggles	3
External Challenges	Financial pressure	2

Coping Strategies of Children raised by Solo Mothers

Table 5 displays the coping strategies that the participant-children do in defying the challenges they face. Said coping strategies are turning to prayer, maintaining optimism, striving hard academically, diverting attention, allocating financial resources, and seeking social support.

Table 5

Participant-children's coping strategies

Category	Themes	No. of Responses
Spiritual Coping	Turning to Prayer	2
Cognitive Coping	Maintaining Optimism	2
Behavioral Coping	Striving hard academically	4
	Diverting attention	4
	Allocating financial resources	3
Social Coping	Seeking social support	3

Table 6 shows the coping strategies of the participant-children as said by their solo mothers. They, too, mentioned that turning to prayer, allocating financial resources, and seeking social support are the effective coping strategies their children do in dealing with adversities.

Table 6

Participants' coping strategies according to their solo mothers

Category	Themes	No. of Responses
Spiritual Coping	Turning to Prayer	3
Behavioral Coping	Allocating financial resources	3
Social Coping	Seeking social support	6

Positive Attributes of Children raised by Solo Mothers

Table 7 exhibits the positive attributes of the participant-children that have helped them achieved in school despite their family set-up. The participant-children said the following attributes: prayerfulness, friendliness, determination, optimism, diligence in study and responsibility.

Table 7

Participant-children's positive attributes

Category	Themes	No. of Responses
Spiritual Attribute	Prayerfulness	2
Social Attribute	Friendliness	3
Cognitive Attribute	Determination	2
	Optimism	2
Behavioral Attribute	Diligence in study	6
	Responsibility	2

Tables 8 and 9 below show the positive attributes of the participant-children that were observed by their solo mothers and their classroom advisers. Both the solo mothers and classroom advisers said that they see the attributes of determination, and diligence among the participant-children. Moreover, the solo mothers added that they also observed the attribute of prayerfulness among the participant-children. Classroom advisers, on the other hand, also have added that the trait responsibility is evident among the participant-children.

Table 8

Participant-children's positive attributes as observed by the solo mothers

Category	Themes	No. of Responses
Spiritual Attribute	Prayerfulness	2
Cognitive Attribute	Determination	2
Behavioral Attribute	Diligence in study	6

Table 9

Participant-children's positive attributes as seen by their teachers

Category	Themes	No. of Responses
Cognitive Attribute	Determination	3
Behavioral Attribute	Diligence in study	4
	Responsibility	4

DISCUSSION

The main thrust of the paper is to utilize its findings for the possible creation of a specialized guidance program for school children who are raised by solo mothers by exploring the challenges, coping strategies, and the positive attributes of high performing children of solo mothers.

The first step in understanding the situation of these children is to identify the challenges that they face. Out of the responses obtained from the participant-children that were verified by their solo mothers, four main challenges were determined. Participant-children revealed that one of the problems that they have to deal with is their longing and desire to have their fathers. They have mentioned that they still miss and long for the presence of their fathers. The feeling of loneliness and longing are common challenges that children of solo parents deal with (Fagan & Churchill, 2012). A study of Johnson in 1981 stated that being in a solo parent home set up creates a feeling of emptiness and longing on the part of the children. Children of solo parents often expresses having feelings of hurt and loneliness due to the lack of care, attention, and emotional support from their fathers (Mancini & Briggs, 2010).

Facing economic strains and witnessing maternal struggles are also seen to be challenges for the participant-children. Since solo parent households only have one income earner, it is not surprising that the participant-children experience having a tight budget. Participant-children admitted of not seeing their report cards due to their unsettled school fees. According to study of Kirby (n.d.), solo mother households are more likely to experience financial crisis and poverty due to lower earning capacity of women and lack of financial support from the fathers of their children. In fact, among other types of solo families, households that are headed by mothers are more likely to be at risk in experiencing poverty (Huang et al., 2016). Financial crisis is a major problem that is encountered by solo families because of the limited resources they have. Given this situation, it is very difficult for solo mothers to provide for the basic needs of their children like food, clothing, fees in schools, and other personal expenses (Raj, 2009). Additionally, due of the financial crisis that is experienced by solo parent families, it is necessary to the part of the solo mothers to double their efforts to provide on their family's needs. Unfortunately, this is seen as a challenge for the part of the participant-children since it results in having limited supervision of their solo mothers to them.

Experiencing limited supervision from solo parents is a common complication that children of solo parents confront. Participant-children said that sometimes, they do not get to see and be with their mothers due to their mothers' work schedule. It is reported in Weldegabreal (2014) that solo mothers tend to divide their time between work and home because of the need to provide for their needs. Sadly, this results in having less time with their children. Furthermore, solo mothers are reported to have less time in monitoring their children and in helping them out with their school work which may affect the children's academic success (Abudu & Fuseini, 2013). However, it was also found in a study that these children also understand their solo mothers' limited time for them because they know that it is for their own good (Weldegabreal, 2014).

Aside from identifying the challenges that the participant-children face, the study also sought to explore on the coping strategies that they do in overcoming said challenges. These children from solo mother households experience hardships and difficulties in life. However, they expressed that they do not dwell much on their problems. They were able to determine different coping ways that they do to overcome these challenges.

Turning to God in times of trouble is one of the coping strategies recognized by the participant-children. Filipinos are known to have a high level of spirituality and religiosity and this was reflected in the participant-children's responses. In Batara (2015), it was found that generally,

the Filipino youth are religious and that they usually resort to spiritual coping mechanism in dealing with their problems and losses. Additionally, it is a noticeable trait among Filipinos that spirituality is expressed spontaneously in relation to problems and adversities (Mansukhani et al., 2009). It is through prayer that many people get the strength and courage that they need in facing life circumstances (Passley, 2006).

The findings of the study also revealed that maintaining optimism and keeping a positive attitude help the participant-children deal with the challenges they encounter. According to the Trade and Union of the Philippines in their survey in 2014, Filipinos, specifically the Filipino youth, exhibit optimism about their future. Conversano and his colleagues stated in their 2010 study that having optimism as a trait greatly influence coping in everyday life. Moreover, keeping a positive attitude is also found to be an effective strategy in coping and dealing with stressful environments because having an optimistic point of view may lessen the negative feeling such as depression, shame, and anger that a person may experience which is caused by adversities and traumatic experiences (Srivastava & Angelo, 2009; Strutton & Lumpkin, 2010).

Striving for academic success and focusing on their studies are effective ways of coping stress for the participant-children. Many believe that education is a “treasure”, a vital tool that one may use in the contemporary world. It is considered important because it is used to mitigate most of the challenges faced in life. With this, making great efforts in regard to academic matter in their performances in school were found to be helpful among the participant-children in dealing with the challenges that they experience. They said that seeing the struggles of their solo mothers in providing for their needs inspires them to achieve more and perform better. This finding is consistent with the study of Clark in 2007 about African American male children of solo mothers. The study stated that despite their situation, children coming from solo parent household focus their attention on striving academically to be able to help their mothers. This eagerness to be academically successful is also influenced by their mothers’ constant reminder that their education should always be their priority.

Diverting the participant-children’s attention to pleasant things is also a coping strategy that is seen to be effective. Participant-children mentioned that engaging with sports, writing, and playing with their classmates and friends aid them to forget negative thoughts about their situation. In psychology, this type of coping is called distraction. Distraction is a coping strategy which diverts the attention of a person away from stressors and focus on other thoughts and behavior that are not associated with the stressor (Traeger, 2013). Sports, writing, and playing are considered good distraction strategies. Engaging in sports and writing are learned to be effective coping strategies that may assist people with their emotional fallout due to traumatic experiences and stressful situations (Lapefia et al., 2009; Nicholson, n.d.). In another study, Capursoa and Pazzaglia (2014) said that play is a common coping for children because through play, children make events that they can control through an imaginary frame where they can freely express their negative emotions and feelings. This makes play an effective way for children to cope with their stress and in regulating their emotions (Russ, as cited in Capursoa & Pazzaglia in 2014).

Lastly, participant-children and their solo mothers concur in acknowledging the importance of social support from their families and friends as a tool that help them deal with problems. This finding is in agreement with those in Greef and Fillis (2009) who found that assistance from friends and family ranked second most important coping strategy among single parent families because receiving encouragement and support from family members and friends strengthen their quality of life and serve as a catalyst in enabling them to recover from their adversities. This fortifies that social support helps a person maintain physical and mental health (Kim & Sherman, 2008).

Several studies suggest that children coming from solo mother households do not excel in school and are more likely to be involved with problems (Borger et al., 1996; Park, 2008; Thiessen, n.d.). A study also has enumerated negative traits that are associated with children of solo mothers such as being aggressive, having low self-esteem, and displaying of antisocial behavior (Fagan & Churchill, 2012).

However, another feature of this study is highlighting and identifying the positive attributes of children from solo mother households that helped them become outstanding students despite the challenges they face caused their family situation. Participant-children mentioned the following attributes that enabled them to thrive: prayerfulness, friendliness, determination, diligence in study, optimism, and responsibility. Their mothers and the classroom advisers also have substantiated the abovementioned attributes.

Participant-children indicated the attribute of being prayerful. Being prayerful as said by the participants assisted them become achievers. Participant-children stated that praying before the exam is beneficial. This finding may have taken root from the trait of Filipinos of being religious and spiritual. According to Pierson (n.d.), praying to the Almighty is a behavior that is very much part of the daily routine among Filipinos. The same study said that Filipinos are known to be dependent on God and that praying is a way of asking for courage and guidance in the day to day living.

Another trait that the participants possess is friendliness. The participants said that being friendly and having lots of friends helped them achieved recognition because they believe that friends aid them during tough times. Children of solo parents value the importance of their friends and peer as they see their friends and peers as source of support (Lapefia, 2009). Additionally, support that is given by friends significantly help in dealing with their adversities and may have long term benefits (Webber & Boromeo, n.d.).

Determination and diligence in studies are also attributes observed among the participant-children. They said that they are eager to finish school and are diligent with their studies so they can help their solo mothers. Additionally, they also mentioned that they are doing these for their solo mothers. The statements of the participants are similar to the findings of Clark in 2007 among African American male children of solo mothers. The study revealed that male children of solo mothers possess the qualities of being eager to finish school and being studious because of the constant motivation coming from their mothers and their mothers' constant reminder that academic success is important.

In this study, the participant-children were found to have positive attitude which they themselves attest. They strive to only focus on the positive and pleasant events in their lives in order to achieve success. This finding is similar to the study of Golombok and colleagues in 2016 that revealed children of solo parents also possess an optimistic view about family and life just like children in two parent home set-up. The same study mentioned that children with strong and positive relationship with their solo parents also acquire positive feelings about themselves and grow up to be healthy individuals who can also develop positive relationships with others. Moreover, it was found that a solo mother's maternal optimism is associated with positive parenting that can lead to having resilient and positive children (Jones et al., 2002).

Finally, participants of the study mentioned the need of having the sense of responsibility to achieve success. This finding corresponds to the study of Wolf in 2017 which revealed that children who are raised by solo parents learn to have the value of responsibility and independence being aware that their contribution to the family is needed. In addition to this, children of solo parents are also seen to be more responsible and mature compared with their peers because of being

charged to do more tasks and duties by their solo parents, thus, making children of solo parents value the importance of planning and handling their actions (Nelsen et al., 1999).

Despite the several literatures that has put children of solo mothers in a bad light, the participant-children of this study appeared to have defied the odds and broken the stigma about children of solo mothers.

Although many studies have associated children of solo mothers to have low academic performance and that children of solo mothers may less likely achieve and do well in school, the participant-children have proven that children coming from solo mother households may also perform well in school just like children with two parents. In fact, there are a few research that have supported this finding. A study of Barajas in 2011 revealed that children from broken families can also succeed with their academics. Actually, some children who were raised by solo parents even do better in school than children belonging to two parent households. This may be explained by possible protective factors that have helped the participants eliminate the risk caused by their family situation.

Innis in her 2014 study among children of divorced parents found that protective factors such as the healthy parent and child relationship, the resilience of the parents, social connections, and emotional competence of children have assisted these children to successfully deal with the challenges and adversities that they have to deal with.

Although family structure is seen to be an important aspect in influencing a child's well-being, it is also important to remember that it is not the only factor to consider (Bogenschneider et al., 1993). Having a positive relationship with the solo parent plus support that comes from the extended family and peers profoundly influence not only the academic success of these children but also their overall well-being (Murry et al., 2001).

Furthermore, based on the findings of the present study and on those with the reviewed literature that substantiated these findings, it can be concluded that what is important to these children, and what constitutes their success despite being in a solo mother household is the quality of parenting they receive, the healthy and positive mother-child relationship, and the support and encouragement from their friends and peers. These factors put together overshadow the children's longing for their fathers.

Inputs for a Proposed Program for Children of Solo Parents

Rationale:

A program for children of solo parents is proposed due to the increasing number of children of solo parents in schools. This program serves to assist these children and help them adjust, cope, and reach their full potentials and abilities despite the various challenges they have to face that are caused by their family situation.

The proposed activities in this program are based on the findings of the research titled: **"Overcoming the Blows, Conquering the Lows: Exploring the Challenges, Coping Strategies, and Positive Attributes of High Performing Children Raised by Solo Mothers"** which explored the challenges, coping ways, and positive attributes of high performing children of solo mothers which helped them become outstanding students in school despite their situation in the family.

The following are the study's findings and the proposed activities for each finding.

CHALLENGES	
	ACTIVITIES
Longing for paternal affection	Focus group discussions
Witnessing maternal struggles	Focus group discussions
Financial pressure	Tips on spending wisely
Limited maternal guidance	Seminar/Awareness and understanding solo parent family set-up
COPING	
	ACTIVITIES
Turning to prayer	Recollection
Maintaining optimism	Highlighting strengths (Positive Psychology)
Striving hard academically	Study habits seminar
Diverting attention	Coping skills worksheets
Allocating financial resources	Tips on budgeting allowance
Seeking social support	Importance of family and friends
POSITIVE ATTRIBUTES	
	ACTIVITIES
Prayerfulness	Recollection
Friendliness	Benefits of being sociable
Determination	Role of determination in success
Diligence in study	Study habits seminar
Optimism	Highlighting strengths (Positive Psychology)
Responsibility	Time management workshop

Emerging Framework

Figure 3 illustrates the emerging framework of the study. The picture represents the challenges, the coping strategies, and the positive attributes of high performing children of solo mothers. Gray skies and storms illustrate the challenges and adversities that children of solo mothers experience which are longing for paternal affection, witnessing maternal struggles, financial pressure, and limited maternal guidance.

On the other hand, the umbrella that the solo mother and the child hold represents the coping strategies that the children do in facing the 'storms' in their lives. These coping strategies are turning to prayer, maintaining optimism, striving hard academically, allocating financial resources, and seeking social support.

Finally, each step in the ladder represents the positive attributes of children of solo mothers which are prayerfulness, friendliness, determination, diligence in studies, optimism, and responsibility. These are the attributes that the participants in the study possess that have helped them become high performers, overcoming the 'blows' and conquering the 'lows' that come along their lives as children of solo-parent-households.

Figure 3

Challenges, Coping Strategies, and Positive Attributes of High Performing Children of Solo Parents



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Perceived English language's power and attitude toward it: Basis for the intensification of the oral English language teaching

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Abstract

This mixed method investigation analyzed the perceptions of randomly selected grades 7 to 10 students (400) and teachers (54) of a national comprehensive high school on the importance of the spoken English language and their attitude toward it. Results of the study are intended to revalidate the usefulness of the spoken English as a tool in learning and to derive inputs for the strengthening of English instruction in the junior high school level. To supplement survey data, 14 Grade 7 students, classified as non-readers, were interviewed on their perceptions about the importance of the English language.

Results showed that the respondent-teachers and students have high regard on the importance of the English language with both groups posing high level of attitudes toward people who are good speakers of the English language but teachers have higher perception on the importance of English language than the students as evident in the registered average weighted means of 3.53 and 3.39, respectively. Meanwhile, statistics show that male and female teachers do not differ in their perceptions on the same variables and so do male and female students. On the other hand, a significant difference on how the respondent-students across grade levels perceived the importance of English and how they view people speaking it was further revealed.

English has been proven to be important, relevant and powerful for both teachers and students. With the realities presented in the study, particularly the arguing perceptions and attitudes of teachers and students towards the importance of English and its speakers, curriculum development and innovation could bolster the way how curriculum is being carried out to the clientele, particularly in making it more relevant and truly addressing the needs of the people it served.

Keywords: *Attitude towards English, English, language, perception towards English*

INTRODUCTION

Language serves as the soul of culture. It unites people by establishing connections through spoken words (Bridges, 2016). It influences the daily lives of all people regardless of race or region. Because language affects behavior and perception, culture is inherent within the language itself (Alptekin, 2002). Essentially, language is a primary means of communication for society. It allows individuals to express feelings, desires, and queries. Humans use words, gestures, and tone to portray complex emotions. This unique ability to communicate through written and spoken language allows humans to form lasting bonds. These bonds separate mankind from the rest of the animal kingdom. Consequently, language contributes to the totality of human development (Banga & Suri, 2015).

Language is the most common system of communication. It consists of arbitrary vocal symbols developed by social groups as a medium for expressing thoughts. As long as humans exist, language remains alive through continuous use (Magallona-Flores et al., 2006). This denotes

the complexity of the role language plays in establishing communication. Without language, the world would be filled with tension and discomfort (Ornos et al., 2004).

When learning a language, a person acquires four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Speaking is distinct because it requires a partner for practice. Speech sounds are crucial because they form the basis for word meanings. These sounds include vowels, consonants, diphthongs, and stress (Garma-Guiyab, 2006). Furthermore, communication acts as a central force in human activity (Fernando, Habana, & Cinco, 2005). It is used for education, entertainment, and the transfer of ideas (Bokhari, 2012). It facilitates social interaction and a more comprehensive knowledge of life. Effective learning results from the usage and meaning found in language. Additionally, communication helps individuals learn by allowing them to seek answers to questions (Thakur, 2014). In line with this, technology has also transformed how people deal with each other in business and social settings (Ramey, 2013), hence improved communication competence plays a pivotal role in the direction of future global decisions.

Communication determines the quality of life and human relationships. It serves as a bridge that penetrates the barriers of individuality (Padilla, 2003). To communicate effectively, one must speak a language fluently. Learning to speak well is a significant asset (Fernando, Habana, & Cinco, 2005). Most people are judged more for their speech than their writing. In schools, students must participate in discussions, debates, and oral reports. In the workplace, clear communication is a highly admired trait.

English has become a global necessity for utilitarian reasons (Cabrera & de Asis, 2008). It is the closest thing to a global lingua franca (Chopra, 2015). The dominance of English is evident in education, science, and the workplace. It even serves as a supranational language for European institutions (Truchot, 2002). In global call centers, English is naturally the spoken language (Mydans, 2007). In the Philippine context, English was acquired when the country became a territory of the United States from 1898 to 1940 (Mar, 2013). Since then, it has remained a medium of instruction (McArthur, 2002).

Moreover, English is essential for success in the business world. Vocabulary knowledge heavily influences general language competence. Students feel more secure and willing to communicate when they know more words (Stepanova, 2013). However, many non-English speakers find learning the language to be a daunting task (Samuels, 2013). Therefore, teachers must find creative ways to motivate students. When students feel confident, they are more likely to move toward full linguistic competence. Effective instruction must acknowledge gender differences and cultural heritage (Saravia-Shore, 2008).

Acquiring familiarity with the associated culture is also an integral part of language learning. Insights into daily life require more than just knowledge of grammar and syntax. Thus, teachers must incorporate sociocultural factors into the classroom as well (Palmer & Sharifian, 2007). Language teachers are often viewed as the driving force behind global understanding and peace (Kaboodvand, 2013). The classroom must provide an environment where communication is encouraged through formal and informal interaction. Students acquire information in various ways, such as reflecting or visualizing. Teachers often use their own preferred teaching styles, which may not always match student learning styles (Rao, 2013).

Positive attitudes facilitate learning, while negative attitudes act as psychological barriers (Al Samadani & Ilnian, 2015). Some students in Japan and Libya have shown a strong aversion to learning English (English Central, 2015; Abidin, Mohammadi & Alzwari, 2012). Language attitude

explains linguistic behavior and can be instrumental or integrative. It is vital for the survival and development of a language (Mamun, Rahman, & Rahman, 2012). Favorable attitudes help students learn, and although English does not have the most users, it remains the uncontested universal language for education and business.

Several factors can hinder language engagement. Many schools prioritize local languages over English in the curriculum. Some students do not see the importance of English if they do not plan to leave their home country (Senobio, 2015). Students often have limited time to practice English in class. At home, they may spend more time on social networking sites. However, the internet can also provide a context for using English (Chinnery, 2014). Student perceptions of technology in the classroom can affect the success of the learning process (Javad & Leila, 2015).

Digital media productions help build community and literacy skills (Brenner, 2014). However, proper pronunciation remains a major challenge. Poor pronunciation can lead to listener incomprehension and learner frustration. It also negatively impacts listening and writing skills (Walker, 2014). Vocabulary building is also a demanding challenge for foreign-language students (Barclay, 2013). It is essential for developing reading abilities. L2 acquisition is difficult without focused attention on target language forms (Schmidt, 2010, as cited in Zhang & Gao, 2014).

Grammar instruction is necessary for effective communicative skills and accuracy. Rules provide students with a sense of security (Payne, 2013). Teachers can help learners by designing activities that move from noticing patterns to real-life communication (Barra, 2013). These language areas are prerequisites for using English effectively. Developing these habits requires an exhausting process. Many people are positive toward English because they are instrumentally motivated (al Mamun, Rahman, & Rahman, 2012). Classroom activities prepared by teachers also have a promising effect on student attitudes (Ahmed, Yassatorn, Yossiri, & Yossiri, 2012).

Filipinos have used English since the American colonial era. English continues to penetrate Filipino society in various domains, including the home (Barlogan, 2009). The language environment for Filipino students is complex and characterized by multiple dialects (Lefever, 2013). Many Filipinos also practice code-switching between Filipino and English. Participants generally feel positive toward this code-switching (Durano, 2009). Because of the Philippine educational system, students may have varying attitudes toward the language. Teachers and students often develop different views based on their level of exposure.

This study presents a discourse on perceptions and attitudes toward spoken English. It highlights the relevance of English for 21st-century learners in the K-12 system. Although the Philippines is a large English-speaking nation, students still experience difficulties. As a multi-linguistic society, learners must master the mother tongue, Filipino, and English. Some students remain content with basic knowledge and lack interest in deeper study. Communication skills are essential for 21st-century education. Students and teachers must collaborate to remain globally competitive.

This study was initiated because people cannot escape English if they wish to be globally connected. The Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL-International) states that people hold deep beliefs about national and foreign languages. Attitudes are demonstrated through actual behavior, such as the desire to learn (SIL-International). Attitudinal studies help identify how language groups view one another. This study explores perceptions of the importance of English and the attitudes toward those who speak it. It also identifies how English proficiency may affect future career views.

The present study uses descriptive analysis and key-point coding from interviews. It focuses on the power of English and how it is perceived by teachers and students. Mismatches in attitudes suggest that the English curriculum may need a reorientation. This research was conducted in Pampanga, where Kapampangan is the primary language. Many students in the public sector are marginalized in their daily use of English. The results may strengthen learner engagement and serve as a tool for teachers.

The data can serve as a baseline for intervention programs. Special attention may be given to non-readers through strengthening English competencies. This may help teachers become more adaptive to student needs. Furthermore, the study may assist school leaders in initiating training and activities. Administrators can use these findings to support programs that develop self-confidence in students. These results may also pave the way for further research into other variables. Finally, this work contributes to the existing body of knowledge in language education. The study is delimited to the experiences of students and teachers in a specific secondary school.

