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## Information

# Toward a realistic aspiration: A Foucauldian discourse analysis of Reycel Hyacenth Bendaña's valedictory texts

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**Structured abstract**

**Background:** In a country that celebrates stories for their exceptional nature, how academic success is construed in the context of poverty is not only telling of broader societal conditions but also critical in constructing outcomes.

**Purpose:** Examine the discourses surrounding the academic success among poor Filipino youth.

**Research design:** Foucauldian discourse analysis

**Data source:** Ateneo de Manila University Class 2019 valedictorian Reycel Hyacenth Bendaña's (a) qualifying essay 'Prayer for Generosity' and (b) actual speech 'Questioning the Hill'

**Data analysis:** Based on Willig's (2008) version of Foucauldian discourse analysis, the different discursive constructions of the academic success among poor Filipino youth were identified. The discourses to which these belong were then analyzed in terms of the purpose that they serve (action orientation), where and how they situate the actors (positioning), the possibilities for action that they render (practice) as well as their likely implications on psychological experience (subjectivity), power, and social change.

**Findings:** Academic success among poor Filipino youth was framed as (a) unrealistic aspiration under the socioeconomic discourse, (b) individual compensation under the psychological discourse, (c) generosity's manifestation under the philanthropic discourse, and (d) societal exception under the justice discourse. Among these, the justice discourse was shown to put the poor Filipino youth in the most empowered position, advancing social change through the assertion of equal educational opportunities for all and transforming the construction of academic success among poor Filipino youth into a societal norm.

**Recommendation:** Discourses that spark hope, distribute power, and compel social change need to be advanced and supported by individuals and institutions alike. Because in the end, to adopt a discourse is to claim its reality, even imperfectly and no matter how gradually.

**Keywords**
academic success, discourse, poor Filipino youth, Foucauldian discourse analysis, Ateneo valedictorian

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## Introduction

Around graduation time in May 2019, the country once again witnessed a spectacle with a symbol of poverty rising to the spotlight of academic success. Several news articles featured Reycel Hyacenth 'Hya' Bendaña, the Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU) Class 2019 valedictorian. Far from the common Atenean with an affluent profile, Hya came from an impoverished background. This stark contrast proved highly salient that most of the headlines tagged her as daughter of a jeepney driver alongside being ADMU's top graduate.

In the wider Philippine scene, about 9% of the estimated 39.2 million Filipinos aged 6 to 24 years old are not able to attend school and complete their studies. This percentage seems small at first. Yet, when translated into numbers, this represents as many as 3.6 million Fil-ipino children and youth who are out-of-school. Among the most common reasons behind this incidence is the lack of financial resources, consistent with the fact that half of these children and youth belong to families whose income falls at the bottom 30%, based on their per capita income (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2018). Furthermore, a survey by an insurance firm reported that only 23% of Filipinos finish college. Again, part of the major contributors to this dismal rate is poverty which hinders parents from sending their children to higher education (Philippine News Agency, 2017).

With the above representation, it is not difficult to see how Hya's academic feat stood out as she reached and even exceeded a commonly unattained level of education among poor Filipino youth. Apart from this, what makes Hya's particular success story even more note-

worthy is the emergence of wider discourses through which academic attainment was tackled in relation to poverty. Through her essay for valedictorian selection (Bendaña, 2019a) and her actual valedictory speech (Bendaña, 2019b), Hya underscored the broader societal context of her experience in light of many more disadvantaged Filipino youth.

The different constructions and discourses about academic success among poor Filipino youth are what the present study sought to examine. The use of a discursive approach advances the notion that how an object is seen or constructed constitutes reality itself (Willig, 2008). Such constructions generate ways of being that may be taken as truths and can therefore exert power over people's lives (Foucault, 1980). Hence, how discourses construct academic success among poor Filipino youth is critical in shaping their social and psychological realities, as well as in perpetuating existing social structures or bringing about social change. In the current research then, implications of these discourses are elaborated on, including how poor Filipino youth are viewed or positioned, the actions made available for them to do, and how they are likely to think, feel, and behave with respect to a particular discourse. The broader relationship of the identified discourses is also tackled in terms of the extent to which they advocate for social change.

### Review of related literature

#### Socioeconomic status and academic success

Among the factors that are deemed influential to academic success, socioeconomic status (SES) stands to be one of the most extensively studied (Farooq et al., 2011). The American Psychological Association (2017) defines SES as a broad term that encompasses multiple facets such as family's income, parents' educational attainment, and even one's perceptions of the available opportunities in life. Meanwhile, the measure of academic outcomes across the education literature has been largely based on students' grade point averages (Ghaemi & Yazdanpanah, 2014).

Most experts argue that low SES leads to poor academic outcomes as the more basic needs have yet to be addressed (Adams, 1996, as cited in Farooq et al., 2011). Such relegation of education to a secondary concern happens even in the context of the Filipino family. In a local study involving elementary students in a Philippine province, nutrition and the family's living conditions appeared to be the most predominant hindrance to students' academic performance (Alcuizar, 2016).

Aside from the direct influence of SES on the prioritization of resources, it has also been suggested to exert an impact on scholastic outcomes through psychological means. In field experiments for instance, low SES students were observed to increase their school motivation, and hence their performance, when they were made to feel that opportunities for success were available (Destin, 2017).

Furthermore, students' growth mindset—the belief that their intelligence is malleable and their academic performance can thus be improved with effort—has been increasingly recognized as an important psychological factor in determining academic achievement. In a nationwide study in Chile, it was found that the assumption of a growth mindset was positively correlated with academic success across socioeconomic strata. In fact, it was even shown to be a comparably strong predictor of academic success as SES. The same study, however, documented that low SES students were less likely to hold a growth mindset compared to students with higher SES. But those low SES students who did exhibit a growth mindset fared better, such that students in the lowest 10th percentile of family income demonstrated a level of academic performance comparable to those students in the 80th income percentile who were less inclined to hold a growth mindset. These results suggest that the extent to which growth mindset is held by low SES students can greatly improve their chance for academic achievement (Claro et al., 2016).

#### Discourses involving socioeconomic status and education

In recent educational policy literature, the discussion on the neoliberal perspective has become prevalent. Within this discourse, education is essentially framed as a commodity that parents, as consumers, choose to avail for their children, regardless of their requisite resources to do so. Here, the responsibility of affording an education is shifted from the state to the parents and their children, such that any failure in completing an education is attributed to students and their families (Apple, 2005).

In response to this, some have begun focusing on the issues of justice and equality as well as their implications to specific populations such as students with low SES (Lester et al., 2016). This counter discourse of justice is elaborated on in an article published in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy in 2017. Here, several scholars argued that access to educational opportunities must be equal for all because of a couple of significant reasons. First, education provides opportunities for an individual's success in competing in the labor market, participating in democratic processes, and thriving as a human, in general. Second, education recognizes that one's life chances must not be determined by uncontrollable circumstances of birth such as social class. And it is in the intersection of education's instrumental value of enabling employment and the disadvantaged position of certain populations such as the poor where the matter of social and economic justice comes in. Hence, the role of the government in upholding justice lies in ensuring equality in educational opportunities. Education, in this sense, cannot be operated under the market principle. It has to be available to anyone, including those whose

parents are too poor to afford it (Shields et al., 2017).

**Theoretical framework**

Discourses pertain to sets of statements that talk about things or events in relatively coherent ways (Edley, 2001). They provide a means of constructing objects in particular cultural and historical contexts, producing forms of knowledge through the use of language (Hall, 1992). Discourses then create subject positions through which people locate and define themselves and play accompanying roles (Parker, 1994).

Consistent with the process of construction, Foucault (1980) focuses on the complex relationship of power and knowledge. As discourses make available certain ways of seeing and being in the world, the resulting representation or knowledge is viewed to be strongly implicated in the exercise of power (Willig, 2008). For instance, Foucault is concerned with how constructed knowledge wields control over people's lives. From a Foucauldian point of view, discourses serve to allow or constrain social practices vis-à-vis what can be said and done by whom, where, and when (Parker, 1992). Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA) then seeks to examine the implications of discourses in people's social and psychological experiences, including how people are positioned, the actions they can engage in, as well as the possible thoughts and feelings they can experience within a discourse.

The following FDA stages were undertaken in this study following Willig's (2008) version.

1. Discursive constructions. These involve the various ways an object is constructed in the text. For this study, the academic success among poor Filipino youth was chosen as the object of focus, as Hya's valedictory texts exposed the different angles through which it is understood in society.
2. Discourses. These refer to the wider ways of understanding that locate the discursive constructions in a broader perspective, making their underlying assumptions and differences more apparent. In the education literature, for instance, socioeconomic, psychological, and justice discourses were noted. Depending on which discourse is activated, construal of the object and power ascribed to actors change. The present research aimed to analyze how academic success among poor Filipino youth is framed in these discourses.
3. Action orientation. This states the purpose that a discourse accomplishes in the text. In this study, the function of each discourse is discussed in terms of attributing or disclaiming capabilities from actors, such as whether poor Filipino youth stand to lose, benefit from, or contribute to their academic success, depending on the given discourse.
4. Positioning. This identifies the location from where people are viewed in society and the position they

take up in a discourse. This also covers the rights and duties ascribed to actors given their subject positions. In relation to this, the current research explored how poor Filipino youth are situated with respect to their pursuit of academic success within a particular discourse.
5. Practice. This provides or limits the possibilities of action that people can undertake given their positioning in a discourse. This also constitutes the expression of power that is granted to or withheld from actors in a certain discourse. In this research, practice addressed the question of how much power is afforded to poor Filipino youth in terms of what they can do or not do in their pursuit of academic success, given their positioning in a particular discourse.
6. Subjectivity. This encompasses what people may think, feel, and experience as a product of their positioning in a discourse. This demonstrates how pervasive the power of discourse can be in influencing individuals' psychological realities. This study aimed to infer the subjectivity embedded in the positioning of poor Filipino youth with respect to a given discourse on their academic success.

Continuing with the power/knowledge concept, Foucault also asserts that power can reinforce knowledge by breeding regimes of truth that can be so entrenched that they remain unquestioned and are taken as 'common sense.' Through this, prevailing discourses that favor specific versions of social reality are able to legitimize and perpetuate existing social structures and power relations. Because of the dynamic nature of language, however, alternative constructions become possible and counter discourses arise eventually, serving as mechanisms for social change (Willig, 2008). In this study, the broader relationship of discourses on academic success among poor Filipino youth is tackled as well as the implications in power relations and systematic change.

## Method

This research examined the discourses surrounding the academic success among poor Filipino youth. Using ADMU Class 2019 valedictorian Reycel Hyacenth Bendaña or Hya's publicly available texts, (a) her qualifying essay 'Prayer for Generosity' (Bendaña, 2019a) and (b) actual speech 'Questioning the Hill' (Bendaña, 2019b), the present study utilized the qualitative approach of Foucauldian discourse analysis.

**Data collection**

Due to the richness of Hya's writings, these were deemed as an ample source of discourses for study. These texts aptly captured her contrasting experience of a remarkable academic success amid an impoverished background. More importantly, Hya did not just talk about her
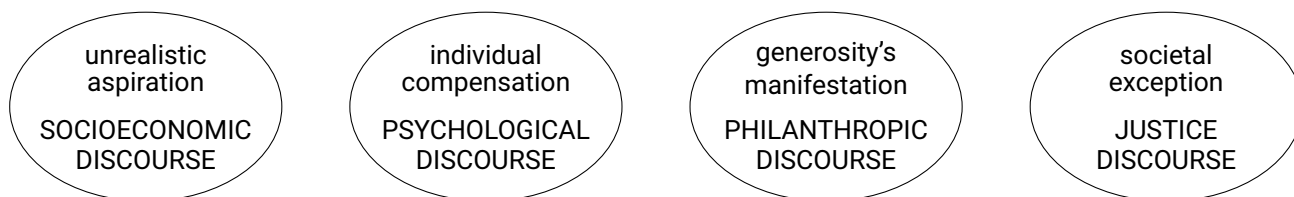
Academic success among poor Filipino youth



**Figure 1.** Summary of discursive constructions and discourses

own circumstances, but mostly related her academic success with that of the poor Filipino youth. With the uniqueness of her case and its illustration of a wider societal scenario, the feature of her story in several newspapers must be indicative of the relevance of discourses contained in it. Altogether, these characteristics make the subject texts worthy of study.

**Data analysis**

Following Willig's (2008) version of Foucauldian discourse analysis, six steps were performed to analyze the data. The first two steps involved identifying different discursive constructions and locating them within the context of wider discourses. Here, I, as the researcher, read the text thrice. My first reading was done without conscious processing. During the second reading, I engaged with the text with the research question in mind, extracting the different ways through which academic success among poor Filipino youth was constructed. My third reading centered on checking the wider discourses against the text again. The next step entailed determining the action orientation or what the discourse does and accomplishes in the text. For this study, I analyzed what each of the discourses conveyed as doing in the text, such as attributing or disregarding agency from poor Filipino youth in their pursuit of academic success. The succeeding step pertained to distinguishing positions, which entailed me to identify the location of poor Filipino youth with respect to their rights to and responsibilities for their academic success. The last two steps covered the implications of positioning within a discourse on available practice and resulting subjectivity. In relation to this, I noted what poor Filipino youth are made to be able to do and not do and extended this to an inference on what they are likely to think and feel given their positioning on a particular discourse.

## Results

Hya's qualifying essay and valedictory speech did more than address the 2019 graduates of ADMU. It also conveyed the different ways by which academic success among poor Filipino youth is constructed in society at large. In this present study, four constructions and wider

discourses were identified. (See Figure 1.) These framed academic success in the context of poverty as (a) unrealistic aspiration under the socioeconomic discourse, (b) individual compensation under the psychological discourse, (c) generosity's manifestation under the philanthropic discourse, and (d) societal exception under the justice discourse.

**Socioeconomic discourse**

The first discourse constructs academic success, in the form of completing an education, as an unrealistic aspiration among poor Filipino youth. In Hya's essay, she stated that even fulfilling basic needs such as food was problematized in her family. She wrote, "I was raised in poverty—there was never enough food on our table…" (Bendaña, 2019a).

As her father and mother struggled to sufficiently provide for them, Hya and her siblings had to face difficulties in finding sustenance early on. Hya narrated this in the following text:

> *Dumating ako sa mundo bilang panganay ng isang construction worker at isang SM saleslady—parehas hindi regular at underpaid, kaya kahit nagsisikap, parehas hindi sapat ang inuuwi. Ang kabataan naming magkapatid ay maghanap ng tindahang mauutangan ng pagkain dahil pagod nang magpautang ang mga tindahan sa kalye namin.* [I came into the world as the eldest child of a construction worker and an SM (shopping store) saleslady. They were both contractual and underpaid, so no matter how hard they worked, their take-home pay was still not enough. My and my sibling's childhood was spent searching for a remaining store that could extend us credit for food, as the ones in our street were already tired of lending to us.] (Bendaña, 2019b)

This constraint among poor Filipino youth also translates in the conflict between spending time in school and helping with the basic needs for the family. This was depicted in Hya's recount of her encounter with Noynoy:

*Nung high school ako, nagkaroon ako ng pagkakataon na magvolunteer magturo sa isang* public school. *Doon ko nakilala si* Noynoy. …Grade 1 *si Noynoy noon, pero siya'y* 12 years old. *Apat na beses na siyang umulit ng Grade 1 noon kasi lagi siyang* absent. *Kailangan niya kasing kumita ng pambili ng pagkain para sa kanyang pamilya.* [When I was in high school, I had the opportunity to become a volunteer teacher in a public school. There, I met Noynoy. …he was in Grade 1 back then, but he was already 12 years old. He repeated Grade 1 four times, as he was always absent. He needed to earn money to buy food for his family.] (Bendaña, 2019b)

This burden is even made more pronounced considering the fees required for enrolment and allowance in going to school. Hya described this in her own story:

*Ilang beses na nag-sorry sa akin mga magulang ko kasi hindi sila makakabayad ng tuition in time for the exam o dahil sa susunod na linggo pa sila makakapagpadala ng allowance.* [For a number of times, my parents apologized to me since they could not pay my tuition in time for the exam, or because they could only send my allowance by the following week.] (Bendaña, 2019b)

…as students, my sister and I had childhoods filled with promissory notes for delayed tuition fee payments. (Bendaña, 2019a)

The socioeconomic discourse thus identifies poverty as the "biggest barrier to education" that makes "graduation from any university …not a realistic dream" (Bendaña, 2019b) and where poor Filipino youth stand to lose given their circumstance. In addressing the Atenean audience and citing different prohibitions in school, Hya made this stark claim about poverty:

In one way or another, we all experience barriers that make it difficult for us to achieve certain goals. But in the real world, the biggest barrier to education is not forgetting IDs, having hold orders, or violating dress code, but poverty. (Bendaña, 2019b)

The socioeconomic discourse then locates poor Filipino youth in a passive and negative stance, that is, as victims of lack. With its focus on material resources, this discourse positions poor Filipino youth as deprived of their rights, essentially taking power away from them. In practice, they will find it difficult to access opportunities to education, perpetuating the existing social structures
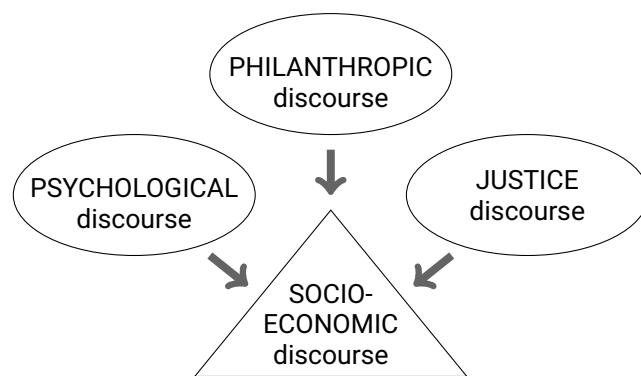


**Figure 2.** Relationship of discourses

that disadvantage them. As an implication to their subjectivity, poor Filipino youth may feel discouraged and hopeless over their slim chances of attaining an education, further reinforcing it as an unrealistic aspiration, as the socioeconomic discourse constructs it.

The succeeding discourses then attempt to counter the socioeconomic discourse by presenting different ways through which academic success among poor Filipino youth may be made possible, offering them a change in positioning, practice, and subjectivity. Hence, Figure 2 shows a more apt representation of the four discourses.

**Psychological discourse**

Within the psychological discourse, academic success among poor Filipino youth is constructed as a form of individual compensation in response to their underprivileged background. This discursive construction was shown in Hya's narrative where she alluded to her journey in making it to the Ateneo:

My father is a jeepney driver, whose example taught me to work harder than everyone else—not only because hard work is high dignity but also, while it is no guarantee of success, anything less than that for us would mean complete failure. I always worked harder than everyone else to get the same opportunities they had. It's the least I can do to compensate for my lack of privilege. (Bendaña, 2019a)

Here, hard work is emphasized as a means to make up for one's poverty, where poor Filipino youth stand to benefit from their inner resources and private coping mechanisms to succeed. As in Hya's case, this meant extending her efforts outside of school and taking on the responsibility of helping her family. In her essay, Hya shared, "This is a reality of life I have long embraced: shouting as jeepney barker for my father to taking odd

jobs in high school. I worked hard to be here" (Bendaña, 2019a).

The psychological discourse then situates poor Filipino youth in a more positive and active state, as capable individuals who can transcend their material deficiencies through their own effort. This positioning allows them to reclaim their rights with the condition of taking personal responsibility for striving. As a resulting action, they will refuse to resign to their circumstance and be pitied upon because of their situation. Rather, they will work harder to outdo their poverty and find ways to finish their studies, which practice affords them an extent of power within their own level. This may make them feel empowered and proud out of being able to toil for and earn opportunities to education they initially lacked. They may however feel frustrated if their striving does not prove fruitful as they anticipated. Since the sense of empowerment in the psychological discourse is confined within an individual level, nothing is changed in the existing social structures and power relations. The same material circumstances and imbalance in societal resources may continue to limit the poor Filipino youth toward attaining an education.

### Philanthropic discourse

The philanthropic discourse, on the other hand, constructs academic success among poor Filipino youth as a manifestation of generosity. With this, the importance of others' benevolence is underscored in granting educational opportunities among poor Filipino youth. Hya's acknowledgment in her speech demonstrated this as she said, "As a matter of fact, I wouldn't be standing here today if it weren't for the generosity of those who helped me get here" (Bendaña, 2019b).

The philanthropic discourse furthermore counters the psychological discourse insofar as academic success among poor Filipino youth is concerned. After affirming her hard work, Hya ascertained that in the absence of others' generosity, her own striving would have been in vain, and her story of academic success not possible. Her words expressed this sentiment vividly:

> Yet, I am aware that my full scholarship exists not because I simply earned it. All my work would have been for nothing if there was no slot on offer in the first place. I am here because someone, by the grace of their heart, gave generously to fund my education. I am here because a generous Ateneo exists, where someone like me who does not share the wealthier background of the common Atenean can be entrusted with the Presidency of the school's Student Council. (Bendaña, 2019a)

Within the philanthropic discourse, poor Filipino youth are positioned in a more passive stance, that is, as beneficiaries of others' kindness. This consequently disclaims their right to assert and makes the existing social inequalities even more apparent as poor Filipino youth stand to depend and receive from the more privileged. Following this discourse, poor Filipino youth will then have to recognize the limits of their personal effort and admit their need for assistance, fortifying the power relations that put them at the mercy of others' generosity. As such, poor Filipino youth may feel grateful for the presence of help or resentful in the absence of it.

### Justice discourse

Among the discourses, it is the discourse of justice where Hya's essay and speech gravitated on. In consideration of the status quo, academic success among poor Filipino youth remains to be constructed as a societal exception. Hya admitted that "people do not expect much from children of poor families" which makes her "[exceed] expectations" (Bendaña, 2019a) and her "story [being] celebrated, even romanticized, for its sheer improbability" (Bendaña, 2019b). While Hya recognized herself as an "example of the underprivileged gaining the highest quality of education in one of the best universities in the country" (Bendaña, 2019a), she reiterated how many poor Filipino youth are hindered from reaching the same dream. Hya's statements made this clear:

> …while it is a place that I have been able to reach, it remains beyond the hopes of many of our fellow citizens. My success is an exception, not the norm: rarely do we see a child from the poorest of the poor climb her way up to one of the top universities in the country…(Bendaña, 2019a)

In the same way the philanthropic discourse countered the sufficiency of the psychological discourse as presented earlier, so does the justice discourse counter the adequacy of the philanthropic discourse. With the Ateneo as the model of generosity, Hya pronounced these straightforward statements:

> …generosity is not enough. The success of one person should not depend on the virtue of another. …it will take more than good intentions. Ateneo taught me the limits of what individual virtue can do. A generous Ateneo alone cannot make up for a society that does not provide fair access to opportunity for all, and a decent path to success for those who are like me. (Bendaña, 2019a)

The justice discourse then exposes the inequality within society that narrows the chances of poor Filipino youth toward academic success. Hya's words captured this:

As long as society has not overcome bigger, deeper problems—social discrimination, stark economic inequality, and the concentration of political power in the hands of the few—there will always be something better to struggle for. (Bendaña, 2019b)

The justice discourse then argues that access to quality education must be made available to all, where poor Filipino youth stand to benefit from and contribute to the advocacy for equal educational opportunities. Instead of being a societal exception, academic success among poor Filipino youth must then be a norm in society. Here, power is distributed as opportunities are not confined to the privileged, but made available to the impoverished. This action orientation of the justice discourse is the one that can ultimately bring about social change, where systemic impediments such as poverty need not define and perpetuate itself among poor Filipino youth. Academic success can then be transformed from an unrealistic aspiration to a dream within reach among poor Filipino youth. Hya's statements painted this reality:

> *Sa isang makatarungang lipunan,* hindi na natatangi ang kwento ng isang iskolar na gaya ko, pero isa nang realidad sa sinumang nangangarap. *Sa isang makatarungang lipunan, ang edukasyon gaya ng atin ay hindi na para lang sa iilan. Sa isang makatarungang lipunan, mas marami pa sana tayong kasamang magtatapos ngayon.* [In a just society, the [success] story of a scholar like me is no longer an exception, but a reality for anyone who dreams. In a just society, an education like ours is no longer for the few. In a just society, many more [youth] could have graduated with us today.] (Bendaña, 2019b)

Within the justice discourse, poor Filipino youth are then positioned in a positive and active stance, with the right to education and responsibility for co-defending it. As an available practice, they can partner with other sectors in striving to transform society to becoming more equal and just. Hya shared this vision with the Ateneo community in the following text:

> *Pero kahit hindi makatarungan ang mundong minana natin[,] kasama natin ang kapwa kabataan, mga magsasaka't manggagawa, mga guro't kawani, mga lingkod-bayan, at marami pang ibang sektor ng lipunan, sa paglikha ng mundong ito.* [But even if the world we inherited is not just, our fellow youth, farmers and laborers, teachers and administrators, public servants, and many more other sectors in society, are with us in creating this world.]

> *At ito ang hamon sa ating lahat. Bumuo tayo at mag-iwan ng isang Pilipinas na mas makatarungan kaysa sa lipunang dinatnan natin,isang lipunan na ikararangal nating ipamana.* [And this is the challenge to all of us. Let us build and leave a Philippines that is more just than the one handed down to us, a society we will be proud to pass on.] (Bendaña, 2019b)

With this, poor Filipino youth are afforded the subjectivity of having a compelling mission and a deep sense of hope, not only for their selves, but for future generations as well.

## Discussion

**Discourse and counter discourses**

Results of the current study showed four constructions of and wider discourses surrounding the academic success among poor Filipino youth. Consistent with Adams's (1996, as cited in Farooq et al., 2011) proposition on the relegation of education in favor of addressing more basic needs, the prevailing socioeconomic discourse constructed the academic success among poor Filipino youth as an unrealistic aspiration in the context of the status quo.

In an attempt to change this construction, counter discourses have emerged. Being made to feel that opportunities can be available (Destin, 2017) even when these have to be earned through hard work and that effort can improve academic outcomes despite one's poverty (Claro et al., 2016) renders some agency to poor Filipino youth within the psychological discourse. Challenging this however is the philanthropic discourse that bares the limitations of such inner resources and highlights the need for dependence of poor Filipino youth on the more privileged. For both the psychological and philanthropic discourses, the assumption of the neoliberal discourse on education becomes evident, as the responsibility of obtaining an education is essentially individualized and assigned to families and students (Apple, 2005) or any willing sponsors by extension, disclaiming the state's duty of affording its citizens their basic right to education.