Definition of Terms

- **Attitude:** A psychological tendency expressed by evaluating an entity with favor or disfavor (Eagly & Chaiken, 2007). Operationally, it refers to the feelings of teachers and students toward the English language.
- **Feeling:** The mental representation of physiological changes that characterize emotions (Damasio, 2001). In this study, it involves the outlook toward people who use English.
- **Perception:** The process of being aware of something in light of experiences (American Heritage® Dictionary, 2011). This refers to the awareness of the importance of communicating in English.

METHOD

This study employed a mixed-method research design. Researchers integrate qualitative and quantitative approaches to maximize the advantages of a study (Navarro & Santos, 2011). The quantitative approach obtains data regarding attitudes from student sampling. The qualitative approach uses in-depth interviews to discover problems affecting performance. Neto (2001) describes the mixed-method approach as a research strategy that integrates different methods to create alternatives to traditional research. This design provides a comprehensive and cohesive description of the problem. It allows for an in-depth, cross-sectional analysis of student and teacher perceptions toward the English language.

The study involved 400 students, 14 non-readers, and 54 teachers from a large secondary public school. Non-readers were categorized into four groups (A through D) based on Department of Education (DepEd) mechanisms. Category A students can read without comprehension. Category B students find difficulty with phrases. Category C students read only simple words, and Category D students recognize only letters. These participants provided a detailed representation of feelings and attitudes toward the English language.

The primary instruments were survey and interview questionnaires. A questionnaire is a list of questions filled out by the person being surveyed (Zulueta & Perez, 2010). This tool allows for a larger sampling because it is easy to distribute to many people at once (Ary et al., 2010). The instruments focused on respondent profiles and their perceptions regarding the importance of English and its speakers.

The survey questionnaire underwent a rigorous validation process. The instrument was tested for reliability using Cronbach's alpha. Items with a reliability index lower than 0.70 were rejected. Three English language experts also validated the content. Their suggestions were incorporated into the final draft of the questionnaire. A pilot test was conducted at a large secondary public school. Results from IBM SPSS 20 showed high reliability. The perception items garnered an index of 0.9326. The attitude items achieved an index of 0.9780. Both indices suggest the measure is reliable for the study's construct.

Formal permission was obtained from the school division superintendent and the principal. The researcher personally administered the questionnaires and conducted the interviews. Parental consent was secured for the interview of non-reader students. Participation remained strictly voluntary for all respondents.

In-depth interviews allowed the researcher to probe and ask follow-up questions (Jha, 2011). The unstructured format remained flexible to capture attitudes and beliefs. A semi-structured guide explored specific issues. Interviews were recorded and transcribed for key-point coding. Data collection continued until saturation of categories occurred. Transcripts were then coded to identify emergent concepts.

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data treatment. Frequency and percentage detailed the respondent profiles. Weighted means described perceptions and attitudes toward English speakers. Inferential statistics included Independent Samples t-tests and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

The scale below with descriptive equivalents was used in determining the perceptions, attitudes, and feelings of the respondents toward people who can speak the English language well:

Scale	Range	Descriptive Equivalent
4	3.26 – 4.00	Very Important
3	2.51 – 3.25	Important
2	1.76 – 2.50	Fairly Important
1	1.00 – 1.75	Less Important

The following scales with descriptive equivalents were used in interpreting the average weighted means of the perceptions of respondents on the importance of English and attitudes of respondents about people who can speak English well:

Scale	Range	Descriptive Equivalent
4	3.26 – 4.00	Very Favorable
3	2.51 – 3.25	Favorable
2	1.76 – 2.50	Fairly Favorable
1	1.00 – 1.75	Less Favorable

To determine significant differences in the survey data, inferential statistics such as the t-test for independent samples and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were utilized. Furthermore, the Scheffe Test was employed to identify the specific locations of these differences within the groups. In this analysis, the probability value (*p*-value) was compared to a threshold of 0.05. If the *p*-value was equal to or less than 0.05, the statistical test was considered significant, and the null hypothesis was rejected. Conversely, if the *p*-value exceeded 0.05, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Parallel to the quantitative treatment, thematic data analysis began with the identification of significant key points in the qualitative data. These points were systematically analyzed through a coding process where similar codes were grouped into concepts based on their commonalities. Subsequently, these concepts were clustered into categories using the constant comparative method. This iterative scrutiny facilitated the emergence of categories directly related to the study's focus.

Within this thematic framework, key-point coding was applied to maintain organizational clarity. Each respondent was identified as a participant, and significant points from the transcripts were assigned identifiers in sequence, such as P1 and P2. To distinguish between participants, a suffix (A, B, C, etc.) was added to these identifiers. For instance, the first key point from Participant A is represented as P1A. This system ensured that every piece of data remained traceable to its original source.

In the final stage of data processing, the narrative report was constructed by linking these categories and investigating the connections between concepts. To maintain the authenticity of the live data, category headings were labeled using the actual words or phrases of the participants. This method allowed the emergent perceptions and attitudes to be derived directly from the original statements. Additionally, student participants were assigned specific codes, such as SA for Student 1 and SB for Student 2, to prevent misinterpretation and safeguard the participants' points of view.

FINDINGS

Respondents' Perceptions on the Importance of English

Table 1 shows the survey results of the perception of the teacher and student respondents on the importance of the English language.

Table 1

Survey results of the perception of respondents on the importance of English

Item Statement	Teachers n=54	Students n=400	Average	
	Mean/ SD	Mean/ SD	Mean/ SD	Descriptive Rating
1. Speaking English makes a person empowered to communicate with others, especially to foreigners.	3.69/ 0.61	3.31/ 0.64	3.50/ 0.63	Very Important
2. Speaking English makes a person globally competitive.	3.70/ 0.63	3.41/ 0.60	3.56/ 0.62	Very Important
3. When a person can speak English very well, he/she has better employment opportunities.	3.43/ 0.84	3.40/ 0.75	3.41/ 0.79	Very Important
4. Speaking English makes a person become successful in his or her future career endeavors.	3.44/ 0.82	3.41/ 0.72	3.43/ 0.77	Very Important
5. Having the ability to speak English is an edge toward various opportunities in life.	3.67/ 0.61	3.38/ 0.70	3.52/ 0.66	Very Important

Item Statement	Teachers n=54	Students n=400	Average	
	Mean/ SD	Mean/ SD	Mean/ SD	Descriptive Rating
6. Proficiency in speaking English spells excellent performance in school.	3.56/ 0.50	3.39/ 0.56	3.47/ 0.53	Very Important
7. Having the ability to speak English makes a person eligible for scholarship.	3.48/ 0.50	3.41/ 0.65	3.44/ 0.58	Very Important
8. English is vital for socio-economic development of a country.	3.43/ 0.50	3.42/ 0.62	3.42/ 0.56	Very Important
9. English is vital in this era of globalization, migration, and technological advancement.	3.46/ 0.77	3.38/ 0.68	3.42/ 0.73	Very Important
10. English is important for developing oneself as a global speaker and global citizen.	3.44/ 0.74	3.41/ 0.64	3.43/ 0.69	Very Important
Average	3.53/ 0.65	3.39/ 0.66	3.46/ 0.66	Very Important

The data indicate that both groups of respondents perceive the English language as “Very Important” for having registered an average weighted mean of 3.46, particularly on the statement that “Speaking English makes a person globally competitive” which registered a mean of 3.56. This discloses further that in today’s 21st century education, where learning is getting global and the arena for information is seemingly becoming borderless, teachers and students are convinced that English, being considered as a global language can make a person globally competitive. This is much true to Filipinos who are now seeking employment abroad as an alternative mode of working. In such scenario, having the ability to speak the English language well is a must for every Overseas Filipino Worker (OFW).

Trimming down the results, teachers have higher perception on the importance of the English language than the students as evident in the registered average weighted means of 3.53 and 3.39, respectively. This view is considerably acceptable since teachers are seeing more the benefits or importance of English in job opportunities, while students are not that typically fascinated by the idea or need of speaking English at this early point in time since their focus is on their studies in the country. Adding to this fact is the reality that these students have their first two languages they are using in everyday living – their mother tongue and Filipino. Having two languages to master as one’s grow is typically posing difficulties to many Filipino children and adding to this dilemma is the challenge of having able to master their language, which is English, once they enter school. Meanwhile, the average standard deviation of 0.66 implies that their responses on the item statements are quite harmonized.

As attested further with their transcripts, the non-reader students pointed out that in being able to speak English well, they may find work abroad and be globally competitive. This was clearly expressed by two of the interviewees.

Respondents' Attitudes about People Who Can Speak English Well

Table 2

Survey results of the respondents' attitudes about people who can speak English well

Item Statement	Teachers n=54	Students n=400	Average	
	Mean/ SD	Mean/ SD	Mean/ SD	Descriptive Rating
1. I have a high regard to people who can speak English well.	3.37/ 0.85	3.41/ 0.87	3.39/ 0.86	Very Favorable
2. I think people who speak English well are eloquent and exude confidence personally and professionally.	3.31/ 0.80	3.38/ 0.89	3.35/ 0.84	Very Favorable
3. I respect people who are better speakers of English than me.	3.63/ 0.76	3.36/ 0.81	3.49/ 0.78	Very Favorable
4. I look up to people who are making efforts to speak the English language well.	3.50/ 0.77	3.51/ 0.66	3.51/ 0.72	Very Favorable
5. I do not think someone is boasting or bragging when he or she is speaking English.	3.52/ 0.69	3.49/ 0.83	3.50/ 0.76	Very Favorable
6. I envy people who can speak English well.	3.44/ 0.72	3.38/ 0.86	3.41/ 0.79	Very Favorable
7. I am inspired by people who speak English well to improve my ability to speak the language.	3.24/ 0.91	3.37/ 0.83	3.31/ 0.87	Very Favorable
8. I feel comfortable being with people who speak English well.	3.39/ 0.88	3.43/ 0.81	3.41/ 0.84	Very Favorable
9. I admire people talking to foreigners and expressing themselves in English.	3.48/ 0.77	3.42/ 0.80	3.45/ 0.78	Very Favorable
10. I love to see people speaking English in school, public places, and other platforms or avenues for speaking opportunities.	3.56/ 0.77	3.47/ 0.84	3.51/ 0.80	Very Favorable
Average	3.44/ 0.07	3.42/ 0.82	3.43/ 0.81	Very Favorable

Table 2 shows the survey results of the attitude of the teacher and student respondents about people who can speak English well. As evidently reflected in the table, both groups of respondents have a "Very Favorable" attitude about people who are good speakers of English as revealed by the obtained average weighted mean of 3.43, specifically, on their thinking that they "look up to people who are making efforts to speak the English language well" and "love to see people speaking English in school, public places, and other platforms or avenues for speaking opportunities" which both obtained a mean of 3.51. These expose further that respondents have high regard on the importance of the English language in one's life. These exhibit how English has influenced the way people give respect to one's authority, power, and ability. Meanwhile, analyzing the results, teachers have slightly higher "Very Favorable" attitude toward people who can speak English well than the students as evident in the obtained average weighted means of 3.44 and 3.42, correspondingly. The average standard deviation of 0.81 suggests that their responses on the item statements are quite homogeneous.

Affirming the overall data on the perception and attitudes of the participants toward English, the interviews exposed how non-readers deemed the importance of English in general and how it can make a person powerful and attain success by just using it as a medium in communicating.

Comparison of the Respondents' Perception and Attitudes toward English and Its Speakers

Tables 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 show the comparison on the perceptions and attitudes of respondent-teachers and students toward the importance of English language and toward the people who can speak English well, when they are grouped accordingly.

Table 3

T-test results of the respondents' perceptions on the importance of English

Group	N	Mean	SD	DF	p-value	Decision
Teachers	54	3.53	0.28	62	0.000	The null hypothesis is rejected.
Students	400	3.39	0.21			

Table 3 presents the results of the comparison of the perceptions of the respondent-teachers and students on the importance of the English language. The Table reveals that the computed t-value of 3.524 which is greater than the critical t-value of 1.999 and a p-value of 0.000 which is less than the level of significance of 0.05 suggest that the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant difference between the teachers' and students' perceptions on the importance of the English language. This underpins the previous finding that teachers have higher perception on the importance of the English language than students as evident in the registered average weighted means of 3.53 and 3.39, respectively. This implies that teachers are the ones who are seeing more the benefits of using the English language.

Table 4

T-test results of the respondents' attitude about people who can speak English well

Group	N	Mean	SD	DF	p-value	Decision
Teachers	54	3.44	0.38	65	0.669	The null hypothesis is accepted.
Students	400	3.42	0.33			

Table 4 presents the results of the comparison of the attitude of the respondent-teachers and students toward people who can speak the English language well. The table reveals a p-value of 0.669 which is greater than the level of significance of 0.05 suggesting that the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is no significant difference between the teachers' and students' attitude toward people who have a good command of the English language. This is further supported by the previous finding which revealed that the difference in the obtained average weighted means between the teachers' attitude and the students' attitude towards people who speak English well to be very minimal, i.e., 0.02. This implies that both groups of respondents maintain the same very favorable attitude toward good speakers in English.

Table 5

T-test results of the teachers' perceptions on the importance of English according to their sex

Group	N	Mean	SD	DF	p-value	Decision
Male Teachers	10	3.22	0.31	11	0.004	The null hypothesis is rejected.
Female Teachers	44	3.60	0.22			

Table 5 exhibits the results of the comparison of the perceptions of the male and female teachers on the importance of the English language. The Table reveals that the p-value of 0.004

which is less than the level of significance of 0.05 suggest that the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant difference between the male teachers' and female teachers' perceptions on the importance of the English language. This highlights how female teachers have garnered higher mean perceptions on the importance of the English language than the male teachers, i.e., 3.60 and 3.22, in that order. This infers that female teachers are the ones who are seeing more the benefits of using the English language.

Table 6

T-test results of the teachers' attitude about people who can speak English well according to their sex

Group	N	Mean	SD	DF	p-value	Decision
Male Teachers	10	3.19	0.37	13	0.031	The null hypothesis is rejected.
Female Teachers	44	3.50	0.36			

Table 6 exhibits the results of the comparison of the attitude of the male and female teachers towards people who can speak the English language well. The Table reveals a p-value of 0.031 which is less than the level of significance of 0.05 suggest that the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant difference between the male teachers' and female teachers' attitude towards those who have good command of the English language. The difference of 0.31 in the computed mean of the two groups of respondents supports this claim in favor of the female teachers. This infers that female teachers are the ones who maintain a more "very favorable" attitude toward the good speakers of English.

Table 7

T-test results of the students' perceptions on the importance of English according to their sex

Group	N	Mean	SD	DF	p-value	Decision
Male Students	200	3.43	0.18	369	0.000	The null hypothesis is rejected.
Female Students	200	3.35	0.24			

Table 7 exhibits the results of the comparison of the perceptions of the male and female students on the importance of the English language. The Table exposes a p-value of 0.000 which is less than the level of significance of 0.05 suggest that the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant difference between the male students' and female students' perceptions on the importance of the English language.

Table 8

T-test results of the students' attitude about people who can speak English well according to their sex

Group	N	Mean	SD	DF	p-value	Decision
Male Students	200	3.56	0.26	366	0.000	The null hypothesis is rejected.
Female Students	200	3.29	0.35			

Table 8 displays the results of the comparison of the attitude of the male and female students towards people who can speak the English language well. It can be seen that the p-value

of 0.000 is less than the level of significance of 0.05 suggest that the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant difference between the male students' and female students' attitude towards those who have good command of the English language. The difference of 0.27 in the computed mean of the two groups of respondents supports this claim in favor of the male students. This surmises that male students are the ones who maintain a more "very favorable" attitude towards the good speakers of English.

Table 9

ANOVA results of the students' perceptions on the importance of English according to their grade levels

Group	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value	Interpretation
Between Groups	2.503	3	0.834	21.049	0.000	The null hypothesis is rejected.
Within Groups	15.699	396	0.040			

Table 9 manifests the results of the comparison among the perceptions on the importance of the English language as described by the respondent-students per grade level. Results indicate a p-value of 0.000 which is lower than the level of significance of 0.05, which suggests the rejection of the null hypothesis. This means that there is a significant difference on how the respondent-students in various grade levels perceived the importance of English.

Table 10

Scheffe test results on the perceptions of students on the importance of the English language according to their grade levels

Group	Group	Mean Difference	Standard Error	P-value	95% Confidence Interval		Interpretation
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Grade 7	Grade 8	-0.005	0.028	0.999	-0.084	0.074	Not Significant
	Grade 9	-0.014	0.028	0.970	-0.093	0.065	Not Significant
	Grade 10	0.176	0.028	0.000	0.097	0.255	Significant
Grade 8	Grade 7	0.005	0.028	0.999	-0.0741	0.084	Not Significant
	Grade 9	-0.009	0.028	0.992	-0.088	0.070	Not Significant
	Grade 10	0.181	0.028	0.000	0.102	0.260	Significant
Grade 9	Grade 7	0.014	0.028	0.970	-0.065	0.093	Not Significant
	Grade 8	0.009	0.028	0.992	-0.070	0.088	Not Significant
	Grade 10	0.190	0.028	0.000	0.111	0.269	Significant
Grade 10	Grade 7	-0.176	0.028	0.000	-0.255	-0.097	Significant
	Grade 8	-0.181	0.028	0.000	-0.260	-0.102	Significant
	Grade 9	-0.190	0.028	0.000	-0.269	-0.111	Significant

Table 10 illustrates the multiple comparisons of the perceptions on the importance of the English language of students in terms of their grade levels. The results indicate that there are no

significant differences in the perceptions on the importance of the English language between Grades 7 and 8, 7 and 9, and 8 and 9. On the other hand, significant differences are found in the perceptions on the importance of the English language between Grades 7 and 10, 8 and 10, and 9 and 10.

Considering the gathered data, it can be deduced that students have varying perceptions toward the power of the English language. Though their mean scores are clustered on high appreciation on the power of English language, their differences in grade levels particularly in their ages revealed differing levels of appreciation.

Table 11

ANOVA results of the students' attitude about people who can speak English well according to their grade levels

Group	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value	Interpretation
Between Groups	10.112	3	3.371	39.448	0.000	The null hypothesis is rejected.
Within Groups	33.837	396	0.085			

Table 11 depicts the results of the Statistical (ANOVA) comparison of the respondents' attitude toward people who can speak English well as described per grade level. Results indicate a p-value of 0.000 which is lower than the level of significance of 0.05, suggestive of the rejection of the null hypothesis. This means that there is a significant difference on the students' attitude towards people who have a good facility on the use of English with due consideration to their grade levels.

Table 12

Scheffe test on the attitude of students towards people who can speak English well according to their grade levels

Group	Group	Mean Difference	Standard Error	P-value	95% Confidence Interval		Interpretation
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound	
Grade 7	Grade 8	0.125	0.0413	0.029	0.009	0.241	Significant
	Grade 9	0.228	0.0413	0.000	0.112	0.344	Significant
	Grade 10	0.434	0.0413	0.000	0.318	0.550	Significant
Grade 8	Grade 7	-0.125	0.0413	0.029	-0.241	-0.009	Significant
	Grade 9	0.103	0.0413	0.104	-0.013	0.219	Not Significant
	Grade 10	0.309	0.0413	0.000	0.193	0.425	Significant
Grade 9	Grade 7	-0.228	0.0413	0.000	-0.344	-0.112	Significant
	Grade 8	-0.103	0.0413	0.104	-0.219	0.013	Not Significant
	Grade 10	0.206	0.0413	0.000	0.090	0.322	Significant
Grade 10	Grade 7	-0.434	0.0413	0.000	-0.550	-0.318	Significant
	Grade 8	-0.309	0.0413	0.000	-0.425	-0.193	Significant
	Grade 9	-0.206	0.0413	0.000	-0.322	-0.090	Significant

Lastly, Table 12 shows the multiple comparisons (Scheffe Test) of the attitude of students toward people who can speak English well in terms of their grade levels. The results indicate that the attitude of Grades 8 and 9 toward people who are good at speaking English are not significantly different while the attitude of Grades 7 and 8, Grades 7 and 9, Grades 7 and 10, Grades 8 and 10, and Grades 9 and 10 toward people who are good at speaking English are significantly different at a level of significance of 0.05.

Considering the Statistical results, it can be deduced that students have varying attitude toward good speakers in English across grade levels. Though their mean scores are clustered on high favor on people who can speak English well, the differences across grade levels imply differing degrees of favorability across ages.

DISCUSSION

Since the American colonial rule, more Filipinos have viewed the ability to speak English as a superior competency [though this may not be the general case], hence a bizarre outlook of Filipinos to people who are good speakers of English. In another sense, this also reveals how Filipinos give importance to English as a mode of attaining one's success and the feeling of being respected in the general society. Moreover, following what the adages say "experience is the best teacher" and "practice makes perfect", exposure to speaking English opportunities is a good means of developing and improving one's skills in the use of the language. Having such opportunity is a good avenue for coaching and mentoring sessions where people can learn from other people who are making efforts in developing their English-speaking skills.

The Philippines has been colonized by the United States of America for more than 40 years and the knowledge in using the English language originates from the Americans (Karnow, 1989). Such denotes how Filipinos have developed a sense of inclination toward the use of the language in every aspect of life, not only in ordinary conversations, more so, in different workplaces (Kassim & Ali, 2010). Also, with the Philippines being considered as the third largest English-speaking nation in the world (Bolton, et al., 2004), Filipino teachers and students are now facing the challenge of maintaining that premium attribute of being known to be communicatively competent in expressing themselves using the English language.

The birth of the K-12 curriculum is among the government's smart moves in equipping young Filipinos with the competencies they need to become "upright, useful and productive" citizens (BP Bldg.232):

To ensure the maximum participation of all the people in the attainment and enjoyment of the benefits of such growth (Section3.2)

It is also the government's contention that sufficiently educated individuals become empowered and confident to take their place in the global society.

In response to the national vision, schools all over the country as implementers of the curriculum, ensure that the students are developed holistically and that they acquire the key competencies – critical thinking, communication, collaboration and creativity – necessary to meet

global standards. Among the four competencies identified, it is communication that plays a critical role in the students' overall formation (Rubin, et al., 1990).

Trends on communication skills development present that there are now five macro skills: listening, speaking, reading, writing and viewing (Barrot, 2014). Of these five skills, students are observed to be having more difficulties in speaking, particularly in using the English language which is said to be the international language (Jenkins, 2000).

It is at this point where the present study seeks to contribute: to highlight the importance of developing the English-speaking ability of the learners. Its overarching objective is to derive inputs that may be offered for intensifying Oral English instruction. As a springboard, the study looked into the perceptions of the respondents on the importance of English; their attitudes about people who can speak English well; and the significant differences on their perceptions and attitudes toward English and its speakers.

Language is a system of arbitrary, vocal symbols developed by a social group to cooperate with one another. It makes it possible for men and women to express their thoughts and feelings (Magallona-Flores, et al. 2006). It is indeed, one of the most important factors in communication (Ornos, et al., 2004). Hence, teachers' responsibilities are even more highlighted in language classes, with language teachers sometimes being viewed as the driving force behind coordination, harmony, peace and global understanding (Kaboodvand, 2013). With such principles in mind, gauging how teachers and students perceive the importance of English language and how they think toward people speaking it is a timely endeavor in today's global educational setting. Teachers and students may have differing views on the value of English as a language, particularly in the Philippine setting where multilingualism exists and the culture permits the use of various languages. But the nature stipulated in the Constitution that strengthens the use of English alongside with Filipino gives certain sort of power in the use of the former.