The justice discourse then serves to uncover and question the deeper inequalities that underlie the argument for compensation through hard work or receiving generosity that the psychological and philanthropic discourses advance. In line with Shields et al. (2017), the justice discourse contends that educational opportunities must be made equal to all. This is since education is linked with opportunities at work, civic engagement, and personal growth, all of which are integral to being human. In light of upsetting the status quo, the justice
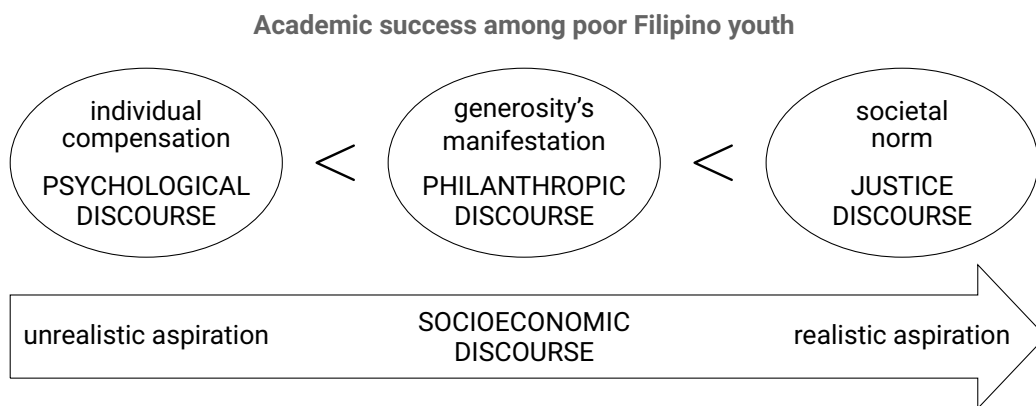
**Academic success among poor Filipino youth**



**Figure 3.** Relationship of discursive constructions and discourses

discourse advocates for equality, turning academic success among poor Filipino youth into a societal norm where obtaining an education for the disadvantaged is already a realistic aspiration. The relationship of these discourse and counter discourses can be captured by the representation in Figure 3.

### On power and social change

The findings of this research may also be evaluated in view of their implications on power and social change. With Foucault's (1980) concept of power/knowledge, it can be seen how constructed knowledge through discourses can either exercise control over or grant power to people. Depending on the dominant institutions or actors in society, their favored representations of reality are preserved. Only counter discourses that challenge the underlying assumptions of the existing social reality and power relations can systematically advance social change.

In the context of this study, the socioeconomic and philanthropic discourses position poor Filipino youth in a passive state, leaving them as victims of lack or mere beneficiaries of kindness. Here, power remains to be concentrated among the affluent whose resources grant them the capacity to limit or open opportunities for the poor. In turn, the dominance of the elite in society can perpetuate this representation of reality where poor Filipino youth can do so little to attain an education and improve their circumstance.

The psychological discourse meanwhile locates poor Filipino youth in a more active position, giving an emphasis on their personal power to direct their life outcomes through striving. This discourse however bears the risk of blaming individuals for not laboring hard enough if their pursuits do not culminate to the desired results. By focusing the issue within an individual level, the psychological discourse can also serve to disregard the inherent disadvantage among poor Filipino youth in terms of their lack of access to educational opportunities. It

can endorse subscription to private coping mechanisms such as hard work where prevailing social structures and power relations continue to restrain the poor Filipino youth from exerting some change in their circumstance. Hence, the psychological discourse only provides an extent of power within an individual level, but it is not sufficient in bringing about social transformation.

The justice discourse then strongly questions the wider inequalities that put a precondition to attaining an education among poor Filipino youth and counters this with the argument for equality in opportunities. Consequently, it provides collective power to the poor Filipino youth who are positioned to be entitled to the same rights to education as everyone else. It allows the disadvantaged to have options and means to attain life outcomes previously made unavailable to them. As this is not yet the case in our present society, the justice discourse challenges the existing social structures that concentrate power among the few and calls for social change where opportunities to education and life are made equally accessible to all. Here, the poor Filipino youth, the rest of the disadvantaged groups, and the different sectors in society stand to contribute to a more just allocation of power and a systematic transformation of society.

### Reflexivity

The topic of academic success in the context of poverty is one that is very close to my heart. As someone who succeeded academically despite being confronted with financial struggles during my college years, I have been drawn to examine similar experiences and stories that resonate strengths within individuals.

My approach then as a researcher has been largely personal, owing to the manner through which I managed to thrive in life—mostly by means of my own hard work and others' help. While I initially planned to adopt an interpretative phenomenological analysis consistent with my orientation, the use of discourse methodology appeared more fitting and efficient given the publicly

available data ready for analysis. Ironically, this proved harder, for employing a discursive approach entailed recognizing broader societal forces and implications which often revealed aspects that constrict and limit, which run counter to my optimistic disposition in life.

My consultations with my research professors helped me deal with and make sense of this ideological discomfort, ultimately resulting to this reflexivity. My deeper engagement with the text through repeated reading helped me articulate the underlying assumptions and social implications surrounding my topic, which I would have otherwise dismissed given my bias toward inner resources and individual coping.

In the end, my decision to use discourse analysis proved personally enriching, as this helped me broaden my perspective and understand how influential discourses are in shaping social outcomes and affecting personal subjectivity. Foucault's focus on power and social change also re-enlivened my sense of advocacy, forcing me to recognize more systemic underpinnings of experience and stirring me to challenge more deeply rooted impediments to growth. Lastly, completing this research also made me realize that while studying discourses can confront researchers like myself with disheartening realities, understanding them better equally equips us with the power to promote counter discourses that can address inequalities and offer better possibilities.

I share with Hya's hope—that academic success among poor Filipino youth can become a more realistic aspiration in a more just and equal society. And we all have a part to play in believing, adopting, and creating discourses that can reinforce this desired reality.

## Conclusion

The current research examined the discourses surrounding the academic success among poor Filipino youth using Hya's valedictory texts. Here, the prevailing socioeconomic discourse underscored poverty as a significant barrier to academic success. Counter discourses, such as psychological, philanthropic, and justice discourses, provided alternative positioning, practice, and subjectivity among poor Filipino youth. Among these discourses, it is the justice discourse that put forth the most inclusive and empowering route to social change, as it advocates for redistributing power and granting equal opportunities to all.

Although the discourses presented in this study may not be exhaustive and their dynamics may be more complex than their illustration here, this research is a significant step toward understanding the discourses on academic success within a disadvantaged group, specifically the poor Filipino youth. The current research particularly elucidated the discourses' implications on power,

positioning, practice, and subjectivity among poor Filipino youth, as well as the consequent contribution of discourses in perpetuating existing social realities or bringing about social change.

Discourses that inspire hope, equalize power, and bring about social change like the justice discourse then need to be cultivated and promoted. Because in the end, to adopt a discourse is to approximate its reality, even imperfectly and no matter how gradually.

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# Competencies of pre-service language teachers: Towards developing a language training program

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**Structured abstract**

**Background:** To provide proper and quality teaching and training of would-be teachers is the mandate of teacher education institutions. Hence, they are expected to ensure that the would-be teachers that they are training are able to demonstrate the essential competencies required in various domains to become effective and competent teachers. If well-equipped, they can efficiently establish the meaning and purpose of education and promote the potentials of their future learners.

**Purpose:** Identify the competency levels of pre-service language teachers and develop a competency-based training program for their improvement.

**Participants:** The respondents of this research were 65 pre-service language teachers in five Philippine teacher education institutions, cooperating teachers in the laboratory schools, and supervising instructors during the second semester of academic year 2013–2014.

**Research design:** Mixed-method design (explanatory sequential design)

**Data collection and analysis:** A 100-item examination identified the competency levels of the pre-service teachers in the areas of language curriculum, foundations of language and literature, and teaching methodology. In the treatment of the qualitative data, significant statements of the respondents that helped clarify dubious results in the quantitative data were filtered. To identify the significant statements, frequent or common statements were considered. These statements were then used within the results and discussion section to clarify, substantiate, and confirm the outcome of the quantitative results.

**Findings:** The quantitative results of the study revealed that the language competency levels of the pre-service teachers in the areas of curriculum, theoretical foundations in language, theoretical foundations in literature, and methodology are at the beginning level. The qualitative results presented the suggestions given by the in-service teachers in improving the performance of the pre-service teachers, namely: intensified pre-service language teachers' training, updated in-service language teachers' training, inflamed love for reading, aligned language curriculum, defined admission policy, and mastered basic language skills for language teachers, thus the formulation of the Helm of Competency Improvement.

**Recommendation:** It is highly recommended that teacher education institutions strengthen their curricular alignments and trainings in their different course offerings using existing international standards for language education.

**Keywords**
helm of competency improvement, language competency, pre-service training

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## Introduction

Quality pre-service teacher education is one of the significant elements in providing quality education (Commission on Higher Education, 2004, Article 1, Section 1). Quality education in the Philippines will only be achieved if the teachers are properly trained and prepared to take various roles and functions of a real teacher. It is imperative to set high standards in setting and defining objectives, competencies, and pre-service teacher education curriculum standards.

In the Philippines, fourth among the nine urgent and critical tasks of the Education for All (EFA) 2015 Plan (*Philippine Education for All 2015: Implementation and Challenges*, n.d.) is to continuously help all teachers improve their teaching practices. There must be an adoption of measures to enhance capacity and competencies

for quality teaching practices among future teachers eligible for admission into the teaching profession, who will later work in schools. Improving teachers' teaching practices and competencies is essential for improving basic education outcomes. Teacher proficiency, performance, and competencies are significant determinants of students' achievements in school and other settings.

As agents of social change and cohesion, teachers are considered the forerunners of any educational system. As transforming forces in the classroom, they need to be taught and trained correctly. The proper teaching and training of would-be teachers are significant responsibilities of Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs). TEIs ensure that future teachers will become effective and competent to teach in this milieu. Teacher quality is the top contributing factor to student achievement. These skilled teachers can efficiently establish the meaning and purpose of education and high-quality teacher preparation will better serve the nation's children (Aypay, 2009; Rampai & Sopeerak, 2011; *What Matters Most: Teaching for America's Future*, 1996).

This primary task of TEIs in training qualified teachers is essential and happens to be the most crucial role since the nation's future depends upon the schools of education. They prepare teachers who can enable their students to learn in ways that will allow them to maximize their potentials in this 21st century (Aypay, 2009; Dorrington & Ramirez-Smith, 1999).

In the Philippines, the Commission on Higher Education (2007) (CHED) stipulated that quality pre-service teacher education is a critical factor in ensuring quality Philippine education. Given this premise, the TEIs have defined high standards and competencies for the training of would-be teachers. Therefore, it is vital for pre-service programs to suitably prepare would-be teachers to face the realities of teaching so that the teaching practices of pre-service teachers will be turned into a more fruitful teaching-learning experience. As such, they can grow and continually develop the skills they first learned in their pre-service teacher preparation programs (Gratch, 2001 as cited in Chong et al., 2011; Kelchtermans & Ballet, 2002 as cited in Chong et al., 2011). Finger et al. (2010) also mentioned that pre-service teacher education programs prepare future teachers who are likely to be teaching their students in a world characterized by ongoing technological changes.

Since basic education is the primary recipient of graduates from various TEIs, the Department of Education (DepEd) has been implementing initiatives to develop highly competent teachers (Lapus, 2009 as cited in *Experiential Learning Courses Handbook*, 2009). If the teaching force is composed of talented teachers, we can be assured of quality education that would guarantee success among students. DepEd started implementing a Teacher Education and Development Program (TEDP)

that seeks to plan a teacher's career path that begins with entry to a teacher education program and ends when a teacher retires from the service. The TEDP addresses each stage of this career path as a blended part linked closely to preceding and ensuing elements. A critical feature in the program is establishing a set of standards. These standards are observed so that the schools' stakeholders (teachers, students, and parents) can appreciate the elaborated set of competencies (skills, attitudes, and behaviors) that each teacher must possess to perform their roles and responsibilities as teachers. The competencies are integrated into a Teacher Performance and Development Framework anchored on Filipino teachers' prescribed characteristics and competencies and the principles of effective and meaningful teaching and learning (*Experiential Learning Courses Handbook*, 2009).

DepEd (2017) adopted the Philippine Professional Standards for Teachers (PPST), recognizing the importance of professional standards in continuing professional development advancement of teachers. TEIs of the country are also using the standards in the PPST to guide them as they prepare the pre-service teachers for the field. The PPST is an enhanced version of the National Competency-Based Teacher Standards (NCBTS) that sets performance indicators classified in appropriate domains and strands that guide teacher professional development. The Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) also referred to the NCBTS in designing the Licensure Examination for Teachers (LET). Thus, the competencies mentioned in the NCBTS, which is now PPST, are emphasized in the training of would-be teachers. TEIs audit their curriculum using the PPST since the primary objective of each TEI is to produce high-quality teachers for a high-quality teaching force. They see to it that the competencies prescribed by the national agency are given emphasis in the program preparing teachers and that the pre-service language teachers (PSLTs) will be well-versed with the defined competencies.

To ensure quality preparation of pre-service teachers, the proposal of the EFA 2015 Plan (*Philippine Education for All 2015 Plan of Action: An Assessment of Progress Made in Achieving the EFA Goals*, 2014) to adopt basic education standards is given emphasis. These standards should be acceptable to both TEIs and DepEd to guarantee the competence of would-be teachers. As defined, competency is technical know-how, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that empower someone to perform a given task effectively and efficiently. Therefore, competence in teaching refers to the skills, knowledge, and performance standards needed by the PSLTs before they conduct actual classroom teaching. These would identify their capability to demonstrate knowledge and skills that have significant implications for successful teacher training (Aitken, 1998 as cited in *Competency Framework for Teachers of English for Academic Purposes*, 2008;

Cheng and Cheung, 2004; Dubois et al., 2004; Grushka et al., 2005 as cited in Kenny, 2010; Gultekin, 2006; Laursen, 2006 as cited in Ogienko and Rolyak, 2009; Mrowicki, 1986 as cited in Weddel, 2006; Parry, 1996 as cited in Sharbain and Tan, 2012; Schenck, 1978 as cited in Weddel, 2006; Sharbain and Tan, 2012).

Once competencies and standards are developed among teachers, the quality of teaching and classroom performance will also be improved; hence higher quality education will be accorded to the learners. This quality in education can only be obtained through reflective teaching, where teaching competencies and standards are developed and applied by teachers who practice all their knowledge and employ their abilities to forward and incite learning and assess the outcome of their performance. The ability to successfully respond to complicated demands involving knowledge, attitudes, values, and capacities in a significant and productive way happens through developed teaching competencies. In other words, it is how the knowledge, beliefs, capabilities, abilities, values, and pedagogical knowledge of a teacher are performed and articulated (Sarracino & Alcaraz, 2008).

In various research studies, language teachers are characterized as competent and effective when they demonstrate proficiency or advanced mastery of content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, language proficiency, contextual knowledge, and transferring language and literary theories into practice (Borg, 2006; Park & Lee, 2006; Richards, 2011; Shulman, 1994).

In 1976, Finocchiaro (as cited in Vadillo, 1999) used the mnemonic MOTIVATION to give some inputs for language teachers.

M  Motivation, Methodology, Meaning, Mother tongue, and Mastery: There is a need to consider methodology's integrative and instrumental motivation and flexibility and intelligently use mother tongue in the classroom.

O  Objectives: The primary aim of language teaching is to teach the learners to use language in different affairs in real life and develop their communicative competence.

T  Technique: Good language teachers always involve their students in practice leading to habit formation and the internalization of rules that govern the learning and application of a language.

I  Involvement, Integration: It is of great significance to motivate learners to become actively involved in and integrated into all facets of the teaching-learning process.

V  Values: Learners should be helped to appreciate the general purpose of human experience and the importance of their own and other people's cultures.

A  Attitudes, Activities, Achievement, and Articulation:

Teachers should plan lessons and activities that satisfy and make their learners productive.

T  Transfer, Translation, Textbooks, and Testing: Teachers should consider that when learners learn a foreign language, they need to have equivalent words that will help them structure their schema. Assessment and evaluation should be frequently given to monitoring the learners' progress.

I  Interference, Individualization: To make the learning of language more meaningful, individual differences and characteristics of learners should be considered.

O  Observation: Observing and mentoring other teachers is very important in coaching and assisting teachers (especially the new ones) in teaching language.

N  Native culture, Needs: It is vital in a language class to always integrate language learning in the students' culture and needs for them to really feel that they are secured and respected.

In 1996, Brosh (as cited in Vadillo, 1999) initiated an investigation regarding the characteristics of good language teachers. The practical aspects of effective language teachers are:

1. Knowledge and command of the target language,
2. Ability to organize, explain, and clarify, and arouse and sustain interest and motivation among students,
3. Fairness to students by showing neither favoritism nor prejudice, and
4. Availability to students.

Brosh emphasizes the weight of teachers' personalities in determining their achievement or deficiency in teaching.

In April 1997, the Texas State Board of Education adopted content and performance standards known as *LOTE Teacher Competencies for Professional Development* (n.d.) designed for language teachers and experts as an individual tool in assessing their competencies. Language teachers should use these competencies as a tool for their personal and professional assessment and rate themselves in each area. Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Languages Other Than English (TEKS for LOTE) are organized around five program goals that serve as skill and competency evaluation for language teachers: communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities.

Education experts around the Philippines worked tirelessly to identify the crucial points or areas needed, which is tuned with the plan of modifying the Filipino teacher into a globally competent one. Thus, the NCBTS were created. This assimilated theoretical framework defines the different dimensions of effective teaching. Effective teaching means the ability to consider and teach varied types of learners to learn the different learning objectives in the curriculum. The NCBTS are designed for

the professional development of Filipino teachers. They are for student teachers to be aware of new teaching approaches that will help them improve their performance, and it will assist them as they undergo practice teaching. Hence, standards could greatly benefit all Filipino teachers who excel in teaching and assist teachers in continuously reflecting on how to improve professionally and become good facilitators of the teaching-learning process. The NCBTS provide a profile that will explain and characterize effective teaching in all facets of a teacher's professional life and development. The set of standards is integrated into a Teacher Performance and Development Framework based on Filipino teachers' core values and on the principles of effective teaching and learning. According to the *National Competency-Based Teacher Standards Framework Table of Specifications* (2006), this framework will allow teachers to self-assess their own performance against the Competency Standards in order to identify areas of strength as well as areas that need to be developed further in order for them to function more effectively as facilitators of learning. The determined competencies are grouped into theoretical foundation, pedagogical, content, and assessment and evaluation of knowledge.

Theoretical knowledge is a fluid mix of framed experience, values, contextual information, and expert insight that provides a framework for evaluating and incorporating new experiences and information. In organizations, it often becomes embedded not only in documents or repositories but also in organizational routines, processes, practices, and norms (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). It is information that consists of facts and data that are organized to describe a particular situation or condition. Knowledge is distinguished from information by the addition of "truths, beliefs, perspectives and concepts, judgments and expectations, methodologies and know-how" (Wiig, 1993). Nevertheless, knowledge can also become information once it is codified in symbolic forms such as text, charts, or images (Alavi & Leidner, 1999). Having that defined can help PSLTs be competent and face the needs of their future students. If PSLTs have this kind of competency, then they will have an extensive range of bases which they can use to teach their subject area.

Kagan (1992) identified the challenges of assessing the teacher's condition. Many of her concerns are in studying pedagogical content knowledge. Pedagogical content knowledge is partly an internal construct; it is the teachers' understanding of context-specific examples that best represent specific topics and knowledge of typical students' difficulties with particular issues. Pedagogical knowledge refers to the ability that provides a basis for language teaching. It is a knowledge that refers to the how of teaching and how to facilitate learning among the language learners for them to learn the

practical uses of language in the context of teaching. It includes courses like curriculum planning, assessment, reflective teaching, classroom management, teaching children, and teaching the four skills (Richards & Farrell, 2001).

There is always an assumption that pre-service teachers should be able to transfer the pedagogical theories and approaches they learned in school to real-life classroom teaching (Cubukcu, 2010; Johnson, 2006; Robinson et al., 2007). In this light, researchers recommend that pre-service teachers be provided with opportunities for them to be involved in exploring pedagogical experiences, self-reflection, and critical analysis of teaching (Johnson, 2006; Putnam & Borko, 2000). "If beginning teachers are to be successful, they must wrestle simultaneously with issues of pedagogical content (or knowledge) as well as general pedagogy (or generic teaching principles)" (Grossman, 1990).

Shulman (1987) introduced the phrase "content knowledge" and sparked a whole new wave of scholarly articles on teachers' knowledge of their subject matter and its importance for successful teaching. In Shulman's theoretical framework, teachers need to master two types of knowledge: (a) content, also known as "deep" knowledge of the subject itself, and (b) knowledge of curricular development, which includes curriculum planning. Content knowledge encompasses what Bruner (as cited in Shulman, 1994) called the "structure of knowledge"—a particular discipline's theories, principles, and concepts. Content knowledge deals with the teaching process, including the most valuable forms of representing and communicating content and how learners will best demonstrate the specific ideas and topics in context. Thus, content knowledge also includes knowledge about the subject matter (Gürbüz, 2012; Tüzel & Akcan, 2009).

Assessment is classroom research to provide helpful feedback to upgrade the practice of teaching and learning. Assessment is feedback from the student to the instructor about the student's education. This is very important for PSLTs to know so that they will be able to handle their students, assess the status of the educational phenomenon, and measure the quality of the interest of every student in learning. An assessment framework for teaching and learning will address the need for producing teachers who have high assessment literacy and who are able to adopt the best practices in the classroom in order to effectively evaluate student outcomes. Assessment results such as grades are used to provide reports on the attainment of institutional learning outcomes. Reporting assessment results is one of the means employed to provide feedback and is necessary to enable students to fully understand their own learning and check if the goals they are aiming are achieved (Darling-Hammond, 2000).

Existing educational laws and research studies pre-

sent the need to meet international standards in teaching through improving teachers' competency levels. However, these focus more on identifying and enhancing the teaching competencies of in-service teachers. Far too little attention has been paid to studying language student teachers' competencies. In the Philippines alone, no research has identified and assessed the competency levels of PSLTs. Thus, the problem arose.

The present study aimed to identify the competency levels of PSLTs and develop a competency-based training program for their improvement. The study specifically answered the following research questions:

1. What are the PSLTs' competency levels in the following areas?
   a. Curriculum
   b. Theoretical Foundations in Language
   c. Theoretical Foundations in Literature
   d. Methodology

2. What strategies will be employed to enhance the PSLTs' competencies?

3. What language training program can be developed aligned with the competencies for language teaching?

The study results are deemed to serve as a source of data to TEIs in developing the competencies of their students majoring in English. Results of the study will help them identify which competencies of the PSLTs must be enhanced and reinforced in their curriculum development and delivery.

## Method

### Research design
This study utilized a mixed-method design, specifically a sequential explanatory design. The researcher first collected and analyzed the quantitative data and then obtained qualitative data that followed up and refined the quantitative findings (Creswell, 2002). The competency levels of PSLTs were gathered and analyzed quantitatively. Afterward, qualitative data were gathered through interviews to validate the quantitative findings.

### Population and locale of study
This study was conducted in the five TEIs in Baguio City, Philippines. The respondents were 65 PSLTs, cooperating teachers in the laboratory schools, and supervising instructors during the second semester of academic year 2013–2014. The total population was considered.

The PSLTs were the respondents of the first phase of the research from whom the quantitative data were gathered, while the cooperating teachers and supervising instructors were the participants of the interviews.

### Data gathering tool
A 100-item examination following the Table of Specifications for the LET for English majors was the main tool that was utilized in this study. The items were contributed by language experts from different universities. The development of the test items was based on the competencies identified by the Teacher Education Council of DepEd in collaboration with CHED and PRC during a convened series of five workshops with experts/subject specialists from the TEIs (*NCBTS-Based Table of Specifications for LET*, 2010). The test items' competencies, which were identified in the research instrument, focused on gathering and gaining authentic and credible information on the areas of Curriculum, Theoretical Foundations in Language, Theoretical Foundations in Literature, and (language) Methodology. To ensure the instrument's reliability, this was tested at the Benguet State University College of Education through the participation of their student teachers. As per result, the research instrument is highly reliable, with a reliability coefficient of .7245.

The guide questions that were utilized during the interview with the cooperating teachers and supervising instructors were crafted after the quantitative data were collected and analyzed. Prior to the interview phase, the results of the quantitative data collection and analysis helped shape the qualitative research questions, sampling, and data collection (Creswell, 2012).

### Data gathering procedure
At the initial phase, letters of request addressed to the heads of offices concerned and to the respondents were given. With the permission of the offices and the willingness of the participants involved, the administration of the test questions was scheduled. The administration of the test questions to the PSLT respondents was done personally by the researcher to ensure the gathering of appropriate data. After the data were gathered, these were subjected to statistical treatment with the help of recognized statisticians of the Saint Louis University Research and Extension Office. The quantitative results were utilized to develop the qualitative research questions that were based on dubious results, as shown by the quantitative data that called for further clarification and confirmation.

After the framing and validation of the research questions, the identification of the target participants from the group of teacher respondents for the gathering of the qualitative data followed next. After which, the focus group interviews were scheduled based on the availability of the respondents. To elicit more natural responses from the respondents to answer the problem, they were interviewed in locations of their own choice, assuming that they would be more comfortable in a familiar environment. Respondents were guaranteed anonymity and were told that they could refuse to answer any question

or stop the interview at any time and that participation is exclusively voluntary (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006). Before conducting the focus group interviews, the purpose and design of the study were presented to assure that everyone would receive a consistent orientation. The transcribed result of the discussions was used to help explain the quantitative results that need further exploration and to answer new questions that emerged from the quantitative results (Creswell, 2012).

**Treatment of the data**

To find the reliability level of the test items, the Kuder-Richardson Formula 20 (KR20) was utilized to treat the gathered quantitative data during the first phase of the study. This formula, the most frequently employed in determining the consistency of an instrument, has become the standard for estimating the reliability for a single administration of a single form test. It measures inter-item consistency and is tantamount to doing split-half reliability on all combinations of items resulting from the different splitting of the test. The KR20 formula is:

$$r_{KR20} = \left( \frac{k}{k-1} \right) \left( 1 - \frac{\sum pq}{(sd)^2} \right)$$

where $r_{KR20}$ is the reliability coefficient using KR20, $k$ is the number of items in the given test, $p$ is the proportion of students who passed the test per item, $q$ is the proportion of students who did not pass the test per item, and $(sd)^2$ is the variance of the total scores of the respondents in the test (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

To know the PSLTs' competency levels in every area, raw scores were converted into percentages and the following competency levels were employed:

Beginning: (74% or below) The PSLT at this level struggles with their competencies; prerequisite and fundamental knowledge and/or skills have not been acquired or developed adequately.