On the perceptions of the respondents on the importance of English, both groups, i.e., the teachers and students have given high regard on the importance of the English language, particularly in making the speakers globally competitive. The non-readers, on the other hand, believed in the importance of the English language and how it can make a person powerful and attain success by just using it as a medium in communicating. This leads to what Lee, et al. (2013) has coined that people are "earning power" by using the new languages. English is a prestigious and a working language for the formal institutions of government, law, education and international business. The acquisition of skills in using the English language allows people to achieve a higher status. With this, it only shows that Filipinos value English as a tool for globalization as more Filipinos are considering English speaking ability to find their luck in working abroad (Stepanova, 2013).

Meanwhile, the attitudes of respondents on people speaking well revealed that teachers and students have high regard toward these individuals. They typically look up to people who are making efforts to speak the English language well. The data present how Filipinos give high regards and respect to people who are making efforts in speaking the English language, recognizing the importance of having such ability. Borlogan (2009) pointed out that English indeed continues to penetrate the Filipino society as evidenced by the dominance of its use in various domains and activities and even more intimate context such as the home, prayers, and expressions of intimate emotions. Furthermore, the feelings of the participants toward people speaking the English language well seem to show that teachers and students value those people as they love to see people speaking English in school, public places, and other platforms or avenues for speaking

opportunities. Cabrera and de Asis (2008) affirmed that English is necessary for utilitarian reasons. It is the language of space, technology and electronics, medicine, international business and advertising, governance and politics, radio, television, film and many other fields of endeavor. This reveals the dominance of the English language and how it seems to affect the attitude of people toward others and how they view things in life.

Overall, teachers and students have high perceptions and attitudes toward the English language and on the speakers. This signifies how they see the power of the English language as a mechanism that could empower one's life. As proven in the Philippine context, the Filipino society can see and encounter English words in almost all facets of life.

Looking closely on the significant differences in the perceptions and attitudes of the respondents toward the importance of English language and the people speaking it well, the data revealed astonishing and varying results. As deduced from the data, there is a significant difference on how the respondent-teachers and students perceive the importance of English and how they view people speaking it well. Meanwhile, on the test of significant difference on how the male and female teachers' respondents perceive the importance of English and how they view people speaking it, a significant difference was disclosed. The male teachers valued the English language in a much higher level. On the other hand, the comparison of male and female students' perceptions and attitudes toward people speaking English well presented no significant difference. These details show how students perceive the importance of English in their life and future career path. Likewise, on the comparison between the perceptions and attitudes toward people speaking English well as described by respondent-students per grade level, a significant difference was obtained. This posits how students have appreciated or valued the importance of English in their schooling. The higher grade level students tend to have established; their level of appreciation toward the English language is also intensified.

As revealed in the transcripts of the non-reader students, they pointed out that in speaking English:

Kaya ko pong makapagtrabaho sa abroad kapag marunong po akong mag-Ingles. [I can work abroad if I am able to speak English] – Pa1

Matutunan ko pong makipagsabayan sa iba. [I can compete with others in speaking English] – Pd2

The cited statements are further attested by Stepanova (2013) because the English language is becoming more and more popular all over the world and in all spheres of life; in particular, anyone who wants to succeed in the business world must be able to speak English. Moreover, Pascasio (2005) pointed out that the role of English may be diminishing on the national (Philippines) level, but certainly for globalization and information technology, it is the language of wider communication in the international level.

Language is power (Mayr, 2008) and indeed, English has made its way to be recognized around the world as an influential language. Such influence transcends to the lives of the people using it and to those who aspire to use it as a tool for success. With the localization and contextualization of the Oral Communication curriculum in the Senior High School program, the students are deemed to be equipped with competencies integral to make them eloquent speakers and able to express themselves through the English language, thus contributing greatly in making them more functionally literate and lifelong learners. Making students speak more the English

language does not mean forcing them to speak inside the classroom. This demands good preparation of instructional materials and implementation must be progressive and systematic. Since the study shows that respondent-students give high regards to those who speak English language well, teachers need to reduce their TTT (Teacher Talking Time) in the classroom. Being a teacher in English is different from being a lecturer. Therefore, teachers may consider increasing STT (Student Talking Time). This may encourage students' participation.

To emphasize, communication skill is one of the most essential 21st century skills that must be honed thoroughly by the students in order to prepare them for the world of work, continuing education and business opportunities.

Hence, the research, through the results of this study, seeks to recommend the formulation or design of programs, strategies, and interventions that would intensify the teaching of Oral Communication to students across levels. Furthermore, curriculum developers may consider the findings in this study as basis for future efforts in enriching the curriculum to make it more relevant and useful.

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Matching degree program requirements and industry needs: A systematic review of the Business Administration major in Marketing Management

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Abstract

This mixed- method research principally aims to investigate the level of congruency between the competencies set by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) for the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) major in Marketing Management (MM) with that of the needs of the industry. The study also explores the extent of the implementation of the CHED Memorandum Order No. 39, series of 2006 in higher education institutions (HEIs) in the locale province of the present study. Qualitative data were derived from the following documents: relevant CHED mandates, job posting details (job requirements, job specifications) from the Human Resource offices of 21 companies representing different business industries, and sample course syllabi from two HEIs that have been offering BSBA in MM in not less than five (5) years. These data were used to develop and validate the survey questionnaire that was administered to the 283 graduating MM students from the two HEIs covered to elicit their perceptions regarding the competencies developed in them while studying. Findings show that there is a gap that exists between the standardized competencies set by the CHED and the specified needs of the industries. A mismatch was observed between the CHED requirements and course syllabi in terms of target competencies. Meanwhile, survey data reveal that overall, the respondent- students expressed moderate agreement on the development of competencies they need while they were in school. Synthesized data led to the emergence of the “Framework for the Making of Globally Competent BSBA MM Graduates”. The study recommends the creation of additional section in the existing CHED memoranda for the BSBA program, enumerating the required specific competencies for each BSBA specialization, and promoting HEI - Industry linkages.

Keywords: *business administration, competency, degree program requirements, globally competent graduates, industry needs, marketing management, mixed-method research*

INTRODUCTION

Since the dawn of industrialization in Europe and in America during the 18th century, the rapid rate of technological changes led the acceleration of globalization and emergence of Regional Economic Integration of the 21st century. These changes have since reshaped the business environment, operations, structures, and strategies. Nkamo (2014) mentioned that changes in macroeconomic factors like economic development and political system create transformation in the foundations of an entire country specifically to consumer behavior, local and legal policies that affect the environment where business firms strive to thrive. As a result of all these changes, relevant competencies in business administration like: administrative system, business management, and information management, will also evolve and may pose relevant challenges to business management education. These changes led the way to a more complex and unstable business environment, and at the same time, intensified business competition in both the local and

international market. Given these developments, critiques of the academic practice have developed strengthened concerns toward the relevance of the course content of business schools to the needs of the industry. Critiques of schools for business administration argued on the graduates' lack of ability to cope with the changes in the business world. Thus, the most commonly asked question is whether or not the graduates of Business Administration program possess the necessary competencies that the industry is looking for.

According to McClelland (1973) as cited in Ron, Yi Chech and Sheng-Huang (2010), competency is the external behavior manifested by a person on his or her knowledge, skills and attitude, and therefore is generally reflected in his/her performance in values, attitude, deduction and judgment. Burns (1972) states that competency is equal to ability. Iqbal and Zenchenkov (2014) and Swanson and Tomkovick (2016) define competency as an underlying characteristic of an individual who contributes to job or role performance and to organizational success. Ennis (2008), mentioned that successful performance of a critical work task, specific functions or successful operation in a given role of position, through the application of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors and personal characteristics, constitute the concept of competency. While Hodges and Burchell (2003) as cited in Iqbal and Zenchenkov (2014), explain that combinations of cognitive skills (technical knowledge, expertise and abilities) and personal or behavioral characteristics (principles, attitudes, values and motives) are the indicators of competency. Beneitone et al. (2007) as cited in the same research suggested that competence in a broad definition refers to the capacities that all humans need to effectively and autonomously resolve the situations that arise in their lives.

According to Okoro (2015), graduates of business education are expected to possess a broad knowledge of management skills which include the ability to plan, organize, and handle small and medium scale businesses, source funds for the smooth running of a small business, managing business risk, effectively supervise and coordinate human and material resources. Staton and Staton (2016) found organizations look for employees who have in-depth understanding of the business domain in which decisions are made, and who possess depth and breadth of understanding of the analytics to optimize decisions. Meanwhile, Ude (1999), Chapman and Jackson (2009), identified three major competencies of business education graduates that employers look for, these are: Human skills which refer to the ability of the managers and employees to handle personal relationships. Technical skills which include ability of managers and employees to have a complete grasp of the methods, processes and techniques required in the performance of a particular activity; and Conceptual skills which refer to the ability of the managers and employees to see the relationship between departments and units within the organization, and relationships between the organization and the environment.

In a survey conducted by the American Management Association (AMA) in 2010, managers and executives identified four important competencies that future business graduates must possess to increase their employability. These four competencies are communications, collaboration/teamwork, critical thinking/ problem solving and creativity/innovation. Similarly, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) in 2008, listed five important business competencies required of applicants: communications, teamwork, analytical, technical and strong work ethic. In addition, Yorke and Knight, as cited in Ghosh (2014), employers today rate highly individual creativity, independent thinking capability, adaptability to pressures, open minds with flexibility and improvisation.

Rodriguez (2007) mentioned that essential to every marketing manager, is the collaborative skills that promote cross- functional dynamics, boundary spanning and inter- firm cooperation. On the other hand, individual marketing competencies can be analyzed into three levels: technical, human and conceptual skills, as said in the work of O' Driscoll, Carson and Gilmore, cited in Geoff, Russel and Stuart (2008). This is the same assertion of Ude (1999). In order for marketing graduates to successfully perform their tasks in the company, they need the ability to capture and retain the attention of customers, promote and sell the organization's products, analyze demand and make educated decisions about it, as well as the ability to carry out effective marketing and information research (Esene, 2009). In addition, researchers hold that organizations today are placing higher importance to the technological and computing competency of marketing graduates (Barnett, Dascher, & Nicholson; Davis, Misra, & Van Aukun; McLarty; Stines), as cited in Geoff, Russel and Stuart (2008).

While most of the related literature about the competencies for business school course is designed to impart large management skills and techniques. Iqbal and Zenchenkov (2014) mentioned that there is an increasing demand for the so-called soft skills. This comes as a result of the shift in economics, particularly the dominance of the service sector over industry sector. These soft skills include the ability to communicate effectively, to display multicultural awareness, and to exhibit some entrepreneurial and leadership qualities. Bradbury and Wiersma, (2004) and Mitchell, Skinner, and White (2010), found that soft skills are important for business/ marketing students because it helps graduates to develop their knowledge, understanding, values and other innate skills that are vital for their employability. In addition, Rodriguez (2007) Done (2011) and Bovinet (2007), hold that the most important set of skills that students must develop are communication skills, critical thinking, cross functional competence, global and cultural awareness, full competence in a self- discipline, and technological competence. As presented in Maes, Weldy and Icenogle (1997), oral communication skills top the list of the skills needed for an entry level job. In 2009, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, stressed that the ability to communicate effectively is a competency that may draw on an individual's knowledge of language, practical information technology (IT) skills and attitudes toward those with whom he or she is communicating with. The increasing needs for global and cultural awareness or multicultural awareness could be attributed to the fact that Globalization does not only limit to international distribution and exchange of consumer and industrial goods but also to the creation of international Economic cooperation among independent nations creating one market. This extends the form of international exchange by allowing the mobility of capital and human resources.

The development of Regional Economic Integrations such as the European Union (EU), Association of the South East Asian Nation (ASEAN) pose opportunities and threats to business graduates. Opportunities come from the expansion of the business market thus, increasing the number of firms/companies to choose from. While the threats come from the increase in the number of business graduates from other nations, adding to the labor market and the immobility of human resource due to the varying employability standards of the companies from other countries. The International Quality Reference Framework (IQRF) was initiated to ease out the human resource immobility due to varying employability and competency standards between nations, and to facilitate the mobility of the graduates. The IQRF initiatives which started in Europe aims to promote transparency, coordination and quality assurance among higher education systems. Responsibility and autonomy competence are the heart of the context of the European Qualification Framework. In the study by Yuche and Stewart (2001), international business competencies needed in the market are: equipped with foreign language skills especially English; manage advance information technology; and knowledge in international legal responsibilities.

In the case of the ASEAN Economic Community, the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) provides a common spine for the levels to which all National Qualification Frameworks (NQF) can relate and broaden the understanding of the national qualifications systems of ASEAN countries and from outside the ASEAN region. The AQRF consist a hierarchy of levels of complexity of learning outcomes. The level descriptors include cognitive and functional competence divided into four areas namely: cognitive competence which involves the use of theory and concepts, as well as informal tacit knowledge gained experientially; functional competence (know-how) are those things that a person should be able to do when they work in a given area; personal competence which involves knowing how to conduct oneself in a specific situation; and ethical competence which involves the possession of certain personal and professional values. The AQRF was designed to assist the NQF in upgrading its policies to develop the national education system, aligned to the policies implemented by the different levels of Education institutions in order to develop globally competitive graduates.

The higher education institutions play an important role in nation building as the catalysts of change. According to Florida as cited in Gosh (2014), the higher education institutions are the right and complete environment to nurture creative minds of the people which facilitate continuous development through invention, technology, and entrepreneurship in the company and in the community. HEIs, through their mandate in developing the mind-set of its students, have the opportunities to develop the human resource of the country. One of the roles of the HEIs is to equip students with the necessary competency that will help them land a job and contribute to the competitiveness of their company (Wilton, 2008). The responsibility in educating future business leaders, building their business competencies lies at the hand of the business schools Yuche and Stewart (2001). This was agreed upon by Walker, Tsarenko, Wagstaff, Powell, Steel and Brace-Govan (2009) in their study where they said that the crucial stage in developing a business career for business professionals is during their undergraduate studies in business school. The classroom serves as the training ground for students where they can acquire and learn the competencies which relate to the skills, knowledge and attitudes that will aid students in landing a job, perform the tasks assigned to them and eventually rise up to the professional ladder. All of these skills, abilities, knowledge, behavior or objectives are what is learned or experienced in the classroom (U.S. Department of Education, 2002; Bronwell & Chung 2001; Burns 1972; Everwign, Bomers & Knubben, 1993; Galambos, & Greence, 2006; Klingstedt, 1972).

Organizations have become more critical in hiring individuals who have exposure to the actual course- work related activities in the work place because it is more directly tied up to higher workplace productivity. However, every employee has to start somewhere, and that is through formal training and education in schools. According to Crosby and Moncarz (2006), "post-secondary education makes entering the work force easier for some jobs; however, a college degree is the only way to begin many careers". In their paper, they described education as the key in developing necessary skills to compete for improved employment opportunities and higher wages. However, there are lingering concerns to the extent to which HEIs are able to adequately prepare graduates for employment, and whether the HEIs and academic professors know the competency needed for today's workplace.

The Partnership for 21st Century Skills and American Management Association (AMA) in 2008 and 2010 respectively, conducted a survey about whether professors and the HEIs do develop the necessary skills in their class which are deemed relevant to the fast-changing business environment. The results of the survey stated that many employers believe that higher education is failing in its role to adequately develop needed skills in students. According to Goodman and Sparague, (1991) and Kang, Wu, and Gould (2005) cited in Millar, Zhenxing and Moreo, (2007),

"Industry professionals often claim that what educators teach in the classroom are outdated', relative to the constant changes in technology, the workforce, product mix and customers. Gibson (2011) pointed out the needs of the business school to improve their evaluation process in measuring the competencies of the students'. Crump (2002) observed that educational institutes are facing increasing challenges in responding to changes in the nature of their business needs, service delivery needs, and community expectations. A gap exists between the education system and labor market demands according to Al-Dosary, Rahman, & Shahid, (2006), as cited in the study of Iqbal and Zenchenkov (2014). Hrehova and llecko (2016) said that discrepancy between acquired skills and knowledge, and needs of their employers could be attributed to the fact that theoretical training does not correspond to real life scenarios and experiences. They further note that there exists low connectivity between the labor market and educational sector. This was concurred in the study of Rodriguez (2007) and White (2013), when he offered that the business curricula do not address the development of relational skills and competencies that support the ability to cooperate, and reconcile diverse interests and objectives as needed in real world practice.

Balan, Callaghan and Stephens (2010) observed that there are differences in the graduates' perceived skills to be used in the workplace and to the reality of working. Employers agree that communication skills of the business graduate students is inadequate (Stevens 2007). Yuche and Stewart (2001) suggested the need for the business schools to realign and inject into their curricula some international business concepts. Considering these contentions, we are driven back to the question whether BSBA in MM do possess the necessary knowledge and skills required by the industry. It also leads us to ask the relevance of the BSBA in MM program to the fast-changing business environment.

Contrary to the claim of the industry professionals, Knight, Mich, and Manion in their 2014 study: *"The Role of Self- Efficacy in Sales Education"*, discussed the improved strategies of the sales educators to better prepare the students in pursuing a career in sales. There are identified three major changes in the themes of business education that dominates in the global term. According to Khuarana (2007), these are: (1) business education focusing on basic business functions such as accounting-finance, production-marketing and management with limited emphasis on research; (2) the professionalization phase that according to Harvard Business School is the utilizations of the scientific approaches in management and delivery of research based theoretical knowledge, although the improvement was not enough to bring a better reputation for business schools in the academic world; and (3) the business schools' movement to more market-oriented perspective in order to increase the sustainability and profitability of companies with increasing amount of interest in research and development. In addition, the concept of competencies moves education from focusing on what academics believe graduates need to know (teacher – focused) to what students need to know and be able to do in varying and complex situations. The competency- based approach requires educators to examine the current environment and its needs, and from which, they determine the content and competencies to be achieved from the instructional program.

Despite the mentioned changes in the business schools that seek to make the business education relevant to the business environment, researchers like Majid, Liming, Toing and Raihanna concluded in their 2012 study, *"Importance of soft skills for education and career success,"* that business schools still could not keep up with employer expectations. According to them, the gap between the industry and business schools was a result of the bureaucratic nature of universities and autocratic leaderships, who were willing to protect the status quo just to protect their position thus, limiting the point of inflection for business education model development and improvement.

Therefore, both ongoing investigation into the needs of the business industry, and ongoing assessment of the competencies taught to business administration students are critical in order to ensure that the courses taught in school are relevant and up-to-date for the business industry. Commission on Higher Education (CHED), higher education institution faculty and industry professionals must work together to make sure that graduating students possess the necessary skills to enter the workforce successfully. The gap in competencies after explicitly comparing the identified competency needs of the industry and the competencies being cultivated in Business school, refers to the mismatch of competencies.

The purpose of this study is to explore the strength of congruency, between the competencies for the students of Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) major in Marketing Management (MM) set by the CHED, and perceived competencies of the BSBA MM graduates from the perspective of business professionals. Specifically, it intends to identify the competencies set by the CHED and what the industry demands. Also, the study investigates the extent of the implementation of the CHED memorandum No. 39, "Policies, Standards, and Guidelines for Bachelor of Science in Business Administration" series of 2006 (CMO No. 39, S. 2006), by the higher education institutions. In this study, the researcher used the term competency (competencies) to refer to: communication skills, human relations skills, critical thinking, innovation, technical and technology skills, and ethics. Communication skills pertain to the ability of the students to effectively conduct business correspondence or exchange of information in a written and oral form, in a technically correct business process within and outside of the business organization. Human relations skill refers to the ability of the graduates to handle personal relationships, to be a team member, the ability to work harmoniously with different types of individuals and the ability to work cooperatively with others in a team. Critical Thinking relates to analytical thinking and problem solving. It is the ability to identify patterns across situations that are not obviously related, and to identify key or underlying issues in complex situations. Innovation or creativity in business refers to the ability of translating new ideas or invention into more effective business operations in order to further satisfy the changing needs of the company stakeholders and customers. Technical skills refer to the ability to perform different basic business and marketing tasks. Technology skills include the "technical know-how," ability in operating or using of different equipment (e.g. computer) and machineries. Lastly, Ethics or Social Responsibility pertains to the competence of having concern about the welfare of the society and environment.

The study explored the level of competencies of the BSBA in MM students based on how the students evaluate their own level of competencies. By measuring the students' level of confidence in their competencies the study will be able to evaluate the strength of implementation of the BSBA MM program by the HEIs. Strong agreement of the students in terms of possessing the specified competencies indicates high congruency between the standards set by CHED and the implementation of HEIs.

The findings in this study are expected to offer useful insights to the experts of curriculum development, the CHED, HEI administrators, faculty members and business organizations. For the Commission on Higher Education, results of this study are expected to challenge them in finding ways in keeping the education system up-to-date to the changes in the business environment. For the HEI administrators, may this study be considered one of the bases for strengthening the university linkages with the business industry. For faculty members, may the results of this study provide useful inputs in enriching their course syllabus and teaching methodology, in order to produce globally competent BSBA Marketing Management graduates. For the business organizations, may the result of this study encourage them to actively partake in enriching the

curriculum content of the business program. For the future researchers, results of this study may serve as a sound basis and springboard for further research undertakings.

This research involves the fourth year BSBA Marketing Management students from two higher education institutions for Academic Year 2014- 2015, however responses from these two universities will not be compared.

METHOD

This research employed mixed method research, utilizing content analysis in evaluating and grouping the competencies required by the different firms in the business industry and the standards set by the CHED. Meanwhile, descriptive statistics was utilized to summarize and analyze the perceived competencies of the graduating BSBA Marketing Management students.

Respondents were composed of all the BSBA Marketing Management graduating students (283 students) for the Academic Year 2014- 2015 from two higher education institutions. As fourth year and graduating students they are expected to have completed the academic requirements as prescribed in their curricula by the CHED for BSBA Marketing Management program and have developed competencies necessary to prepare them to the real field of work. The participating institutions were selected because they had been offering BSBA major in Marketing Management and had produced graduates in the past five years.

Respondents were asked to fill up the informed consent form after the researcher discussed the content of it and the purpose of the current study.

A 56- item researcher- made questionnaire was used as the instrument to gather pertinent data from the respondents. It is composed of questions pertaining to the combined competencies set by the CHED and deemed needed and important by the industry. Prior to actual use, it was subjected to content validation by experts. Several revisions were conducted to improve the instrument. Examples of the revisions were: item number 3 which was originally written as "I had developed salesmanship skills"; item number 4 which was previously stated as "I can apply the principles of the different forms of communication"; and item number 8a was modified from "I can work overtime".

Respondents were asked to self-rate their competencies using a 4-point scale: 1- Strongly Disagree; 2- Disagree; 3- Agree and 4- Strongly Agree. This was the basis of the researcher in evaluating how the graduating students evaluate their competencies and whether or not these are at par with the goal of the commission on higher education, higher institution administrators, and professors.

Arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the data gathered from the research questions. Question item with a mean value of 1.00 – 1.74 was regarded as the respondent "*strongly disagree*" that he/she had developed the specified competency; 1.75 – 2.50 was regarded as the respondent "*disagree*" that he/she had developed the specified competency; 2.51 – 3.26 was regarded as the respondent "*agree*" that he/she had developed the specified competency; and 3.27 – 4.00 was regarded as the respondent "*strongly agree*" that he/she had developed the specified competency.

To identify and enumerate the standard competencies and skills set by the CHED for graduates of BSBA Marketing Management program, secondary data gathering was utilized.

Article IV: Competency Standards, as seen in CMO No. 39, S. 2006, which contain the standard competencies for BSBA Marketing Management, was retrieved from the website of the commission and subsequently used to identify the competencies they had established. Secondary data from the human resource department office (HRD) hiring details and website job postings that enumerate and identify the competencies and other relevant specifications required from BSBA Marketing Management graduates were utilized. Data were gathered from the HRD offices and websites of a total of 21 firms in different industries: fast food (2), telecommunication (2), manufacturing (7), real estate (3), financial (5) services and courier services (2) in the local province of the present study.