Developing: (75%–79%) The PSLT at this level possesses the minimum knowledge and skills and core competencies, but needs help throughout the accumulation of competencies.

Approaching competency: (80%–84%) The PSLT at this level has developed the fundamental knowledge and skills and core competencies and, with little guidance and assistance, can perform the competencies.

Proficient: (85%–89%) The PSLT at this level has developed the fundamental knowledge and skills and core competencies, and can perform them independently.

Advanced: (90% or above) The PSLT at this level exceeds the core requirements in terms of knowledge, skills, and competencies, and can perform them automatically and flexibly.

In the treatment of the qualitative data, significant statements of the respondents that helped clarify dubious results in the quantitative data were filtered. To identify the significant statements, frequent or common statements were considered. These statements were then used within the results and discussion section to clarify, substantiate, and confirm the outcome of the quantitative results.

The language training program that was designed was based on the results and discussions done. The program focused on the enhancement of the competencies that got the lowest level.

## Results and discussions

This section has three parts. The first part presents the results and discussions of the quantitative phase. The quantitative data are presented in four tables based on the clusters of the language competencies of the respondents. Discussion follows next after every table. The second part presents the results of the qualitative phase. The summary of the qualitative data is presented through a simulacrum followed by a discussion of its themes or elements. The third part presents the training design, which was developed based on the analyses of the quantitative and qualitative results of the study.

**Quantitative data analysis**

The competencies are clustered in four areas: Curriculum, Theoretical Foundations in Language, Theoretical Foundations in Literature, and Methodology.

Curriculum refers to the means and materials with which students will interact for the purpose of achieving identified educational outcomes. It consists of all the school's planned experiences as part of its academic responsibility (Ebert et al., 2011). It also represents the results of a highly complex and dynamic interaction of events and acts, and it clearly shows the validity of any single variable or linear conceptualization of curriculum planning (Macdonald, 1986).

Table 1 shows the competency levels of the PSLTs in the area of Curriculum. Having acquired 44.62% ("beginning") for all the competencies, the PSLTs struggle with their competencies. The prerequisite and fundamental knowledge and skills have not been acquired or developed adequately on Curriculum, specifically in the areas of Remedial Instruction in English, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and Language Curriculum for Secondary School. The PSLTs were not well-informed of some of the most relevant knowledge that will prepare them for the LET and prepare them to facilitate the language courses captured in the basic education curriculum. An in-depth understanding of a curriculum is crucial in the preparation of PSLTs for the actual field because it will help them understand the expected learning

**Table 1.** Competency levels of PSLTs: Curriculum

| Areas | | Number of items | Raw score | Percentage of scores | Rank | Competency level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | Remedial Instruction in English | 1 | 30/65 | 46.15% | 2 | Beginning |
| B | English for Specific Purposes | 2 | 62/130 | 47.69% | 1 | Beginning |
| C | Language Curriculum for Secondary School | 2 | 52/130 | 40.00% | 3 | Beginning |
| | Overall | | | 44.62% | | Beginning |

outcomes that must be demonstrated by every student at the end of the entire program, at the end of every year level, and at the end of every course or learning activity.

The lowest competency level among the three areas is that for the secondary language curriculum. It is important to note that the student teachers who are being prepared to facilitate courses in the secondary level have a beginning competency level for this area. One of the possible reasons why this is low is the number of courses offered for this purpose in the existing Curriculum. The Curriculum taken by all the respondents has only a three-unit course for this purpose, which is limited to introducing the concepts of curriculum development. As noted, the experience of developing a curriculum will likely lead to developing a higher competency level. This supports Dewey's contention that actual experience is needed to internalize the innovation.

The competencies of PSLTs are expected to be developed in these areas because Remedial Instruction in English talks about organizing, designing, implementing, and evaluating remedial English programs in any of the macro skills. As such, there is a need for the PSLTs to take into consideration inadequacies in language and literature competencies for remediation purposes. In the area of ESP, there is a need to improve on understanding language in context and in identifying features of language specific to the career needs of the learners. There is a need to enhance mastery in applying content-based principles and strategies in developing language proficiency for specific disciplines. The area of Language Curriculum for Secondary School encourages PSLTs to exhibit a clear understanding of the design, development, and dissemination of the existing language curriculum of DepEd. This competency provides the different theoretical foundations, content, and the development process of evaluating the current secondary education program.

From the analysis done in the course descriptions of the various subjects, it was observed that the subject offering on Language Curriculum for Secondary School does not have any specific follow up major subjects that explicitly enhance their skills on this competency. Hence, there is a little deepening of mastery of skill because the teachers need to introduce the concepts in one semester only. As per the curriculum schedule, there is not enough time to further enhance and do practice or drills that will lead to the mastery of the competency.

It is possible that the competency Language Curriculum for Secondary School is at a beginning level because the K to 12 Curriculum was just introduced in the academe; they had been learning about the basic education curriculum in their professional education subjects while the question items were about the K to 12 Curriculum.

Remedial Instruction for English covers the five macro-skills, so teachers have to divide the 54 hours teaching to listen, speak, read, write, and view. This is barely 10 hours per macro skill. Hence, it will be on the level of introducing only, and it is difficult to reach the level of higher understanding and demonstrating. As for ESP, the syllabus reflected a discussion of the historical beginnings of ESP, its branches, and drills on module preparation. There is no exposure for them to practice the skills and competencies in this area.

The results of this study are further explained through the accounts of the interviewed supervising instructors and instructors who are facilitating the major subjects of the PSLTs. The interviewees were able to shed light on the reasons why the competency level is at the beginning level. The beginning level of the PSLTs is traced by the interviewees to the inadequate number of hours in training and unequal distribution of subjects. As the interviewees mentioned,

T9: Schools should provide more units (hours) to major subjects. General Education subjects for English majors should focus on the foundations of language and literature.

T10: The English Curriculum must be revisited. Literature and Grammar/Language subjects are not equally distributed or balanced. There should be more exposure to the teaching experience. If possible, increase observation and practice teaching time. The competencies per subject in the Curriculum (especially in major and basic language subjects) must also be re-evaluated. This would mean enhancing the skills needed for teaching.

T11: Intensive training must be given to the language student teachers.

The teachers' responses clearly present that the focus of the language curriculum, time allotment, provisions of training, and experiential learning contribute to

**Table 2.** Competency levels of PSLTs: Theoretical Foundations in Language

| | Areas | Number of items | Raw score | Percentage of scores | Rank | Competency level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | Introduction to Linguistics | 15 | 508/975 | 52.10% | 2 | Beginning |
| B | Structure of English | 11 | 466/715 | 65.17% | 1 | Beginning |
| C | Introduction to Stylistics | 7 | 180/455 | 39.56% | 4 | Beginning |
| D | Literary Criticism | 7 | 231/455 | 50.77% | 3 | Beginning |
| | Overall | | | 51.90% | | Beginning |

the low competency levels of the students in this area. Thus, the teacher respondents recommend a revisit or reevaluation of the Curriculum per se and have it aligned in the expected content in the LET and in the actual teaching. This is aimed at enhancing the skills needed by the PSLTs.

The low result in this area is supported by Kauffman et al. (2002) as they explored the issue of how new teachers experience curriculum, and the respondents expressed their frustration over perceived lack of guidance, support, and materials. Lack of guidance, support, and materials in teaching the areas in Curriculum indeed results in low performance in these competencies. Shawer and Alkahtani (2013) mentioned that Curriculum is readily grasped by learners if they are provided with various experiences necessary for them to learn. However, if they are not provided with the training and experiences they need, necessarily, the achievement is lower than expected.

The lack of a set of clear standards for training of the students is also an effect of a low competency level in teaching and discrepancies between the course curriculum and course requirements resulting in incompetent students if the competency level for Curriculum is at the beginning level (Mâță, 2014; Pattanapichet & Chinokul, 2011).

Table 2 shows the competency levels of PSLTs in the area of Theoretical Foundations in Language. Having garnered an overall evaluation of 51.90% with a qualitative interpretation of "beginning," this shows that the student teachers have not fully acquired or developed their knowledge and/or skills adequately in all the Theoretical Foundations in Language areas. Specifically, this competency deals with Introduction to Linguistics, Structure of English, Introduction to Stylistics, and Literary Criticism. In the area of Introduction to Linguistics, the PSLTs need to demonstrate understanding of the structural aspect of language (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics), and apply concepts and principles of language learning, teaching, and language use in specific contexts for language acquisition and learning. They also need to learn how to draw implications of linguistics, psycholinguistics, and sociolinguistics to language teaching and learning. In the area of Structure of English, PSLTs are expected to demonstrate an understanding

of grammatical concepts by describing and analyzing various language structures' form, meaning, and use. Introduction to Stylistics suggests that these would-be language teachers use conceptual framework and schema of linguistics and literature in understanding literary language. In Literary Criticism, PSLTs need to demonstrate knowledge of the basic approaches to problems in critical theory from the classical to modern times as applied to literary works.

Just like how it was observed in the analyses done for Curriculum, the PSLTs got a low score in this competency, possibly because the subject offerings in this area are all introductory. The different course checklists and course descriptions lack major follow-up subjects that will enhance their theoretical foundations in language. Hence, there is no deepening of mastery of skills in the theoretical foundations in language. Introduction to Stylistics got the lowest score which is 39.56 percentage competency level, simply because this subject is very new to the PSLTs. Yet no major follow-up subjects for Stylistics were given. The competencies Structure of English and Introduction to Linguistics got the top percentage competency levels because the PSLTs have enough experience and background in the English language since they were in basic education. However, they are also at the beginning level because there is a limited avenue for them to practice the use of the English language. They use the English language during their subjects in English, but this may not be followed up in their other subjects. As per observation, they sometimes do not mind their grammar in making their outputs, whether oral or written. It is also observed that PSLTs lack reading habits. Reading is essential to develop communication and grammar skills since model grammar, like a simple subject-verb agreement, is presented in the different texts.

In the interviews conducted, the teacher respondents explained the phenomenon. Their accounts explain why the PSLTs have low ratings in this area. In the interviews, the language level and reading habits of the PSLTs and the school's admission policy were mentioned as reasons. The following responses from the teacher respondents clarify the need for a strong foundation in the language.

T1: They still need to realize the problems with

teaching language in the different competencies, thus, the need for language student teachers to gather and critique information from different sources for specific purposes.

T2: Reading competence of language student teachers is low. Grammar proficiency is low. They have not mastered their grammar yet.

T3: Communication skills should be given priority for the training of a language student-teacher (macro-skills).

T5: Love for words or reading has not been developed in childhood. This forms the basic foundation for language competence. Entering college students do not have the expected language competencies to handle the academic requirements for college. No or lack of school-wide measures or interventions to enable college students to develop / enhance their language competencies needed to cope with more difficult ones.

T6: The mastery of basic skills in English was not fully developed. Language student teachers do not apply/use what they have learned inside the classroom. An example is in communicating. There is no consistency in the use of the target language. Some teachers who teach the course are really not English majors or they are not proficient in communicating using the language.

T7: The nature of the subjects is independent and introductory. Independent because the subjects are not dependent [on] other subjects (they are not prerequisite[s] of other major subjects). Introductory because you will discuss features of the subject matter in passing and there is no[t] much time to go into details.

T8: No prerequisite or follow-up subjects when taking major subjects.

T9: There is no qualifying examination for incoming English majors. This is relevant in order to assess their proficiency in English. The language student teachers lack exposure to avenues where their language competence could be improved. One semester of practice teaching is not enough. Seminars and pieces of training should also be improved.

T10: There is also a need to give a qualifying exam per major/specialization.

T11: Even English teachers are not masters of the English language.

The above-cited responses of the respondents clarify the PSLTs' competency levels in Theoretical Foundations in Language. As the facilitators of the subjects of the PSLTs, they are in a position to shed light on the results. As they explain the phenomenon, their recommendation for enhancing the Curriculum is also expressed.

Indeed, a strong foundation in English basics is essential as it dovetails to all complex areas. Indeed, if mastery of the basic skills is not fully developed, the problem will follow until their tertiary level. Another reason underscored is reading. Reading is a gateway to other discoveries and learning, yet the interviewees identified the PSLTs as having low reading competence. This foundation then affects their competency level.

The admission policy is a factor that resulted in the beginning level of PSLTs, as seen by the interviewees. Since there is no qualifying examination for English majors, anyone with low English proficiency may enroll as there was no instrument to measure their ability. As one of the participants said,

T9: There is an absence of a certain selection process qualifying any college student desiring to have a degree in Education major in English.

This participant believes that a specific selection process is necessary to determine the gems among the stones. Many of those who opt for a degree in Education major in English/Language are subpar with the expectations of their desired course. They have not acquired the necessary skills or reached this academic level to qualify as language student teachers at the tertiary level.

Finally, one of the interviewees mentioned,

T7: The nature of the subjects is introductory; hence there is no deeper understanding of each subject. The courses were independent of each other too. Thus, not reaching the level of competency required.

This result is seen as problematic, as supported by Wiig (1993). He said that a problem arises since the PSLTs lack competency in the know-how of their specialization. Beijaard et al. (2000) stated that subject matter expertise is a prerequisite of good teaching. Given this result, PSLTs lack the basics of their expertise. This competency opens up vivid new perspectives on every significant aspect of language and communications: grammar and vocabulary, learning, origins of language, and the relationships of language and thought to the real world. It puts linguistics at the center of the research for understanding human nature and human cognition (Jackendoff, 2002). Teachers must already know about the language when they enter courses and how important they consider this knowledge in their future teaching career. This result implies that teachers who have a low-level language competency will also have a limited understanding of their ability to analyze the parts and

**Table 3.** Competency levels of PSLTs: Theoretical Foundations in Literature

| Areas | Number of items | Raw score | Percentage of scores | Rank | Competency level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A  Mythology and Folklore | 5 | 119/325 | 36.62% | 1 | Beginning |
| B  Afro-Asian Literature (including Philippine Literature) | 8 | 158/520 | 30.38% | 3 | Beginning |
| C  English and American Literature | 7 | 158/455 | 34.73% | 2 | Beginning |
| Overall | | | 33.91% | | Beginning |

structure of sentences. Since mastering grammar is the foundation in the proficiency of a language (Wang, 2010), it is inevitable for educators who teach well to master English grammar. This area is very important because if the PSLT will not improve on this competency, then they may fail to establish successful communication in either getting the interlocutor's message or putting their messages across, may not function effectively as facilitator to the students, and will also have limited understandings in their ability to analyze the parts and structures of sentences (Aina et al., 2013; Arslan, 2013; Penn-Edwards, 2010).

Table 3 shows the competency levels of PSLTs in the area of Theoretical Foundations in Literature. Having garnered an overall evaluation of 33.91% with a qualitative interpretation of "beginning," the PSLTs struggle with their competencies and their prerequisite and fundamental knowledge and/or skills have not been acquired or developed adequately. In the areas of Mythology and Folklore, Afro-Asian Literature (including Philippine Literature), and English and American Literature, language student teachers are expected to use literary concepts in interpreting and analyzing various literary texts, and to identify characteristics, motifs, archetypes, and symbols of different literary texts.

Aside from the reason that the subjects in this competency are introductory and no follow-up major subjects were given to deepen the competencies of the PSLTs, of the four competencies, the Theoretical Foundations in Literature got the lowest overall percentage competency level because the students lack literary appreciation and reading habits. These PSLTs lack love for reading, as observed in their lack of interest in reading different literary genres. Another observation is the lack of teachers who are experts and majors in literature. The researcher learned that minimal training and seminars in teaching literature are provided. One way to demonstrate love for reading and studying literature is a teacher who exemplifies enjoyment and in-depth teaching of literature. It is also observed that the teaching of literature is limited to plain reading, film viewing, and role-playing, after which answering of the given guide questions follows.

In the interviews, the teacher respondents mentioned the following reasons why PSLTs got a low rating in this competency.

T2: Language student teachers' interest in literature is low. Instructors have inadequate trainings in literature instruction.

T3: Lack of mastery on the theoretical foundation in language and literature. Lack of mastery on content affects methodology and vice-versa.

T5: Curriculum in the basic education does not motivate learners to read for fun and learning. Even classroom instruction and school activities do not encourage learners to read beyond what is assigned them.

It is true that one way to deepen and develop love for literature is to exemplify strong interest in learning literature by providing more meaningful and enjoyable strategies and approaches in presenting literature inside the classroom. Encouraging the PSLTs to develop reading habits and skills is also important and very significant to enhance their competencies in Theoretical Foundations in Literature.

Brumfit and Carter (1986) believed that literature is a language partner. Works of literature can help learners learn a skill in the target language, learn the usage of idiomatic expressions, speak legitimately, and become more fluent and creative in the target language (Obeidat, 1997). Theoretical Foundations in Literature plays a significant role in language curriculum and teaching. However, insufficient training in this area has made them unable to fully achieve their goals of mastering this competency (Babaee & Yahya, 2014).

Khajloo (2013) found that students are not interested to learn English due to the lack of subjects that will deepen their understanding in a particular course. In the case of language arts, literature courses are fundamental to deepen the students' understanding of certain concepts in literature and grammar.

Table 4 shows the competency levels of PSLTs in the area of Methodology. Having garnered an overall evaluation of 37.82% with a qualitative interpretation of "beginning," the PSLTs struggle with their competencies and their basic requirements and fundamental knowledge and/or skills have not been acquired or developed adequately. It is possible that the PSLTs got the lowest percentage score in the many competencies mainly because the competencies are taught separately and not

**Table 4.** Competency levels of PSLTs: Methodology

| Areas | Number of items | Raw score | Percentage of scores | Rank | Competency level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A  The Teaching of Speaking, Listening, and Reading | 5 | 116/325 | 35.69% | 6 | Beginning |
| B  Teaching Literature | 5 | 130/325 | 40.00% | 3 | Beginning |
| C  Preparation and Evaluation of Instructional Materials | 5 | 141/325 | 43.38% | 2 | Beginning |
| D  Language and Literature Assessment | 5 | 121/325 | 37.23% | 5 | Beginning |
| E  Language Research | 3 | 99/195 | 50.77% | 1 | Beginning |
| F  Campus Journalism | 3 | 77/195 | 39.49% | 4 | Beginning |
| G  Translating and Editing of Text | 3 | 61/195 | 31.28% | 8 | Beginning |
| H  Speech and Stage Arts | 3 | 65/195 | 33.33% | 7 | Beginning |
| I  Creative Writing | 3 | 57/195 | 29.23% | 9 | Beginning |
| Overall | | | 37.82% | | Beginning |

integratively, as seen in the different curriculum checklists. From the various areas in this competency, the PSLTs should use and demonstrate understanding of the nature of the four language macro-components (listening, speaking, reading, and writing, including grammar) and the theoretical bases, principles, methods, and strategies in teaching these components. They also need to demonstrate basic concepts in language and literature testing in assessing language proficiency and achievement and literary competence, basic theories and concepts in translation as applied to the writing and editing of various types of text, and the process of oral communication and the various forms of speech arts, from public speaking and group discussions to debate, oral interpretation, and dramatics. They are also expected to apply: principles, skills, and strategies gained to literature instruction; knowledge of principles and processes involved in developing and evaluating various types of instructional materials for language and literature instruction, including the use of technology for assisting instruction and independent language learning; principles and approaches in research to find answers to questions in language and literature teaching and learning; principles and strategies in writing the various parts of a campus newspaper; rules of discourse and rhetoric in editing various kinds of written materials; principles and strategies in translating texts of various types from English to another language or from another language to English; and the theories, concepts, and skills in creative writing to include biographical sketches, fiction, creative non-fiction, and poetry.

Creative Writing got the lowest rating; its rating was lower than that of Language Research because, in the curriculum, there is only one major subject that talks about creative writing. In contrast, the curriculum gives two subjects for research: Research 1 and 2. It is evident that the language research skills and competencies of PSLTs are enhanced because of two essential subjects that will deepen the understanding and skills of the

students in research. It is in this context that competencies should be taught and be developed integratively in order for the PSLTs to see the connection of each competency embedded in the different English major subjects. Teaching involves continuous analysis of one's work, the experiences of other teachers, and the search for new means to improve teaching.

Tamura (2006) stated that methodology enhances the process of teaching by empowering and facilitating teachers to work proficiently. Having knowledge and skills in methods, the teacher will have a precise competency in teaching a particular subject matter. PSLTs must be knowledgeable in using a variety of teaching methodologies to respond to the varied learning needs and requirements of a multi-lingual and multi-cultural learning environment. A well-trained teacher knows strategies in teaching or integrating lessons about the proper alignment of the competencies, strategies, and assessment. Previous studies mentioned that if there is a low-level competency in this area, the teacher will struggle in preparing a sufficient number of high-quality works and good discussion with proper teaching methods for the class and will not have adequate knowledge of the occupational task of teaching a subject matter (Beare et al., 2012; Filatov & Pill, 2015).

As a result of the interviews with the teacher respondents, the following are why the PSLTs got low ratings in this competency.

T1:  We need to improve and develop teaching and create [more] purposeful classroom activities and employ the suited strategies and methodologies to improve the competencies of teachers and they also lacked the knowledge for the preparatory training which requires a lengthy time to provide and utilize different sources of knowledge. They need to understand more on the theoretical concepts, principles, and practice of teaching language for them to enhance

their competencies.

T2: Teaching strategies of the instructors can also be a factor why the qualitative interpretation was "beginning."

T3: The language student teacher may be prepared ideally but may find difficulty in classroom management in actual teaching.

T6: Teachers who teach the course lack the training they need. Schools don't have the necessary facilities/materials that would help supposedly in the teaching and mastery of the language.

T10: There should be more exposure to the teaching experience. If possible, increase observation and practice teaching time. Seminars and trainings may also be given since not all are learned in the classroom.

T11: Intensive training must be given to the language student teachers. Lack of exposure and proper training.

With this outcome, the problem arises on the issue that PSLTs struggle and lack knowledge on how to deliver language teaching since this competency provides the basis for language teaching (Richards & Farrell, 2001). TEIs should see that PSLTs master this competency since they will experience problems delivering their language lessons to their future classes (Cubukcu, 2010; Johnson, 2006; Robinson et al., 2007).

The same result is very evident in Gan's (2013) study revealing that pre-service teachers had difficulty in preparing pedagogical practices they learned in their methodology courses. Similarly, pre-service teachers had problems in choosing appropriate teaching methodology and strategy as presented in Yunus et al.'s (2010) research.

**Qualitative data analysis**
As gleaned from the results of the study, the PSLTs' competency levels in all the following areas need enhancement: Curriculum (beginning level), Theoretical Foundations in Language (beginning level), Theoretical Foundations in Literature (beginning level), and Methodology (beginning level).

From the analyses of these results and the observations of the teacher respondents, the teacher respondents recommended during their interviews strategies and activities to enhance the PSLTs' language competencies. The recommended strategies were thematized and stipulated through the Helm of Competency Improvement (shown in Figure 1). This helm, in summary, captures the activities suggested by the teacher respondents that will enhance the PSLTs' competency levels.

The helm is the equipment that controls the direction of boats or ships. It is manually steered to guide the boat
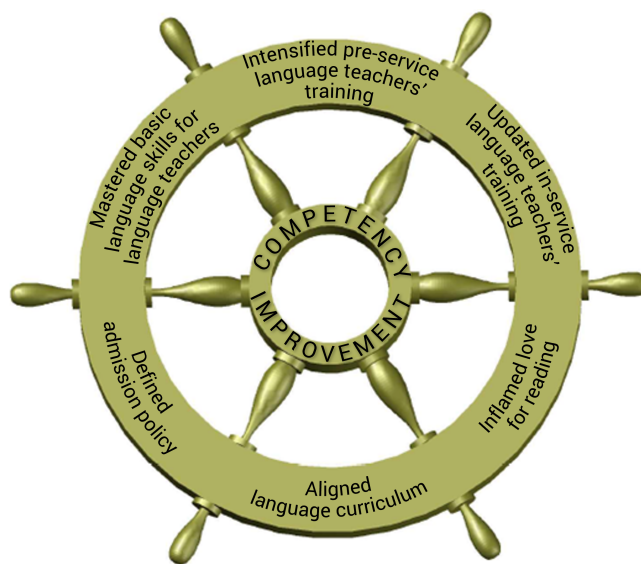


**Figure 1.** Helm of Competency Improvement

or vessel where it is heading. Likened to education, the helm is the driving force guiding the PSLTs to reach their expected language teacher competencies. The helmsman (the teacher) steers the helm in the right direction to ensure that the expected competency of a PSLT is achieved, thus becoming a competent language teacher. The helm is not just focused on one specific activity to enhance the competency of a PSLT. All the activities seen in the six felloes are equally important to ensure that the needed competency of PSLTs is developed.

The helm summarizes the suggested activities mentioned by the teacher participants to increase the PSLTs' competency levels. The six felloes of the helm represent the themes simplified in this study: intensified PSLTs' training, updated in-service language teachers' training, inflamed love for reading, aligned language curriculum, defined admission policy, and mastered basic language skills for language teachers.

**Intensified pre-service language teachers' training**
To ensure quality language teaching, intensive training for PSLTs is a necessity. Intensification of PSLTs' training means focusing on teaching the essentials and looking into possible ways to improve the competencies of each PSLT teacher, especially in the areas where they experience difficulties. As emphasized by the teacher informants, this kind of training will empower the PSLTs with the necessary theoretical and practical knowledge of language arts. Through training, seminars, conferences, lengthened classroom observation, and practice teaching, PSLTs will be more exposed to deepening their knowledge, hence, gaining more information, knowledge, and necessary skills to master their specialization.

T1: They need to understand more on the theoreti-

cal concepts, principles, and practice of teaching language to enhance their competencies.

T2: Go to literature instruction. Students' interest in literature is low.

T3: Lack of mastery on the theoretical foundation in language and literature. Communication skills should be given priority for the training of a [PSLT] (macro-skills).

T9: The [PSLTs] lack exposure to avenues where their language competence could be improved. One semester practice teaching is not enough. Seminars and trainings should also be improved.

T10: Seminars and trainings may also be given since not all are learned in the classroom. There should be more exposure to the teaching experience. If possible, increase observation and practice teaching time.

T11: Intensive training must be given to the pre-service teachers.

The beginning level of the PSLTs is workable as suggested by the informants through training programs given to the PSLTs. T9, T10, and T11 mentioned seminars and trainings. These are avenues for things not discussed or not enhanced in the classroom, as it is not enough to say all content in 54 hours. So the training and seminars will be supplemental for all the learners and be avenues for their improvement.