Relevant documents gathered from the office of the Commission on Higher Education and business organizations consisted of the CMO No. 39, S. 2006 and the list of Job Requirements/ job specifications were simplified and organized using content analysis. The result of the content analysis which identified the list of competencies required by the CHED were explicitly matched to the list of competencies demanded by the industry. The competencies that both the CHED and the Industry required, and the set of competencies that are needed by the industry but were not listed by CHED were combined in to one set of competencies list, which became the 56- item research made questionnaire.

Meanwhile, the primary data gathered from respondents were summarized and organized using descriptive statistics: percent distribution, mean and standard deviation.

FINDINGS

The Strength of Congruency Between the Competencies Set by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Specified Competency Needs by the Industry.

This section includes the competencies required by the Commission on Higher Education for the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA) major in Marketing Management (MM) and the competencies demanded by the business industry for the graduates of BSBA in MM. The summary of which is presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3.

Competencies set by the Commission on Higher Education. Table 1 shows the standard competencies set by the Commission on Higher Education as seen in the CHED Memorandum No. 39, series of 2006, in accordance with pertinent provisions of Republic Act No. 7722, otherwise known as the "Higher Education Act of 1994".

Table 1
CHED prescribed competencies

Competencies Standards Set by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED)	
1.	Convey ideas clearly both oral and written in English
2.	Prepare, analyze, and evaluate reports, proposals and concept papers
3.	Demonstrate the values of fairness, transparency, accountability, hard work, honesty, patience, diligence, innovativeness, and risk taking
4.	Apply the principles of the different forms of communication
5.	Develop the ability to access, retrieve and disseminate information using IT
6.	Perform quality work
7.	Understand the concepts and principles of good interpersonal relations
8.	Develop a wholesome personality
9.	Participate actively in business associations and comply with their policies and obligations

Competencies Standards Set by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED)
10. Demonstrate leadership qualities, civic-mindedness and responsible citizenship
11. Conduct environmental scanning
12. Conduct feasibility study and other business research/ plan
13. Explain the concepts, approaches, and techniques of environmental conservation
14. Know and understand the country's national development thrusts, concerns and socio-economic indicators

Competencies needed by the Business Industry. Table 2 enumerates the competencies needed by the industry from BSBA major in Marketing Management graduate as seen in their job postings and the firms' websites.

Table 2
Competency needed by the industry

Competencies Standards Needed by the Business Industry
1. Convey ideas clearly both oral and written in English
2. Prepare, analyze, and evaluate reports, proposals and concept papers
3. Demonstrate the values of fairness, transparency, accountability, hard work, honesty, patience, diligence, innovativeness, and risk taking
4. Apply the principles of the different forms of communication
5. Develop the ability to access, retrieve and disseminate information using IT
6. Perform quality work
7. Understand the concepts and principles of good interpersonal relations
8. Develop a wholesome personality
9. Participate actively in business associations and comply with their policies and obligations
10. Demonstrate leadership qualities, civic-mindedness and responsible citizenship
11. Conduct environmental scanning
12. Conduct feasibility study and other business research/ plan
13. Explain the concepts, approaches, and techniques of environmental conservation
14. Know and understand the country's national development thrusts, concerns and socio-economic indicators
15. Understand and can create a web design
16. Proficient in MS Office Applications
17. Understand and can conduct the concept of salesmanship
18. Knowledgeable in preparing, analyzing, and evaluating Strategic Plan and Marketing Programs
19. Knowledgeable in creating and executing traditional and digital advertising
20. Can create and execute public relation events and other marketing events
21. Has developed team player qualities, flexibility, creativity and open mindedness
22. Can work under stress and pressure
23. Can work overtime and willing to be assigned in different locations
24. Can work with minimal supervision

Mismatches in the competencies set by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the industry needs. Column 1 of table 3 presents the seven major categories of business competencies, column 2 specifies the set of competencies required by the Commission on Higher Education as stipulated in Article IV of the CMO no. 39 series of 2006, column 3 enumerates the competencies needed by the industry. Column 4 shows and compares the competencies prescribed by the CHED and needs of the industry. It identifies the competencies that are not listed among the competencies from the standards set by the CHED vis-à-vis industry needs.

Table 3
Mismatches in the competencies

Seven Major Category of Competency	Competency Standards set by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED)	Competency Standards needed by the Business Industry	Mismatches in the Competency (CHED and INDUSTRY)
COMMUNICATIONS	1. Convey ideas clearly both oral and written in English	1. Convey ideas clearly both oral and written in English	There is no mismatch between the CHED and Industry Competencies in this area.
	2. Prepare, analyze, and evaluate reports, proposals and concept papers	2. Prepare, analyze, and evaluate reports, proposals and concept papers	
	3. Apply the principles of the different forms of communication	3. Apply the principles of the different forms of communication	
HUMAN SKILLS	1. Understand the concepts and principles of good interpersonal relations	1. Understand the concepts and principles of good interpersonal relations	The industry expects the marketing graduates to have the capabilities to become a team player in the workplace. In addition, graduates must be able to work under stress and pressure, to work overtime, willing to be assigned in different locations, and to work with minimal supervision.
	2. Participate actively in business associations and comply with their policies and obligations	2. Participate actively in business associations and comply with their policies and obligations	
	3. Demonstrate the values hard work, patience, and diligence	3. Has developed team player qualities	
	4. Demonstrate leadership qualities	4. Demonstrate the values hard work, patience, and diligence	
		5. Demonstrate leadership qualities	
		6. Can work under stress and pressure	
		7. Can work overtime and willing to be assigned in different locations	
		8. Can work with minimal supervision	

Seven Major Category of Competency	Competency Standards set by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED)	Competency Standards needed by the Business Industry	Mismatches in the Competency (CHED and INDUSTRY)
CRITICAL THINKING	1. Prepare, analyze, and evaluate reports, proposals and concept papers	1. Prepare, analyze, and evaluate reports, proposals and concept papers	The industry needs marketing graduates to have the knowledge in preparing, analyzing, and evaluating Strategic Plan.
	2. Conduct environmental scanning	2. Conduct environmental scanning	
	3. Conduct feasibility study and other business research/ plan	3. Conduct feasibility study and other business research/ plan	
INNOVATION		4. Knowledgeable in preparing, analyzing, and evaluating Strategic Plan	
	1. Demonstrate leadership qualities	1. Demonstrate leadership qualities	Besides the innovative characteristics and qualities required by the CHED, the industry also explicitly identifies flexibility, creativity and open mindedness among the qualities it needs.
	2. Demonstrate the values hard work, patience, diligence, innovativeness, and risk taking	2. Demonstrate the values hard work, patience, diligence, innovativeness, and risk taking	
TECHNICAL SKILLS		3. Has developed flexibility, creativity and open mindedness qualities	
	1. Perform quality work	1. Perform quality work	1. Can understand and conduct the skill of salesmanship
	2. Conduct environmental scanning	2. Conduct environmental scanning	2. Knowledgeable in preparing, analyzing, and evaluating Marketing Programs
	3. Conduct feasibility study and other business research/ plan.	3. Conduct feasibility study and other business research/ plan	3. Knowledgeable in creating and executing traditional and digital advertising
		4. Understand and can conduct the concept of salesmanship	4. Knowledgeable in creating and executing Public relations events and other Marketing events
		5. Knowledgeable in preparing, analyzing, and evaluating Marketing Programs	
		6. Knowledgeable in creating and executing traditional and digital advertising	
		7. Can create and execute Public relations events and other Marketing events	

Seven Major Category of Competency	Competency Standards set by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED)	Competency Standards needed by the Business Industry	Mismatches in the Competency (CHED and INDUSTRY)
TECHNOLOGY	Develop the ability to access, retrieve and disseminate information using IT	1. Develop the ability to access, retrieve and disseminate information using IT	The industry specified IT and specific applications that Marketing graduates must have basic knowledge if not capable of using. It includes the ability to access, use MS office applications and the basic concepts and ability to design websites, as websites is one of the new platform in staying connected with customers today. These IT skills were not specified in the CHED required competencies. Though course subjects can be found in the BSBA program proposed curriculum that teaches the application of MS Office and the basic of web designing.
		2. Understand and can create a web design	
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	1. Demonstrate the values of fairness, transparency, accountability, and honesty 2. Develop a wholesome personality 3. Demonstrate civic-mindedness 4. Demonstrate responsible citizenship 5. Explain the concepts, approaches, and techniques of environmental conservation 6. Know and understand the country's national development thrusts, concerns and socio-economic indicators	3. Proficient in MS Office Applications	There is no mismatch between the CHED and Industry Competencies in this area.
		1. Demonstrate the values of fairness, transparency, accountability, and honesty	
		2. Develop a wholesome personality	
		3. Demonstrate civic-mindedness	
		4. Demonstrate responsible citizenship	
		5. Explain the concepts, approaches, and techniques of environmental conservation	
		6. Know and understand the country's national development thrusts, concerns and socio-economic indicators	

The Extent of the Implementation of the CHED Memorandum Order No. 39, Series of 2006 in the Higher Education Institutions

This section includes the findings in determining the extent of the implementation of the CHED memorandum Order No. 39 in the Higher Education Institutions. It presents the competencies identified in the sample course syllabi from the two Higher Education Institutions. In addition, this section includes the perceptions of the graduating MM students regarding the competencies developed in them after completing the four- year BSBA in MM course.

Competency in the HEIs syllabi vis-à-vis CHED requirement. Column 1 of table 4 presents the seven major categories of business competencies. Column 2 specifies the set of competencies required by the CHED. Column 3 identifies the competencies as seen in the course syllabi of the subjects taught in college, which serves as the program implementation by the HEIs for the MM program. Column 4 specified the competencies lacking from the standards set by CHED and the actual set of competencies found in the BSBA in MM course syllabi, after explicitly matching the list of competencies.

Table 4*Competency in the HEIs syllabi vis-à-vis CHED requirement*

Seven Major category of Competency	Competency Standards set by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED)	Competency Standards needed by the Business Industry	Mismatches in the Competency (CHED and INDUSTRY)
COMMUNICATIONS	1. Convey ideas clearly both oral and written in English	1. Convey ideas clearly both oral and written in English	There is no mismatch between the CHED and Industry Competencies in this area.
	2. Prepare, analyze, and evaluate reports, proposals and concept papers	2. Prepare, analyze, and evaluate reports, proposals and concept papers	
	3. Apply the principles of the different forms of communication	3. Apply the principles of the different forms of communication	
HUMAN SKILLS	1. Understand the concepts and principles of good interpersonal relations	1. Understand the concepts and principles of good interpersonal relations	There is no mismatch between the CHED and Industry Competencies in this area.
	2. Participate actively in business associations and comply with their policies and obligations	2. Participate actively in business associations and comply with their policies and obligations	
	3. Demonstrate the values hard work, patience, and diligence	3. Demonstrate the values hard work, patience, and diligence	
	4. Demonstrate leadership qualities	4. Demonstrate leadership qualities	
CRITICAL THINKING	1. Prepare, analyse, and evaluate reports, proposals and concept papers	1. Prepare, analyse, and evaluate reports, proposals and concept papers	There is no mismatch between the CHED and Industry Competencies in this area.
	2. Conduct environmental scanning	2. Conduct environmental scanning	
	3. Conduct feasibility study and other business research/ plan	3. Conduct feasibility study and other business research/ plan	
INNOVATION	1. Demonstrate leadership qualities	1. Demonstrate leadership qualities	Demonstrate the value of risk taking.
	2. Demonstrate the values hard work, patience, diligence, innovativeness, and risk taking	2. Demonstrate the values hard work, patience, diligence, and innovativeness	

Seven Major category of Competency	Competency Standards set by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED)	Competency Standards needed by the Business Industry	Mismatches in the Competency (CHED and INDUSTRY)
TECHNICAL SKILLS	1. Perform quality work	1. Perform quality work.	There is no mismatch between the CHED and Industry Competencies in this area.
	2. Conduct environmental scanning.	2. Conduct environmental scanning	
	3. Conduct feasibility study and other business research/ plan	3. Conduct feasibility study and other business research/ plan	
TECHNOLOGY	Develop the ability to access, retrieve and disseminate information using IT	Develop the ability to access, retrieve and disseminate information using IT	There is no mismatch between the CHED and Industry Competencies in this area.
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY	1. Demonstrate the values of fairness, transparency, accountability, and honesty	1. Demonstrate the values of fairness, transparency, and honesty	Accountability
	2. Develop a wholesome personality	2. Develop a wholesome personality	
	3. Demonstrate civic-mindedness	3. Demonstrate civic-mindedness	
	4. Demonstrate responsible citizenship	4. Demonstrate responsible citizenship	
	5. Explain the concepts, approaches, and techniques of environmental conservation	5. Explain the concepts, approaches, and techniques of environmental conservation	
	6. Know and understand the country's national development thrusts, concerns and socio-economic indicators	6. Know and understand the country's national development thrusts, concerns and socio-economic indicators	

Students' Perceived Competencies Acquired from Studies.

Table 5 and 6 summarized the responses from the 221 students of the Higher Education Institutions-A (HEI-A) and sixty- two (62) students of Higher Education Institutions-B (HEI-B).

HEI-A students' responses to the survey. Table 5 presents the results of the survey conducted to the BSBA in MM graduating students for the Academic Year 2014- 2015 of Higher Education Institution A. As seen in table 5, the mean scores of responses shows that the respondents Strongly Agree that seven (7) competencies had developed in them, likewise they Agree that they had developed the forty- six (46) competencies, while they disagree that they possessed the other three (3) competencies. The results of the Standard Deviation shows that the majority of the respondents are consistent with their answers.

Table 5
HEI-A students' responses to the survey

Question no.	Item	Percent Distribution				Mean	SD	Interpretation
		1	2	3	4			
COMMUNICATION	1A I know how to convey ideas clearly in Oral English.	4%	7%	75%	14%	2.48	0.68	Disagree
	1B I know how to convey ideas clearly in written English.	2%	8%	69%	21%	2.49	0.68	Disagree
	2A I am capable of preparing, analyzing, and evaluating proposals.	5%	9%	66%	20%	3.02	0.68	Agree
	2B I am capable of preparing, analyzing, and evaluating concept papers.	3%	11%	73%	13%	2.95	0.58	Agree
	2C I am capable of preparing, analyzing, and evaluating reports.	3%	13%	69%	15%	2.97	0.6	Agree
	4A I consider my audience, and my purpose in communicating.	5%	2%	56%	37%	3.25	0.72	Agree
	4B I anticipate objections, from others.	4%	7%	62%	27%	3.12	0.7	Agree
	4C I create a well- rounded picture of the communication scenario.	3%	10%	69%	18%	3.01	0.63	Agree
	4D I use multiple communication techniques.	2%	16%	67%	15%	2.95	0.63	Agree
	Total Average					2.92	0.66	Agree
HUMAN SKILLS	7A I understand the concepts and principles of good interpersonal relations.	3%	5%	58%	33%	3.2	0.7	Agree
	7B I can apply the concepts and principles of good interpersonal relations.	3%	5%	61%	31%	3.2	0.66	Agree
	9A I had developed the ability to participate actively in business associations.	1%	10%	67%	22%	3.09	0.6	Agree
	9B I had developed the ability to comply with the policies and obligations of any business associations.	1%	8%	62%	29%	3.19	0.62	Agree
	20A I manifest in me the values of being a team player.	1%	9%	60%	29%	3.15	0.66	Agree
	21A I have developed the ability to cope up with stress.	3%	8%	60%	29%	3.15	0.69	Agree
	21B I have developed the ability to cope up with pressure.	2%	8%	61%	29%	3.16	0.65	Agree
	22A I can work overtime.	4%	5%	45%	46%	3.33	0.75	Strongly Agree
	22B I am willing and can adapt to different work locations.	2%	8%	48%	42%	2.3	0.71	Disagree
	23 I can work with minimal supervision.	4%	3%	55%	38%	3.3	0.7	Strongly Agree
	3D I manifest in me the values of hard work.	4%	3%	41%	52%	3.4	0.73	Strongly Agree
	3F I manifest in me the values of patience.	3%	5%	45%	47%	3.36	0.7	Strongly Agree
	3G I manifest in me the values of diligence.	3%	2%	57%	38%	3.29	0.67	Strongly Agree
	Total Average					3.16	0.68	Agree
CRITICAL THINKING	18A I am capable of preparing Strategic Plan.	3%	12%	62%	23%	3.05	0.68	Agree
	18A I am capable of analysing Strategic Plan.	3%	12%	62%	23%	3.05	0.68	Agree
	18A I am capable of evaluating Strategic Plan.	3%	12%	62%	23%	3.05	0.68	Agree
	11 I can conduct environmental scanning.	2%	12%	63%	23%	3.06	0.65	Agree
	12 I can conduct feasibility study and other business research/ plan.	3%	10%	62%	25%	3.09	0.7	Agree
	Total Average					3.16	0.68	Agree

Question no.	Item	Percent Distribution				Mean	SD	Interpretation
		1	2	3	4			
INNOVATION (CREATIVITY)	3D I manifest in me the values of hard work.	4%	3%	41%	52%	3.4	0.73	Strongly Agree
	3F I manifest in me the values of patience.	3%	5%	45%	47%	3.36	0.7	Strongly Agree
	3G I manifest in me the values of diligence.	3%	2%	57%	38%	3.29	0.67	Strongly Agree
	3H I manifest in me the values of innovativeness.	2%	8%	58%	32%	3.2	0.66	Agree
	3I I manifest in me the values of risk taking.	3%	7%	60%	30%	3.17	0.67	Agree
	10A I do demonstrate leadership qualities.	2%	9%	67%	22%	3.09	0.62	Agree
	20B I manifest in me the values of flexibility.	2%	9%	50%	39%	3.26	0.71	Agree
	20C I manifest in me the values of creativity.	13%	6%	52%	29%	2.99	0.92	Agree
	20D I manifest in me the values of open mindedness.	14%	5%	49%	32%	3.01	0.92	Agree
Total Average						3.20	0.73	Agree
TECHNICAL SKILLS	6 I can perform quality work.	4%	4%	53%	39%	3.26	0.72	Agree
	11 I can conduct environmental scanning.	2%	12%	63%	23%	3.06	0.65	Agree
	12 I can conduct feasibility study and other business research/ plan.	3%	10%	62%	25%	3.09	0.7	Agree
	17 I have acquired and applied concepts on salesmanship.	2%	11%	69%	18%	3.02	0.62	Agree
	18B I am capable of preparing, analyzing, and evaluating Marketing Programs	2%	14%	65%	19%	3.02	0.64	Agree
	19A I can create and execute traditional advertising.	4%	14%	63%	19%	2.9	0.71	Agree
Total Average						3.02	0.73	Agree
TECHNOLOGY	5A I had developed the ability to access mation using IT.	2%	16%	67%	15%	2.96	0.61	Agree
	5B I had developed the ability to retrieve information using IT.	3%	17%	66%	14%	2.91	0.64	Agree
	5C I had developed the ability to disseminate information using IT.	3%	10%	67%	20%	3.04	0.64	Agree
	15A I understand the basics of Web concept designs	3%	17%	64%	16%	2.92	0.68	Agree
	15B I can create a web design.	6%	24%	57%	13%	2.76	0.76	Agree
	16A I am proficient in MS Office Applications: MS WORD	11%	6%	42%	41%	3.12	0.96	Agree
	16B I am proficient in MS Office Applications: MS EXCEL	6%	5%	50%	38%	3.2	0.81	Agree
	16C I am proficient in MS Office Applications: MS POWER POINT	5%	5%	52%	38%	3.21	0.77	Agree
Total Average						3.02	0.73	Agree

Question no.	Item	Percent Distribution				Mean	SD	Interpretation
		1	2	3	4			
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (ETHICS)	3A I manifest in me the values of fairness.	4%	4%	47%	45%	3.34	0.72	Strongly Agree
	3B I manifest in me the values of transparency.	4%	3%	60%	33%	3.22	0.69	Agree
	3C I manifest in me the values of accountability.	2%	6%	60%	32%	3.21	0.65	Agree
	3E I manifest in me the values of honesty.	3%	4%	39%	54%	3.44	0.7	Strongly Agree
	8 I had developed a wholesome personality.	5%	3%	59%	33%	3.2	0.71	Agree
	10B I do demonstrate civic mindedness qualities.	1%	12%	72%	15%	3	0.58	Agree
	10C I do demonstrate responsible citizenship qualities.	3%	7%	66%	24%	3.12	0.65	Agree
	13 I can explain the concepts, approaches, and techniques of environmental conservation.	2%	14%	65%	19%	3.02	0.65	Agree
	14A I know and understand the country's national development thrusts.	4%	15%	67%	14%	2.88	0.7	Agree
	14B I know and understand the country's concerns.	4%	9%	66%	21%	3.03	0.69	Agree
	14C I know and understand the country's socio-economic indicators.	5%	11%	69%	15%	2.95	0.68	Agree
	Total Average					3.13	0.67	Agree

HEI-B students' responses to the survey. Table 6 presents the results of the survey conducted to the BSBA in MM graduating students for the Academic Year 2014- 2015 of Higher Education Institution B. The mean scores shows that the majority of the respondents strongly agree that they had developed in them two (2) competencies, and they agree that they had developed in them the other fifty- four (54) competencies. The Standard Deviation scores suggests that the respondents are consistent with their answers.