Theoretical concepts also need to be strengthened, as mentioned by T1 and T3. This is vital so that the PSLTs will have enhanced knowledge of the competencies. Lack of expertise in theories of language and literature affects students' competencies. Further, T2 capitalized on literature instruction. There is a suggestion to increase this part to be more competent in teaching.

Finally, communication skills must be given strong emphasis in the training as mentioned by T3. This means training or improvement in the macro skills—speaking, listening, reading, writing, and viewing. A good or high level of mastery of language skills is a must among English majors as this is their content and not only their medium of instruction. Therefore, English speaking skills must not be faulty to teach the subjects.

**Updated in-service language teachers' training**
As per teacher informants, the PSLTs should have intensified training. Teachers facilitating the major subjects should also be trained on the content and pedagogies of teaching the English major subjects. Updated in-service language teachers' training means giving in-service training for all teachers teaching English major subjects in order for them to become updated on the trends and issues in language teaching and on the nature of language teaching anchored on the Curriculum Guide of the K to 12 Curriculum. These teachers should also be continuously trained for them to teach meaningfully all the essential information and concepts needed by PSLTs to become competent enough in teaching the English subject. Teachers of the English major subjects should master the different competencies required in the different English major subjects. The goal of producing highly competent PSLTs can be done once meaningful in-service training for language teachers is provided to have a continuous training of English teachers.

T1: They still need to realize the problems with teaching language in the different competencies, thus, the need for language teachers to gather and critique information from different sources for specific purposes.

T1: We need to improve and develop teaching and create [more] purposeful classroom activities and employ the suited strategies and methodologies to improve the competencies of teachers and they also lacked the knowledge for the preparatory training which requires a lengthy time to provide and utilize different sources of knowledge.

In-service teacher training is also a very vital factor in enhancing the competency levels of the PSLTs. T1 explained that in-service teachers need to continuously study the different language competencies to teach significantly needed competencies for the PSLTs.

Improving and developing teaching and creating more purposeful classroom activities among in-service teachers will surely improve the performance level of the PSLTs, as mentioned by T1. Training and seminars must also be provided among in-service teachers in order for them to guide and teach well the PSLTs. A well-trained in-service teacher can produce a well-rounded PSLT in this context.

**Inflamed love for reading**
Reading is a known foundation of knowledge and forms the basic foundation for language competence. Inflamed love for reading focuses on developing the innate love for reading since this is one of the macro skills PSLTs need to learn, develop, and enhance. Once they learn, develop, and enhance this macro skill, PSLTs will be motivated to continuously search for the meaning and substance of their subject through reading. It is expected that language teachers should have deepened desire for reading. According to the teacher informants, one of the reasons PSLTs are at the beginning level is that the reading competence of the PSLTs is low. It is so because love for reading has not been developed since childhood. When they reached becoming a PSLT, they groped to survive the challenges of reading many texts, especially in literature subjects, and understanding and studying lessons and competencies in grammar/linguistics.

PSLTs become complacent by studying only a specific lesson's focus. They do not usually exert extra effort in conducting an advanced reading of the lessons, in both literature and grammar.

> T5: English teachers relied on to teach/encourage reading when this should be a learned effort for all teachers.

> T5: Curriculum in the basic education does not motivate learners to read for fun and learning. Even classroom instruction and school activities do not encourage learners to read beyond what is assigned them. This should be included in the curriculum.

> T5: Love for words or reading has not been developed in childhood. This forms the basic foundation for language competence.

Reading is an important skill that needs to be learned and developed in all students and not only among PSLTs. Reading then can be a solution to the beginning level of the PSLTs if they are encouraged to love reading and appreciate its many benefits.

Most of the contents teachers share are primarily from their readings—further, vocabulary increases as one reads. Therefore, reading must be developed among the PSLTs, be it reading for pleasure or reading for academic purposes.

T5 also intensified this skill by saying that it should be included in the curriculum. This means it will also be strengthened in the school's activities, not only as a subject matter.

**Aligned language curriculum**
An aligned language curriculum means ensuring that the language curriculum is integrated in such a way that the different subject offerings (English major subjects) are linked to one another. Subjects should not be seen as compartmentalized; instead, subjects should be treated in ways that they are interconnected, meaning the competencies are enhanced and intensified as the PSLTs progress from one subject to another. The teacher participants saw the curriculum to be important in the improvement of the PSLTs' competency levels. As emphasized by the teachers, curriculum must be revised, curriculum must be evaluated again, and schools must provide more units of major subjects. Indeed, in this fast-changing era, the curriculum must be in pace and abreast with the needs of the learners and society. An in-depth understanding of the content of the curriculum is also a must so that the teacher can teach well the competencies of the subject aligned with the strategies and assessment.

> T9: Schools should provide more units (hours) to major subjects. GE subjects for English major should focus on foundations of language and literature.

> T10: The competencies per subject in the curriculum (especially in the major subjects and basic language subjects) must also be evaluated again. This would mean enhancing the skills needed for teaching.

> T10: The English curriculum must be revisited. Literature and grammar/language subjects are not equally distributed or balanced.

These key informants saw a revisit of the curriculum as a way of improving the PSLTs' competency levels. The supervising instructors believe that the subjects to be offered to the PSLTs, especially major subjects, be evaluated so that these will be geared towards the improvement of the competencies of the students.

Since English majors are also expected to teach literature subjects, T10 saw the importance of balancing the subjects in such a way that it will be focused not only on grammar or linguistics but also on literature.

These suggestions of the in-service teachers are timely as the curriculum is already revised for the 2018 incoming education students.

**Defined admission policy**
The TEIs are suggested to have a more defined admission policy or requirement among English majors. Defined admission policy denotes that before an education student is admitted to enroll as an English major, schools should devise a stringent policy before a student qualifies to become an English major. The admission policy will focus on the testing and identifying the education students' readiness and preparedness in taking English major subjects. They should have a screening process that will identify the student's readiness to become a PSLT. Two teachers mentioned qualifying exams for incoming English majors. This suggestion implies that there should be stricter rules in the admission of English majors; they should certify their proficiency so that they will be qualified to be one.

> T9: There is no qualifying exam for incoming English majors. This is relevant in order to assess their proficiency in English.

> T10: There also be a need to give qualifying exam per major/specialization.

As mentioned by two teacher informants, a qualifying examination is needed for all incoming English majors to assess their proficiency level in the language. This qualifying examination will be of great help to evaluate and monitor the language competency of the PSLTs. A well-defined admission policy in the TEIs will help aspiring language teachers assess their language abilities and skills, guiding them to become good in their chosen major.

**Mastered basic language skills for language teachers**

Mastered basic language skills for language teachers involves communicative competence of a PSLT focusing on grammar (oral and written), more so on the use of the English language. One of the reasons mentioned by the key informants for the PSLTs' beginning competency levels is the lack of proficiency in communication and language as a whole. Hence, as one of the felloes of the helm, mastery of basic grammar, structure, and components of language is needed so that PSLTs can handle the academic requirements of college, more so when they are English majors.

> T5: Entering college students do not have the expected language competencies to handle the academic requirements for college.

> T6: Students do not apply / use what they have learned inside the classroom. An example is in communicating. There is no consistency in the use of the target language.

> T6: The mastery of basic skills in English was not fully developed.

Going back to basics is emphasized by the teachers. Hence, mastery of basic language skills would elevate the PSLTs' competency levels. If one knows the basics, then there is an easy transfer of knowledge as compared to when the subject matter becomes more complex. For example, suppose there is mastery of basic sentence structure and subject-verb agreement. In that case, there will be a transfer of learning and more accessible learning of the form of language and syntax. The same is true in literature. It will be an easier literary criticism if literary concepts are understood in basic literature.

## Conclusion and recommendation

### Conclusion

The study results revealed that there is a need to provide intensive training for the students to improve the language competency levels as PSLTs. Hence, an enhanced program is recommended to be conducted to help fill in the gap between teachers' beginning level and their expected proficiency. As shown by the results of the study, the level of the language competencies of the students in all areas indicates that the preparation of the PSLTs is not enhanced. While it is true that their field of specialization is English, their competency levels show that they are not well-prepared to take the LET and to work in the actual workplace. Furthermore, the respondents are fully aware of what must be done to ensure that the low-level performance in the different competencies will be improved.

### Recommendation

Based on this research, it is highly recommended that TEIs develop curricular alignment of the different course offerings, especially in the areas of language education, using the curriculum guides of the K to 12 Curriculum for English. There is a need to match the different content and performance standards and learning competencies in enhancing the Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English course syllabi. There is also a need to have a stringent admission policy for those who would like to major in English to ensure that these would-be teachers will be prepared to take the English courses as their field of specialization. The deans of the different TEIs may recommend to the Technical Panel of CHED mechanics on how to improve curricular offerings in different fields of specialization in the teacher education programs like the alignment of English major courses with the subjects in the K to 12 Curriculum. It is also recommended that PSLTs should have thorough training in the lowest competencies following the language training program for competency improvement as prepared by the researcher. Lastly, university professors teaching English major courses need to undergo in-service training for them to have an in-depth understanding of the new language curriculum to help PSLTs enhance their competencies.

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# The Philippine secondary school experience of bullying through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's socioecological theory

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**Structured abstract**

**Background:** Bullying is a complex social phenomenon influenced by a myriad of factors, including psychological and environmental ones. It is generally perceived as dangerous and life-threatening and, thus, must be urgently addressed.

**Purpose:** Investigate the prevalence and the actual bullying experiences of Filipino junior high school students using Urie Bronfenbrenner's socioecological theory or ecological model of development as a framework.

**Participants:** 1,090 students from nine selected secondary schools in the 4th and 6th District in the province of Batangas, with 30 of them chosen as key informants

**Research design:** Mixed method expansion sequential research design

**Data collection and analysis:** The V-SCAIRD Acts of Bullying Inventory Tool was administered to determine the prevalence of bullying (by bullying role, form of bullying, and effect of bullying) across genders and school types. Independent sample $t$-tests were used to compare male and female differences in the bullying roles, the forms of bullying, and the effects of bullying across genders. Analysis of variance showed the degree of significant differences in the bullying roles, the forms of bullying, and the effects of bullying across school types. Fisher's least significant difference test was run as post hoc test. All statistical analyses were tested at $p < .05$. The students who scored high as bullies, victims, and bystanders were interviewed to draw out their actual bullying experiences and the possible psycho-social environmental factors influencing this social phenomenon.

**Findings:** Prevalence rates of 8, 14, and 78 in 100 students translate to one bully, two victims, and seven bystanders in every 10 students, with a victimization ratio of 1:5. Male students exhibited a significantly higher tendency to be bullies and victims. All forms of bullying (covert indirect, cyberbullying, physical, and verbal) were experienced by students regardless of gender. However, it appeared that the male students were more exposed to verbal bullying while the female students were more exposed to cyberbullying. Significant gender differences were found in the students' experiences of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral effects of bullying. Across school types, no significant differences were found in bully tendencies, but a significant difference was found in victim tendencies between public and Catholic schools, with the former having a higher rate than the latter. Students from both Catholic and non-sectarian schools registered a significantly higher tendency to become bystanders than those in public schools. The interview disclosed various forms of bullying experienced by the students, categorized into covert indirect, cyberbullying, physical, and verbal types. Verbal abuse from family members was reported, primarily due to failed expectations such as perceived poor academic performance. Psycho-social factors influencing bullying phenomenon in schools include teachers' attitude in school, peer influence, and school discipline.

**Recommendation:** Provide continuing professional development to teachers on bullying management in schools and create clear structure and school policies that emphasize home and school partnership and certain discipline in school.

**Keywords**

bullying prevalence, bullying roles, forms of bullying, effects of bullying, gender-specific bullying, school-based bullying

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## Introduction

Bullying is considered one of the most pressing educational issues worldwide because of its cataclysmal effects on various levels of society from individuals to families, schools, neighborhoods, and other societal institutions. Teachers who bully children, students who

bully teachers, parents who bully administrators, parents who bully students, or students who bully their peers certainly exist, giving rise to the perception that school is no longer a safe and healthy place (Due et al., 2005; Gofin & Avitzour, 2012; Pörhölä et al., 2020), particularly for vulnerable populations such as those with disability or suffering from extreme poverty (Campbell et al., 2017; National Center for Education Statistics, 2019; Rose & Gage, 2017).

The key facts from the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) (Selim, 2018) confirmed the high degree of peer aggression in school settings with approximately half of the students in junior high school around the world experiencing peer-to-peer bullying. The Philippines has not been spared from this socioeducational concern (Plan Philippines, 2008; Selim, 2018), prompting scholars to delve into the issue and investigate its prevalence and severity in the local context (Balatbat et al., 2014; Cardona et al., 2015; Maximo & Loy, 2014).

Recognized as an intricate social phenomenon, bullying has been proven to have multidimensional negative effects on individuals, both short- (e.g., physical injuries, academic problems, cohort survival, depression, self-harm) and long-term (e.g., social and emotional difficulties, poor financial management, suicidal ideation) (Bowes et al., 2015; Gladden et al., 2014; Heydenberk & Heydenberk, 2017; Wolke & Lereya, 2015). The feeling of being powerless, intimidated, and humiliated as a result of bullying may consume some individuals even long after the bullying incident. Bowes et al.'s (2015) study suggests that depression among young adults could be partially attributed to peer victimization in earlier years. Wolke and Lereya's (2015) careful review of studies on the ill effects of bullying found many debilitating effects of bullying even 40 to 50 years later.

Given bullying's complexity and impact on student lives, it becomes imperative to investigate the extent of its prevalence, the factors that influence bullying behaviors, and the psychological and sociocultural profile of students involved in the bullying act. It has been noted that the extent and magnitude of bullying within the school context are quite unknown, particularly in the Philippine setting, due to lack of systematic collation of data. At the national level, bullying data in the Philippines is limited to reported cases from the Legal Department of the Department of Education, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the PGH Child Protection Unit, and the Philippine National Police. Moreover, most studies conducted in the Philippines focused on certain aspects of bullying only, such as frequency, prevalence rate, and common types of bullying (Balatbat et al., 2014; Rastrullo & Francisco, 2015; Sanapo, 2017) or classroom management approaches to mitigate bullying incidence (Cardona et al., 2015).

To fill the gap in current literature, we approached bul-

lying from a broader perspective by addressing not only individual level predictors but also peer, family, school, community, and cultural contexts through the socioecological lens of Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1994/1997). This report, which is part of a more comprehensive study, focuses on the first two phases. Phase 1 investigated the prevalence of bullying in terms of the bullying role, the form of bullying, and the effect of bullying according to gender and school type, while Phase 2 delved into the actual bullying experiences and the nature of school environment of the individual participants.

**Problem statement**

Phase 1 sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the prevalence of bullying according to gender and school type among Filipino junior high school students?
2. What are the common forms and effects of bullying according to gender and school type?
3. Are there differences in the bullying roles, forms of bullying, and effects of bullying across genders and school types?

Phase 2 aimed to further understand bullying as experienced particularly by junior high school students. This part of the study intended to establish the nature and forms of bullying experienced in school settings and the school factors contributing to the bullying behaviors of the selected bullies, victims, and bystanders.

4. What are the nature and forms of bullying experienced by the selected students involved in bullying, particularly in school settings?
5. What psycho-social environmental factors could have influenced bullying behavior in the school context?

**Research hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested in the study.

1. There are significant differences in the bullying roles, forms of bullying, and effects of bullying across genders.
2. There are significant differences in the bullying roles, forms of bullying, and effects of bullying across school types.

**Bullying as a social phenomenon**

In describing bullying, many researchers quote Olweus and Limber (2010) who defined it as "an aggressive behavior or intentional harm carried out repeatedly and over time in an interpersonal relationship characterized by an actual or perceived imbalance of power or strength" (p. 25). The elements of intentionality, aggression, imbalance of power, and repetition were also emphasized by other scholars (e.g., Bosworth & Judkins, 2014; Hymel &

Swearer, 2015). Hymel and Swearer (2015) reiterate that abuse of power distinguishes bullying from other forms of aggression, highlighting the use of strength, physical or otherwise, of one person or even a group over another. The repetitive nature of bullying is also stressed by the American Psychological Association (2018) in its definition of bullying as "a form of intentional and repeated aggressive act that causes another person injury or discomfort" (¶1).

The Anti-Bullying Act of 2013, under the Philippine law, defines bullying as "any severe, or repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at another student that has the effect of actually causing or placing the latter in reasonable fear of physical or emotional harm or damage to his property; creating a hostile environment at school for the other student; infringing on the rights of the other student at school" (*Republic Act No. 10627*, 2013, §2). This document, together with the other literature on bullying, underscores direct or indirect aggression, intentionality, repetition, and power imbalance as the underlying elements of bullying.

As a form of aggression, bullying can be viewed in two forms, namely proactive and reactive aggression (Hanish et al., 2004). Unlike proactive aggression which is a goal-oriented behavior, reactive aggression is a response to a perceived threat or social provocation. Harris (2009), for his part, classified bullying as either a direct behavior or an indirect behavior. The first classification involves discriminatory behavior such as mauling, beating, sexual harassment, physical assaults, pushing/shoving, biting, cases of extortion, theft, hitting, spitting, kicking, and throwing of papers. On the other hand, indirect behavior involves spreading rumors, verbal discrimination, mockery, insults, social exclusion, dirty looks, and other negative gestures which are much harder to detect.

Antiri (2016), who classified bullying into physical, social, verbal, cyber, and psychological, confirmed earlier findings that the verbal type of bullying is the most prevalent bullying form (e.g., Balatbat et al., 2014). In recent years, the prolific use of social media ushered a new platform for cyberbullying in many parts of the world (Antiri, 2016; *CyberSafe: Survey 2015*, 2016; Fretwell, 2015). Watkins (2003) stressed that this societal concern may perpetuate as it is still considered by many as part of human nature which can no longer be changed.

Literature on bullying has identified four roles involved in this aggressive behavior: bullies, bystanders, victims, and bully-victims (e.g., Huang et al., 2013; Psalti, 2012; Seixas et al., 2013; Smith, 2004; Swearer et al., 2010; Yang et al., 2016; Yang & Salmivalli, 2013). The bullies are usually the strongest among peers and thus can cause repeated harm. Found to have a strong need for power, they take an initiative stance as perpetrator and foster violent behavior over others. The bystanders, on the other hand, serve as the audience of a bullying action usually taking place in front of them. They are considered the largest group in bullying incidents. They can support the bully, defend the victim, or serve as passive onlookers. In the majority of cases, bystanders attend without intervening, but still they are considered an integral part of the bullying situation. The third role is taken by the victims who are regarded as the target of bullying. They are the ones who experience hostile behavior and retaliation continually. They are of lower status than their aggressors, tend to isolate themselves, appear unable to defend themselves, and are in need of protection (Smith, 2004). Children who are perpetrators of bullying and are also victims of bullying take the fourth role, bully-victims. Scholars have reported that bully-victims tend to commit significantly more bullying in various forms (i.e., physical, verbal, cyberbullying) compared to pure bullies (e.g., Seixas et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2016; Yang & Salmivalli, 2013). They also tend to perform less favorably in psychosocial and behavioral measures than either the bullies or the victims (Haynie et al., 2001). They are also considered the high-risk group as they tend to exhibit controversial profiles, demonstrating highly positive attitudes towards bullying, higher levels of self-esteem and self-confidence like the bullies, but often with higher levels of rejection and weakness similar to victims (Psalti, 2012; Seixas et al., 2013).

Individuals who have been part of bullying victimization experience numerous internalizing and externalizing behaviors. Higher rates of internalizing behaviors were noted among victims, bullies, and bully-victims such as low self-esteem, depression, loneliness, psychosomatic symptoms, poor social competence, poor relationships with peers, and school avoidance among other symptoms (Deighton et al., 2018; Huang et al., 2013; Nansel et al., 2004; Swearer et al., 2010). More disturbing are the numerous studies cited by Heydenberk and Heydenberk (2017) and the National Center for Education Statistics (2019), confirming "the relationship between bullying and an increased risk of depression and suicidal ideation" (p. 12).

Moilanen et al. (2010) observed that bullies tend to show a higher tendency to manifest externalizing behaviors. They are more inclined to exhibit problem behaviors such as alcohol consumption, cigarette smoking, and poor academic performance. These problematic externalizing behaviors usually manifest earlier than internalizing behaviors commonly observed two years after. Externalizing difficulties are found to be significantly correlated to poor academic performance (Obradović et al., 2010). This observation converges with the results of longitudinal studies (e.g., Chen et al., 2010; Deighton et al., 2018; Vaillancourt et al., 2013), showing that ex-

ternalizing problems exhibited during childhood years predicted academic underachievement in later years, which in turn predicted upsurges in internalizing and externalizing problems in a cyclical manner. Other studies presented similar findings that early manifestations of externalizing problems lead to amplified internalizing problems in later years through deficits in social competence such as anger management, self-control, assertion, cooperation, responsibility, and accountability (Cleverley et al., 2012; Obradović et al., 2010).

Gladden et al. (2014) stressed that the harmful effects of bullying are also felt by others, including friends and families, and can hurt the overall health and safety of schools, neighborhoods, and society. They added that although it is individuals who initiate and carry out this behavior, it is more of a social and cultural issue. For them, bullying may also be regarded as power-based behavior when it happens in a climate that supports the behavior, where everyone participates in it and others simply ignore it. Considering these debilitating effects of bullying, it becomes imperative for schools to have a sustainable program based on comprehensive data in order to mitigate the ill effects of bullying (Espelage & Swearer, 2011; Heydenberk & Heydenberk, 2017; Selim, 2018).

### Gender differences in school bullying

Gender variations in bullying experiences have been reported across different cultures and schools. In the USA, males were noted to report a higher rate of bullying perpetration and victimization among middle school (Carbone-Lopez et al., 2010; National Center for Education Statistics, 2019) and university students (Lund & Ross, 2016) as well as juvenile offenders (Tisak et al., 2016). A similar pattern was noted in Greece, Estonia, and Argentina (Pörhölä et al., 2020).

Notably, male students are more likely to get involved in physical forms of bullying while their female counterparts are more likely to experience indirect forms such as gossiping or exclusion from activities on purpose (Carbone-Lopez et al., 2010; Fernández et al., 2013; National Center for Education Statistics, 2019; Pörhölä et al., 2020). Scholars have explained this male inclination to physical aggression, especially to aggravated assaults, in line with the socially constructed view that physical aggression is indicative of masculinity or manhood (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Dukes et al., 2010; Rosen & Nofziger, 2019; Tisak et al., 2016). Pörhölä et al. (2020) suggest that certain cultures, especially the highly authoritarian ones, tend to normalize bullying behavior.

Rosen and Nofziger (2019) assert that the social construction of masculinity contributes significantly to bullying among male adolescents, and this becomes cyclical as the bullying behavior reinforces the notions of hegemonic masculinity. They added that when men's mas-

culinity is threatened, they are more likely to defend their manhood through displays of aggression, physically or verbally (Bosson & Vandello, 2011). Indeed, gender orientation can be influential in bullying victimization (Kosciw et al., 2012; Nansel et al., 2004; Peterson & Ray, 2006).

### Framework of the study

Recent research in bullying orientates toward a socioecological framework as scholars recognize the complexity of this phenomenon compared to other forms of violence (e.g., Espelage & Swearer, 2011; Hong & Eamon, 2012; Hong & Espelage, 2012; Huang et al., 2013). Rather than being treated as an isolated representation of behavioral pattern, it has been studied from multidimensional perspectives, considering the interplay of individual contexts with those of the dynamics of other social groups such as family, school, and community. This approach originating from Bronfenbrenner's (1979) socioecological systems theory accounts for the complex relationships between the individual and their sociocultural environment. Using a social-ecological lens, problems attendant to bullying are viewed as systemic consequences rather than individually produced.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1994/1997) socioecological theory or ecological model of development places the individual at the center and examines environmental influences, looking into factors or systems that might have influenced their personal, social, and moral development. He stresses that the five socially organized subsystems (i.e., microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem) help, support, and guide human growth for healthy development to occur. For him, an individual or a child cannot be separated from their surroundings and thus, it is important to understand each one in the context of multiple environments that influence how they will grow and develop.

The microsystem encompasses the most immediate social environment, providing direct contact or interaction with the individual (e.g., family, friends, neighbors, and school). The mesosystem consists of interactions (roles) and links among those immediately surrounding the individual creating a network of microsystems (Bronfenbrenner, 1994/1997). In this system, the emphasis is on the importance of roles within an environment that may be different in another context. The process is taking place between two or more settings (e.g., relations between home and school, school student and teacher, administration and parents). The exosystem consists of "one or more settings that do not involve the individual as an active participant but in which events occur that affect or are affected by what happens in that setting" (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 237). Examples include events that have a connection through the family or peer groups, affecting the individual (e.g., parents place of work and the family, university and the parent, neighborhood group and

teacher activities). The macrosystem, which according to (Bronfenbrenner, 1994/1997, p. 40) "may be thought of as a societal blueprint for a particular culture or sub-culture," refers to overarching themes and patterns between the other systems that create cultural norms (e.g., socioeconomic status, systems of beliefs, knowledge, opportunities, hazards, and life options). The chronosystem "encompasses change or consistency over time not only in the characteristics of the person but also of the environment in which that person lives" (Bronfenbrenner, 1994/1997, p. 40). Settings or influences that belong to this system include transfer of place of residence, socioeconomic status, divorce as a major life transition, degree of stress or instability in one's life among others.

Since the school serves as a human ecology where children and adolescents navigate social structures and strengthen interpersonal relationships with their peers and classmates, it has been identified as a primary setting where bully behaviors and involvement take place (Bowes et al., 2015; Gladden et al., 2014; Wolke & Lereya, 2015). Thus, bullying behaviors cannot be solely attributed to individual characteristics or family influence as Bronfenbrenner (1979) theorizes since many aspects in school may be associated to it. It must be noted that each school has its own cultural norms and beliefs regarding bullying situations, which may influence the perception on normative social behaviors of bullies, victims, and bystanders.

## Methodology

### Research design

This study made use of the mixed method expansion sequential research design (Polit & Beck, 2012), with Phase 1 providing the quantitative part and Phase 2 the qualitative part. The use of this method allowed us to widen the scope, breadth, and range of the study and derive new insights and perspective on bullying phenomenon, possibly leading to new theorizing or refinement of Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1994/1997) socioecological theory or ecological model of development. Phase 1 covered the investigation on the prevalence of bullying along its three components: bullying role (bullies, victims, and bystanders), (common) form of bullying (covert indirect, cyberbullying, physical, and verbal), and effect of bullying (cognitive, affective, and behavioral). We excluded the bully-victims as a category in Phase 1 since a bully-victim exhibits characteristics that overlap with those of bullies and victims. We felt that to identify bully-victims categorically from bullies or victims, the quantitative method must be complemented with case studies among those who exhibited bully tendencies. Phase 2 focused on the actual bullying experiences, the school environment the individual participants were exposed to, and the potential psycho-social factors contributing to bullying phe-

**Table 1.** Distribution of respondents according to school

| School type | School | Junior high school student population | Proportional allocation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Catholic | CS1 | 1,427 | 184 |
| | CS2 | 653 | 85 |
| | CS3 | 620 | 80 |
| | Total | 2,700 | 349 |
| Non-sectarian | NS1 | 1,300 | 145 |
| | NS2 | 610 | 68 |
| | NS3 | 1,300 | 145 |
| | Total | 3,210 | 358 |
| Public | PS1 | 1,019 | 48 |
| | PS2 | 655 | 31 |
| | PS3 | 6,506 | 304 |
| | Total | 8,180 | 383 |
| Total population | | 14,090 | 1,090 |

**Table 2.** Distribution of respondents according to gender

| School type | | Male | Female | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Catholic | | 177 | 172 | 349 |
| Non-sectarian | | 178 | 180 | 358 |
| Public | | 191 | 192 | 383 |
| | Total | 546 | 544 | 1,090 |

nomenon.

### Respondents and locale of the study

In Phase 1, we used stratified quota sampling and proportional allocation techniques to ensure that the three school types were represented in the study, with proportional allocation of representatives for each (see Table 1).

Taro Yamane's formula (1967, as cited in Adam, 2020) was used to determine the sample size of 1,090 from a population of 14,090. Proportional allocation was used to determine the sample size per sample unit of each school type (Catholic, non-sectarian, and public) (see Table 1). The 1,090 junior high school students were enrolled in Grades 7 to 10, 349 of whom came from Catholic schools, 358 from non-sectarian schools, and 383 from public schools within the 4th and 6th Districts in the province of Batangas. Out of 1,090 respondents, 546 are males and 544 are females (see Table 2), with ages ranging from 13 to 16 years old.

In Phase 2, purposive sampling was employed to identify key informants in the case study method. The selection was based on the results in the V-SCAIRD Acts of Bullying Inventory Tool from the nine secondary schools. Fifty male and female students with high scores (3.40–5.00) were identified as having the tendency to become bullies, victims, and bystanders, each given a parental

and informed consent letter. Since bullying is a critical and confidential issue particularly for parents and school administrators, some students were not permitted to participate in Study 2, resulting in the reduction of the number of students from 50 to 30. All the 30 students participated in the study with approved consent from their parents.

**Data gathering instruments**
For Phase 1, the Villamor, Serrano, Cañaveral, Alarcon, Ibasco, Royo, Dihiansan, Del Mundo, David (V-SCAIRD) (2014) Acts of Bullying Inventory Tool was administered to 1,090 junior high school students. A pen and paper type of test, the V-SCAIRD (2014) consists of 43 statements streamlined through factor analysis from the original 144 items. The tool looked at the bullying roles, the forms of bullying, and the effects of bullying on the students by asking respondents the extent to which they agreed or disagreed on a given statement such as "I get scared as I frequently receive threats at school" and "I think of mimicking or imitating mannerisms of some I am teasing." Each item was rated using a five-point Likert scale with 0 as Never (Not at All), 1 as Seldom (Rarely), 2 as Sometimes (Occasionally), 3 as Often (Repeatedly), and 4 as Always (At All Times). The interpretation used for each score and level consists of the following: 1.0–1.6 Low, 1.7–3.3 Moderate, and 3.4–5.0 High. Statistically, all items were accepted as reliable with Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .97 and with a high KMO of .90 while the Barlett's test of sphericity (degree of freedom = 10296) yielded a statistical significance at $p < .01$.

In Phase 2, the structured interview questionnaire was validated by five educational psychology experts to establish the nature of bullying experiences of students. The 15 questions included (a) "When thinking about the time when you were bullied by your classmate/s, what is the first thing that comes to your mind?" (b) "What metaphor can you give to bullying? Where can you associate the experience?" and (c) "Looking back, what were some of your thoughts and feelings when the incident/s happened?"

**Data gathering procedure**
Parental and informed consent was given to all students who voluntarily participated in the study. In Phase 1, the administration of the V-SCAIRD Acts of Bullying Inventory Tool and the interview were done on separate schedules. The retrieval of questionnaires was done through the assistance of the guidance counselors, academic coordinators, and advisers of the nine selected secondary schools in the 4th and 6th District in the province of Batangas. The data gathered were tabulated and made ready for statistical treatment. In Phase 2, the interview data were transcribed and interpreted, after which the transcribed data were subjected to content analysis to

**Table 3.** Prevalence of bullying by bullying role

| Bullying role | f | Prevalence |
|---|---|---|
| Bully | 32 | 8 |
| Victim | 52 | 14 |
| Bystander | 301 | 78 |

$n$ = 385, prevalence is per 100

establish themes and subthemes.

**Treatment of data**
To determine the prevalence of bullying in the nine identified schools, the formula for a point prevalence rate $PR$ was applied.

$$PR = \frac{\text{Number of cases with the condition or disease at a given point in time}}{\text{Number in the population at risk of being a case}} \times K$$

$K$ was the number of people for whom the researcher worked to have the rate established (e.g., per 100 or 1000 population). When data are obtained from the sample, the denominator is the size of the sample, and the numerator is the number of cases with the condition, as identified in the study of Polit and Beck (2012). The proportional allocation sets the sample size in each stratum proportional to the number of sampling units in that stratum (Polit & Beck, 2012).

The prevalence of bullying (by bullying role, form of bullying, and effect of bullying) was determined across genders and school types. Independent sample $t$-tests were conducted to compare male and female differences in the bullying roles, the forms of bullying, and the effects of bullying across genders. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the degree of significant differences in the bullying roles, the forms of bullying, and the effects of bullying across school types. Fisher's least significant difference test was run as post hoc test to confirm where the differences occurred between groups. All statistical analyses used SPSS Statistics 22, tested at $p < .05$.

## Results

**Phase 1**
**Prevalence of bullying according to bullying role, gender, and school types**
Table 3 shows that out of the 1,090 respondents, 385 or 35.32% had shown high tendencies as bullies, victims, or bystanders with prevalence rates of 8%, 14%, and 78%, respectively. These figures indicate that per 100 students, eight manifested the tendency to become bullies, while 14 and 78 showed high chances of becoming victims and bystanders, respectively.

**Table 4.** Prevalence of bullying by gender and school type across bullying roles

| Variable | Bully | Victim | Bystander |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | | | |
| Male (*n* = 186) | 12 | 15 | 72 |
| Female (*n* = 199) | 5 | 11 | 79 |
| **School types** | | | |
| Catholic (*n* = 127) | 5 | 9 | 84 |
| Non-sectarian (*n* = 130) | 8 | 12 | 80 |
| Public (*n* = 128) | 16 | 19 | 63 |

*n* = 385, prevalence is per 100

**Table 5.** Prevalence of bullying by form of bullying and effect of bullying

| Variable | *f* | Prevalence |
|---|---|---|
| **Form of bullying** | | |
| Covert indirect | 29 | 7 |
| Cyberbullying | 32 | 8 |
| Physical | 84 | 22 |
| Verbal | 36 | 9 |
| **Effect of bullying** | | |
| Cognitive | 66 | 17 |
| Affective | 59 | 15 |
| Behavioral | 51 | 13 |

*n* = 385, prevalence is per 100

**Table 6.** Prevalence of bullying by form of bullying and effect of bullying across genders

| Variable | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|
| **Form of bullying** | | |
| Covert indirect | 9 | 5 |
| Cyberbullying | 7 | 9 |
| Physical | 26 | 17 |
| Verbal | 17 | 5 |
| **Effect of bullying** | | |
| Cognitive | 19 | 15 |
| Affective | 14 | 13 |
| Behavioral | 16 | 7 |

Male *n* = 186, female *n* = 199, prevalence is per 100

**Table 7.** Prevalence of bullying by form of bullying and effect of bullying across school types

| Variable | Catholic | Non-sectarian | Public |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Form of bullying** | | | |
| Covert indirect | 3 | 14 | 5 |
| Cyberbullying | 7 | 4 | 13 |
| Physical | 15 | 21 | 29 |
| Verbal | 5 | 9 | 16 |
| **Effect of bullying** | | | |
| Cognitive | 11 | 10 | 28 |
| Affective | 8 | 4 | 26 |
| Behavioral | 6 | 4 | 25 |

Catholic *n* = 127, non-sectarian *n* = 130, public *n* = 128, prevalence is per 100

Out of 100 students, 12 male students had the tendency to become bullies and 15 others were more likely to become victims, in contrast to five and 11, respectively, for the female group (see Table 4). As participants to bullying, more female students (79) tended to take a passive role as bystanders compared to their male counterparts (72).

Table 4 also indicates that per 100 students in public schools, 16 exhibited the tendency to become bullies compared to eight from non-sectarian schools and five from Catholic schools. Public school students also recorded higher prevalence as victims (19) compared to non-sectarian (12) and Catholic schools (9) per 100 students. Conversely, public school students (63) registered the lowest rate as bystanders compared to non-sectarian (80) and Catholic school (84) students.

Table 5 reveals that physical bullying was the most common form as reported by 84 of the 385 respondents, projecting the prevalence rate of 22 per 100 cases. On the effects of bullying, cognitive effect (17) had the highest prevalence among students who experienced bullying, followed by affective effect (15), and behavioral effect (13).

Compared to their female counterpart, the male group reported higher prevalence of bullying in all its four forms, with physical bullying (26) gaining the top list followed by verbal bullying (17), covert indirect bullying (9), and cyberbullying (7) (see Table 6). It also indicates that male students are more affected cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally as compared to female students.

On the forms of bullying and the effects of bullying on the students, public schools (29) registered the highest prevalence rate in physical bullying compared to non-sectarian schools (21) and Catholic schools (15) (see Table 7). Public schools also recorded the highest rates in verbal bullying (16) and cyberbullying (13). In contrast, students from non-sectarian schools reported the highest incidence of covert indirect bullying.

While Catholic schools exhibited the lowest prevalence of bullying in all its forms across school types, the presence of bullying in this school type is undeniable. In terms of the effects of bullying, it shows that students from public schools also had the highest prevalence in the cognitive (28), affective (26), and behavioral (25) effects of their bullying experiences.

**Table 8.** Differences in the bullying roles, forms of bullying, and effects of bullying across genders

| Variable | Male | | Female | | $t$ | $df$ | $p$-value (2-tailed) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | M | SD | M | SD | | | |
| **Bullying role** | | | | | | | |
| Bully | 2.59 | 0.57 | 2.39 | 0.44 | −3.69 | 351.11 | <.01* |
| Victim | 2.74 | 0.59 | 2.55 | 0.51 | −3.44 | 369.46 | <.01* |
| Bystander | 3.37 | 0.51 | 3.40 | 0.41 | 0.50 | 360.21 | .62 |
| **Form of bullying** | | | | | | | |
| Covert indirect | 2.64 | 0.41 | 2.62 | 0.35 | −0.39 | 369.66 | .70 |
| Cyberbullying | 2.57 | 0.43 | 2.68 | 0.40 | 2.39 | 378.51 | .02* |
| Physical | 2.98 | 0.47 | 2.90 | 0.36 | −1.77 | 351.60 | .08 |
| Verbal | 2.68 | 0.56 | 2.57 | 0.39 | −2.35 | 382.00 | .02* |
| **Effect of bullying** | | | | | | | |
| Cognitive | 2.99 | 0.50 | 2.90 | 0.44 | −1.95 | 372.14 | .05* |
| Affective | 2.87 | 0.53 | 2.77 | 0.49 | −2.12 | 376.04 | .04* |
| Behavioral | 2.76 | 0.60 | 2.65 | 0.46 | −1.93 | 382.00 | .05* |

$^*$ $p < .05$

### Differences in bullying roles, forms of bullying, and effects of bullying across genders and school types

To determine whether there are significant differences between the male and the female groups and across school types in terms of roles, forms of bullying, and effects of bullying, $t$-tests and ANOVA were conducted and the results are in Tables 8 and 9, respectively. To identify the sources of variances in the ANOVA results, Fisher's least significant difference (LSD) test was run and the results are in Table 10.

Table 8 shows the $t$-test results which confirmed the tendency of male students to be bullies ($t_{382}$ = −3.69, $p$ < .01, $d$ = 0.39) and victims ($t_{382}$ = −3.44, $p$ < .01, $d$ = 0.35) which is significantly higher than their female counterparts. No significant difference, however, was noted in bystander tendency ($t_{382}$ = −.50, $p$ = .62, $d$ = −0.07) between the male ($M$ = 3.37, $SD$ = 0.51) and female ($M$ = 3.40, $SD$ = 0.41) groups.

The $t$-test also revealed that all forms of bullying (i.e., covert indirect, cyberbullying, physical, and verbal) were experienced by students regardless of gender. However, it appeared that the male students were more exposed to verbal bullying ($t_{382}$ = −2.35, $p$ = .02, $d$ = 0.23) while the female students were more exposed to cyberbullying ($t_{382}$ = 2.39, $p$ = .02, $d$ = −0.27). On the effects of bullying, gender differences also manifested in their cognitive ($t_{382}$ = −1.95, $p$ = .05, $d$ = 0.19), affective ($t_{382}$ = −2.12, $p$ = .04, $d$ = 0.20), and behavioral ($t_{382}$ = −1.93, $p$ = .05, $d$ = 0.21) aspects, with the male students having experienced a higher degree of bullying effects in all three dimensions.

The ANOVA results in Table 9 revealed that in terms of the bullying role in a bullying situation, the school type has small significant effects on being bystanders ($F(2,381)$ = 7.79, $p$ < .01; $\eta^2$ = .04) and victims ($F(2,381)$ = 8.66, $p$ < .01, $\eta^2$ = .03), but it has no significant effect on bully tendencies.

The ANOVA results also pointed to the significant effects of school type on the forms of bullying, particularly in covert indirect bullying ($F(2,381)$ = 9.21, $p$ < .01, $\eta^2$ = .04), physical bullying ($F(2,381)$ = 5.81, $p$ < .01, $\eta^2$ = .06), verbal bullying ($F(2,381)$ = 4.18, $p$ = .01, $\eta^2$ = .04) and cyberbullying ($F(2,381)$ = 2.72, p= .05, $\eta^2$ = .02), all indicating small effect sizes.

Concerning the effects of bullying on students across school types, the ANOVA results pointed to significant differences in all three dimensions: cognitive ($F(2,381)$= 9 .23, $p$ < .01, $\eta^2$ = .05), affective ($F(2,380)$ = 16.50, $p$ < .01, $\eta^2$ = .03), and behavioral ($F(2,381)$ = 19.36, $p$ < .01, $\eta^2$ = .04), all having small effect sizes.

Table 10 shows the LSD post hoc results which confirmed the significant differences found in victim role tendencies between Catholic and public schools ($MD$ = −.14, $p$ = .04), with the latter having a higher rate than the former. Evidently, students from both Catholic ($MD$ = .18, $p$ < .01) and non-sectarian schools ($MD$ = .21, $p$ < .01) registered a significantly higher tendency to become bystanders than those in public schools.

The LSD post hoc results also showed that non-sectarian schools had a significantly higher incidence of covert indirect bullying than Catholic ($MD$ = .19, $p$ < .01) and public ($MD$ = .16, $p$ < .01) schools. In terms of physical bullying, both public ($MD$ = .15, $p$ < .01) and non-sectarian ($MD$ = .15, $p$ < .01) schools showed significantly higher incidence in this form than Catholic schools. In verbal bullying, public schools also indicated a significant higher incidence compared to Catholic schools ($MD$ = .17, $p$ = .01). Notably, while the ANOVA results

**Table 9.** Differences in the bullying roles, forms of bullying, and effects of bullying across school types (ANOVA)

| Variable | | Sum of squares | df | Mean square | F | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Bullying role** | | | | | | |
| Bully | Between groups | 1.01 | 2 | 0.51 | 1.93 | .15 |
| | Within groups | 99.73 | 381 | 0.26 | | |
| Victim | Between groups | 1.46 | 2 | 0.73 | 8.66 | <.01* |
| | Within groups | 117.67 | 381 | 0.31 | | |
| Bystander | Between groups | 3.25 | 2 | 1.63 | 7.79 | <.01* |
| | Within groups | 79.53 | 381 | 0.21 | | |
| **Form of bullying** | | | | | | |
| Covert indirect | Between groups | 2.58 | 2 | 1.29 | 9.21 | <.01* |
| | Within groups | 53.35 | 381 | 0.14 | | |
| Cyberbullying | Between groups | 0.94 | 2 | 0.47 | 2.72 | .07 |
| | Within groups | 66.18 | 381 | 0.17 | | |
| Physical | Between groups | 1.94 | 2 | 0.97 | 5.81 | <.01* |
| | Within groups | 63.69 | 381 | 0.17 | | |
| Verbal | Between groups | 1.89 | 2 | 0.94 | 4.18 | .01* |
| | Within groups | 85.98 | 381 | 0.23 | | |
| **Effect of bullying** | | | | | | |
| Cognitive | Between groups | 3.96 | 2 | 1.98 | 9.23 | <.01* |
| | Within groups | 81.70 | 381 | 0.21 | | |
| Affective | Between groups | 8.11 | 2 | 4.06 | 16.50 | <.01* |
| | Within groups | 93.44 | 381 | 0.25 | | |
| Behavioral | Between groups | 10.05 | 2 | 5.02 | 19.36 | <.01* |
| | Within groups | 98.87 | 381 | 0.26 | | |

* $p < .05$

showed no significant difference in cyberbullying across school types, the post hoc test results revealed that non-sectarian schools recorded a significantly higher rate of cyberbullying than Catholic schools ($MD$ = .12, $p$ = .03).

The LSD post hoc test results in Table 10 also identified which school types vary significantly in terms of effects of bullying. Based on the findings, the cognitive effects of bullying on students in public schools significantly differ from those in the Catholic ($MD$ = .22, $p < .01$) and non-sectarian schools ($MD$ = .21, $p < .01$). No significant difference was documented between Catholic and non-sectarian schools in this dimension ($MD$ = .02, $p > 0.05$).

A similar pattern was observed in the affective dimension, indicating that students from public schools differ significantly in their experiences of the affective effects of bullying from those in the Catholic ($MD$ = .31, $p < .01$) and non-sectarian schools ($MD$ = .30, $p < .01$). In addition, just like in the cognitive effects of bullying, no significant difference was recorded in the affective effects of bullying on the students between Catholic and non-sectarian schools ($MD$ = $-.01$, $p > 0.05$).

The same pattern was recorded in the behavioral effects of bullying on the students across school types.

Students from public schools reported higher degree of behavioral effects of bullying compared to their counterparts from Catholic ($MD$ = .36, $p < .01$) and non-sectarian schools ($MD$ = .32, $p < .01$). Notably, no significant difference was found between students from Catholic and non-sectarian schools in the behavioral dimension ($MD$ = $-.03$, $p > .05$).

**Phase 2**

**Experiences of students involved in bullying**

The interview with the 30 participants disclosed that the victims of bullying were subjected to different forms of bullying in school (see Table 11). Some students were physically bullied by being pushed, punched, hit, bitten, or slapped, by having their clothes pulled off, or by being incited into a fist fight. Others were verbally bullied through name calling, teasing, mocking, or criticisms, primarily due to their distinctive physical appearances and deformities, sexual orientation, or perceived poor or superior intellectual capacity. Cyberbullying was also experienced through social media platforms, oftentimes by having offensive or insulting comments posted together with images such as pictures or memes that reinforce content. Ostracism or social exclusion and vandalism

**Table 10.** Differences in the bullying roles, forms of bullying, and effects of bullying across school types (LSD)

| Variable | School type | | Mean difference | Standard error | *p*-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Bullying role** | | | | | |
| Bully | Catholic | Non-sectarian | −.04 | .06 | .54 |
| | Catholic | Public | −.12 | .06 | .06 |
| | Public | Non-sectarian | .08 | .06 | .20 |
| Victim | Catholic | Non-sectarian | −.12 | .07 | .09 |
| | Catholic | Public | −.14 | .07 | .04* |
| | Public | Non-sectarian | .02 | .07 | .76 |
| Bystander | Catholic | Non-sectarian | −.03 | .06 | .59 |
| | Catholic | Public | .18 | .06 | <.01* |
| | Public | Non-sectarian | −.21 | .06 | <.01* |
| **Form of bullying** | | | | | |
| Covert indirect | Catholic | Non-sectarian | −.19 | .05 | <.01* |
| | Catholic | Public | −.02 | .05 | .61 |
| | Public | Non-sectarian | −.16 | .05 | <.01* |
| Cyberbullying | Catholic | Non-sectarian | −.12 | .05 | .03* |
| | Catholic | Public | −.09 | .05 | .08 |
| | Public | Non-sectarian | −.02 | .05 | .65 |
| Physical | Catholic | Non-sectarian | −.15 | .05 | <.01* |
| | Catholic | Public | −.15 | .05 | <.01* |
| | Public | Non-sectarian | .01 | .05 | .90 |
| Verbal | Catholic | Non-sectarian | −.06 | .06 | .32 |
| | Catholic | Public | −.17 | .06 | .01* |
| | Public | Non-sectarian | .11 | .06 | .07 |
| **Effect of bullying** | | | | | |
| Cognitive | Catholic | Non-sectarian | −.02 | .06 | .76 |
| | Catholic | Public | −.22 | .06 | <.01* |
| | Public | Non-sectarian | .21 | .06 | <.01* |
| Affective | Catholic | Non-sectarian | −.01 | .06 | .86 |
| | Catholic | Public | −.31 | .06 | <.01* |
| | Public | Non-sectarian | .30 | .06 | <.01* |
| Behavioral | Catholic | Non-sectarian | −.03 | .06 | .60 |
| | Catholic | Public | −.36 | .06 | <.01* |
| | Public | Non-sectarian | .32 | .06 | <.01* |

* $p < .05$

were cited as an indirect or covert type of bullying. Notably, the data points to home-related factors affecting bullying as some participants experienced verbal abuse from their own family members due to failed expectations such as perceived poor academic performance.

The bystanders witnessed physical, covert indirect, verbal, and cyberbullying across school types.

Many of the bully students were led or provoked to do acts of bullying due to various reasons, but primarily in retaliation to a bullying act inflicted on them. Most of them were reprimanded due to untoward behaviors and uncontrollable temper that led them to threaten, dominate, and provoke other students to fight. There were

also bully students who felt empowered by the act of bullying itself as represented by the one who "felt happy *kapag nauunahan ko sila*, feeling *ko nasa akin lahat ang* attention, I have power over them" (I feel happy whenever I beat them; with the feeling that all attention seems to be on me, I have power over them).

**The school environment**
As perceived by the respondents, the school-related determinants to bullying behaviors include teachers' attitude in school, school discipline, and peer influence as principal factors that may have influenced the bullying phenomenon (see Table 12). Under teachers' attitude,

**Table 11.** Actual bullying experiences of bullies, victims, and bystanders

| Bullies' situation that led to or provoked acts of bullying | Bullying experienced by victims | Bullying situation witnessed by bystanders |
|---|---|---|
| **Seeking revenge** | **Covert indirect** | **Covert indirect** |
| Sought revenge when getting into fights with groups | Had a classmate spit on her book and put 'vandals' (graffiti) on her chair, wanting to see her reaction; had classmates backbite and gossip about her | A female student was constantly an object of bad jokes, rumors, and malicious tricks in the classroom without her knowledge. |
| Was being bullied by friends because they got annoyed with her action, talking behind her back | Was discriminated against for "being a gay": "*hindi nila ako kinakausap* [they would not talk to me]" | A classmate was asked to put a colored soft gel on his friend's chair that made her uniform get so dirty; no one dared to tell her who did it. |
| Had his clothes pulled off by a classmate: "*hinubuan ako*" in front of the whole class, "*bumawi sa akin, napahiya ako sa buong klase, nagalit ako at sinuntok ko* [he got even with me, I was shamed in class, so I got mad and punched him]" | Was excluded from a circle of friends because he is fond of using the English language during conversation, which has a negative notion for the group; they used to say "*englishero o 'di kayá mayabang* [fond of speaking in English or boastful]." | **Cyberbullying** |
| "They edit[ed] my picture at FB [Facebook]; because of anger, *kinuha ko pagkain nila* [I took their food] and asked them to do something." | **Cyberbullying** | A classmate spread rumors by posting insulting comments on her friend's social networking profile. |
| **Being reprimanded** | Was sent rude text messages by her classmates to threaten her | A classmate was harassed in Facebook and group chat, and blackmailed through a picture posted by the bullies. |
| Was reprimanded by teachers due to being rude, indifferent, and lacking empathy towards others | Was cyberbullied by friends and classmates through group chat by the use of pictures with an insulting and offensive statement on them | A classmate sent rude text messages to another student with offensive comments. |
| **Releasing pent-up emotions** | **Physical** | **Physical** |
| Threatened other students and provoked them into a fight because he was unable to control his temper | Was pushed by a male classmate | A classmate was bitten on the arm by another student; he cried so hard. |
| Easily got irritated and angry towards his classmates | Was played at: "*pinagti-tripan nila ako lagi, tinatago* bag *ko at kinukuha ang gamit ko* [they are always on a power trip, hiding my bag or getting my things] that led me into a fight with them" | A student was threatened by a classmate to get him into a fight if he would not follow his instruction. |
| Bullied a classmate by saying bad words, "*nainis at nagalit ako sa kanya dahil masyadong OA sa project* [I hate the person because he is over reacting on the project]" | **Verbal** | A male friend was slapped, hit, and pushed, and got into a fist fight with other students; clothes had been torn off for fun. |
| **Giving in to peer pressure** | Was discriminated against in school by being made fun of and being given sarcastic remarks, often called the class clown, "*tinatago po nila ako sa ibat-ibang* [they call me by different] code name[s]" | **Verbal** |
| Did mischievous things due to peer pressure: "Just to fit in, I am fearful to be an outcast in the group; I wanted to belong with my peers." | Was called names by the whole class: "*baboy*" (pig), "*pangit*" (ugly), "*sumbungera*," "teacher's pet," "Miss Tapia" [a Philippine television show character] because of her eyeglasses | A student was being teased a lot in an unpleasant manner, got played with a nasty joke, and got purposely hurt until the bullies and the victim got into a fight. |
| | Was called "*pangit-pangit*" because of the eyeglasses she used to wear: "*'di ka pwede sa amin, dun ka sa mga katulad mo* [you can't join us; join those who are like you]" | Bullies tormented a female classmate by saying negative things and giving dirty looks whenever they were given a chance. |
| | Received hurtful words from classmates | A classmate was being teased always by her male seatmates by making fun of the way she looks. |
| | Was belittled inside the classroom, called "*maarte, 'di naman kagandahan* [fussy, not that beautiful]," weakling | |

**Table 11** (continued).

| Bullies' situation that led to or provoked acts of bullying | Bullying experienced by victims | Bullying situation witnessed by bystanders |
|---|---|---|
| **Feeling of satisfaction**<br><br>"*Sobra nasasayahan kapag may nabu-*bully *lalo kapag pikunin sila* [I feel elated each time I bully others, especially if they get mad]."<br><br>"Felt happy *kapag nauunahan ko sila*, feeling *ko nasa akin lahat ang* attention [if I beat them, I feel all attention is on me], I have power over them."<br><br>Did not care what others will say: "*gusto ko magyabang at maging popular sa klase namin kaya ko ginawa* [I wanted to boast and be popular in our class, so I did it]."<br><br>"*Nang-aasar ng barkada at kaklase kahit sino ang matipuhan, kapag napipikon sila sa akin at gusto akong gantihan* [I tease my friend, classmates and anyone I like, if they get mad and want to get even]."<br><br>**Feeling superior**<br><br>Tended to manipulate and dominate others | Was discriminated against in class for being thin and short: "*pandak-pandak, kelan ka kaya tatangkad*? [shorty, shorty, will you ever grow tall?]"<br><br>Was called "*kawayan*, like a bamboo post, *hindi maabot* [Bamboo, like a bamboo post that can't be reached]" because he was the tallest guy in class<br><br>Was mocked for "being a gay": "*hindi nila ako kinakausap, magladlad ka na bakla ka naman* [they would not talk to me, you show your true self that you are a gay]"; when he admitted it in front of the class "*oo, gay ako* [yes, I'm a gay]," they all laughed aloud<br><br>Experienced bullying that started at home; "*ikaw, wala kang mararating sa buhay* [you don't have any future]," "'*di ka naman magaling sa* school, *maliit ka pa* [You have not been academically gifted ever since]"; in school, she was called "*bobo*" [dumb or stupid] because of her poor grade performance | A classmate was verbally bullied because of their physical disability and physical appearance.<br><br>Students with disability or different physical appearance were bullied: "*yong may kapansanan na alam nila na hindi papatalo sa kanila* [those who have disabilities whom they know would not be subservient]."<br><br>A female classmate was bullied because of her fat body image, eyeglasses, and hair pigtails.<br><br>A male student was bullied because of his different look (very tall and muscular body).<br><br>Classmates were subjected to name calling because of their "weird appearance."<br><br>A group of friends was bullied by another section because of their weird look and appearance, finding them always different and out of fashion. |

some of the salient aspects point to the teacher's negative attitude towards students, the teacher's temperament in handling students' behavior, unfair treatment of students, lack of information on what to do with students involved in bullying, and the need for teachers to have closer supervision of bullying situations.