Table 6
HEI-B students' responses to the survey

Question no.	Item	Percent Distribution				Mean	SD	Interpretation
		1	2	3	4			
COMMUNICATION	1A I know how to convey ideas clearly in Oral English.	8%	10%	58%	24%	2.98	0.81	Agree
	1B I know how to convey ideas clearly in written English.	6%	5%	65%	24%	3.06	0.74	Agree
	2A I am capable of preparing, analyzing, and evaluating proposals.	5%	13%	61%	21%	2.98	0.74	Agree
	2B I am capable of preparing, analyzing, and evaluating concept papers.	5%	11%	65%	19%	2.98	0.71	Agree
	2C I am capable of preparing, analyzing, and evaluating reports.	5%	11%	68%	16%	2.95	0.69	Agree
	4A I consider my audience, and my purpose in communicating.	5%	11%	56%	28%	3.06	0.76	Agree
	4B I anticipate objections, from others.	3%	10%	63%	24%	3.08	0.68	Agree
	4C I create a well- rounded picture of the communication scenario.	5%	6%	71%	18%	3.02	0.66	Agree
	4D I use multiple communication techniques.	3%	15%	53%	29%	3.08	0.75	Agree
	Total Average					3.02	0.73	Agree

Question		Item	Percent Distribution				Mean	SD	Interpretation
no.			1	2	3	4			
HUMAN SKILLS	7A	I understand the concepts and principles of good interpersonal relations.	5%	8%	60%	27%	3.1	0.73	Agree
	7B	I can apply the concepts and principles of good interpersonal relations.	5%	8%	58%	29%	3.15	0.7	Agree
	9A	I had developed the ability to participate actively in business associations.	5%	6%	60%	29%	3.13	0.74	Agree
	9B	I had developed the ability to comply with the policies and obligations of any business associations.	5%	8%	60%	27%	3.08	0.65	Agree
	20A	I manifest in me the values of being a team player.	5%	5%	56%	34%	3.18	0.74	Agree
	21A	I have developed the ability to cope up with stress.	5%	3%	68%	24%	3.1	0.68	Agree
	21B	I have developed the ability to cope up with pressure.	5%	2%	67%	26%	3.13	0.67	Agree
	22A	I can work overtime.	5%	6%	50%	39%	3.21	0.78	Agree
	22B	I am willing and can adapt to different work locations.	3%	5%	52%	40%	3.27	0.71	Strongly Agree
	23	I can work with minimal supervision.	6%	5%	55%	34%	3.15	0.79	Agree
	3D	I manifest in me the values of hard work.	5%	10%	41%	44%	3.24	0.82	Agree
	3F	I manifest in me the values of patience.	5%	11%	44%	40%	3.19	0.82	Agree
	3G	I manifest in me the values of diligence.	5%	8%	55%	32%	3.15	0.76	Agree
	Total Average							3.16	0.74
CRITICAL THINKING	18A	I am capable of preparing Strategic Plan.	3%	12%	62%	23%	3.05	0.68	Agree
	18A	I am capable of analysing Strategic Plan.	3%	5%	65%	27%	3.15	0.66	Agree
	18A	I am capable of evaluating Strategic Plan.	3%	5%	65%	27%	3.15	0.66	Agree
	11	I can conduct environmental scanning.	3%	5%	65%	27%	3.15	0.66	Agree
	12	I can conduct feasibility study and other business research/ plan.	3%	8%	64%	24%	3.08	0.68	Agree
	Total Average							3.12	0.66
INNOVATION (CREATIVITY)	3D	I manifest in me the values of hard work.	5%	10%	41%	44%	3.24	0.82	Agree
	3F	I manifest in me the values of patience.	5%	11%	44%	40%	3.19	0.82	Agree
	3G	I manifest in me the values of diligence.	5%	8%	55%	32%	3.15	0.76	Agree
	3H	I manifest in me the values of innovativeness.	5%	10%	51%	34%	3.15	0.78	Agree
	3I	I manifest in me the values of risk taking.	5%	8%	48%	39%	3.21	0.79	Agree
	10A	I do demonstrate leadership qualities.	5%	8%	61%	26%	3.08	0.74	Agree
	20B	I manifest in me the values of flexibility.	5%	3%	57%	35%	3.21	0.73	Agree
	20C	I manifest in me the values of creativity.	6%	5%	57%	32%	3.13	0.79	Agree
	20D	I manifest in me the values of open mindedness.	5%	8%	54%	34%	3.15	0.77	Agree
	Total Average							3.17	0.78

	Question no.	Item	Percent Distribution				Mean	SD	Interpretation
			1	2	3	4			
TECHNICAL SKILLS	6	I can perform quality work.	6%	10%	50%	34%	3.11	0.83	Agree
	11	I can conduct environmental scanning.	3%	8%	64%	24%	3.08	0.68	Agree
	12	I can conduct feasibility study and other business research/ plan.	3%	6%	68%	23%	3.08	0.65	Agree
	17	I have acquired and applied concepts on salesmanship.	3%	8%	58%	31%	3.15	0.71	Agree
	18B	I am capable of preparing, analyzing, and evaluating Marketing Programs	3%	3%	65%	29%	3.18	0.65	Agree
	19A	I can create and execute traditional advertising.	2%	8%	63%	27%	3.15	0.63	Agree
		Total Average					3.12	0.68	Agree
TECHNOLOGY	5A	I had developed the ability to access mation using IT.	3%	16%	56%	24%	3.02	0.73	Agree
	5B	I had developed the ability to retrieve information using IT.	3%	11%	65%	21%	3.03	0.67	Agree
	5C	I had developed the ability to disseminate information using IT.	3%	16%	60%	21%	2.98	0.71	Agree
	15A	I understand the basics of Web concept designs	6%	5%	67%	23%	3.03	0.73	Agree
	15B	I can create a web design.	3%	8%	63%	26%	3.1	0.68	Agree
	16A	I am proficient in MS Office Applications: MS WORD	5%	8%	39%	48%	3.29	0.82	Strongly Agree
	16B	I am proficient in MS Office Applications: MS EXCEL	6%	6%	50%	37%	3.16	0.82	Agree
	16C	I am proficient in MS Office Applications: MS POWER POINT	5%	6%	47%	42%	3.24	0.79	Agree
		Total Average					3.11	0.74	Agree
SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (ETHICS)	3A	I manifest in me the values of fairness.	3%	13%	50%	34%	3.15	0.76	Strongly Agree
	3B	I manifest in me the values of transparency.	3%	13%	47%	37%	3.18	0.77	Agree
	3C	I manifest in me the values of accountability.	5%	5%	63%	27%	3.13	0.72	Agree
	3E	I manifest in me the values of honesty.	8%	7%	37%	48%	3.26	0.9	Strongly Agree
	8	I had developed a wholesome personality.	6%	7%	53%	34%	3.13	0.81	Agree
	10B	I do demonstrate civic mindedness qualities.	3%	6%	68%	23%	3.1	0.66	Agree
	10C	I do demonstrate responsible citizenship qualities.	5%	3%	61%	31%	3.16	0.72	Agree
	13	I can explain the concepts, approaches, and techniques of environmental conservation.	5%	6%	66%	23%	3.05	0.71	Agree
	14A	I know and understand the country's national development thrusts.	3%	11%	65%	21%	3.02	0.68	Agree
	14B	I know and understand the country's concerns.	3%	8%	57%	32%	3.16	0.71	Agree
	14C	I know and understand the country's socio-economic indicators.	3%	8%	68%	21%	3.05	0.65	Agree
		Total Average					3.13	0.74	Agree

DISCUSSION

The Commission on Higher Education memorandum order (CMO) no. 39 series of 2006 under Article IV stipulates the competency standards expected to be developed for the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (BSBA). According to Delos Santos, Dominguez and Lafrance (2011), competencies are foundational to curriculum development. It provides structure, direction, and alignment of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes the higher education institutions need to develop in students. It is worth noting that attitudes or character are as important and are connected to skills and knowledge, like how mind and heart are connected. The standard competencies set by the CHED serve all programs under the Bachelor of Science in Business Administration which includes: Marketing Management, Economics, Financial Management, and Human Resource Management. Each of the BSBA program differs in terms of its actual tasks and responsibilities in the industry. These tasks and responsibilities correspond to specialized skills, knowledge and attitudes needed by each graduate to effectively perform the expectations of their employer. Furthermore, each business program, like that of Marketing Management, is also divided into sub fields of specialization in the industry. Consumer research, product development, advertising promotions campaigns are other specialized fields of marketing management that require different or rather, specialized sets of skills and character. International Marketing is another field that has a different set of purpose in the industry.

The study contends that there exists uniqueness in each of the programs offered in BSBA and within each program, a set of sub field of specialization which may require different sets of standards of competence. As mentioned in Tekarslan and Erden (2014), there exist wide variety of jobs, specialization and continuous development in the business environment. This brings to the comparison of the standard competencies set by the commission on higher education (CHED) vis-à-vis industry needs. One of the striking differences is that the CHED standards are rather broad, unclear and insufficient compared with the needs of the industry, where the competencies are direct and specific. As such, besides the competencies required for the BSBA program, the CHED may also consider adding an article in the memorandum specifying the required competencies for each BSBA major as specified by the industry.

In addition, the HEI must acknowledge the fact that the industry has a syllabus of its own, although not written in the same format as the academe. The syllabus pertains to the mission, goals, operational strategies, marketing strategies and credo of the firm. This syllabus continuously adapt to the changes in the business environment should the firms want to keep and improve its market niche and profitability. In Raman (2009), it was stressed that if the Indian business education wants to improve the quality of its graduates' competencies, there is a need to build stronger interaction with the business environment. The interaction between the academe and the industry may keep the business school at pace with the fast and inevitable changes in the business environment. It is thus imperative to suggest for future study, a focus on finding ways and identifying the possible platforms in which the HEI and the CHED can best interact with the industry. The findings of this study may be useful source for the curriculum experts of the CHED to drive toward policy reforms that will aid in creating more competent and work-ready graduates in an environment where change is permanent.

One of the problems brought about by the current hyperactive business environment, continuous globalization, developing regional economic integrations (and disintegrations) and technological advancement, is the intensified industry competition. Thus, firms cannot sit

comfortably in their laurels, because anytime new firm comes in or existing firms innovate, these firms may break into their competitive advantage.

Barney (1991) suggested that in order for an asset to qualify as a source of sustainable competitive advantage, the resource must add value to the firm, it must be rare, and it must be non-substitutable. All these are attributes which perfectly fit the human capabilities. Human competencies is also considered the most important resource of the company like the saying goes, "people make a company, that is, make it either good or not so good" (Stommen, 2013). In fact, it was found that in the study of Ferguson (2007), firms commit to billions of dollars investment annually in training and seminar to update employee capabilities. In doing so, they accept the critical role of the employees in the overall operation of the organization. Therefore, business organizations expect so much from business graduates, as they will be the future source of the firms' competitive advantage. Given these facts, one may conclude that there is a need to explore and match the competency required by the CHED vis-à-vis industry needs, to improve the employability of the students in the future.

The findings of the study reveal that there is a mismatch in the competencies set by the CHED vis-à-vis the needs of the companies. The CHED competency requirements lack some of the competencies deemed important by the industry. The competencies that were not found in the CHED Memorandum are: human relation skills competency: the ability to be a team player; ability to work under stress and pressure; capability to work overtime, willingness to be assigned in different locations (soft skills- industry needs), and can work with minimal supervision; innovation: developed qualities such as flexibility, creativity and open mindedness; technical skills: understand and can conduct the concept of salesmanship; knowledge in preparing, analyzing, and evaluating marketing programs; knowledgeable in creating and executing traditional and digital advertising; and create and execute public relations events and other marketing events; technology: understand the basics of web designs; and proficient in MS Office applications.

The "*ability to be a team player*" is one of the most important human relation skills that the industry demands from an employee. This may have arisen from the rapid increase in global interdependence that result in increasing local diversity as well as more frequent and intense conflicts, Johnson and Johnson (2014). As such, firms need strong players among their employees. A team player, is someone who works well as a member of a team or group and can collaborate well with others, thus it allows for the efficient coordination and cooperation of the different tasks within the organizations' value chain. Team work is imperative to the success of the organization. Given the importance of team work in today's business environment, it is now a challenge for the CHED and HEI to find ways how they can create a learning environment that will encourage students to collaborate with others, to develop their team player characteristics. In addition, other competencies that were identified that were not present in the human skills theory are: ability to work under stress and pressure; capability to work overtime and to be assigned in different locations (soft skills needed by the industry); and can work with minimal supervision. These competencies are essential for firms to solve complex business projects (Peeler, 2016), thrive and make sound decisions in the extreme hardship, and disruptive business situations. To know is one, but to stay focused, in control and to be calm is another, thus human capabilities, assist employees in keeping their focus, as the firm navigates in the unending possibilities the business environment holds. These competencies work best with help from the innovative or creative side of the human brain.

Creativity as defined in Magee as cited in Ghosh (2014), is the constant recycling and recombination of a finite stock of ideas. On the other hand, Allison (2004) contended that a creative

mind has three divisions: one-third novelty knowledge, one-third intelligence and one-third personal characteristics. The application of creativity in the context of business implies innovations in the form of new product, new production process, new market, new source of raw materials, and new organizational process development. Innovation through the creative minds of employees gives firms more chances or leverage to adapt and respond effectively and efficiently to the dynamics of the business environment. It is a no brainer to understand why today's firms demand competencies related to innovation. The results of the study suggest that there are some innovation skills that are not present in the list of competencies that were set by the CHED, these are: flexibility, creativity and open-mindedness. Acknowledging and correcting the shortcomings of the CHED policies, through policy reforms will not be enough, because innovation is the interface of knowledge and character, which goes beyond memorization of theories. Building up knowledge and character requires experience learning methodology, thus insights from the industry are necessary to the educators of HEIs. These insights are required in creating a learning environment that infuses industry problem-solving, real-time industry issues, actual business circumstances and situations. Same is being done in the graduate studies, where concepts and theories are being challenged by professionals with business experience in their discussions, generating new learning from the shared knowledge and experiences of the graduate students.

While the study contends that innovation and creativity are important business competencies, the basic knowledge of business and marketing tasks must be regarded with equal importance. Employers also expect their employees to have a basic comprehension of the different business and marketing concepts, theories and operational tasks. The findings of the study reveal there are still technical skills that are not part of the required competencies by the CHED. These are: ability to understand and apply the concept of salesmanship; knowledge in preparing, analyzing, and evaluating marketing programs; capability in creating and executing traditional and digital advertising; and create and execute public relations events and other marketing events.

In addition, the list of competencies in CHED mandates does not explicitly include the basic of web designing, digital advertising and proficiency in MS Office. These are some of the specific competencies needed by the industry, which are connected to the ever-changing nature of globalization in today's hyper-connected and knowledge intensive economy. As indicated in Menzies' *Digital Network: The Medium of Globalization, and the Message* (1999), this new concept is known as digital globalization, which refers to the convergence between business information networks and those associated with digital mass media. Digital globalization, according to Farwell, Lee and Trauth (1993), Menzies (1999), Burkey (2007) and Sampere, (2015), paved way to the creation of a new business organization paradigm. The new paradigm allows for faster cross border flow of goods and services, making businesses shy away from the labor- capital- intense resources exchange; instead, the paradigm now includes activities that have a high Research and Development component, such as transmit of information, ideas, or expertise. Menzies (1999), also further elaborated that "these changes in technology application led to the emergence of developing countries, and opportunities for micro entrepreneur to be a micro-multinational". With the development of computers and advancements in technology, a lot has indeed changed in the business environment, changing every aspect of business operations (Al- Imamy & Farhat, 2005) making it an absolute necessity for higher education institutions to follow the trend of change.

The study also looked into the accuracy of the implementation of the higher education institution on the standards set by the Commission. Going through all the course syllabi and using content analysis, the research finds that the instructors and professors were able to integrate in their lectures, the competencies set by the CHED as deemed important to be learned by students except for two competencies: risk taking, and accountability. Risk taking is part of the innovation or

creativity competency category which is considered as the foundation in generating new knowledge and adaptability to changes. Accountability, on the other hand, is part of the human skill competencies, relevant in building organizational professional relationship and achieving customer trust.

Risk taking refers to the character or mentality that thrives on innovation and creative process amidst the presence of financial loss for a business man. Furthermore, risk taking is associated or synonymous with flexibility, creativity and innovativeness which according to Tekarslan and Erden (2014), are the attitudes that could aid business schools to be successful, because these attitudes permit people to strive for continuous research undertakings that will act as remedies for business organization problems and shortcomings. Thus, inculcating into the minds of the business students the skill in taking calculated risks is an important trait to encourage creativity, innovation and challenging the past laurel. Having this skill paves the way for continuous inflection point or reengineering of the company.

Accountability is the other competency that was not given a priority by the higher education institutions. It refers to the trait of an individual or of an organization to account for its activities, accept responsibility for them, and to disclose the results in a transparent manner. It also includes the responsibility for money or other entrusted property. The industry looks for employees who have the 'ownership of the business' mindset rather than an employee mindset; employers expect their employees to treat the business, company as their own.

In relation to exploring the level of accuracy of the implementation by the higher education institution to the standards set by the CHED, the study also investigated the level of confidence of the graduating students of BSBA MM as regards to acquired competencies. The results of the study reveal that among the seven major categories of the competencies, communication competency got the lowest mean score from HEI-A and HEI-B respondents, with 2.92 and 3.02 scores respectively. Among all skills that were rated, communication scored the lowest, indicating a possible low confidence among students in communication. The irony of this result is that the CHED and the industry agree that communication is an essential skill that must be developed by the students. Thus, it was safe to expect that business graduates are properly equipped with the necessary communication skill, therefore confident, but the results show otherwise. In addition, a majority of the HEI-A students believed that they do not have the ability to convey their ideas in oral and written English. The findings of the study suggest that the strategies of HEIs in building the students communication skills in the English language may not be that effective.

According to Botez (2015), English language is the most dominant language at the international level in all the fields of activity: communication, sciences, business, aviation, tourism, media and more. Accordingly, business communication across the borders around the world is conducted in English. Thus, in today's world of merging economies, building regional economic alliances and promoting international cooperation, the importance of English language cannot be understated. Hence, the low confidence in the command of the English language limits the competitiveness and mobility of the marketing management graduates.

Both HEI-A and HEI-B students rated themselves highest in innovation with a mean score of 3.20 and 3.17 respectively. These are the competencies that according to the students they developed, thus having the highest rating.

In general, the respondents agree that they had acquired all the seven (7) major competencies: communication, human skills, critical thinking, innovation, technical skill, technology

and social responsibility. However, there is still a need for higher education institutions to realign and evaluate its existing instructional strategies, in certain areas of competencies with low mean rating such that they may further increase the level of confidence of the students in their capabilities. In addition, HEIs may also consider creating a program that will allow team-teaching between industry representatives and the academe. This collaboration may minimize or eliminate the gap that exists between the business schools and the industry. Through team teaching, students may enjoy the benefits of gaining knowledge of the various and evolving business theories and practices, and at the same time may experience and learn from the actual business experience and latest trends in the business environment, from both the academic and business industry practitioners. Hence, delivering a holistic education, for future marketing managers and leaders. These educational strategies could bridge the gap between the competencies needed by the industries and those that are developed among the Marketing Management students.

The Emerging Framework

Figure 1 illustrates the framework named after this researcher, hence, the Gomez' Framework for The Making of Globally Competent BSBA Marketing Management Graduates.

The figure is presented vertically, identifying the development stages, and the continuous process in creating globally competent graduates of BSBA Marketing Management. The first stage shows the need for collaboration between the Industry and the Commission on Higher Education for Policy reforms. In addition, the first stage includes the needs of the CHED to gather information from the jobs Global market. This can be done through the Office of the Alumni Affairs from different HEIs. This will help the organization to align the goal of the Education system to the needs of the industry, both in the local and global market. The Commission, through its memorandum will be the guiding manual for the higher education institutions to achieve the national goals on education and the needs of the industry.

The implementation by the higher education institution is guided by the CHED memorandum. The connection line and arrow from the industry going to the HEIs reflects the need of the HEIs to interact and coordinate with the industry through its linkages, and in order to have clearer and more solid insights to the real-time situations, scenarios, occurrences, and changes in the industry. The HEIs may consider setting up regular interaction with its industry linkages through the office of the career services, or the office that handles industry linkages to facilitate the parity of the industry needs and HEIs production output. Furthermore, the HEIs on-the-job training supervisor (OJT) should encourage the immediate supervisor of the students in their OJT to write some comments in the students' OJT manual regarding their work performance. Using this feedback mechanism, will allow the HEIs officials and teachers to have a clearer view of the specific competencies that should be developed among students. Instructors and professors will be able to design a course plan (syllabi), prepare learning materials and environment, and align strategies and activities that are geared toward producing competent graduates. Given the instructions from the CHED and inputs from the industry, the HEIs may be able to produce globally competitive graduates.

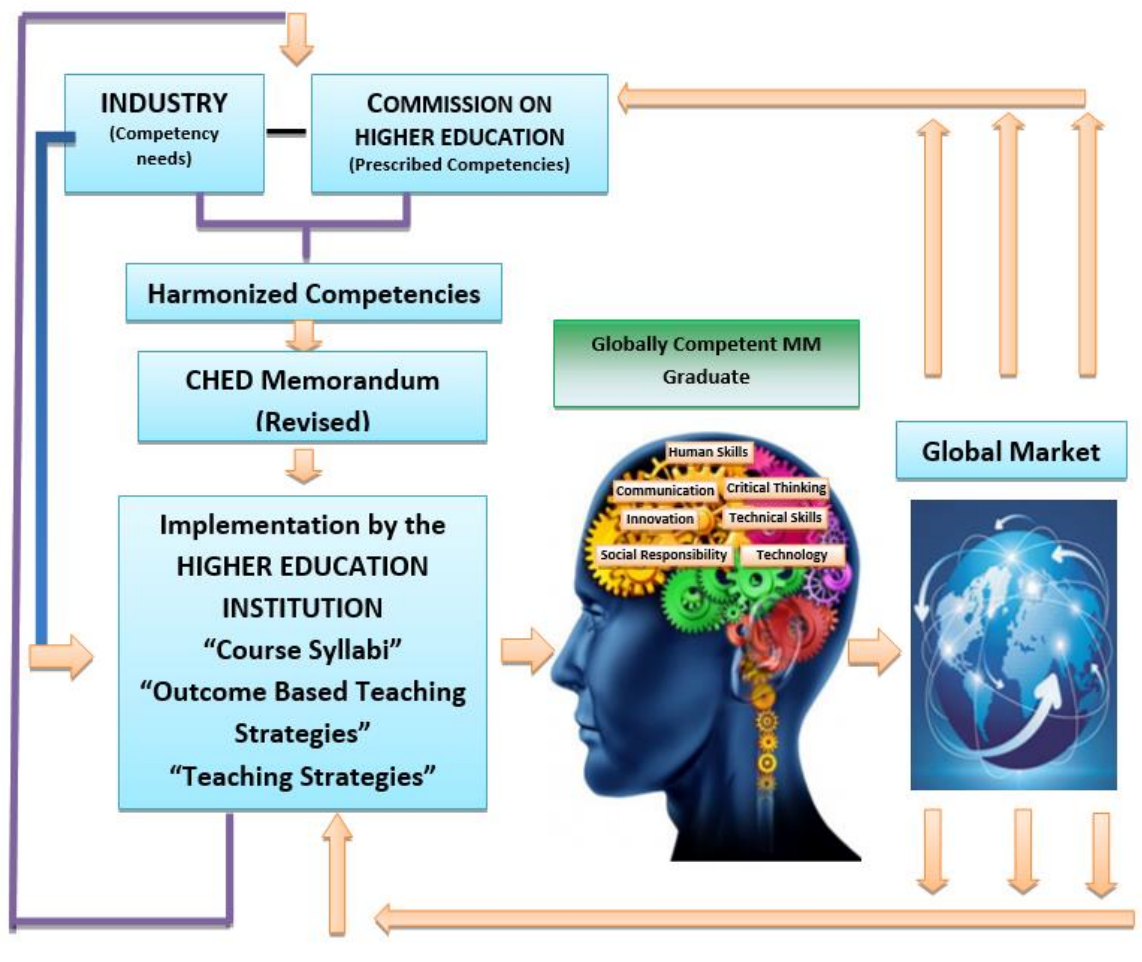
Globally competent graduates have greater opportunities to be employed in multinational companies in the local and global market. To keep the education system abreast of the changes in the global market, insights from the HEI alumni who are currently involved in the industry, and at present are well informed about the developments in the global economy needs, may be solicited through the Office of the Alumni Affairs. Inviting the HEIs alumni for speakership, consultation and other forms of solicitation of insights or suggestions on how the HEIs may improve their course

syllabi, instructional strategies and school activities. This feedback mechanism is represented by the arrows that go back to the HEIs implementation of education.

The arrow pointing back to the first step signifies the continuity of the process to ensure the formation of globally competent BSBA Marketing Management graduates.

Figure 1

Framework for the Making Of Globally Competent BSBA Marketing Management Graduates



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Scoping the 8Cs of 21st century learning in a Catholic elementary school in the context of the k to 12 curriculum

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Abstract

This study looked into the curricular program of the participating Catholic elementary school with the objective of describing the means and methods of how said institution nurtures the eight 21st Century Skills (8Cs) as identified by the Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) and adapted by the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) through its Revitalizing Teaching-Learning for Highly Effective K to 6 Classrooms (ReTEACH) Program.

The Curriculum Alignment Model by Fenwick English served as the foundation of the conceptual framework which emerged from this study, describing the implementation of the K to 12 Curriculum of the participating school that may be used by Catholic Elementary Schools as reference for assessing their curricular implementation. The triangulation and alignment of the data from the three qualitative and quantitative data gathering approaches via axial coding targeting the tested (national curricular standards), the written (school's curricular designers), and the taught (school's curricular implementers) curricula yielded 25 themes which highlight either "compliance," affirming the school's implementation of the curriculum, or "gaps," items needing to be bridged to become aligned with the said curriculum standards.

The research determined that there exist gaps specifically on Computing and ICT Literacy, both outside and within the "sweet spot" or the intersecting region of the three curricular areas in the conceptual model of the participating school. It is worth highlighting, however, that overall, each of the 8Cs or the 21st Century Skills is extensively identified as nurtured in the participating school's curricular program.

Keywords: 21st century skills, K to 12 Curriculum, Catholic elementary schools, Curriculum alignment model, Triangulation, Axial coding, Eight Cs of 21st century learning.

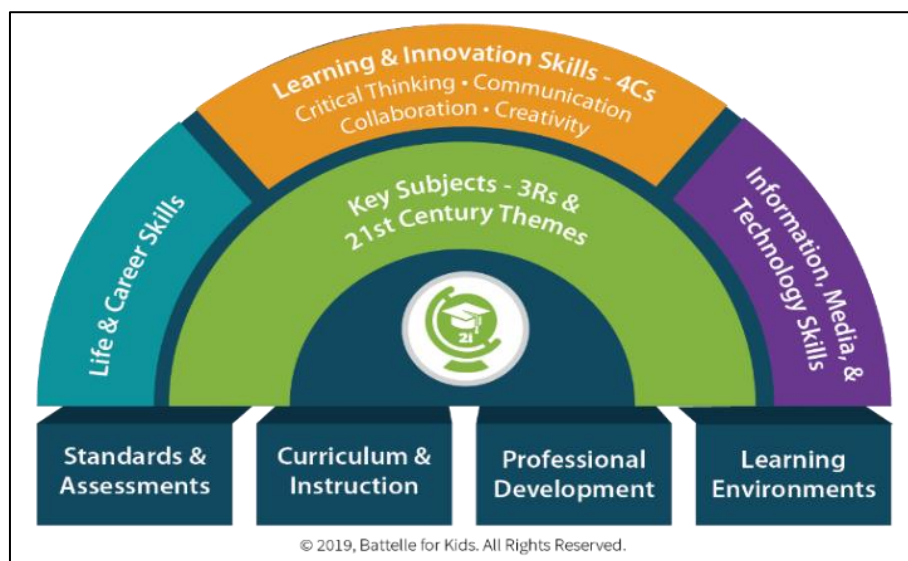
INTRODUCTION

Education authorities believe that the world is gearing up for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0). Driven by Klaus Schwab's vision, the merging of digital, physical, and biological systems is unprecedentedly inevitable (Xu, David, & Kim, 2018). This transformative era, deemed more significant than prior revolutions (Bianchi & Labory, 2018), has inspired nationwide initiatives in countries like the USA, France, and Japan (Aulbur & Bigghe, 2016).

It is given that technological advancements are foreseen to have an impact on every individual as productive citizens of the society. Therefore, future societal integration requires education to equip individuals for technological shifts.

With such, education systems worldwide prioritize 21st Century Skills to prepare learners for our rapidly evolving globalized society, driven by the Fourth Industrial Revolution. These skills, unlike traditional knowledge-based learning (Dede, as cited in Guo & Woulfin, 2016), focus on competencies crucial for success in dynamic workplaces (Friedman, 2005, as cited in Jacobson-Lundeberg, 2016). International bodies like the OECD and the World Economic Forum have documented these transversal, multidimensional, higher-order skills (Voogt & Roblin, 2012). The Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21), a leading initiative, identifies Learning and Innovation, Digital Literacy, and Career and Life Skills (AACTE & P21, 2013). Their Framework for 21st Century Learning emphasizes a holistic approach, encompassing the initial 4Cs (Critical Thinking, Creativity, Collaboration, Communication) and later expanding to 7Cs, including Computing, Cross-Cultural Understanding, and Career Self-Reliance (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

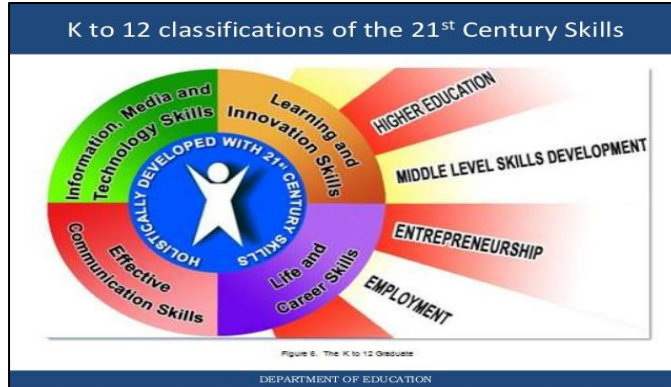
Figure 1
The P21 Framework of 21st Century Learning



K to 12 Curriculum in the Philippines

The Philippines' *AmBisyon Natin 2040*, a vision by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), reveals Filipinos view education as central and crucial avenue towards achieving a better life and stable employment (National Economic and Development Authority, 2017). Recognizing the global era's demands, the nation implemented the K to 12 Curriculum through Republic Act 10533. This innovation aims to provide a comprehensive education system, fostering productive, responsible citizens with essential lifelong learning competencies (Department of Education, 2013a). Key changes include mandatory Kindergarten and the addition of Senior High School. The curriculum emphasizes transfer of learning, where acquired knowledge is applied across various contexts, preparing Filipinos to be locally and globally competitive (Perkins & Salomon, 2012; Department of Education, 2013b). Instructional design, guided by standards-based curriculum and 21st Century Skills frameworks, underpins this goal, ensuring graduates are holistically developed and ready for future endeavors (Department of Education, 2012; Department of Education, 2013b).

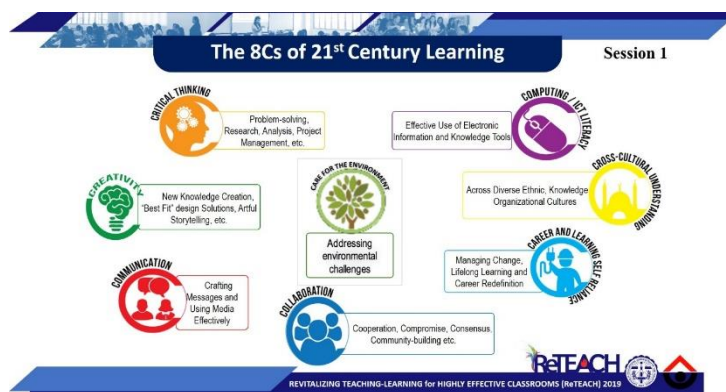
Figure 2:
DepEd K to 12 Graduate Framework



Twenty-first Century Skills for Philippine Catholic Elementary Schools

The Revitalizing Teaching-Learning for Highly Effective K to 6 Classrooms (ReTEACH) program, for Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) schools, introduces "Formation Standards" as a third pillar for curriculum design. These standards, representing an institution's unique values and vision, aim to cultivate lifelong values and human dignity among K-6 learners (CEAP & PEAC, 2019b). ReTEACH also adds "Care for the Environment" as an eighth "C" to the 21st Century Learning skills, addressing global ecological concerns (CEAP & PEAC, 2019a). This recalibration of learning standards necessitates restructuring school management, emphasizing curriculum development and pedagogy, to align with DepEd's standards-based instruction (DepEd Order No. 31, 2012) and foster globally competitive Filipino graduates with a focus on transfer of learning.

Figure 3:
CEAP and PEAC's 8Cs of 21st Century Learning



The preceding articulations led to these questions: What are the manifestations of a graduate who is "locally and globally competitive"? and, What skills are needed to be "transferred"? This study investigates how Catholic elementary schools, under the K to 12 Program, cultivate 21st-century skills (P21, ReTEACH) to foster globally competitive Filipino graduates.

Objectives

This study intended to develop a conceptual model on the implementation of the K to 12 Curriculum in the light of the 8Cs of 21st Century Learning which may be used by Catholic Elementary Schools as reference for assessing their curricular implementation.

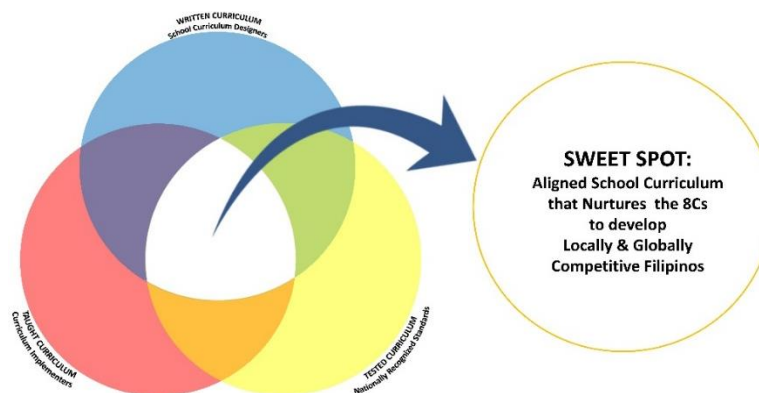
Specifically, this study sought to (1) describe the perspectives of the participant-elementary school teachers of the participating Catholic elementary school along with its existing practices in nurturing the 8Cs of 21st Century Learning based on the results of the survey, (2) describe the integration of the 8Cs of 21st Century Learning in the school's curricular programs drawn from the focus group discussion among the participating school's leaders and academic heads, and (3) identify the factors that align the school's present curriculum with nationally recognized standards of 21st Century Learning.

Conceptual Framework

This study, guided by English's (1999) Aligned Curriculum Model, investigated the congruence between mandated (tested) and school-designed (written) curricula in a Catholic elementary school. By examining teachers' (taught) implementation of the 8Cs of 21st Century Learning, the research identified areas of "compliance" or "gaps," aiming to inform strategies for curriculum development and instructional enhancement.

Figure 4:

Curriculum Alignment (English, 1999) in Ascertaining K to 12 Curriculum Adherence through the Nurturance of the 8Cs of 21st Century Learning



Scope and Delimitation

This study investigates how a private Catholic elementary school nurtures the 8Cs of 21st Century Skills, as defined by DepEd and CEAP, within its enriched curriculum. Focusing on the perspectives of administrators and teachers, the research aims to identify prioritized skills, offering insight into the school's alignment with national educational standards. It deliberately excludes observations of teacher competency or learner proficiency (Jia et al., 2016).

METHOD

This study probed into the manifestations of the 8Cs of 21st Century Learning, which serves as standards of the success of the implementation of the K to 12 Curriculum in the

participating school. It employed a mixed-methods triangulation approach to investigate how the 8Cs of 21st Century Learning manifest within a Catholic elementary school's K to 12 curriculum. This methodology, as noted by Patton (cited in Guion, Diehl, and McDonald, 2011; Carter et al., 2014), enhances validity and understanding by integrating diverse data sources. The research specifically examined the written, taught, and tested curricula, confirming findings across these components to validate the presence of the 8Cs (McLachlan, 2012).

Data was gathered from curriculum designers (principals, subject chairpersons), implementers (teachers), and the school's 2015 PAASCU Level II Accreditation Report.

For the taught curriculum, a 16-item survey, developed from studies by Ananiadou and Claro (2009), Buza (2010), and McLachlan (2012), assessed teachers' perceptions of nurturing the 8Cs. This instrument underwent rigorous content and language validation, followed by pilot testing to ensure reliability and validity (Fink, 2010; Story & Tait, 2019). The survey was administered to 24 teachers, yielding a 96% return rate.

The written curriculum was explored through a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with 14 curriculum designers, including the Principal's Council of the participant Catholic elementary school. This qualitative technique, described by Nyumba et al. (2018), used open-ended questions to probe the integration of 21st Century Learning skills. Deductive coding, guided by the P21 Framework, was used to analyze the transcribed discussions (Williamson, Given, & Scifleet, 2017).

Finally, document analysis of the school's 2015 PAASCU Level II Re-Accreditation Survey Report provided insights into the tested curriculum and its alignment with national standards (Bowen, 2009). This report, outlining strengths and recommendations across various areas, was deductively coded to identify connections to the 8Cs.

The study concluded with data triangulation, inductively and deductively coding findings from all three methods to identify overarching themes related to the development of the 8Cs. Recognizing the researcher as a crucial instrument in qualitative research (Xu & Storr, 2012), meticulous adherence to ethical protocols and "member checking" with the principal's council ensured credibility and mitigated bias (Koelsch, 2013).

FINDINGS

Based on the objectives of this study, the following are the findings from the three data analysis procedures carried out. The same presented data herein were further processed for triangulation in the succeeding discussion.

Taught Curriculum

Results of the Survey on Teachers' Perceptions of the 8Cs of 21st Century Learning

The study investigated the integration of 21st Century Learning's "8 Cs" within the participating school's curriculum based on the survey of teachers. The findings, derived from teacher perceptions regarding various instructional activities, indicate a general consensus that these skills are highly evident in practice.

Career and Learning Self-Reliance emerged as the most prominent skill, with 100% of respondents consistently providing opportunities for real-life relevance and lifelong learning connections. Collaboration also ranked highly, with nearly all teachers encouraging cooperative

learning and group activities. Care for the Environment and Communication were likewise perceived as strong suits, with teachers frequently incorporating environmental awareness and diverse communication methods into their lessons.

However, the survey revealed areas requiring further attention. Critical Thinking and Problem Solving and Creativity and Innovation both landed in the lower half of the skills nurtured, despite general agreement on their importance. Notably, while teachers reported often encouraging critical thinking, the actual utilization of problem-based activities was less consistent. Similarly, while many teachers foster creativity, some still seldom allow learners to deviate from prescribed methods. Cross-Cultural Understanding showed a broad range of implementation, with some teachers consistently exposing learners to diverse cultures, while others did so less frequently.

Computing and ICT Literacy, despite being verbally interpreted as highly evident, ranked last among the 8Cs. This discrepancy is largely due to a significant portion of teachers not consistently allowing students to utilize technology for their outputs, even though most teachers personally integrate technology into their instruction.

In addition, the data highlighted that newer educators (0-5 years of experience) and some seasoned teachers (20+ years of experience) were more likely to report lower engagement in certain 21st-century skill activities, particularly those involving technology and problem-based learning.

Table 1

Teachers' perception of the nurturance of 21st century skills

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Verbal Interpretation
8Cs of 21st Century	3.48	0.29	Highly Evident

Note. *n*=24

Written Curriculum

Findings of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with the Members of the Principal's Council

Having the key question "In what ways is school's curriculum aligned to the development of 21st Century Skills and towards the achievement of K to 12 goals set by DepEd and CEAP?", the analysis of the FGD transcript yielded emerging themes through axial coding in consonance with the 21st Century Skill indicators from the P21 Framework. The analysis, guided by the said framework, revealed the integration of various "Cs."

The curriculum actively cultivates Critical Thinking and Problem Solving through real-world problems in classroom discussions, "How" and "Why" questions, and the use of Singapore Math. Creativity and Innovation are nurtured via performance-based subjects, a focus on talent development, and avenues like bulletin boards, an exhibit room, and Basic Science Investigations. Communication skills are enhanced through classroom discussions and co-curricular activities led by the Student Activity Program and Guidance and Admissions Office. Collaboration is integral, with an emphasis on group learning, cooperative learning, and initiatives from the Guidance and Admissions Office. Cross-Cultural Understanding is fostered through multidisciplinary approaches, co-cultural activities, and outreach programs emphasizing local culture and understanding those in need. Career and Learning Self-Reliance is promoted through co-curricular activities, projects visualizing careers, and school advocacies like "CLAYGO". Care for the Environment is deeply

ingrained through learning plans, instructional materials, reuse/recycling practices, and dedicated clubs and advocacies.

Computing and ICT Literacy is developed in classrooms, clubs, and the IMC. However, limitations such as DepEd's gadget policy, the need for infrastructure investment, and teacher readiness were noted.

Overall, the school demonstrates a clear awareness of the importance of 21st-century skills, actively providing opportunities for their development through various integrated curricular and co-curricular activities.

Tested Curriculum

Outcomes of the Perused Documents from Accreditation Describing Alignment to Nationally Recognized Standards

This part presents the participating school's 21st Century Skills development based on findings of a quality assurance institution recognizing excellence in the curricular offerings of the participating school based on accepted standards, with findings highlighting both strengths and areas for growth.

The accrediting body commended the school's success in cultivating critical thinking and problem-solving, evidenced by student awards in competitions, effective classroom management, and a well-utilized instructional media center (IMC) with a new science laboratory. However, recommendations surfaced for enhanced faculty training in fostering critical and creative thinking, linking lessons to real-life issues, and diversifying assessment strategies.

Creativity and innovation were recognized through diverse club opportunities and positive classroom environments, alongside the effective promotion of IMC resources and the modern science lab. Yet, further faculty training in creative thinking and more functional bulletin boards to display student work were suggested to bolster these skills.

Communication thrives through open lines within the school community. Nonetheless, the report urged more faculty training on guiding students to ask questions and integrating questioning strategies into lesson plans.

Collaboration is evident in harmonious inter-sectoral relationships, student club participation, positive classroom management, and strong parent-teacher cooperation. The IMC's close coordination with faculty was also lauded. Future improvements include further faculty training in facilitating and processing group activities.

The presence of multimedia equipment across classrooms signifies a dedication to computing and ICT literacy. Still, the evaluation recommended more faculty training in judicious multimedia use, improved internet connectivity, and the creation of an IMC website.

Cross-cultural understanding is fostered through faculty involvement in outreach programs and the school's "Yakap Extension Program," providing free education and scholarships to underserved communities. The "Donate a Book and Educate a Child" project contributes to this skill. The report suggested the IMC prepare locally-produced instructional materials to highlight local culture.

Career and learning self-reliance is nurtured by involving parents and alumni as resource persons and faculty concern for student welfare. Recommended improvements include connecting lessons to real-life situations, a structured enrichment program, and higher utilization of guidance data.

The school's Materials Recovery Facility also demonstrates a commitment to care for the environment, with recommendations to intensify waste segregation efforts.

Themes Emerged from Triangulation Process

This study involved the use of three data-gathering procedures, each representing the three shades of the curriculum: the taught, written, and tested curricula. Key interpretations from the survey instrument, key points from the FGD session, and key statements from the document analysis obtained triangulated Common Key Themes through axial coding, a combination of deductive and inductive coding. They are as follows:

C1: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving (4)

Critical Thinking-Inclusive Curriculum

Manifestation of Critical Thinking and Problem Solving in the School's Curricular Program

Problem-Based Instruction

Nurturance of Critical Thinking and Problem Solving through Classroom Activities

Critical Thinking-Laden Assessments

Development Critical Thinking and Problem Solving through Assessment

Critical Questioning Techniques

Development of Critical Thinking and Problem Solving through the Art of Questioning

The participant Catholic elementary school cultivates critical thinking and problem-solving through curriculum and problem-based instruction, evident in competitive successes (PAASCU Level II Re-Survey Report). While assessment methods align with these goals, the skills nonetheless rank lower among 21st-century competencies. Ongoing improvements in questioning techniques and varied activities continue to enhance students' analytical prowess.

C2: Creativity and Innovation (4)

Creativity-Assimilated Curriculum

Indication of Creativity and Innovation in the School's Curricular Program

Creativity-Rich Instruction

Fostering of Creativity and Innovation through Classroom Activities

Innovating Facilities

Provision of Facilities to Nurture Creativity and Innovation

Innovation-Filled Clubs

Provision of Opportunities for Learners to Display Creativity and Innovation through School Organizations

This analysis reveals a school actively integrating creativity and innovation (C2) into its curriculum, evidenced by student accolades and resource utilization (PAASCU Report). While teacher perceptions suggest C2 ranks lower among 21st-century skills, classroom practices foster C2 through varied performance tasks and differentiated grouping (FGD). The school is also

innovating facilities and leveraging clubs to provide C2 opportunities (PAASCU Report, FGD), though documentation and certain faculty training require systematic improvement.

C3: Communication (3)

Communicative Curriculum

Presence of Communication in the School's Curricular Program

Communicating Classrooms

Development of Communication through Classroom Activities

Conversive Questioning Strategies

The Development of Communication through the Art of Questioning

This PAASCU-recognized school prioritizes communication through its curricular program, fostering harmonious relationships (PAASCU Report). They nurture speaking skills via seminars and clubs, and students even correspond internationally. Teachers integrate diverse communicative activities, including oral, non-verbal, and multimedia presentations, with a significant majority consistently encouraging varied expression. The school also emphasizes questioning strategies for developing communication skills (PAASCU Re-Survey Report for Level II).

C4: Collaboration (2)

Collaboration-Adapted Curriculum

Occurrence of Collaboration in the School's Curricular Program

Collaborative Classrooms

Cultivation of Collaboration through Classroom Activities

Efforts to foster collaboration are evident across the school, ranking second among eight key skills. This is nurtured through strong communication channels among stakeholders (PAASCU) and integrated into annual events. Classroom activities, particularly cooperative learning, are widely employed (96% of respondents), with teachers purposefully grouping students by intelligence or talent. Facilities like the Science Laboratory also support collaborative skill development.

C5: Computing and ICT Literacy (5)

Technology-Comprehensive Curriculum

The Manifestation of Computing and ICT Literacy in the School's Curricular Program

Technology-Centered Instruction

The Nurturance of Computing and ICT Literacy in Classroom Activities

ICT-Loaded Infrastructure

The Recognition of the Need to Invest in Infrastructure to Nurture Computing and ICT Literacy

Technology-Utilizing Learners

The Recognition of the Need to Improve Learners' Access to Technology to Develop Computing and ICT Literacy

ICT-Savvy Mentors

Recognition of the Need to Ascertain the Readiness of Teachers to Nurture Computing and ICT Literacy

Despite curriculum integration and commendable infrastructure as noted by PAASCU, a participating school struggles with Computing and ICT Literacy, identified as the least developed among 21st-century skills (FGD participants; survey instrument analysis). While teachers frequently integrate technology into instruction, significant challenges remain. Investment in infrastructure, particularly internet connectivity, is hampered by budgetary constraints (FGD). Furthermore, nurturing responsible technology use and encouraging student creation of digital content proves difficult, alongside a noted reluctance among some educators to fully embrace technology (PAASCU Re-Survey Report; FGD). Addressing these multifaceted issues requires ongoing teacher training and strategic resource allocation.

C6: Cross-Cultural Understanding (3)

Culture-Connected Curriculum

Indication of Cross-Cultural Understanding in the School's Curricular Program

Culture-Grounded Instruction

Fostering of Cross-Cultural Understanding through Classroom Activities

Illumined Local Culture

Cultivation of Local Culture to Develop Cross-Cultural Understanding

This school actively fosters cross-cultural understanding through diverse initiatives like the Mirai Nikabu exchange, welcoming various religions, and community outreach (PAASCU Report). While teachers integrate global issues and local Kapampangan culture (Literacy Month Celebration), and utilize technology for cultural exploration, cross-cultural understanding ranks moderately among nurtured 21st-century skills.

C7: Career and Learning Self-Reliance (2)

Real-World Curriculum

Presence of Career and Learning Self-Reliance in the School's Curricular Program

Real-Life Classroom Lessons

Development of Career and Learning Self-Reliance through Classroom Activities

The participating school in response to nurturing these characteristics actively cultivates students' career and learning self-reliance through a multifaceted curriculum. Initiatives like career guidance seminars and life survival skills training (Real-World Curriculum) are evident. Teachers consistently connect lessons to real-life situations (Real-Life Classroom Lessons), with 83% always doing so. External commendations highlight parental involvement and faculty dedication. Recommendations include enhancing enrichment programs and utilizing guidance data for improved instruction.