Aspects of school discipline that were identified include poor disciplinary measures in the classroom and the school premises, lack of guidance from the teachers and staff on proper behavior, lack of personnel handling bullying behaviors of students, lack of discipline and respect among students, and the need to have a closer coordination between parents and schools to help students involved in bullying. Other school-related factors include having a large class population and the lack of concern from school personnel and staff.

In terms of peer influence, some of the aspects recurrently highlighted concern the presence of bad peer influence and misunderstanding among peers. As perceived by the students, bad peer influence might have caused some students to get involved in drinking, smoking, and other forms of vices. On the other hand, misunderstanding among peers may have potentially led to aggressive

demeanor.

## Discussion

This study provided empirical evidence that bullying incidence is indeed present in the Philippine educational setting as reported by the junior high school students in the 4th and 6th Districts of Batangas. The prevalence rates of 8, 14, and 78 in 100 students translate to a potential scenario of one bully, two victims, and seven bystanders in every 10 high school students. The victimization prevalence rate of one in five students is nearly equal to the earlier findings of one in three students involved in bullying reported by Selim (2018), UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2018), and UNICEF Philippines (2019). While studies on bullying did not specify the prevalent rate considered as alarming level, scholars have reiterated that the presence of bullying at any rate can cause violence among the youth and must be urgently addressed, particularly in school settings (Campbell et al., 2017; Due et al., 2005; Gofin & Avitzour, 2012; Pörhölä et al., 2020; Selim, 2018; UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2018; UNICEF Philippines, 2019).

A notable finding of this study is the presence of bully-

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**Table 12.** School environment of bullies, victims, and bystanders that contribute to bullying behaviors

| Bullies | Victims | Bystanders |
|---|---|---|
| **Teacher's attitude in school** | | |
| Teacher's negative attitude towards students (3) | Teacher's negative attitude towards students (3) | Teacher's negative attitude towards students (2) |
| Teacher's temperament in handling students' behavior (3) | Teacher's temperament in handling students' behavior (2) | Teacher's temperament in handling students' behavior (3) |
| Teacher's lack of information on what to do with bullies, victims, and others (3) | Unfair treatment of students by teachers (2) | Unfair treatment of students by teachers (2) |
| | Need for closer supervision by the teacher on bullying situation (3) | Need for closer supervision by the teacher on bullying situation (3) |
| | Teacher's lack of information on what to do with bullies, victims, and others (2) | |
| **School discipline** | | |
| Poor disciplinary measures in the classroom and the school premises (2) | Poor disciplinary measures in the classroom and the school premises (2) | Poor disciplinary measures in the classroom and the school premises (2) |
| Lack of clear school policy on bullying (2) | Lack of discipline and respect among students (2) | Lack of discipline and respect among students (3) |
| Lack of discipline and respect among students. (3) | Lack of personnel to handle bullying behaviors of students (3) | Lack of personnel to handle bullying behaviors of students (2) |
| | Lack of guidance from the teachers and staff on proper behavior | |
| **Peer influences** | | |
| Bad peer influence in school; some get involved in drinking, smoking | Misunderstanding among peers that leads to aggressive behavior | Peer group hang out to tease or harass other students |
| Peer pressure | Peer pressure | Peer pressure |
| **Other school environment influences** | | |
| Having a large class population | Having a large class population | Lack of concern by school personnel and staff |

victims who reported being provoked to engage in the cycle of bullying, primarily to avenge themselves for the experiences of being bullied, resulting in the re-enactment of violence (Selim, 2018). In their desire to seek redress for the injustice at the hands of the perpetrators, they gave in to their negative emotions through various forms (i.e., physical, verbal, cyberbullying) (Seixas et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2016; Yang & Salmivalli, 2013). As they found satisfaction in releasing their anger and frustration, they began to espouse positive attitudes towards bullying (Psalti, 2012; Seixas et al., 2013) and view it a source of power and domination.

Based on the present findings, bullying is prevalent in all school types (i.e., public or private, sectarian or nonsectarian), and high school students regardless of gender have the potential to be involved in bullying. These findings support the claim that bullying has been a global issue documented as one of the most common forms of aggression suffered by children and youth (Antiri, 2016; Balatbat et al., 2014; Campbell et al., 2017; *CyberSafe: Survey 2015*, 2016; Hymel & Swearer, 2015; Rastrullo &

Francisco, 2015; Selim, 2018). The perpetuation of bullying in school could be explained by its antagonistic nature, which can be partly accounted to the people's perception and attitude towards bullying, which treats aggression as an innate trait of humans.

We also found that male students were highly affected by bullying episodes either as bullies or victims while their female counterparts had the tendency to become victims. Both male and female groups had the potential to be bystanders in the bullying incidence. These results converge with earlier findings that boys were involved in all kinds of bullying incidents to a significantly higher degree than girls were (Carbone-Lopez et al., 2010; Fernández et al., 2013; Hong & Espelage, 2012; Pörhölä et al., 2020; Rosen & Nofziger, 2019; Selim, 2018; Tisak et al., 2016; UNESCO Institute of Statistics, 2018; UNICEF Philippines, 2019).

On the forms of bullying, physical bullying was the most common form, regardless of gender. Compared to their female counterpart, the male group reported higher prevalence of bullying in all forms, with the *t*-test results

indicating significant differences in verbal bullying and cyberbullying but not in physical bullying and covert indirect bullying. These findings diverge from a large body of research, showing gender-specific correlates in physical bullying and covert indirect bullying with males engaging more on the former and females on the latter (e.g., Carbone-Lopez et al. (2010) and Neupane (2014)). However, the results converge with some studies revealing that males tend to engage more in verbal bullying than females (e.g., Pontzer, 2010).

As male students are more exposed to bullying than female students, they are more affected cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally as compared to female students. These gendered experiences in bullying can be partly accounted to the socially constructed view that physical aggression is associated with masculinity or manhood (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Rosen & Nofziger, 2019). These results align with the social role theory of Eagly (1987), which states that people tend to behave consistently with their socially constructed gender roles.

Rosen and Nofziger (2019) assert that the social construction of masculinity contributes significantly to bullying among male adolescents, and this becomes cyclical as the bullying behavior reinforces the notions of hegemonic masculinity. In this environment, when men's masculinity is threatened, they are more likely to defend their manhood through displays of aggression, physically or verbally (Bosson & Vandello, 2011). Indeed, gender orientation can be influential in bullying perpetration and victimization (Eagly, 1987; Kosciw et al., 2012; Nansel et al., 2004; Peterson & Ray, 2006; Pörhölä et al., 2020).

Additionally, this study found that across school types, public school students have the highest prevalence tendency to become bullies and victims as compared to students in non-sectarian and Catholic schools. Conversely, public schools have the lowest rate as bystanders. Student-participants from public schools reported that due to their overcrowded or congested classrooms, they could hardly concentrate on their lessons. At the same time, the schedule of class shifts from morning, afternoon, and evening sessions may also be a factor. According to some teachers, the schedule of classes in most public schools which was shortened from 8 hours to 6 hours resulted in compacted curriculums which could be cognitively demanding for most students. Likewise, the teachers may not have enough time to spend on developing more innovative teaching methods such as cooperative learning and group work to enhance learning. They also observed that teachers could hardly monitor student behavior inside and outside the classroom due to their tight class schedules and other concerns.

As regards school psycho-social environment, we found three major factors possibly influencing the bullying phenomenon in schools: teachers' attitude in school, peer influence, and school discipline. Under teachers' at-

titude, some of the salient aspects include the teacher's negative attitude towards students, the teacher's temperament in handling students' behavior, unfair treatment of students, lack of information on what to do with students involved in bullying, and the need for teachers to have closer supervision of bullying situations. These findings resonate earlier findings that emphasize the extent of teacher intervention as well as quality and style of teaching as specific factors affecting the rate of bullying incidence in academic institutions (Ayers et al., 2012; Jordan, 2014; Kahn et al., 2012). These also highlight the importance of honing the teachers' competence in managing bullying situations in schools and of redirecting their views and attitude towards teaching not only as a profession but as a vocation.

Aspects of school discipline that were identified include poor disciplinary measures in the classroom and the school premises, lack of guidance from the teachers and staff on proper behavior, lack of personnel handling bullying behaviors of students, lack of discipline and respect among students, lack of concern by school personnel and staff, and the need to have a closer coordination between parents and schools to help students involved in bullying. Other factors include having a large class population and compacted schedule of classes.

Apparently, the need to upskill not only teachers but also staff in managing bullying incidence in schools through capacity building programs is underscored. In addition, school policies that enhance the school culture of peace, discipline, and respect seem to be needed. These findings indicate the need for hiring or (re)assigning staff primarily responsible for addressing bullying phenomenon in schools as it appears to be one of the priorities emphasized.

In terms of peer influence, some of the aspects recurrently highlighted concern the presence of bad peer influence and misunderstanding among peers. As perceived by the students, bad peer influence might have caused some students to get involved in drinking, smoking, and other forms of vices. On the other hand, misunderstanding among peers might have led to aggressive behavior. Peer influence on bullying cannot be undermined since the adolescence stage is highly associated with peer groups especially during junior high school (Rodkin et al., 2006). Rodkin et al. (2006) noted that adolescents with common interests tend to constellate with one another and together, they form a common identity and behaviors including aggressiveness. Søndergaard (2012) warned that the fear of being socially ostracized results in expressing anxiety, which in turn leads students to bully others to prevent themselves from falling victim to social marginalization. Ostracism or social exclusion from peers may also lead to adolescent depression and suicidal ideation (Heydenberk & Heydenberk, 2017).

In line with Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1994/1997) eco-

logical model of development, this study recognizes that bullying is a social phenomenon happening through the various interactions between and among bullies, victims, and bystanders. Such a phenomenon is influenced by the psychological and environmental factors existing within and around them. The psychological factors refer to the interaction of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral patterns that describe how the bullies, victims, and bystanders are individually affected by the bullying situations (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994/1997; Heydenberk & Heydenberk, 2017).

The environmental factors refer to the context of the students' surroundings, the quality of interaction between individuals and multiple systems which influence and affect human behavior. These include home and school environment factors, and the interplay of these factors can shape various forms of bullying and can lead to different effects on the respondents. As Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1994/1997) theorizes, bullying behaviors cannot be solely attributed to individual characteristics or family influence since many aspects in school may be associated to it. This study confirms other scholars' proposition that as part of the networks of microsystem and mesosystem in the lives of the individual students, the psycho-social variables such as the roles of peers, teachers, and staff in school as well as academic policies and programs strengthening the link between school and home are potential predictors of student bullying behavior (Ayers et al., 2012; Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994/1997). These school environment factors could have accounted for the differences noted between and among types of school in Phase 1 of this study.

Another key social variable to bullying that surfaced in the study is peer influence, perceived as an essential element in the development of an individual, their value systems, and their sense of social acceptance, particularly in the adolescence stage. Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1994/1997) considers friends, classmates, and significant others in school aside from family and neighbors as part of the microsystem that is influential to the quality of interactions and relationships experienced by an individual. Studies reviewed by Heydenberk and Heydenberk (2017) revealed that such relationships are critical to healthy levels of subjective wellbeing.

A more encompassing factor which can be considered as part of the macrosystem possibly affecting gender variations in bullying experiences is the social construction of masculinity, femininity, and aggression, particularly in Philippine society. Scholars have pointed out the socially constructed views that expression of aggression is natural to humans and that physical expressions of aggression index masculinity or manhood (Bosson & Vandello, 2011; Rosen & Nofziger, 2019). While we recognize the potential explanatory power of this ideological view, we also acknowledge the need to conduct further investigation on these constructs to solidify claims through empirical evidence.

## Conclusions and recommendations

Bullying is generally perceived as dangerous and life-threatening as it can truly hurt and affect people mentally, emotionally, socially, and physically (Bosworth & Judkins, 2014; Espelage & Swearer, 2011; Gladden et al., 2014; Heydenberk & Heydenberk, 2017; National Center for Education Statistics, 2019; Olweus & Limber, 2010; Pörhölä et al., 2020; Psalti, 2012; Swearer et al., 2010). It is a global issue that has penetrated the Philippine educational setting (Ancho & Park, 2013; Balatbat et al., 2014; Selim, 2018) and thus must be urgently addressed. As confirmed by the present study, it is experienced by students regardless of gender and school type, primarily as bystanders. Male students are the most affected by bullying phenomenon as bullies and victims, but both genders have the potential to become bystanders. This concern is more evident in public schools as compared to private educational institutions, particularly physical bullying. In Catholic schools, bullying also undeniably exists despite having the lowest prevalence across school types. Cyberbullying more prevalent in non-sectarian schools has found a new platform in social media. Ostracism or social exclusion, a covert or indirect form of bullying associated with depression and suicidal ideation, has also been experienced in Philippine schools.

Indeed, bullying as a social phenomenon is of a complex nature as it is influenced by a myriad of factors, including psychological and environmental ones (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994/1997; Heydenberk & Heydenberk, 2017; Pörhölä et al., 2020). School environment serves as an exogenous factor significantly affecting the existence of bullying in school (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 1994/1997). In relation to the culture of bullying in schools, teachers' temperament in class, management of classes, sense of justice, and methods of teaching all contribute to the existence of bullying in schools. Bullying also tends to be reinforced by the number of school personnel attending to the students' individual needs (i.e., teachers, staff, guidance counselors), and the policy-articulation on discipline and bullying.

To address bullying in school, aside from providing continuing professional development to teachers, it is recommended that clear structure and school policy be created that emphasizes home and school partnership (Ross, 2002) and imposes certain discipline in school. Ttofi et al. (2011) found that certain elements become deterrents to bullying. These elements include parent training/meetings, improved playground supervision, disciplinary methods, classroom management, teacher training, whole-school anti-bullying policy, school conferences, intensity and duration of the program, and work with peers (e.g., peer mediation and peer mentoring).

Educational scholars also recommend strengthening home-school partnership and collaboration among parents, teachers, and administrators to address problems on bullying. Ross (2002) would even emphasize that in school, all personnel, other professionals, parents, and children must have a strong commitment and willingness to work together in putting up a prevention program. To assist parents, trainings on parental roles, parenting styles, and family relationships and similar topics may be provided to help address this social concern (Cook et al., 2010; Rose et al., 2011; Ttofi et al., 2011; Veltkamp & Lawson, 2008).

It is also recommended that clear structure and school policy be created that emphasizes home and school partnership (Ross, 2002). Ross (2002) suggests informing parents and students about the disciplinary processes and exemplary penalties involved in the gravity of bullying cases. Parents are encouraged then to actively monitor regularly their children's activities and problems both at home and in school. There must be a constant dialogue between them to foster positive and healthy relationships. The school must have a committee composed of school officials, teachers, guidance counselors, educational psychologists, parents, and community representatives to protect the children from all forms of violence that may be inflicted by adults, persons in authority, as well as their fellow students. They should be informed on enacted laws and policies on bullying. A serious advocacy program should be initiated and maintained to prevent bullying behaviors and to safeguard the youth from any danger or threat.

A sizeable proportion of scholarship on bullying as a social phenomenon had already been focused on the prevalence and forms of bullying, yet only a few incorporated in the investigation the psycho-social aspects of bullying that might have possibly influenced it, particularly in the Philippine educational context. The use of Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1994/1997) theoretical lens in this study was essential in delineating the critical contribution of the psycho-social dynamics the school brings to the bullying experiences of the students, specifically as mediated by the teachers, administrators, and other school personnel.

It must also be noted that while significant differences in bullying behaviors were found across genders and school types, the effect sizes of the *t*-test and ANOVA results are relatively small. Thus, it is recommended that future research include a larger sample from the same grade level or similar age group to strengthen statistical results. Other factors, external and internal to the students, should also be considered to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the bullying phenomenon in the Philippines. Other stakeholders' (e.g., teachers, parents, administrators, and the bigger community) perspectives may also be considered for a more comprehensive understanding of this social phenomenon. Future research may also expand to include the determination of the Filipinos' perception and attitude towards bullying and aggression in general to trace the possible ideological influences on bullying perpetration. Future scholarship may also endeavor to refine the bullying inventory tools to identify more efficiently bully-victims from the other categories.

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# The extent of compliance of Lasallian basic education schools to the Philippine Catholic Schools Standards

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## Abstract

**Background:** Catholic schools are recognized as offering high-quality education to students, especially to the unfortunate and marginalized members of society. Parents choose Catholic schools because they believe that Catholic schools can develop their children's values and mold them into better persons. Because Lasallian schools are known Catholic schools in the Philippines, there is a need to know whether Lasallian school administrators comply with the Philippine Catholic Schools Standards for Basic Education (PCSS-BE) under the leadership and governance domain to ensure the quality of education for their students.

**Purpose:** Determine the extent of compliance of Lasallian basic education schools to the PCSS-BE under the leadership and governance domain.

**Participants:** A total of 264 principals/directors, faculty, and staff employed in various Lasallian basic education schools with junior and senior high schools.

**Research design:** Convergent triangulation mixed methods research design

**Data collection and analysis:** The PCSS-BE survey form for the leadership and governance domain owned by the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines was administered in Lasallian basic education schools. Interviews were conducted to gain insights, knowledge, and experiences from the school administrators and to validate the information given by the respondents in the survey. Documents and other forms of evidence were also collected from the schools. Means, analysis of variance, post-hoc tests, and Tukey's honestly significant difference test were utilized to analyze and interpret data.

**Findings:** The overall extent of compliance of Lasallian basic education schools to the PCSS-BE under the leadership and governance domain is in Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration). There is a significant difference in the overall extent of compliance of the Lasallian basic education schools in the PCSS-BE under the leadership and governance domain. The themes identified in the interviews were call to lead, readiness, acceptance, formation, and service.

**Recommendations:** Formally and properly present to the school administrators for consideration and adoption a written management program for leadership and governance. Have school leaders conduct extensive consultations with faculty and staff to enhance the best features of the school and to further develop the skills of future administrators. Involve school leaders in various forms of church services and formation programs to improve their personal lifestyle, decisions, and actions. Mentor qualified leaders for the position and define their roles and responsibilities to ensure that they can function effectively.

**Keywords**
benchmarks, Catholic, governance, leadership, standards

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## Introduction

According to Miksic (2014), "parents choose Catholic schools for a number of personal reasons, but one of them is the belief that their children will receive a stronger academic education than in public schools." Some parents also believe that Catholic schools can develop their children's values through praying the rosary, reading the Bible, attending mass, and participating in recollections, retreats, and other religious activities. They are confident that Catholic Schools can mold their children into better persons.

Catholic schools are recognized as offering high-quality education to students, especially to the unfortunate and marginalized members of society. However, the decreasing enrollment and continuous movement of students to public schools have become very alarming. A significant number of parents opt to transfer their

children to public schools whenever Catholic schools increase their tuition fees. Catholic school administrators are finding ways to address the challenges of a continuous decrease in enrollees in Catholic schools through aggressive marketing efforts and educational improvements to recruit and retain students. It has been observed that enrollment in parochial schools decrease despite their low tuition fees, and if the trend continues, then parochial schools would "eventually be drained of students" (Esplanada, 2014).

Another factor affecting Catholic schools is the exodus of teachers seeking higher-paying jobs and lighter routines in public schools. Private school administrators invest much in faculty development and professional growth. In most cases, teachers apply to private schools just to gain experience after graduation. Some of them stay because of smaller class sizes, more disciplined students, and available facilities and resources. But because they do not have the perks and benefits that public-school teachers usually enjoy, most teachers are now transferring to public schools that offer higher salaries and benefits. The exodus of teachers has a negative impact on private and Catholic institutions to recruit and retain the best teachers.

Many from diocesan schools expressed the difficulties they encounter between the achievement of their vision and mission for excellence and the output from their programs. These challenges may hinder their tasks in carrying out their mission as Catholic institutions. They had a serious discussion regarding these challenges, particularly on their sustainability, financial stability, and improvement of their leadership and governance practices and policies. These conditions require educational institutions to go back to their identity and practices and to look for better ways to become effective and relevant while remaining true to their mission.

What does it mean to be a Catholic school in the twenty-first century? Given the various forms of educational innovations, what makes a Catholic school distinct from others? What would be the profile of excellence in Catholic schools today? What standards common to Catholic schools can be implemented to ensure quality and facilitate improvement in their operations, guarantee collective viability, and establish consistency across different institutions? To answer these important questions, the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP, 2016, p. 5), through its Superintendents Commission and National Basic Education Commission, presented a ground-breaking document called the Philippine Catholic Schools Standards for Basic Education (PCSS-BE).

Because Lasallian schools are known Catholic schools in the Philippines, the following questions of the various stakeholders remain to be addressed:
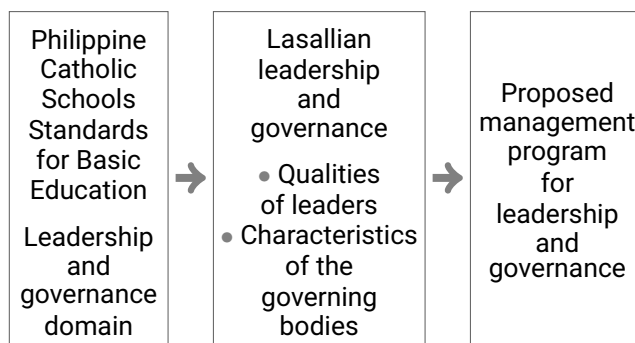
- How Catholic are Catholic schools?



**Figure 1.** Conceptual paradigm

- Are Lasallian schools really Catholic schools?
- Are Lasallian school governors and administrators complying with the necessary standards to ensure the quality of education for their students?

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual paradigm of the extent of compliance of Lasallian basic education schools to the PCSS-BE under the leadership and governance domain. The paradigm further illustrates the relationship between the PCSS-BE under the leadership and governance domain (independent variable) and Lasallian leadership and governance (dependent variable). The findings of the study served as the basis to develop a management program for leadership and governance.

The PCSS-BE enables Catholic schools with their various and diverse stakeholders to systematically examine their performance and meaningfully engage in an authentic and dynamic process of continuous improvement and renewal. Schools then will not only assess where they are but also discern where they need to be as they live out their unique identity and mission. United with the church and in the spirit of servant leadership and Christian witnessing—governance and leadership in Catholic schools practice and promote professionalism, collegiality, co-responsibility, and subsidiarity-effectively creating a school that is a community of disciples (CEAP, 2016, pp. 7–30).

Specifically, this study aims to answer three questions:

- What is the extent of compliance of Lasallian basic education schools to the PCSS-BE under the leadership and governance domain?
- Is there any significant difference in the extent of compliance of Lasallian basic education schools to the PCSS-BE under the leadership and governance domain?
- Based on the findings of the study, what management program for leadership and governance could be proposed?

**Table 1.** Lasallian basic education schools that participated

| Island group | Lasallian basic education school | Location |
|---|---|---|
| Luzon | De La Salle–Lipa | Batangas |
| | De La Salle Santiago Zobel School | Muntinlupa City |
| | De La Salle University–Dasmariñas | Cavite |
| | De La Salle University–Integrated School | Laguna |
| | St. Jaime Hilario School–De La Salle Bataan | Bataan |
| | La Salle College Antipolo | Rizal |
| | La Salle Green Hills | Mandaluyong City |
| Visayas | De La Salle Andres Soriano Memorial College | Cebu |
| | University of St. La Salle | Negros Occidental |
| Mindanao | De La Salle John Bosco College | Surigao del Sur |
| | La Salle Academy | Lanao del Norte |
| | La Salle University | Misamis Occidental |

## Methodology

### Research method

The convergent triangulation mixed methods research design was used in this study. Mixed method is a research approach whereby researchers collect and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data within the same study. It can provide opportunities for the participants to share their experiences and facilitate different avenues of exploration that enrich the evidence and enable questions to be answered more deeply (Shorten & Smith, 2017). Triangulation is the most common and well-known approach in mixed method which aims to find various but complementary data on the same topic to best understand the research problem. In combining both quantitative and qualitative methods to answer the specific research question, the results may converge and lead to the same conclusions. Converging results aim to increase the validity through verification (Heale & Forbes, 2013).

### Respondents

This study involved 264 respondents identified through purposive sampling. The respondents were principals/directors, faculty, and staff employed in various Lasallian basic education schools with junior and senior high schools.

Table 1 lists the schools that participated in the study. Out of the 16 Lasallian schools in the Philippines, 12 participated in the study, with seven from Luzon, two from Visayas, and three from Mindanao. However, in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 (*Republic Act No. 10173*, 2012) and to ensure the confidentiality of the data from the Lasallian basic education schools, codes were randomly assigned to these schools irrespective of their geographical location: Schools A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, J, K, and L.

Table 2 summarizes the profile of the respondents.

**Table 2.** Profile of the respondents

| Profile | Categories | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 100 | 37.9 |
| | Female | 164 | 62.1 |
| Age (years) | 21–30 | 154 | 58.3 |
| | 31–40 | 56 | 21.2 |
| | 41–50 | 36 | 13.6 |
| | 51–60 | 18 | 6.8 |
| Religion | Roman Catholic | 218 | 82.6 |
| | Iglesia ni Cristo | 3 | 1.1 |
| | Islam | 1 | 0.4 |
| | Others | 42 | 15.9 |
| Highest level of education (degree) | Baccalaureate | 178 | 67.4 |
| | Master's | 59 | 22.3 |
| | Doctoral | 8 | 3.0 |
| | Others | 19 | 7.2 |
| Administrative experience (years) | 1–5 | 196 | 74.2 |
| | 5–10 | 31 | 11.7 |
| | 11–15 | 19 | 7.2 |
| | 16–20 | 18 | 6.8 |
| Nature of work | Administrator | 70 | 26.5 |
| | Faculty | 167 | 63.3 |
| | Staff | 20 | 7.6 |
| | Others | 7 | 2.7 |

The respondents were mostly female, 21–30 years old, Catholic, holding baccalaureate degrees as their highest level of education, school administrators for 1–5 years, and faculty from the junior and senior high schools.

### Research instruments

In this study, multiple data collection methods were used: an online survey, interviews, and collection of documents and other forms of evidence.

**Table 3.** Extent of compliance

| Lasallian basic education school | Standard 5 M | Standard 5 SD | Standard 6 M | Standard 6 SD | Standard 7 M | Standard 7 SD | Overall M | Overall SD | Verbal interpretation (Overall) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 3.06 | 0.738 | 3.25 | 0.612 | 3.24 | 0.540 | 3.18 | 0.630 | Fully meets benchmark |
| B | 3.19 | 0.685 | 3.25 | 0.539 | 3.24 | 0.700 | 3.22 | 0.641 | Fully meets benchmark |
| C | 3.00 | 0.747 | 3.23 | 0.688 | 3.05 | 0.660 | 3.09 | 0.699 | Fully meets benchmark |
| D | 3.15 | 0.491 | 3.70 | 0.479 | 3.50 | 0.541 | 3.45 | 0.504 | Fully meets benchmark |
| E | 3.13 | 0.719 | 3.13 | 0.676 | 3.10 | 0.717 | 3.12 | 0.704 | Fully meets benchmark |
| F | 2.92 | 0.727 | 3.05 | 0.627 | 3.00 | 0.646 | 2.99 | 0.667 | Partially meets benchmark |
| G | 2.63 | 0.651 | 3.20 | 0.523 | 2.65 | 0.618 | 2.82 | 0.598 | Partially meets benchmark |
| H | 2.96 | 0.653 | 3.17 | 0.565 | 3.09 | 0.602 | 3.07 | 0.607 | Fully meets benchmark |
| I | 3.30 | 0.545 | 3.36 | 0.606 | 3.35 | 0.600 | 3.34 | 0.583 | Fully meets benchmark |
| J | 3.37 | 0.805 | 3.41 | 0.662 | 3.21 | 0.797 | 3.33 | 0.755 | Fully meets benchmark |
| K | 3.31 | 0.640 | 3.40 | 0.568 | 3.33 | 0.617 | 3.34 | 0.609 | Fully meets benchmark |
| L | 3.03 | 0.653 | 3.23 | 0.523 | 2.85 | 0.892 | 3.04 | 0.689 | Fully meets benchmark |
| Overall extent of compliance | 3.09 | 0.700 | 3.28 | 0.623 | 3.13 | 0.677 | 3.17 | 0.666 | Fully meets benchmark |

$M$: 1.00−2.00: Level 1 'Initially meets benchmark' (Awareness); 2.01−3.00: Level 2 'Partially meets benchmark' (Recognition); 3.01−4.00: Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration); 4.01−5.00: Level 4 'Exceeds benchmark' (Institutionalization)

The PCSS-BE survey form for the leadership and governance domain owned by CEAP was used to gather quantitative data. It deals with a set of standards, benchmarks, and rubrics. Standards are expectations of excellence and effectiveness that give a clear description of where the Catholic school should be headed. Benchmarks describe what must be done to achieve the standards. The rubrics show four levels of attainment: Level 1 'Initially meets benchmark' (Awareness), Level 2 'Partially meets benchmark' (Recognition), Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration), and Level 4 'Exceeds benchmark' (Institutionalization).

The 12 school administrators (who were among the 264 respondents) were individually interviewed face-to-face to gather qualitative data—the administrators' insights, knowledge, and experiences—and to validate the information given by the respondents in the survey.

**Data gathering procedure**

A letter was sent to the CEAP Executive Director requesting permission to use the PCSS-BE survey form for the leadership and governance domain as a research questionnaire. Another letter was sent to the President of De La Salle Philippines requesting permission to conduct the study and to administer the survey in the different Lasallian basic education schools. The researcher also requested the De La Salle University−Dasmariñas Ethics and Review Committee to review and approve the research based on ethical standards. After the approvals were received and the respondents had given their consent, an electronic copy of the survey form was sent to the Lasallian basic education schools. Interviews with the school heads were conducted. All records, documentation, or information related to the respondents were

coded and kept personally by the researcher to ensure confidentiality. The results of the study were shared with all participating schools and other Catholic schools for the improvement of their institutions.

**Statistical treatment of data**

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine the significant differences in the extent of compliance in the area of leadership and governance of the participating schools. Post-hoc tests were used to compare the mean scores of the schools. Standard deviations were used to measure the significant differences in the extent of compliance of the schools. Tukey's honestly significant difference test was used to compare the mean scores of the schools. Weighted means were used to determine the extent of compliance of the respondents to PCSS-BE and to identify the significant difference in the extent of compliance of the schools.

## Results and discussions

**Extent of compliance**

Table 3 summarizes the extent of compliance of Lasallian basic education schools to the PCSS-BE under the leadership and governance domain.

**School A**

The mean scores of School A in Standard 5 (3.06), Standard 6 (3.25), and Standard 7 (3.24) revealed that their respondents are in Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration) in terms of communication, personal and professional qualifications, personal and professional development, membership to professional networks related to

their ministry, recognition by competent Church authority, providing direction and strategies, collaboration and delegation of responsibility, compliance of requirements set by the government, formation programs for personnel development, sense of ownership and responsibility, dedication and concern, and adherence to the school's policies and code of ethics. However, their respondents are in Level 2 'Partially meets benchmark' (Recognition) in terms of leadership style, making decisions and actions, faithfulness to the values of the gospel and teachings of the Church, and undergoing formation programs and activities.

The school principals and directors interviewed in this study confirmed that servant leadership is a practice of leadership in Lasallian schools. They believed that Jesus is the best role model and that, as school administrators, they are expected to emulate the character traits of Jesus Christ: being compassionate, committed, forgiving, gentle, humble, loving, patient, prayerful, servant, and self-controlled. They pointed out the importance of collaboration with the other members of the school community to develop a culture of "learning together."

These findings are consistent with those of Enderle's (2014) study on effective leadership. According to him, "it is of great value that [school leaders] adopt leadership practices that contribute to the success of their schools." He believed that "servant leadership may be one such vehicle for positive systems change within school organizations [...]."

In the same way, Patterson (2015) stated that servant leaders love others and lead with love. She pointed out that as servant leaders who represent Christ, leaders must walk with integrity, love their followers, do the right things, and create cultures that are honoring and honorable. She said that servant leaders must have a heart to give and the humility to receive.

### School B
The mean scores of School B in Standard 5 (3.19), Standard 6 (3.25), and Standard 7 (3.24) revealed that their respondents are in Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration) in terms of communication, personal and professional qualifications and development, faithfulness to the values of the gospel and teachings of the Church, recognition by competent Church authority, formation programs and activities, providing direction and strategies, collaboration and delegation of responsibility, compliance of requirements set by the government, formation programs for personnel development, sense of ownership and responsibility, dedication and concern, and adherence to the school's policies and code of ethics. However, their respondents are in Level 2 'Partially meets benchmark' (Recognition) in terms of leadership style, making decisions and actions, and membership to professional networks related to their ministry.

In interviews with the Lasallian administrators, the majority expressed that Lasallian leadership is service for the love and passion of teaching and leading the community, and that school administrators must prioritize the needs and concerns of the school community, especially the students. They all believed that school leaders must have a shared vision, lead by example, adapt to change, and be accountable for their actions.

Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership's (n.d.) statement that "a servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong" and that "the servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible" is consistent with these findings.

Also consistent is Spears's (2010) statement that servant leadership enhances the growth of workers while improving the care and quality of organizational life. He believed that listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community are the qualities of servant leaders.

### School C
The mean scores of School C in Standard 6 (3.23) and Standard 7 (3.05) revealed that their respondents are in Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration) in terms of personal and professional development, recognition by competent Church authority, formation programs and activities, providing direction and strategies, collaboration and delegation of responsibility, compliance of requirements set by the government, sense of ownership and responsibility, and adherence to the school's policies and code of ethics. However, the mean score of School C in Standard 5 (3.00) revealed that their respondents are in Level 2 'Partially meets benchmark' (Recognition) in terms of leadership style, making decisions and actions, communication, personal and professional qualifications, membership to professional networks related to their ministry, faithfulness to the values of the gospel and teachings of the Church, formation programs for personnel development and Christian witnessing, human maturity, professionalism and sense of solidarity, sense of ownership and responsibility, and dedication and concern.

The Lasallian administrators shared the importance of preparing people before they are given administrative posts. They said that since these people will be facing a lot of challenges at work, they can be more productive and effective if they will be given proper training to manage the school. The administrators suggested considering not just the personal and professional qualifications of school administrators, but their experiences and readiness as well.

This is consistent with Jacobson's (2011) finding that

"direction setting, developing people, and redesigning the organization were practices common to successful principals in all contexts, including those in [...] high-poverty schools."

Similarly, school leaders "need to cultivate an understanding of self by engaging in formative processes which are related to their ability to learn from defining situations, thus raising awareness of points of convergence in a leader's career" (Karp, 2013).

### School D

The mean scores of School D in Standard 5 (3.15), Standard 6 (3.70), and Standard 7 (3.50) revealed that their respondents are in Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration) in terms of leadership style, personal and professional qualifications, personal and professional development, faithfulness to the values of the gospel and teachings of the Church, formation programs and activities, providing direction and strategies, collaboration and delegation of responsibility, compliance of requirements set by the government, formation programs for personnel development, sense of ownership and responsibility, dedication and concern, and adherence to the school's policies and code of ethics. However, their respondents are in Level 2 'Partially meets benchmark' (Recognition) in terms of making decisions and actions, communication, membership to professional network related to their ministry, and recognition by competent Church authority.

The data of the present study revealed that out of 264 respondents, 69 or 26.1% were members and officers of professional organizations related to their ministry. Some of them mentioned that joining professional organizations allowed them to become members and officers of committees, share their ideas, volunteer for work, and participate in the implementation of activities, projects, and programs that could give them a feeling of security and trust.

These findings are consistent with the statements of Forbes (2011) that effective school leaders are expected to "motivate and support the teachers, encourage the community and other school stakeholders to be involved in the educational program, and encourage participatory decision-making" and that it is also good to reform the functions of the present and future breeds of school leaders to make them more productive, dynamic, and efficient.

In addition, the findings of Hilton et al. (2015) showed that "school leaders' participation in teacher professional development programs has a positive influence on the capacity of teachers to enact and reflect on new knowledge and practices. They also revealed a positive influence on the professional growth of the leaders themselves."

### School E

The mean scores of School E in Standard 5 (3.13), Standard 6 (3.13), and Standard 7 (3.10) revealed that their respondents are in Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration) in terms of leadership style, making decisions and actions, communication, personal and professional qualifications, personal and professional development, membership to professional networks related to their ministry, faithfulness to the values of the gospel and teachings of the Church, recognition by competent Church authority, formation programs and activities, providing direction and strategies, collaboration and delegation of responsibility, compliance of requirements set by the government, formation programs for personnel development, sense of ownership and responsibility, dedication and concern, and adherence to the school's policies and code of ethics.

In interviews with the school principals and directors, they expressed their interest to continue education and attend conferences, trainings, and workshops. Some of them remarked, "Allowing us to continue our education, at the same time providing us the opportunity to attend workshops and conferences will give us the confidence to embrace our dreams of becoming a good leader." They also suggested increasing the budget for the school's leadership and governance development programs so they can immerse in what is new and current.

These findings are consistent with Hoy and Miskel's (2013) statement that leaders must also prioritize faculty development programs to establish certain standards of competence for instruction and develop quality programs, and that the personal and professional growth of teachers will contribute a lot to the integral formation of the students.

In addition, DeMers (2015) stated that instilling motivation to work is not easy, but it is necessary. According to him, leaders must set an example of positivity and understanding. He believed that leaders must create an environment of transparency because transparency can build trust and establish open communication.

### School F

The mean score of School F in Standard 6 (3.05) revealed that their respondents are in Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration) in terms of compliance with requirements set by the government and adherence to the school's policies and code of ethics. However, the mean scores of School F in Standard 5 (2.92) and Standard 7 (3.00) revealed that their respondents are in Level 2 'Partially meets benchmark' (Recognition) in terms of leadership style, making decisions and actions, communication, personal and professional qualifications, personal and professional development, membership to professional networks related to their ministry, faithfulness to the values of the gospel and teachings of the

Church, recognition by competent Church authority, formation programs and activities, providing direction and strategies, collaboration and delegation of responsibility, formation programs for personnel development and Christian witnessing, sense of ownership and responsibility, and dedication and concern.

The school principals and directors interviewed in this study agreed that Lasallian schools must invest in the development and training of school leaders. They believed that it is essential for them to be allowed to participate in various developmental programs since the 21st century demands leadership competencies to achieve the goal of the organization and this necessitates the continuous upgrading of leaders to build a culture of performance.

These findings are consistent with Meador's (2019) statement that great leadership is the key to the success of any school. According to him, an effective school leader leads by example, has a shared vision, is well respected, is a problem solver, is selfless, is an exceptional listener, adapts to change, understands individual strengths and weaknesses, makes those around them better, admits when they make a mistake, holds others accountable, and makes difficult decisions.

Similarly, Prothero (2015) stated that "the professional development that many principals do get is of questionable quality." She explained that "although the specific professional-development needs vary from rookies to veterans, the tenets of good career training remain the same." She believed that "it should be individualized and rooted in real-world, or real-school, problems."

### School G
The mean score of School G in Standard 6 (3.20) revealed that their respondents are in Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration) in terms of providing direction and strategies, collaboration and delegation of responsibility, and compliance with requirements set by the government. However, the mean scores of School G in Standard 5 (2.63) and Standard 7 (2.65) revealed that their respondents are in Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration) in terms of leadership style, making decisions and actions, communication, personal and professional qualifications, personal and professional development, membership to professional networks related to their ministry, faithfulness to the values of the gospel and teachings of the Church, recognition by competent Church authority, formation programs and activities, formation programs for personnel development, sense of ownership and responsibility, dedication and concern, and adherence to the school's policies and code of ethics.

The survey of the study revealed that out of 264 respondents, 214 or 81.1% regularly undergo formation programs and activities like spiritual formation, character development, professional growth, and community-building activities. The majority of the respondents confirmed that these programs and activities helped develop their character, faith, and leadership skills which are necessary for establishing a school culture.

These findings are consistent with the statements of Ocean Tides School (n.d.) that "Lasallian Education centers on Catholic values and personal relationships, emphasizing academic excellence, faith formation, inclusion, respect for the individual, service and social justice. [...] In Lasallian communities, educators touch hearts, stimulate minds and cultivate leadership to prepare students for life, work, and service to society and the Church."

According to Alfante and Aguiling (2015), aligning the workforce's personal values with organizational values, particularly in the educational ministry, is very significant for the success and achievement of the goals of its foundation. They believed that "all Catholic schools are founded for a missionary purpose" and that "it is noteworthy that these schools are founded not for profit-oriented but for mission-oriented apostolate."

### School H
The mean scores of School H in Standard 6 (3.17) and Standard 7 (3.09) revealed that their respondents are in Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration) in terms of personal and professional development, recognition by competent Church authority and formation programs and activities, providing direction and strategies, collaboration and delegation of responsibility, compliance of requirements set by the government, formation programs for personnel development, sense of ownership and responsibility, dedication and concern, and adherence to the school's policies and code of ethics. However, the mean score of School H in Standard 5 (2.96) revealed that their respondents are in Level 2 'Partially meets benchmark' (Recognition) in terms of leadership style, making decisions and actions, communication, personal and professional qualifications, membership to professional networks related to their ministry, and faithfulness to the values of the gospel and teachings of the Church.

As viewed by some of the school administrators, leadership is about commitment, accountability, and responsibility; it is not about power. They believed that school leaders need to focus on the goal of the organization, instill confidence to do their job, push the group in the right direction, and accept criticism and failure, hence always being open for change. They further explained that it will guide the school administrators in implementing plans and programs, making decisions, and evaluating school progress.

These findings are consistent with Ososami et al.'s (2014) statement that accountability builds trust, improves performance, promotes ownership, and inspires confidence. They pointed out that accountability is build-

ing a culture of trust and not of fear.

In addition, school administrators should be provided with training on the accountability process to be enlightened about their roles and responsibilities. The administrators' competencies should be taken into consideration and accountability should be included among the important criteria in assigning them (Argon, 2015).

### School I
The mean scores of School I in Standard 5 (3.30), Standard 6 (3.36), and Standard 7 (3.35) revealed that their respondents are in Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration) in terms of leadership style, making decisions and actions, communication, personal and professional qualifications and development, membership to professional networks related to their ministry, faithfulness to the values of the gospel and teachings of the Church, recognition by competent Church authority, formation programs and activities, providing direction and strategies, collaboration and delegation of responsibility, compliance of requirements set by the government, formation programs for personnel development, sense of ownership and responsibility, dedication and concern, and adherence to the school's policies and code of ethics.

The respondents in the study believed that their commitment to achieve and fulfill the schools' philosophy, vision, mission, and core values (PVMCV) is essential in providing them direction to perform their roles and responsibilities as school administrators and as members of the school community. They believed that collaboration will lead to a better school environment where each person feels like a partner in achieving school success. They pointed out the importance of supporting one another and good community relationships in finding solutions and making things happen.

These findings are consistent with Jodice's (2016) statement that "leadership happens on many levels," whether one serves "as a president, principal, campus minister, animator, teacher, coach, club moderator, counselor," or "any other role that touches the hearts of young people" and that leadership is not about titles, positions, or flowcharts but about one life influencing another.

Similarly, Kam (2018) stated that leadership is "all about having a genuine willingness and a true commitment to lead others to achieve a common vision and goals through positive influence." He believed that "teamwork goes hand in hand with leadership" and "leadership is about people—and for people."

### School J
The mean scores of School J in Standard 5 (3.37), Standard 6 (3.41), and Standard 7 (3.21) revealed that their respondents are in Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration) in terms of leadership style, making decisions and actions, communication, personal and professional

qualifications and development, membership to professional networks related to their ministry, faithfulness to the values of the gospel and teachings of the Church, recognition by competent Church authority, formation programs and activities, providing direction and strategies, collaboration and delegation of responsibility, compliance of requirements set by the government, formation programs for personnel development, sense of ownership and responsibility, dedication and concern, and adherence to the school's policies and code of ethics.

In interviews conducted with school administrators, the majority confirmed that their school meets all the minimum requirements set by the government. They emphasized the value of having clear policies and procedures for proper monitoring and documenting compliance of the institution. They also believed that compliance with these requirements is a good way to develop a sense of ownership, responsibility, and accountability.

These findings are consistent with the statement of Williford and Small (2013) that establishing an effective compliance and ethics program has become a necessity to protect any highly regulated organization. They believe that an organization's program should include monitoring and auditing systems that are designed to detect improper conduct, and that in addition to evaluating the organization's compliance with legal requirements, these also evaluate the program's effectiveness.

Similarly, Lock and Lummis (2014, p. 62) state that "school leaders are responsible for ensuring compliance with the regulatory framework and developing protocols to assess risks and ensure compliance are essential tool for all school leaders and leadership teams." They said that "it should also be recognized that undertaking risk assessments and developing compliance protocols can be very valuable team building and professional development tasks for leaders and aspirant leaders."

### School K
The mean scores of School K in Standard 5 (3.31), Standard 6 (3.40), and Standard 7 (3.33) revealed that their respondents are in Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration) in terms of leadership style, making decisions and actions, communication, personal and professional qualifications and development, membership to professional networks related to their ministry, faithfulness to the values of the gospel and teachings of the Church, recognition by competent Church authority, formation programs and activities, providing direction and strategies, collaboration and delegation of responsibility, compliance of requirements set by the government, formation programs for personnel development, sense of ownership and responsibility, dedication and concern, and adherence to the school's policies and code of ethics.

It was gathered from the interviews conducted that taking ownership of work is essential for school lead-

ers and governing bodies. They believed that mentoring leaders before appointment as an administrator must also be practiced to prepare potential leaders to lead effectively, and that multi-tasking or handling two positions at the same time must also be avoided to ensure that school leaders can function well.

These findings are consistent with Gorton and Alston's (2012) statement that future administrators must be demonstrating the following abilities: recognizing; rewarding, and supporting the work of new leaders; coaching the leaders on the values, mission, and goals of the school and school system; supplying necessary resources; providing tools for review and reflection of their work; promoting opportunities for leadership enhancement; giving credit to new leaders while maintaining responsibility; consulting often with and delegating freely to new leaders; and supporting these leaders' decisions.

In addition, Schawbel (2012) pointed out that great leaders need to gain knowledge, that is, learn about their strengths and weakness and the strengths and weaknesses of other people; look for mentoring relationships and share their learning with others; and seek new experiences outside the workplace to broaden their understanding of reality.

### School L

The mean scores of School L in Standard 5 (3.03) and Standard 6 (3.23) revealed that their respondents are in Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration) in terms of leadership style, making decisions and actions, communication, personal and professional development, faithfulness to the values of the gospel and teachings of the Church, recognition by competent Church authority, formation programs and activities, providing direction and strategies to ensure the attainment of the school goal, collaboration, delegation of responsibility, compliance of requirements set by the government, formation programs for personnel development, and dedication and concern. However, the mean score of School L in Standard 7 (2.85) revealed that their respondents are in Level 2 'Partially meets benchmark' (Recognition) in terms of personal and professional qualifications, membership to professional networks related to their ministry, providing direction and strategies, formation programs for personnel development, sense of ownership and responsibility, and adherence to the school's policies and code of ethics.

The school administrators explained the importance of maintaining integrity and credibility within the workplace. They believed that they need to help build effective relationships in the workplace characterized by respect, fairness, and trust, regardless of whatever situation they would face; that they are expected to always 'do the right thing' and maintain good reputations; that they cannot impose their ethics and behavior on their subordinates;

**Table 4.** Level of compliance

| Benchmark | Lasallian basic education school | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L |
| 5.1-A | L2 | L2 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L2 | L2 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 |
| 5.1-B | L2 | L2 | L2 | L2 | L3 | L2 | L2 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 |
| 5.2-A | L3 | L3 | L2 | L2 | L3 | L2 | L2 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 |
| 5.2-B | L3 | L3 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L2 | L2 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L2 |
| 5.2-C | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L2 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 |
| 5.2-D | L3 | L2 | L2 | L2 | L3 | L2 | L2 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L2 |
| 5.3-A | L2 | L3 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L2 | L2 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L2 |
| 5.4-A | L3 | L3 | L3 | L2 | L3 | L2 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L2 |
| 5.5-A | L2 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L2 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L2 |
| 6.1-A | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 |
| 6.1-B | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L2 |
| 6.2-A | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 |
| 6.3-A | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 |
| 6.3-B | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 |
| 7.1-A | L3 | L3 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L2 | L2 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 |
| 7.1-B | L3 | L3 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L2 | L2 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L2 |
| 7.2-A | L3 | L3 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L2 | L2 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L2 |
| 7.2-B | L3 | L3 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L2 | L2 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L2 |
| 7.3-A | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L2 |
| 7.3-B | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L2 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L3 | L2 |

and that their subordinates will not always think the same way as leaders do, but leaders can always guide and advise them to avoid conflict and issues.

These findings are consistent with Monhaut's (2012) statement that all educators must accept the responsibility to be role models to the students in expressing ways to live out the Lasallian tradition, and that modeling proper behavior not only shapes the minds of the students but also shapes the students' souls as well.

Similarly, Miles (2017) believed that open communication, good decision-making skills, and a strong moral compass to guide all decisions and actions are important. She pointed out that integrity is not just important on a personal level, it is also extremely important at a workplace level.

### Level of compliance of Lasallian basic education schools

The overall mean scores of School A (3.18), School B (3.22), School C (3.09), School D (3.45), School E (3.12), School H (3.07), School I (3.34), School J (3.33), School K (3.34), and School L (3.04) revealed that their respondents are in Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration) while the mean scores of School F (2.99) and School G (2.82) revealed that their respondents are in Level 2 'Partially meets benchmark' (Recognition) in relation to servant leadership, government policies and gospel values, and development and empowerment of personnel.