C8: Care for the Environment (2)

Environment-Aligned Curriculum

Occurrence of Care for the Environment in the School's Curricular Program

Environment-Caring Classrooms

Cultivation of Care for the Environment through Classroom Activities

The participating school evidently integrates environmental care into its curriculum, advocacies like "Alang Plastikan," and club activities (Bantay Kalikasan, Scouting). Inspired by Laudato Si, they engage learners through external partnerships (DENR), eco-farm exposure, and

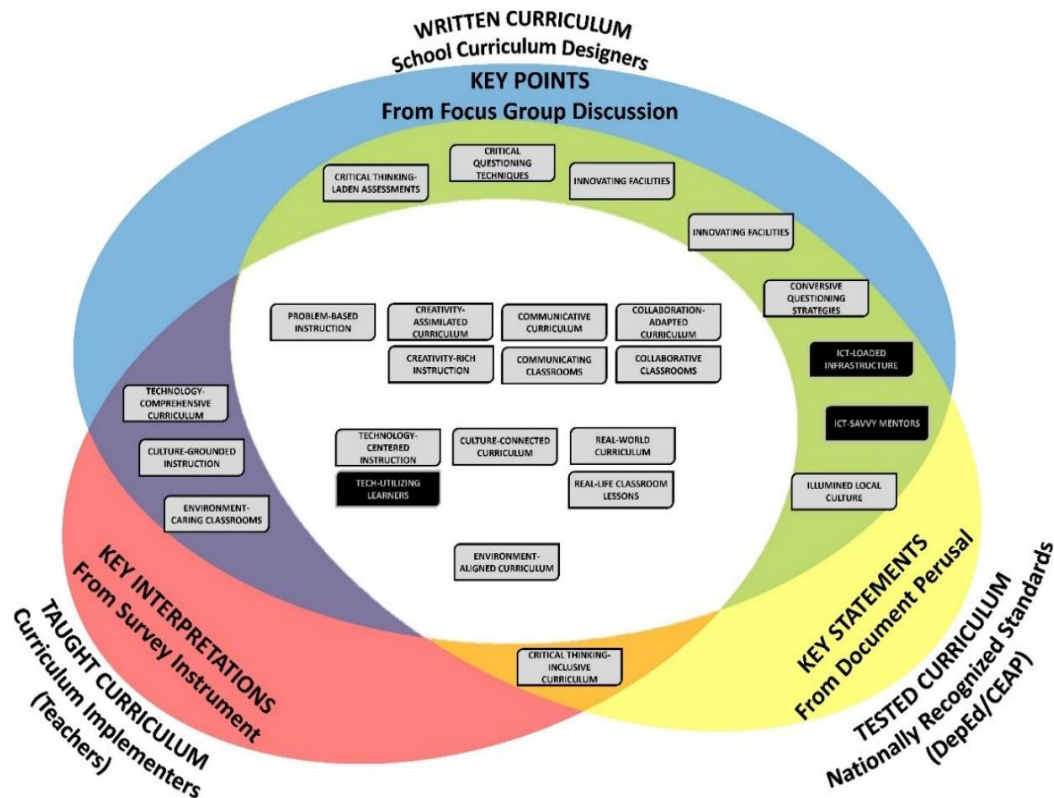
city-wide clean-ups. Teachers prioritize this skill, with 67% of activities demonstrating environmental care, affirming its high awareness and integration.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to examine the Catholic elementary school's instructional program, specifically how it fosters the 8Cs of 21st Century Learning. Drawing on Fenwick English's curriculum model—encompassing the taught, written, and tested curricula—the research sought to identify alignment strengths and discrepancies (English). The objective was to gauge the K to 12 Curriculum's implementation success and develop a conceptual framework for other Catholic institutions. Data from curriculum designers and teachers revealed areas of both "compliance" and "gaps" in nurturing these vital skills. Intriguingly, the "sweet spot" where all three curricula intersected yielded the most emergent themes, suggesting a robust core despite some asymmetrical alignments in skill manifestation.

Figure 5

Conceptual Model of the Manifestation and Nurturance of the 8Cs of 21st Century Learning of the Participating School



Triangulation of Written and Tested Curricula

The study identified six compliance themes aligned with the Written Curriculum and Tested Curriculum (green zone). These are:

Critical Thinking-Laden Assessments*Development of Critical Thinking and Problem Solving through Assessment;***Critical Questioning Techniques***Development of Critical Thinking and Problem Solving through the Art of Questioning;***Innovating Facilities***Provision of Facilities to Nurture Creativity and Innovation;***Innovation-Enriching Clubs***Provision of Opportunities for Learners to Display Creativity and Innovation through Clubs;***Conversive Questioning Strategies***Development of Communication through the Art of Questioning; and***Illumined Local Culture***Cultivation of Local Culture to Develop Cross-Cultural Understanding*

To cultivate adept learners, the school intentionally hones critical thinking and problem-solving through rigorous assessment and a culture of inquiry (Germaine et al., 2016; Tan, 2016). Creativity and innovation are fostered via student organizations and showcases (NEA, 2012). Emphasis on strategic questioning and local cultural appreciation further enriches these 21st-century competencies (Bialik & Fadel, 2015; Heinrichs, 2016 as cited in Chalkiadaki, 2018).

However, as indicated by the negative-colored text boxes in the conceptual model, the themes aligned with the said section likewise revealed two gap themes in the written and tested curricula of the school:

ICT-Loaded Infrastructure*Recognition of the Need to Invest in Infrastructure to Nurture Computing and ICT Literacy; and***ICT-Savvy Mentors***Recognition of the Need to Ascertain the Readiness of Teachers to Nurture Computing and ICT Literacy*

Addressing the digital divide means nurturing ICT literacy beyond infrastructure to include skill development (Gonzalez, 2002 as cited in Mason, 2006). Teachers, integral to this, need training in ICT-supported pedagogies to foster 21st-century skills (Voogt et al., 2013 as cited in Lambert et al., 2017).

Triangulation of Written and Taught Curricula

Three themes were identified as compliance themes aligned with the Written Curriculum and Taught Curriculum (violet zone), which are:

Technology-Comprehensive Curriculum*Manifestation of Computing and ICT Literacy in the School's Curricular Program;***Culture-Grounded Instruction***Fostering of Cross-Cultural Understanding through Classroom Activities; and***Environment-Caring Classrooms***Cultivation of Care for the Environment through Classroom Activities*

In light of technology's pervasive influence, schools must cultivate new skills. Computing and ICT Literacy are critical, impacting various competencies and pedagogical practices (de los

Reyes et al., 2018). These skills are seen as a gateway to broader 21st-Century Skills (Lambert et al., 2017). Furthermore, educators must foster cross-cultural awareness to support diverse learners (Ruetters, 2013), enabling effective collaboration in a globalized workplace (Kivunja, 2014). Environmental education is also crucial for promoting stewardship (Potter, 2009). While the participating school emphasizes these areas, a key assessment document (PAASCU) surprisingly overlooked their extensive integration.

Triangulation of Taught and Tested Curricula

The study yielded a compliance theme aligned with the Taught Curriculum and Tested Curricula (orange zone). This is:

Critical Thinking-Inclusive Curriculum

Manifestation of Critical Thinking and Problem Solving in the School's Curricular Program

The curriculum largely aligns with national and PAASCU standards, adhering to the call to nurture critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Davis, 2018). However, while these skills are taught and observed, the written curriculum lacks specific provisions for their development outside classroom instruction..

Triangulation of Taught, Written, and Tested Curricula

Twelve identified compliance themes were identified as aligned with the standards set by all three curricula: the curriculum implementers, the curriculum designers, and the nationally recognized standards. They are as follows (white zone):

Problem-Based Instruction

Nurturance of Critical Thinking and Problem Solving through Classroom Activities;

Creativity-Assimilated Curriculum

Indication of Creativity and Innovation in the School's Curricular Program;

Creativity-Rich Instruction

Fostering of Creativity and Innovation through Classroom Activities;

Communicative Curriculum

Presence of Communication in the School's Curricular Program;

Communicating Classrooms

Development of Communication through Classroom Activities;

Collaboration-Adapted Curriculum

Occurrence of Collaboration in the School's Curricular Program;

Collaborative Classrooms

Cultivation of Collaboration through Classroom Activities;

Technology-Centered Instruction

Nurturance of Computing and ICT Literacy in Classroom Activities;

Culture-Connected Curriculum

Indication of Cross-Cultural Understanding in the School's Curricular Program;

Real-World Curriculum

Presence of Career and Learning Self-Reliance in the School's Curricular Program;

Real-Life Classroom Lessons

Development of Career and Learning Self-Reliance through Classroom Activities; and

Environment-Aligned Curriculum

Occurrence of Care for the Environment in the School's Curricular Program

Within the participating school's curriculum, a strong emphasis is placed on fostering critical 21st-century skills. Problem-solving is paramount, encouraging students to analyze complex issues and make informed decisions, often through methods like the Singapore Math Block Model (Greenstein, 2012; Mayer, 2013 as cited in Care et al., 2018). The school also champions creativity and innovation, understanding their multifaceted influences on classroom dynamics (Guo & Woulfin, 2016). Communication is a cornerstone, actively cultivated to deepen understanding and enhance academic and linguistic outcomes through classroom discourse (Spies & Xu, 2018). Furthermore, collaboration is highly valued as a foundational skill, promoting teamwork and shared responsibility (Hixson et al., 2012 as cited in Davis, 2018). Technology integration is pervasive, transcending standalone ICT instruction to enrich all subjects (de los Reyes et al., 2018). Cross-cultural understanding is nurtured through global citizenship themes and outreach, promoting appreciation for diverse backgrounds (Kivunja, 2014). Finally, life and career skills, encompassing leadership and personal responsibility, are integrated experientially (Anagün, 2018; Dede, 2009), alongside a commitment to environmental care, echoing a call for planetary preservation (Francis, 2016).

The above-mentioned compliance themes are aligned within the "sweet spot" of the conceptual model, signifying that all three curricula bring into line the compliance on the nurturance of **all the 8Cs** of 21st Century Learning.

However, one theme emerged as a gap theme on the nurturance of **Computing and ICT Literacy** as revealed from the alignment of the three curriculums as indicated by the negative-colored text box in the conceptual model:

Tech-Utilizing Learners

The Recognition of the Need to Improve Learners' Access to Technology to Develop Computing and ICT Literacy

The participating school acknowledges the importance of technology to their learners' future, but to date, very few institutions have successfully incorporated technology into the mainstream of academic learning. (Pearson & Young, 2002, as cited in Mason, 2006). While there are schools that have started to build the required technical infrastructure, the shift in curricular priority needs to ensure that all learners learn to use technology judiciously is still a challenge, even for the participating school. Existing policies, like DepEd Order No. 83 S. 2003, restrict cellphone use (Department of Education, 2003), hindering efforts to leverage devices for learning, even with student access. The disparity in classroom versus leisurely tech use remains a persistent challenge.

Encompassing Theme

Awareness and Nurturance of the 21st Century Skills towards Developing Locally and Globally Competent Filipinos

Schools face a crucial task: preparing learners for a globalized future by fostering 21st-century skills. Defining these skills and integrating them effectively into curriculum remains a challenge (Hallinger, 2010). The participating school, aligning with DepEd and CEAP, prioritizes these competencies, embedding them across subjects and activities, alongside Catholic Identity. This interdisciplinary approach, recognizing Industry 4.0's human-centered shift (Xing & Marwala, 2018), addresses a key hurdle: lack of awareness (Care et al., 2018). Ultimately, teachers are vital in laying the groundwork for lifelong learning (Dişlen Dağgöl, 2017).

Conclusions and Recommendations

The Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0) necessitates a paradigm shift in education, prioritizing 21st-Century Skills beyond traditional academics. Frameworks like P21 guide this, with nations like the Philippines implementing reforms. The K to 12 Curriculum, established by Republic Act 10533, aims to cultivate globally competitive Filipinos by fostering holistic development and transferable skills for real-world application.

To foster globally competitive Filipino graduates, Catholic elementary schools integrate 21st Century Skills (P21, DepEd, ReTEACH), viewing their successful cultivation as key to K-12 curriculum effectiveness.

This study examined the Catholic school's adherence to the K to 12 curriculum, specifically its development of the "8Cs" or 21st Century Skills, with the goal of producing globally and locally competent Filipino graduates. While the institution largely aligns with these standards, a notable gap emerged in Computing and ICT Literacy, identified as the least nurtured skill. This deficiency suggests a need for investment in technology infrastructure, enhanced teacher preparedness, and improved student access to digital tools.

Furthermore, the research highlighted areas requiring better curricular alignment, ensuring that all aspects of the school's educational programs consistently support these skills. The study also recommends verifying the implementation of past accreditation recommendations. Future research could triangulate these findings with analyses of upcoming accreditation reports and delve into K to 12 compliance across different school departments for a holistic view.

Interestingly, the school emphasizes Catholic Identity, a skill not explicitly mandated by national or Catholic education standards (DepEd; CEAP), prompting a suggestion for CEAP to consider its inclusion as a 21st Century Skill for Catholic institutions in an era demanding ethical and human-centered approaches in the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Ultimately, the study advocates for future evaluations against global frameworks to ensure Philippine education meets international benchmarks. Twenty-first Century Skills are not relatively new, but they are newly important (Silva, 2008). Today's learners must be able to find and analyze information from multiple sources and use this information to make decisions and create new ideas for living in the real world, thus the occurrence of a transfer of learning.

One might argue that preparing learners for an ever-evolving world, a concept championed by John Dewey, necessitates integrating 21st Century Skills not as mere additions, but as foundational elements of the curriculum (Larson & Miller, 2011). Educators, therefore, must proactively reshape instruction to align with current and future demands.

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Exploring the experiences and insights on “*pagpapatawad*” (forgiveness) of successful professionals who were victims of childhood bullying

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Abstract

This mixed method study ultimately aimed at deriving inputs to recommend for designing or enhancing a guidance program for young adults particularly on helping them overcome bullying experiences. A total of 35 successful professionals qualified to participate based on the screening done among 60 prospective participants. All of the 35 participants acceded to accomplish the Personal Checklist Experiences (PECK) to verify their bullying experiences, and the Forgiveness Scale to describe indicators of having forgiven their respective offenders. Of the 35, 11 consented to have a face-to-face interview that led them to comprehensively narrate their childhood-to-adolescence experiences related to bullying and forgiveness.

Data showed that the participants were unanimous in declaring the absence of negative thoughts and feelings (anger, hatred and revenge) about their sad experiences and the presence of positive ones (letting go of negativities, having compassion, praying and hoping for good things) signaling that they already had forgiven the bullies. Physical appearance and social status in life were the most common reasons why participants had been bullied; the same factors caused them to have poor academic performance, negative emotions, self-isolation and anxiety during the height of the bullying circumstances. The majority (10 out of 11) of them expressed that as time went by, they were able to gradually convert their past experiences as victims of bullying into positive drives that motivated, inspired and challenged them to succeed and to boost their self-esteem, to focus on succeeding and to eventually achieve their goals in life – to finish studies and to prove themselves worthy to have a place in the society. Forgiveness led them to let go of the negative feelings incurred, enabling them to eventually live a stress-free and peaceful life. Data and insights may be useful in designing specific activities that may guide college students or young adult-counselees to overcome the crippling effects of bullying or to prevent bullying from happening in any setting.

Keywords: *Childhood bullying, early adult counseling, forgiveness, mixed methods design*

INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a subtype of aggressive behavior, in which an individual or a group of individuals repeatedly attacks, humiliates, and/or excludes a relatively powerless person” (Salmivalli, 2010, p.112). Bullying rate shows at least once in thirty (30) days, in various forms, and regardless of gender and age. A study shows that those who were bullied in childhood had increased levels of psychological distress at ages 23 and 50 years (Takizawa, Maughan & Arseneault, 2014). Students who experienced bullying may have a negative impact in their school life (Yamoto, 2013). Reactions toward these instances vary on the psychosocial differences of students. Students, who suffered from physical bullying or those who for the first time experienced it, often felt sad and on rare instances considered committing suicide. On the other hand, students who were taught that co-

students were often kind, whose parents understood their troubles, and those taught on handling stress were less likely to be bullied (Cheng et al., 2010; Hinduja & Patchin, 2010).

There were so many reasons why a student or a child is bullied. Poor motor skills (Bejerot, Edgar & Humble, 2010), poor family relationship (Cook et al., 2010), and the need to belong, social status, family dynamics, victim provocation, and the physical appearance of victims (Wilton & Campbell, 2011) are just some of the prevalent reasons. Rofes (2009) in his article titled "Bullies", states that children or students, in the elementary level which are ideally aging 6-12 years old – that is, are most likely to be either the victims of bullying, bullies, or those who see bullying.

Insecurity towards status, job permanency, and job comparison are the causes of bullying in workplaces. The same as in the school setting, these give negative effects to the performance of the bullied person and eventually, the performance of the company (Carroll & Lauzier, 2014; Glambek et al., 2014).

Tremendous efforts are being done to address this concern. Data on incidents show an increasing trend. Results show that one of every three children is involved in incidents of bullying and one of every five children are involved specifically on cyber bullying (Zych, Ortega-Ruiz & Del Rey, 2015). Moreover, boys have been more involved than girls (Cook et al., 2010; Zych et al., 2015). Bullied students are mostly likely to have lower school performance (Schneider et al., 2012).

Bullying is an offense or a wrong doing towards a person. When an offense is committed to another person, it starts to end when forgiveness is given. Offenses or sins against a person may possibly not forego easily even with forgiveness but this initiates reconciliation and eventually personal growth or learning on both parties.

There are two ways in forgiveness – Interpersonal and Intrapersonal. In the interpersonal forgiveness both parties, the victim and perpetrator, work together toward reconciliation while intrapersonal forgiveness is all about an individual process and moving forward through reflection of feelings and emotions of the clients who were harmed without negative reactions and does not involve the perpetrator (Balkin, Harris, Freeman & Huntington, 2013). Moreover, in the study of Wright, Turner and McCarthy (2017) on "Perceived Parenting, Self-Conscious Emotions, and Forgiveness in College Students", results show that both self-forgiveness and interpersonal forgiveness were predicted by parental warmth, empathy, and shame.

Forgiveness is reconciliation with the bully. It may be manifested through simple gestures of concern, doing what is right and just, admission of faults, fraternal correction, revision of life, examination of conscience, spiritual direction, and accepting the consequences of one's wrongdoings as part of the process (Catechism of the Catholic Church, Pt. II, Sec. II, Chap. II, Art. 4, V-1435).

A recent study of Watson, Rapee and Todorov (2015) shows that an advice to forgive the perpetrator results in less anger than an advice to take revenge or avoid and ignore the bullying. If an individual turns the negative feelings such as blame, irritation, revenge and anger into a positive feeling such as an attempt to forgive the person, this will positively contribute to the subjective well-being of the individual (Sapmaz et al., 2016, p.39). Letting go of un-forgiveness is essential because this will help the victims of bullying overcome the negative mental health effects (Barcaccia et al., 2017, p.217).

People who have a difficult time in forgiving cling to anger, resentment, and bitterness causing emotional and physical disorders/illnesses at various levels (Plante, 2014). Forgiveness is one of the ways in decreasing negative feelings which may prevent the development of mental problems and increase the positive feelings (Karairmak & Güloğlu, 2014) as well as having positive implications for health and well-being.

The study looked into the profiles of the 'once-upon-a-time-bullied-but-now-successful' professionals and explored their experiences and insights on forgiveness in order to derive inputs for designing or enhancing existing counseling programs for early adults. It specifically aims to describe the participants': (1) forgiveness indicators based on their self-assessment using a Forgiveness Scale; and (2) the experiences and insights on bullying and forgiveness.

METHOD

The study employed a mixed-method sequential explanatory design that involves the collection and analysis of quantitative data followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data (Ivankova, Creswell & Stick, 2006). Specifically, the quantitative approach consists of a survey and accomplishment of a checklist on bullying and forgiving among prospective respondents. This served as a screening procedure in order to identify the qualified participants for the qualitative aspect of the study. Meanwhile, the qualitative phase was undertaken next to gather detailed experiences of the qualified participants through in-depth face-to-face individual interviews.

A total of 60 professionals from different fields agreed to undergo the screening process; 35 got qualified based on the following pre-set criteria: (1) should have at least finished a 4-year college degree program and passed a licensure examination; (2) currently on supervisory or managerial position either from the educational, industrial or hospital setting; (3) aged 23-58 years; (4) experienced bullying (bullied) in any form during childhood and/or adolescent years. Of the 35, only 11 consented to have a face-to-face interview that led them to comprehensively narrate their childhood to adolescence experiences related to bullying and forgiveness.

To achieve the objectives of the study, three instruments were used:

Instrument Title	Type	Purpose
(1) Childhood bullying Survey of Successful Professionals	Researcher-made; Content-validated by experts	To identify qualified (bullied and forgave) participants for the screening process
(2) Personal Checklist Experience	Standardized-test Authors: Hunt, Peters and Rapee (2012)	To assess the bullying experiences of an individual in terms of frequency of occurrence and ability to cause subjective distress
(3) Forgiveness Scale	Standardized-test Authors: Rye, Loiacono, Folck, Olszweski, Heim and Madia (2012)	To describe indicators of having forgiven their respective offenders

To gather quantitative data and to determine the prospective participants, the Childhood Bullying Survey of Successful Professionals, Personal Checklist Experiences (PECK) and Forgiveness Scale were used validated by an expert and with permission from the authors. With respect to research instruments, the study used a 32 situational item-Personal Experience Checklist (PECK) developed by Hunt, Peters and Rapee (2012), with an excellent consistency

(Cronbach's alpha range = 0.78 – 0.91) and adequate test-retest reliability range ($r = 0.61 - 0.86$). Moreover, the study also adopted a 15-point item questionnaire, Forgiveness Scale, developed by Rye et al. (2001) with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.87 and test-retest reliability of 0.80. Questions were answered in a Likert Scale format ranging 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) and interpreted in two subscales namely, Absence of Negative and Presence of Positive.

On the other hand, qualitative data were obtained through an in-depth interview using an interview guide that was content validated by three experts. This was done to ensure that questions were clear, free from grammarian errors and aligned to the objectives of the study.

The distribution of survey questionnaires commenced after permission was granted by authorities in target institutions. An informed consent was given to qualified participants and it contained the purpose of the study, the standardized tests to be administered, the assurance that participation was optional, that their responses would remain anonymous and that participants have the freedom to withdraw anytime without getting penalized. The PECK and Forgiveness Scale have been given to them. Data collected were encoded in a spreadsheet and were summarized in frequency and percentage scores as well as the interpretation.

Of the 35 qualified participants, only 11 (eleven) consented to have a face-to-face interview on their insights and experiences about bullying and forgiveness. The interview session was recorded through the use of a cell phone. After the data were gathered, the actual responses were accurately transcribed. Assistance from language experts was sought in transcribing recorded responses. Content analysis of responses led to the formation of themes and categories. Later, the researcher returned to the participants to verify the interpreted participants' descriptions and resonance with their experiences (member check). Lastly, the assistance from three research experts was sought to validate the themes and categories formed and these were finalized based on the objectives of the study.

Table 1
Demographic profile of the participants

Demographic Profile		Frequency	%
Field of Work	Education	23	65
	Industrial	7	20
	Medical	5	15
Age	23-35	16	45
	36-45	10	28
	46-58	9	25
Gender	Male	14	40
	Female	21	60
Grade/Year Level of Being Bullied	Grade School/Elementary	29	82
	Grade School – High School	3	9
	High School	2	6
	High School - College Level	1	3

Data presented in Table 2 are the mean responses of the participants on forgiveness. It showed that the general weighted mean score of bullied successful professionals on forgiveness was 4.30 (agree). Therefore, based on a five-point Likert scale, the successful professionals were unanimous in declaring the absence of *negative* thoughts, feelings and behavior (anger, hatred and revenge) and having *positive* thoughts, feelings and behavior (letting go of negativities, having compassion, praying and hoping for good things) toward the wrongdoer (bullies).

Table 2

Mean responses of successful professional on forgiveness

Subscales on forgiveness	Mean	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Absence of negative subscale	4.40	0.18	Agree
Presence of positive subscale	4.19	1.24	Agree
General Weighted Mean	4.30	1.22	Agree

This research noted from the 11 interviewees the following personal information: their field of work, age, gender and grade or year level of being bullied. Table 2 presents a summary of these data.

Figures show that of the 11 participants, 7 are currently working handling subordinate/s in the education field followed by industrial (2) and medical (2). Almost half (5) of them are in the age range of 46-58 years old followed by those within 36-45 (4); six (6) were male, and the rest, were female (5). A huge number (10) of the participants have been bullied in their Grade school/Elementary years only.

Table 3

Demographic profile of the 11 interviewees

	Demographic Profile	Frequency	%
Field of Work	Education	7	63.6
	Industrial	2	18.2
	Medical	2	18.2
Age	23-35	2	18.2
	36-45	4	36.4
	46-58	5	45.5
Gender	Male	6	54.5
	Female	5	45.5
Grade/Year level of being bullied	Grade School/Elementary	10	90.9
	Grade School – High School	1	9.1

Participants' Insights and Experiences on Bullying

Reasons for Being Bullied

In this study, there are two reasons why the participants were bullied in their childhood and adolescent days – physical appearance and social status in life. Table 4 presents a summary of these varied reasons. Data show that the majority of them have been bullied because of their physical appearance – small built; some because of complexion and impairment of body parts acquired since birth. Some of them were bullied because of their social status in life, that is, being poor; while a lone participant narrated that bullying on her was caused by the bullies' seeming envy on her being the class president.

Physical appearance. The participants who were bullied because of physical appearance.

Status in life. As regards those who were bullied because of being poor and other social circumstances.

Effects of Bullying

The participants expressed their thoughts and feelings from the past on how the bullying experience affected them in terms of academic, emotional, social and psychological aspects.

Academic Aspect

Poor academic performance. Some described incurring lower grades and rank as a result of poor academic performance such as being unable to recite and attend or participate in class activities.

Emotional Aspect

Negative feelings. The majority of the participants' (10 out of 11) declared having developed low self-esteem such as losing self-confidence.

Trauma. At least two participants described their status as 'harassed' and 'traumatic' that prevented them from expressing their feelings.

Social Aspect

Self-isolation. Six out of eleven participants became aloof to others that they veered away from joining any group to protect themselves from further hurts. They also had difficulty in trusting other people again which resulted in staying away from and hating people. This negative feeling had prevented them from communicating well and they prefer to isolate themselves than to deal with and trust other people again.

Psychological Aspect

Anxiety. One of the participants shared that the bullying experience had a negative effect that haunted him even in his dreams.

Bullied Experience Contributed to Their Desire to Succeed

The majority of the participants (10 out of 11) shared that their bullying experience intrinsically motivated them in their desire to succeed and had a great impact on where they are now.

Intrinsic motivation. The participants felt challenged or motivated in achieving their goals and in proving themselves to others that despite those bullying instances, they can still succeed in life, and that attitude pushed them to finish their studies and become successful professionals someday. These experiences were expressed in the following remarks:

Fostering resilience. Almost all of the participants (10 out of 11) felt challenged after the bullying instances. They were challenged in a way that they wanted to finish their studies to prove to the bullies that they were wrong in seeing them as helpless and unable to achieve goals in life.

The experiences and insights on bullying of successful professionals are summarized in Table 4. Participants' reasons why they have been bullied and its negative and positive effects.

Table 4
Experiences and insights on bullying

Categories	Themes	Number of Responses
Reasons of being bullied		
Physical Appearance	Vertically challenged	5
	Complexion	2
	Visually-impaired	1
Social Status in Life	Position in school	1
	Being poor	5
Effects of bullying		
Academic Aspect	Poor academic performance	6
Emotional Aspect	Low self-esteem	9
	Trauma	2
Social Aspect	Self-isolation	7
Psychological Aspect	Anxiety	1
Desire to succeed		
Intrinsic Motivation	Fostering resilience	10

Experiences in Forgiving the Person

Reasons in Forgiving the Bully

The bullied-turned-successful professionals' have varied reasons/factors in forgiving the bully: Personal, Socio-cultural and Spiritual. The value of love, acceptance and being God-fearing made them even stronger despite what had happened. During the interview, some of them said that they forgave because it is already part of the past and just wanted to forget all the bad things which happened during that time. On the other hand, some of them expressed that they forgave but will never forget the hurt in their hearts.

Personal factors. Participants had their personal and individual reasons on why they have forgiven the bullies. The level of maturity and positive attitude they have become a mode to understand and later forgive the bullies.

Level of maturity. They believed that past experiences are already part of being *mature* and an opportunity of moving forward from those experiences.

Positive attitude. Acceptance, love from loved ones and deeper understanding of what had happened became instruments of forgiving a person who hurt some of them.

Forgave but did not forget. The bullying experience can never be forgotten according to some participants. They believed in the saying that "You can forgive but you can never forget".

Socio-cultural factor. Other factors such as the environment also influenced the participants in choosing to forgive the bullies.

Change of environment. Shifting to another environment helped some of the participants learn to forgive the person who hurt them.

Spiritual aspect. Spiritual belief and being faithful to God helped other participants in the healing process and forgiving the bully.

Faith in God. With the help of the spiritual dimension, an individual who forgives can convert the negative feelings of anger and resentment into positive ones by forgiving others. This is one of the essential ingredients of forgiveness as expressed by the participants:

Meaning of Forgiveness Based on the Participants' Experiences

The participants happily expressed their meaning of forgiveness which added development in their *personal*, *interpersonal* and *spiritual* aspects.

Personal Development

More than half (6 out of 11) of the participants shared that they found new personal meanings of forgiveness: it is a process and a positive manifested in being humble and accepting the reality of the bullied experiences.

Positive attitude. Bringing out the feeling of what is inside the person can make positive changes into the lives of the participants as they have shared the meaning of forgiveness based on their bullied experience. Moreover, embracing the learning experiences can result in better connection.

Interpersonal Development

According to some participants, forgiving someone means choosing and accepting to have a harmonious relationship toward the offender.

Harmonious relationship. Forgiveness is free to be given by each individual and regaining the value of trusting other people really takes time.

Spiritual Development

According to three participants, belief in and faith in God added to the meaning of forgiveness even in the midst of a bad experience.

Faith in God. The value of trust and belief in God strengthened and empowered the participants' personality and spiritual aspect.

Insights on Forgiveness

Positive Outcomes of Forgiving a Person

Participants shared the benefits or positive outcomes, such as Personal and Spiritual, of forgiving a person based on their bullying experiences. They acquired a sense of freedom and prevented negative emotions from lingering and this made them regain to focus and get back on track in life. Some of them also expressed having *peace of mind* and *happiness* helped them to move on and become more mature. Lastly, two participants experienced hope through forgiveness in *serving the Lord*.

Personal outcomes. The participants freely expressed the positive outcomes within themselves.

Transcendental. Six out of eleven participants expressed that having peace of mind and happiness are some of the benefits in forgiving a person. In this, they had the freedom to do what they wanted to do and were able to grow faster.

Contingent. The participants expressed that forgiving other people help them grow personally especially in their emotional aspect such as having focus on other things, free from stress and get rid of other negative feelings. These emotions for some participants made them to have a light feeling.

Spiritual outcome. Some participants' closeness to God made an impact in forgiving others.

Spirituality. Learning from serving Christ and through His teachings made some of the participants strengthen and deepen their faith in God.

Learning Derived from Forgiving

The shared learning experiences of the participants from forgiving a person who hurt them positively contributed within themselves in a way of not doing revenge and restoring relationship despite of what had happened. These learning experiences had an effect specifically in their *Personal*, *Interpersonal* and *Spiritual* growth. Forgiveness developed the participants to have peace of mind and deep faith in God, to be more patient, resilient and stronger.

Personal growth. Forgiving a person contributed in the personal growth of the participants specifically in having positive attitude in life.

Positive attitude. The learning experiences of the participants had a positive impact on their personal growth such as being more patient, stronger, having peace of mind and healing.

Interpersonal growth. Good communication to other people results in a better connection – that is, restoring a relationship.

Restoring relationship. Having harmonious relationship is one of the lessons learned and results of forgiving others for some of the participants.

Spiritual growth. The presence of having faith in God helped some of the participants developed their spiritual aspect.

Faith in God. Deepening of faith helped them understand truly the purpose of having a spiritual life.

Table 5
Experiences and insights on forgiveness

Categories	Themes	Number of Responses
Reasons in forgiving		
Personal Factors	Level of maturity	4
	Positive attitude	4
	Forgave but did not forget	3
Socio-cultural Factor	Change of environment	2
Spiritual Aspect	Faith in God	3
Meaning of Forgiveness		
Personal Development	Positive attitude	6
Interpersonal Development	Harmonious relationship	2
	Faith in God	3
Spiritual Development		
Positive outcomes		
Personal outcomes	Transcendental	7
	Contingent	7
Spiritual outcome	Spirituality	2
Learning experiences		
Personal Growth	Positive attitude	7
Interpersonal Growth	Restoring relationship	3
Spiritual Growth	Faith in God	2

DISCUSSION

Bullying may not have been the term being used during the time of the childhood and adolescence of the participants but the incidents or experiences they had, are manifestations of bullying as they call it today. Physical, social, verbal, even cyber bullying nowadays, and other similar acts are what they can consider as some of the forms of bullying (Jan & Husain, 2015) that were experienced by the participants.

Table 1, the Demographic Profile of the Participants for this study, shows us that the majority of the participants experienced bullying on their elementary grade levels and at some extent, until their high school years. This study and Rofes (2009) in his article, done in a different location and time, exhibit the same. Most bullying incidents happen during the childhood or elementary school years. In the study of Kumpulainen and Rasanen (2000) on children involved in bullying, found that those who were victims of bullying at early elementary school age (8 years) and in early teens (12 years), had more psychiatric symptoms at the age of 15 years.

When judging others, people tend to focus always on what is readily observable to them, physical appearance – that is (Adams, 2012). It is inevitable since their senses work, especially the sense of sight. In the context of bullying, bullies perceive victims as persons inadequate of fulfilling their criteria of being a “good/acceptable/even a perfect” person. It is unacceptable for the perception of the bully and therefore, an object of his/her criticism. Recent surveys depict that physical appearance (e.g. weight, disabilities, height, etc.) is the most likely reason why a person is being bullied.

Two more surveys, though a year apart, show consistent finding that participants were bullied because of their personal appearance. In the “Annual Bullying Survey” conducted, most of the participants suffered from physical bullying on their childhood or adolescence years (Ditch the Label, 2015; Ditch the Label 2017).

Aside from appearance, socio-economic status is a significant factor in having bullies or victims even though it gives as a weak connection as to a reason why it becomes a source of bullying (Tippett & Wolke, 2014). Nowadays, being underprivileged may mean being “powerless” since if a person does not have much, he/she may not have that much control either. In the context of bullying, it may seem like Displacement, a type of Defense Mechanism according to Sigmund Freud and defined as “a redirection of an impulse (usually aggression) onto a powerless substitute target” (McLeod, 2009).

In the study of Block (2014), it was found that students who were bullied were affected negatively in their academic performance since they feared going to school because they felt unsafe. Moreover, they were unable to concentrate and their academic success was hindered.

Outlook towards studying is affected when bullying is experienced in school (Ditch the Label, 2015; Ditch the Label 2017). Respondents’ experiences show that there were instances when they tend to skip school or even be absent because of bullying. One of them, though academically inclined, pretended to be mediocre for the bullies to excel and eventually stop bullying him.

Bullying also has effects in the emotional aspect of a person. Depression and anxiety are the most common effects. Participants experienced these effects and even felt a lower self-esteem. Same as through surveys, a huge number of victims suffer the same effects or even harming

oneself or worst is having suicidal tendencies (Shriver, 2012; Koriath & Writer, 2016; Ditch the Label, 2017)

It was further observed that the participants also experienced effects in their social relationship with others. Most of them said that they were afraid to mingle with others because of fear of being rejected. The above-mentioned research states also the same. As reported in a government study, an enormous percentage of bullied students tend to become unsociable. They had lower self-esteem and even became pessimistic (State Government of Victoria Australia, 2017)

These effects of bullying that were observed in this study and previous studies may be bracketed as effects in the psyche of the victims of bullying. Kinds or forms of bullying mostly affect the psychological aspect of a person. The previous paragraphs explain how a victim is affected socially and emotionally. Some of the victims may experience more on top of those. Repetitive attacks like bullying, according to a study of mental health, may also cause victims to dream about their bullying experience which may be considered a nightmare for them (Pathstone Mental Health, n.d.).

Bullying has various negative effects on the victims. These go from light to serious levels. On the other hand, a part of this study also aims to see the other side of the bullying experience. The successful professionals who experienced bullying responded on this study and most of them said that their experiences of bullying led them to where they are now. Those experiences became a strong positive driving force for them to strive to become successful and to prove themselves worthy to have a place in the society.

Some famous celebrities and athletes were bullied during their early years but these experiences were not hindrances but rather became stepping stones for them to become better persons and eventually become successful persons in their own fields. Such examples may not be supported by any study or research but these are genuine experiences, the same as what we have from herein participants (The richest, n.d.; OxNotes Education, 2017; Borba, n.d.)

According to et al. (2004), forgiveness, taking it from a *laypersons'* point of view, is letting go of a negative effect but does not forget reconciliation, forgetting/not forgetting, and simply behaving as if nothing happened. McCullough (2001) defined it as "*suite of prosocial motivational changes that occurs after a person has incurred a transgression*". McCullough and Worthington, Jr. (1999) defined it as "*a concept with deep religious roots*" and also a social and psychological phenomenon.

Some studies even show that forgiving may help in improving the health conditions like lower blood pressures, a stronger immune system, improved heart health, etc. (Mayo Clinic, 2017). It may also affect the social, emotional, and psychological aspects like healthier relationships, less anxiety, stress and hostility, fewer symptoms of depression and improved self-esteem (Enright & Fitzgibbons, 2015; Zheng et al, 2014).

There are also a few participants who mentioned forgiving because of their schools' interventions or teachings. They stated that the formation they had acquired from their education made them students or persons who knew the value of forgiveness. It was not for the reason of becoming healthier physically but rather, it was part of deepening their spirituality (i.e. as a Catholic) and strengthening their relationship with God (Cox et al., 2012).

The goals or targets, like personal development, set by people to themselves are powerful motivators / influences of their current behavior (Karoly, 1999). These goals have pictures in every

persons' minds which are being affected by sociocultural factors (e.g. family values, attitude towards work, etc.), norms, and expectations that they currently have (Greene & DeBacker, 2004).

Further, some of the participants mentioned forgiving for interpersonal development. Taking it on the most popular line, "*No man is an island*", people are innately relational beings. A human cannot thrive or live by itself. Gustavsen (2009), in his review on Gergen's book (2009) entitled "*Relational Being*", one of the issues raised was the difference between man being self-bounded and a man created by his relationships. A self-bounded man may learn or experience things on his own. He, eventually, shall have a personal notion or idea about the experience. However, another man learning or experiencing the same thing may have a different notion or idea about the experience. When both shared each other's personal experience, each shall have a new notion or idea about the experience and therefore, a new learning for both. Gergen (2011) proposes the re-construction of the "bounded self" towards understanding the primacy of relational being.

A Catholic, like some of other participants, say that they forgive because they believe in *Divine Justice*, a belief where people tend to forgive, forget, and let God do the rest. Or, forgive because God forgave them also. This teaching of the Catholic Church as reflected on *Matthew 18:21-35 or the Parable of the Unforgiving Servant* is a manifestation seen on the experiences shared by the participants of this study. The Catholic teaching tells that there is no limit to giving forgiveness. Further, the aggressor or perpetrator, though given forgiveness by the victim, shall still face judgment of the Father who also bestowed forgiveness to all the people (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2018).

The victim and the offender are less hostile, angry, or upset regarding the incident that transpired (Lawler et al., 2005). The same study of Hannon, Finkel, Kumashiro and Rusbult (2011) on "*The soothing effects of forgiveness on victims' and perpetrators' blood pressure*" also suggests that lack of forgiveness may result in higher level of negative emotion which may eventually affect negatively the health of both parties.

When the mind holds no grudges or basically when the person forgave, the mind signals the whole body to rest and relax because it does not need to think more about the incident. The resting body follows and eventually making the health condition of the person better (Kosednar, 2012).

After the body attains its relaxed state, the mind eventually calms and frees itself from the pains. Dyer (2016) in his article entitled "Find Peace in Forgiveness" states that a person should never assign responsibility to anyone. This means moving on and no longer thinking about the why's of the incident.

In the context of spiritual development among Christians, forgiving someone is like making a person feels closer to God or even being like Christ who forgave those people who turned away and caused His crucifixion ("Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" Luke 23:32-43). The ultimate goal of Christians is to be like Christ who forgave sinners even if they are unworthy of any of it. Considering that, people are to forgive those who sin against them no matter how hard or painful it is (Marrazzo, 2013).

Enright's Process Model of Forgiveness and Worthington's Pyramid Model of Forgiveness (known as "REACH") (Bush, 2014) concurs with this study. The shared experiences of the participants manifest forgiveness as a developmental process. Like in most studies, forgiveness is a response for coping with negative experiences such as bullying (Flanagan et al, 2009).

In summary, this study explored the genuine experiences of the participant – successful professionals on having been bullied during their days as young children and how later on were able to forgive their offenders. Their shared experiences turned out to be shared knowledge that could shed light on how to learn from the negative effects and overcome these and eventually create stepping stones out of these experiences toward success in their career.

The results of the study gave insights on the experiences of the participants regarding forgiveness, why they forgave, how it was given, how they felt after doing such, and eventually how it affected their relationship with the perpetrators and their relationship with other people.

Indeed, bullying, though may not have been termed before, was a common problem of schools and institutions which until now is being addressed. Countless studies, researches, and interventions were done to minimize it but as time goes by, it seems evolving even further. And so, it challenges the people to cope and adjust to the changes brought about by this problem.

This study gives a glimpse of hope for the bullied and the bullies. Often, other people pity those who are bullied since they are considered the victims. It has been a rule of thumb that the victims are attended first and then, the perpetrators. It is logical to support the aggrieved party first over the perpetrators since, most of the time, the perpetrators are considered the party on a better standing. But, the two parties should both be understood and given assistance or appropriate intervention. It was seen in the results, in the latter part, that is, that some of the participants saw why their perpetrators were bullying them. If given proper counseling or interviews, a counselor may see also why a bully does bullying. Eventually, if given correct or necessary interventions, a bully may be subdued or in time, ceases to be such.

This study exposes the varied reasons why the participants forgave their offenders later on. Every reason given has its own rationale emanating from where the participants had lived, or as a result of having learned from their religion/faith life, their upbringing, among others.

Taking into account the participants' responses and the studies cited, the present research arrives at the conclusion that forgiveness is vital for the personal and relational development of both the bullied and bullies. For any person, letting go of the bad experiences of having been offended and bestowing forgiveness on the offender could create pathways for gaining positive outlook in life and earning moral boosting lifelong lessons.

For one who is into guidance and counseling, the inputs of this study may be useful in designing specific activities that may guide college students or young adult – counselees to overcome the crippling effects of bullying or to prevent bullying from happening in any setting. Counseling techniques may also be re-created in order to address the concerns of the reported bullies. Contemporary activities may be designed for post-millennial bullies and the bullied to mitigate the negative effects of today's bullying.

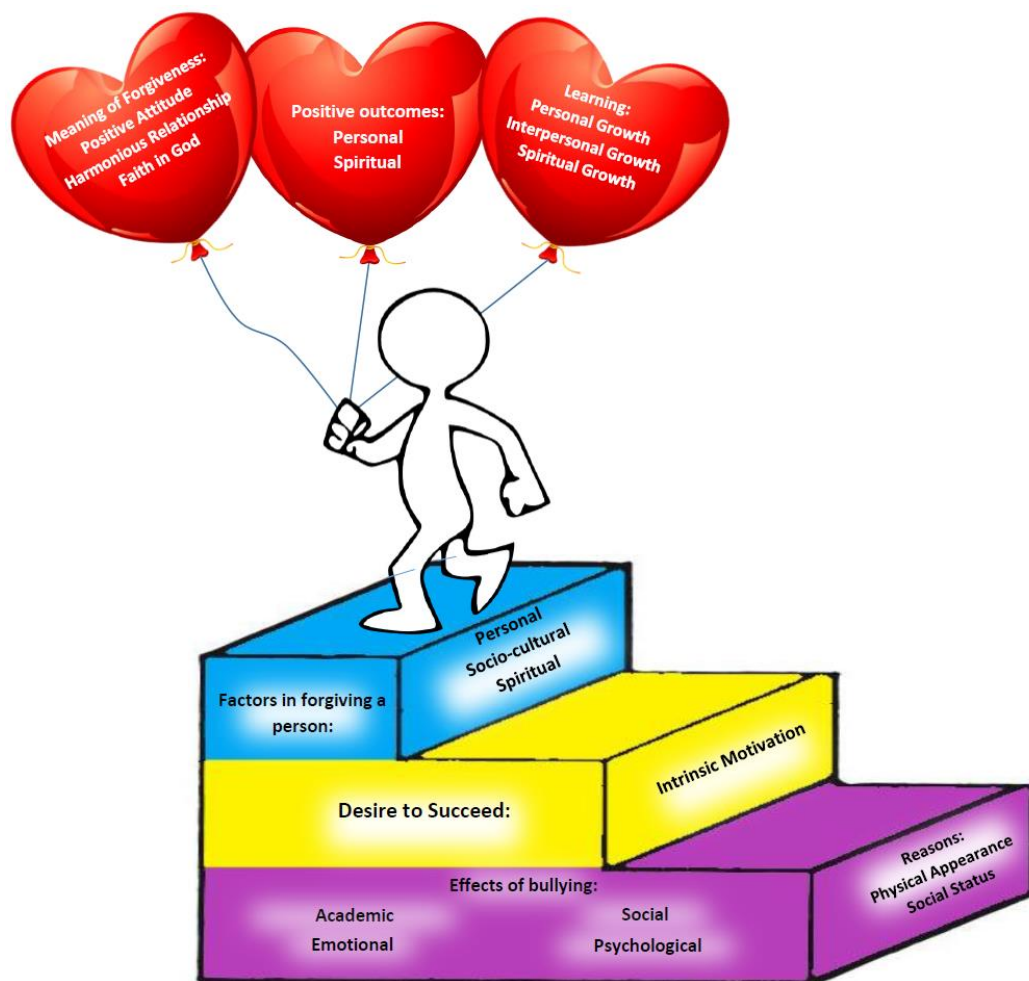
Further, this research suggests that the faculty or school administration work hand in hand with counselors to formulate and implement guidelines regarding bullying, wider information dissemination such as film viewing about bullying – providing the simplest to most severe effects, lessons on forgiveness, character development workshops, and subject for retreats and recollections among children, adolescents, and possibly early adults. This recommendation seems to be the most crucial considering the emergence of issues about gender and sexuality, the misuse of social media, and increase in varieties of disorders or diseases.

Moreover, this research proposes that students or parents, other researchers on bullying or forgiveness, use the insights offered as ground work to better understand the value of shared experience – turned – shared knowledge of the successful professionals who stood as respondents and participants. May this study also encourage the guidance counselors to be advocates of creating bullying-free schools and workplaces.

The Emerging Framework

Figure 1

Experiences and Insights of Successful Professionals on Bullying and Forgiveness



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