**Table 5.** Comparison of overall extent of compliance

| Lasallian school | M | * | SD | Verbal interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | 3.18 | □ | 0.630 | Fully meets benchmark |
| B | 3.22 | □ | 0.641 | Fully meets benchmark |
| C | 3.09 | ◇ | 0.699 | Fully meets benchmark |
| D | 3.45 | ◇ | 0.504 | Fully meets benchmark |
| E | 3.12 | ◇ | 0.704 | Fully meets benchmark |
| F | 2.99 | ◇ | 0.667 | Partially meets benchmark |
| G | 2.82 | ◇ | 0.598 | Partially meets benchmark |
| H | 3.07 | ◇ | 0.607 | Fully meets benchmark |
| I | 3.34 | ◇ | 0.583 | Fully meets benchmark |
| J | 3.33 | ◇ | 0.755 | Fully meets benchmark |
| K | 3.34 | ◇ | 0.609 | Fully meets benchmark |
| L | 3.04 | ◇ | 0.689 | Fully meets benchmark |
| Overall | 3.17 | | 0.666 | Fully meets benchmark |

* significant at 0.05 level, means of □ are not significantly different, means of ◇ are not significantly different, means of □ and ◇ are significantly different

Of the 12 schools surveyed, School D with a mean of 3.45 ranked the highest ('Fully meets benchmark' (Integration)) while School G with a mean of 2.82 ranked the lowest ('Partially meets benchmark' (Recognition)).

The overall mean scores in Standard 5 (3.09), Standard 6 (3.28), and Standard 7 (3.13), and the overall mean of 3.17 revealed that the overall extent of compliance of Lasallian basic education schools in the PCSS-BE under the leadership and governance domain is in Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration).

Table 4 summarizes the level of compliance of Lasallian basic education schools in the PCSS-BE under the leadership and governance domain.

All participating schools are in Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration) in terms of compliance with requirements set by the government (Benchmark 6.3-A), and compliance being done to advance and secure the well-being of the school (6.3-B). However, more than half (58%) of the participating schools are in Level 2 'Partially meets benchmark' (Recognition) in terms of making decisions and actions (5.1-B) and membership to professional networks related to their ministry (5.2-D). Half (50%) are in Level 2 in terms of leadership style (5.1-A) and faithfulness to the values of the gospel and teachings of the Church (5.3-A).

Schools E, I, J, and K are in Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration) in Standards 5, 6, and 7, while Schools A, B, C, D, F, G, H, and L are in Level 2 'Partially meets benchmark' (Recognition) in some benchmarks. These latter schools may reflect together with their other stakeholders to examine the school's performance and engage in a process of continuous improvement.

**Significant difference**

A comparison of the overall extent of compliance of Lasallian basic education schools in the PCSS-BE under the leadership and governance domain is in Table 5.

The findings of the study revealed that there is a significant difference among overall means on the overall extent of compliance of Lasallian basic education schools in the PCSS-BE under the leadership and governance domain, $F(11,228) = 18.056$, $p < 0.001$. Furthermore, multiple comparisons of means via post-hoc test suggest that the mean score of School A (3.18) is significantly different at 0.05 level from the mean scores of School C (3.09), School D, (3.45), School E (3.12), School F (2.99), School G (2.82), School H (3.07), School I (3.34), School J (3.33), School K (3.34), and School L (3.04).

**Themes**

An analysis of the experiences of the school administrators who were interviewed revealed a structure composed of five themes which may also be viewed as phases that describe the experiences they went through. The themes are: a call to lead, readiness, acceptance, formation, and service. These five concepts were identified as emerging themes because these were consistently and continually discussed by the interviewees.

**Call to lead**

The call to lead is the first common theme in the experience of the interviewees. They considered this phase as the initial phase of their experience as school leaders. They were expected to build Catholic culture and community fostering faith development and integrating Church's traditions and practices into all aspects of school life. Their call to lead can be classified into two subthemes: professional and vocational.

Professional.    All interviewees were invited to lead their Lasallian basic education school. They were all aware that they must be professionally prepared and must have the necessary qualifications to lead a school. They believed that their success depends on their professional competence and their commitment to lead the school. Their experiences of being warmly welcomed and recognized in the Lasallian community helped develop their character, faith, and leadership skills. What is noteworthy is their common intention to develop their skills and talents, improve their weaknesses, and build their confidence since the 21st century demands leadership competencies to achieve the goals of the school and build a culture of performance.

Vocational.    This vocational aspect requires the interviewees to lead the school community to embrace and be animated by the Catholic vision of life. The interviewees shared that their experiences as Lasallian leaders were not easy, to the point of sacrificing their personal

concerns for the common good of the school community. They believed that their commitment to achieve and fulfill the school's goal is essential in providing them with direction to perform their roles and responsibilities as school administrators and members of the Lasallian community. Their initial hesitation because of accountability, pressure, and high expectations to meet and raise the school standards was overpowered by having the Lasallian brothers and supportive administrators which gave them a feeling of security and trust.

### Readiness

Readiness is the second common theme in the experience of the interviewees. Though it is common among them, each interviewee had different levels and kinds of readiness in their experiences as Lasallian administrators. They used the terms 'afraid,' 'confused,' 'fear,' and 'challenged' to describe their experiences. Their readiness can be grouped into four subthemes: emotional, intellectual, relational, and spiritual.

**Emotional.** The interviewees shared that they often deal with highly stressful situations that sometimes compromise their ability to develop and sustain a healthy relationship with the school stakeholders, lead effectively, build strong relationships, and support various programs in the school. As school leaders, they recognize the importance of handling their emotions and stress effectively. In most cases, they are expected to exhibit acceptance, care, compassion, patience, and trust. Their awareness and understanding of their emotions strengthen their relationships and communication with others.

**Intellectual.** The interviewees expressed that allowing them to continue their higher education, at the same time providing them the opportunity to attend workshops and conferences, gave them the confidence to embrace their dreams of becoming good leaders. They believed that it is essential to participate in various developmental programs since the 21st century demands leadership competencies, and this necessitates the continuous upgrading of leaders to build a culture of performance.

**Relational.** The interviewees believed that school leadership is a collaborative endeavor built through partnership. They shared that the presence of students, teachers, parents, and other members of the school community is a fundamental component of successful school leadership. They acknowledged the need to create and foster a healthy and positive atmosphere and relationships in the school. They recognized the importance of building an environment of trust, respect, professionalism, compassion, and collaboration. For them to do this, they have to be visible in the school and spend an intense amount of time developing relationships.

**Spiritual.** The interviewees confirmed that they have various spiritual activities and practices in their schools. They acknowledged that these programs helped develop their character, faith, and leadership skills which are necessary for bringing the community together. They were also aware that as Lasallian administrators, they have to manifest the Catholic teachings in their working style, principles, and values. Since they are expected to give direction to the school, they need to personally examine themselves and know where their heart is centered because as a leader, they cannot practice what the heart does not practice.

### Acceptance

Acceptance is the third common theme in the experience of the interviewees. This phase includes opportunities and facing complex issues and challenges school administrators are dealing with.

**Opportunities.** The interviewees' opportunities include membership to professional organizations, meeting new people who can mentor and help them grow as leaders, attending seminars, workshops, trainings, and conferences, volunteering for work, participating in the implementation of activities, projects, and programs, travel locally and internationally, benchmarking in other Lasallian school community, and a lot more. These opportunities helped them acquire new skills, learn new ideas and practices, improve their weaknesses, build their confidence, and develop a culture of "learning together."

**Challenges.** The interviewees' challenges include improving instruction, handling student discipline, working with and managing employees, implementing plans and programs, maintaining safe school facilities, supervising and evaluating students and teachers, scheduling and doing classroom observations and evaluations, funding, making strategic decisions, and resolving issues and concerns of parents and other stakeholders. They believed that in facing complex situations, they need to focus on the goals of the organization and be open to change to be able to set direction, develop positive relationships among members, and create an avenue to establish the organization.

### Formation

Formation is the fourth theme in the experience of the interviewees. This phase supports the interviewees to be successful leaders. They acknowledged the importance of preparing people before they will be given the administrative post since they will be facing a lot of challenges at work. They also believed that they will be more productive and effective if they will be given continuous and proper training once in a position to manage the school.

**Before accepting the administrative post.** Some interviewees expressed that they accepted the position out of respect for the higher administrators and this experience gave them the feeling of doubt and lack of confidence because they are not prepared. The interviewees believed that mentoring leaders before appointment as an administrator must be practiced to prepare potential leaders to lead effectively and that these experiences will help them function effectively and not be surprised and overwhelmed by the challenges. They suggested considering not just the personal and professional qualifications of school administrators, but even their experiences and readiness as well.

**Once in position.** The interviewees shared that once appointed, they are expected to perform the roles and responsibilities of a leader. They believed that the continuous professional development equipped them with knowledge, skills, and confidence to perform their roles and responsibilities as the head of the school. However, some of them suggested that multi-tasking or handling two positions at the same time must be avoided to ensure that school leaders can function well. What is noteworthy is the collaborative efforts of Lasallian school leaders who worked hard and gave support to one another to meet the leadership standards.

### Service

The interviewees expressed that Lasallian leadership is servant leadership. They all believed that school leaders must have a deep commitment and a natural feeling to serve. They are expected to emulate the character traits of Jesus Christ: being compassionate, committed, forgiving, gentle, humble, loving, patient, prayerful, servant, and self-controlled. They are all aware that they must always prioritize the needs and concerns of the school community, especially the students. They valued the importance of having a shared vision, leading by example, adapting to change, and being accountable for their actions.

## Conclusions and recommendations

The overall extent of compliance of Lasallian basic education schools to the PCSS-BE under the leadership and governance domain is in Level 3 'Fully meets benchmark' (Integration). Overall, the Lasallian leaders are qualified, hardworking, service-oriented, and committed to providing direction and strategies founded on Christian principles. However, the Lasallian culture and Catholic teachings and principles are not often manifested in their working style, principles, and values.

To enhance the best features of the school and to develop further the skills of the school administrators, extensive consultations between school administrators, faculty, and staff can be done. A written management program for leadership and governance must be formally and properly presented to the school administrators for consideration and adoption. Involve school leaders in various forms of church services and formation programs to improve their personal lifestyle, decisions, and actions. Mentor qualified leaders for the position and define their roles and responsibilities to ensure that they can function effectively.

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# The lived experience of students in a formal mentoring program: Exploring students' motivation based on the Organismic Integration Theory

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## Abstract

**Background:** There has been a growing number of educational institutions which incorporated formal mentoring programs in their curriculum. When the mentoring program is given as an optional service, a good number of students avail of it, while some do not. Among those who attend the mentoring sessions are motivated mentees who initiate the mentoring sessions themselves.

**Purpose:** Discover the motivations of mentees who seek mentoring sessions with their mentors in the context of a formal mentoring program.

**Research design:** Qualitative; phenomenological research design

**Data source:** Semi-structured interviews of 12 university students

**Data analysis:** A researcher-constructed semi-structured questionnaire was used to interview participants about their mentoring experiences and their motivations to seek their mentors for mentoring sessions. van Manen's 'existentials' and the analysis process of Sloan and Bowe's hermeneutic phenomenological analysis were used in analyzing the interview videos and transcripts. Though frameworks are not normally used in phenomenological analysis, the Organismic Integration Theory (OIT) was used as a framework since the phenomenon of interest is the motivation of these students to seek mentoring, and motivation is covered by the OIT.

**Findings:** The motivations of the interviewed students are primarily identification and secondarily integration which were present in the experiences of most if not all mentees interviewed. The rest were present in half or less than half of the total respondents. Identification, a type of internalization where there is more relative autonomy and conscious endorsement of values and regulations, is evidenced when the students identify the things they get from their mentors as personally valuable and important to them. They experience greater autonomy and have a more internal perceived locus of causality. Integrated regulation results from bringing a value or regulation into congruence with the other aspects of the person, such as certain religious practices, valuing of family, studies, friends, and life choices.

**Recommendations:** Include training needs, such as giving advice and feedback, ways of helping the youth, setting goals, and relationship-building, in mentoring programs. Develop a mentoring program that is university-wide with cross-sectoral participation. Conduct research on instruments development, phenomenological studies of successful graduates, and mixed-method research on academic performance and adaptation capacity of students. Include mentoring programs dedicated to the youth in educational institutions and non-governmental organizations.

**Keywords**
mentoring, motivation, integrated regulation, identified regulation, hermeneutic phenomenology

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## Introduction

Helping the youth become responsible and productive adults is at the core of youth mentoring, something practiced for over a century now (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008). Because adolescents tend to be highly emotional, impulsive, and disorderly, they have to learn how to orchestrate their thoughts and actions according to internal goals (Miller & Cohen, 2001). It is up to adults to guide adolescents at this crucial stage of their lives, which is where youth mentoring plays an important role.

Since the first youth mentoring movement at the dawn of the 20th century in the United States, youth mentoring programs have been growing. But just how effective are these? In a meta-analysis done by Raposa et al. (2019), most mentoring programs have small to medium effects. Despite all the good reviews from anecdotal reports on the impact of mentoring, the 2019 study showed that most relationship-based mentoring programs do not work, and those few mentoring programs with medium to large positive effects are targeted and skills-based programs.

An important factor in mentoring success includes student motivations (Fallatah et al., 2018). Motivation is a well-studied field in educational psychology (Krapp, 1999; Weiner, 1990). It is defined as an internal state of a person that arouses, directs, and maintains certain behaviors (Woolfolk, 2013). Research on motivation has been a focus of the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) developed by Ryan and Deci (2000b). The SDT is an organismic meta-theory for the study of human motivation. It can provide a compelling theoretical framework to study the mentor-mentee relationship and mentee motivations (Firzly et al., 2022).

Mentoring is recognized as essential in large organizations as well (Kram, 1985, as cited in Firzly et al., 2022), and research on mentoring provides support on the importance of mentoring relationships in workplace outcomes (Allen et al., 2008). In a study conducted by Janssen et al. (2014), the motives of informal mentors on why they provide developmental support to their protégés were examined. They found five broad categories of mentor motives: self-focused motives, protégé-focused motives, relationship-focused motives, organization-focused motives, and unfocused motives. Using the SDT, the researchers showed five subcategories of self-focused motives, ranging from extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation.

The above-mentioned research by Janssen et al. (2014) is what prompted the use of the SDT in this study in exploring motivations among university students who seek their mentors for mentoring conversations. In particular, one of the six sub-theories under the SDT was used as a framework—the Organismic Integration Theory (OIT). The motivations of mentees to seek their mentors were not as explored as other aspects of the mentoring relationship.

Though a few educational institutions in the Philippines have implemented formal mentoring programs, the past decade has shown a rise in the implementation of a mentoring program in educational institutions (Lactao, 2016). This study is focused on the lived experiences of students in a formal mentoring program offered by a higher education institution. In this study, the experiences of mentees as they go through their mentoring conversations with their mentors were explored, particularly when the mentees initiated a mentoring session with them. Recognizing the dearth of research on the specific phenomenon of seeking one's mentor, hermeneutic phenomenology was utilized.

## Review of literature
### Mentoring
Like coaching, counseling, and psychotherapy, mentoring is a helping relationship. There are basic skills that a mentor needs to possess to be effective—listening, empathizing, responding, and rapport-building, to name a few (Converse & Lignugaris/Kraft, 2009). However, unlike a coach, counselor, or school psychologist, a mentor does not need specialized training because what he puts in the mentoring sessions is mostly drawn from his personal life experiences. The term 'mentor' has been defined in various ways. A natural mentor is a "non-parental adult, such as extended family members, teachers or neighbors, from whom a young person receives support and guidance as a result of a relationship developed without the help of a program specifically designed to connect youth and adults to form such a relationship" (Zimmerman et al., 2005). A mentor has been identified by Kram (1983) as someone who provides career guidance and psychosocial support. DuBois and Karcher (2005) described a mentor as one who has more life experience or wisdom than the mentee, and who offers guidance or instructions that facilitate the growth and development of the mentee.

### Youth mentoring
Eby et al. (2008) made a meta-analysis of peer-reviewed academic journals. This quantitative analysis focused on the three major areas of mentoring research—youth, academic, and workplace. They concluded that the mentoring outcomes include behavioral, attitudinal, health-related, relational, motivational, and career outcomes. They also saw that larger effect sizes were detected for academic and workplace mentoring compared to youth mentoring.

Youth mentoring focuses on reducing risky behavior and improving the youth's social and academic functioning (DuBois & Karcher, 2005). Parents enroll their kids in a mentoring program if they observe that their kids exhibit risky behaviors or tend to truancy and misbehavior. Youth mentoring programs help the mentee achieve personal, emotional, cognitive, and psychological growth. Thus, to achieve these outcomes, mentors have to be trained well so that youth mentoring involves the relationship between a caring, supportive adult and a child or adolescent (Rhodes, 2005).

### Academic mentoring
Academic mentoring focuses on student retention, academic performance, and adjustment to college life (Jacobi, 1991, as cited in Anderson & Shore, 2008). The

main goal of academic mentoring is skills development for academic survival. Indeed, mentors can help their mentees improve their academic performance in school (C. S. Chan et al., 2013; Eby et al., 2008). Another example is the adviser-graduate student mentoring relationship. The adviser, also referred to as the Research Adviser, guides the graduate student towards a career in the academe. Among the skills that a graduate student learns from his adviser-mentor are research, networking, and writing. This mentorship approximates the apprentice model of education where a faculty mentor imparts knowledge, provides support, and offers guidance to a student protégé on academic and non-academic issues. This mentorship also facilitates psychological adjustment and fosters a sense of professional identity (Austin, 2002).

### Mentor-mentee relationship

To make the mentoring relationship work, the feeling of trust in the mentor and the feeling of friendship need to develop as soon as possible (Adey, 1997). Having shared characteristics and experiences between the mentor and the mentee is crucial to building relationships. If there are differences in gender, ethnicity, language, and generation, then an interference occurs in the development of the mentoring relationship (Bickel & Rosenthal, 2011). To remedy this, it was suggested that the mentee, who feels vulnerable, be provided a safe space to explore. For the mentees to develop relationship-building behaviors, the mentors must find areas where they share similarities and common interests (Zheng et al., 2021). When mentors perceive those similarities with the mentees, they tend to share more things with them, leading to the aforementioned relationship-building behaviors. Further, Mitchell et al. (2015) found that protégés have more organizational and professional commitment when they see themselves as similar to their mentors. Sharing likes and dislikes could predict longer mentoring relationship (Raposa et al., 2019).

To analyze the mentoring relationship, the core elements must be looked into. DuBois and Karcher (2005) collated several definitions of mentoring and condensed these into the three core elements of a mentoring relationship: (a) the mentor has more experience or wisdom than the mentee, (b) the mentor offers guidance or instruction that is intended to facilitate the growth and development of the mentee, and (c) there is an emotional bond between mentor and mentee, a hallmark of which is a sense of trust.

In another study done on graduate students doing community-engaged dissertation research, the advisor-advisee relationship had the following characteristics: (a) background and experience matter, (b) faculty advisors and advisees are co-learners, (c) the advisor-advisee relationship can approach a synergistic state, (d) faculty advisors often serve as interpreters and interveners, and (e) community-engaged dissertation studies often lack "structural" support (Jaeger et al., 2011).

### Self-determination theory and motivation

What motivates a student to engage in a mentoring relationship? Motivation is a well-studied concept applied in various research fields—education, psychology, sociology, athletics, among others.

Deci and Ryan's (1985) SDT states that there are two types of motivation based on one's goals. One type is intrinsic motivation which is the motivation that comes from activities that one finds inherently enjoyable or interesting. The second type is extrinsic motivation, which is what moves one to an action that has a separable outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). These are important concepts since the quality of experience and performance greatly differ if it is intrinsically motivated or extrinsically motivated. Intrinsic motivation is seen as something that results in high-quality learning in the field of education, and often, the outcomes of extrinsic motivation pale in comparison (deCharms, 1968, as cited in Ryan & Deci, 2000a). However, while there are impoverished forms of extrinsic motivation, there are those that represent active and agentic states (Ryan & Deci, 2000a).

Extrinsic motivation is contrasted with intrinsic motivation with the source fulfillment or accomplishment. Intrinsically motivated individuals enjoy the activity itself, whereas extrinsically motivated individuals are fulfilled by the instrumental value. For example, someone who enjoys solving math problems for the sake of the satisfaction of getting the correct answers is intrinsically motivated to do his homework. On the other hand, an externally motivated student would solve the math problems to avoid the punishment of the parent (e.g., no videogame time), or because of the praise that they might get from their parents or teacher. In these examples of external motivations, two degrees of autonomy are seen—one is out of fear, while the other is for a reward (praise).

Internalization is the process of taking in a particular value or regulation, while integration is the process of assimilating this value or regulation so that it becomes something of one's own and that it would emanate from himself. Ryan and Deci described a continuum from amotivation (unwillingness) to intrinsic motivation, which they called the OIT. From amotivation comes external motivation in gradation of external regulation, introjection, identification, and integration. After integration comes intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

### Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework of this study is from the SDT of Ryan and Deci (Deci & Ryan, 1985), specifically, the OIT. The OIT supports the various levels of internalization of external motivations such that there is greater autonomy and internal perceived locus of control.

The OIT discusses the internalization of the various forms of extrinsic motivation. The concepts of internalization and integration are central to this theory. On one hand, internalization can be described as an internal psychological process that corresponds to the process of socialization. Socialization is a way for society to transmit behavioral regulations, attitudes, and values to its members (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Ryan et al. (1985) describe internalization as a process where one takes in values, beliefs, or behavior regulations from external sources and turns them into one's very own. This means that what was an external motivation for someone could become more internally motivating. For example, consider when a child is externally motivated to study because of the reward (access to one's smart phone, for example) that they can receive by accomplishing that behavior (studying). This behavior can become more internally motivating if they feel good about the praises they hear in performing this behavior (i.e., they feel good when their parents praise them for studying). Yet, this is not totally internally motivating (i.e., enjoying the act of studying in itself) because of the external motivation of praise. Internalization is a natural growth process that manifests an inherent tendency towards integration. Integration, on the other hand, involves the process of self-reflection and reciprocal assimilation. A motivation is integrated into a person when they see a personal value in that behavior and brings this in congruence with the other aspects of one's self. The result of integration is a more mature and stable form of self-regulation that allows for flexible guidance of one's actions (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

These concepts of internalization and integration in Ryan and Deci's (2017) OIT result in the four types of motivational regulation—external, introjected, identified, and integrated. What makes these four different, though all four are considered forms of external motivations as well, are the degrees of autonomy one performs and the specific antecedents and effects on experience and behavior. Ryan and Deci describe these regulations in the succeeding statements. External regulation, as the name implies, is the most externally motivated regulation of the four. The performance of the behavior is dependent upon external rewards or punishments. As with the example above, a child may be externally motivated to study because they are given access to use their smartphone after studying. It is also possible that one performs a behavior to avoid punishment, such as deprivation of the use of one's smartphone when studying is not done. For introjected regulation, there is an initial internalization but only in a partial or incomplete assimilation. An example would be feeling good for the praises one received for studying. Identified regulation is a more internalized regulation as compared to introjected regulation; there is now a more conscious effort to see behavior as personally important to the person performing

the behavior. A student may have an introjected motivation when they see their studies as something valuable in their life because it makes them knowledgeable of things, and not because of the rewards or punishments given or the praises associated with studying. The fullest type of internalization is integrated regulation, which is considered the most autonomous form of extrinsic motivation. A child may integrate the behavior of studying when they see that studying is something valuable and in congruence with other aspects of their life.

## Method

This study employs a qualitative research design. This design was selected because the study involved an exploration of the motivations of students who sought out their mentors. This means that a one-on-one interview is the best method for gathering data for this research. As such, phenomenology was used for this study because of the interest in investigating the phenomenon of "seeking the mentor" among mentees who experienced good mentoring relationships with their mentors. To do so, mentees were asked to share these experiences in an in-depth, one-on-one interview.

Purposive sampling was used for this research. The participants were selected from a list of mentees provided by the mentoring office. From this list, mentors were also asked to refer students who fulfill the requirements for this study. There were also some students who were asked to refer other students with the following criteria: (a) had pleasant mentoring experiences with their mentors, (b) were assigned to a mentor of their choice for at least one year, (c) had at least eight mentoring sessions with the same mentors in a span of two consecutive semesters, (d) had sought or initiated at least one mentoring session with their respective mentors, and (e) were not in the final year of their courses (so that it will be easier for the researcher to get back to them for further questions or clarifications in the following year).

### Research participants
A sample of 12 student-mentees (undergraduate and post-undergraduate students), and their mentors from a private university (hereinafter referred to as the University) were chosen for this research through purposive sampling. The University was selected because it has a long history of mentoring. It started an informal form of mentoring in the late 1960s when it was still a think tank. In 2010, it formally established a Student Mentoring Committee to focus more on formal mentoring. The University is a non-sectarian private university that offers undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. It is a small university of about 2,200 students.

According to Boyd (2001, as cited in Groenewald, 2004), two to 10 participants are sufficient to reach saturation. Creswell (2014) suggested that around three to

**Table 1.** List of mentees

| Code | Mentee (pseudonym) | Gender | Course | Age | Year level | Years with current mentor |
|------|---------------------|--------|--------|-----|-----------|----------------------------|
| MeM-1 | Amos | Male | Humanities | 22 | 5 | 4 |
| MeM-2 | Billy | Male | Communications | 20 | 2 | 2 |
| MeM-3 | Chuck | Male | Political Science | 19 | 1 | 3 |
| MeM-4 | Dan | Male | Management | 20 | 4 | 2 |
| MeM-5 | Emman | Male | Management | 21 | 5 | 2 |
| MeM-6 | Felipe | Male | Humanities | 20 | 2 | 2 |
| MeF-1 | Amanda | Female | Economics | 22 | 4 | 2 |
| MeF-2 | Beth | Female | Communications | 21 | 2 | 2 |
| MeF-3 | Celeste | Female | Education | 22 | 3 | 2 |
| MeF-4 | Dette | Female | Management | 20 | 4 | 2 |
| MeF-5 | Eve | Female | Law | 27 | 3 | 3 |
| MeF-6 | Fatima | Female | Education | 20 | 2 | 1 |
| | | | Average | 21.17 | 3.08 | 2.25 |

10 participants are sufficient for in-depth interviews for phenomenology. There were equal numbers of female and male participants in the sample—six male and six female (see Table 1).

Among the 12 student-mentees, three were Management majors; two were taking Humanities; two were Communications majors; two were Education students; one was taking up Political Science; one was in Economics; and one was in Law. The age of the students ranged from 19 to 27 years old ($M$ = 21). The number of years of the mentee-mentor relationship ranged from 1 to 4 years ($M$ = 2.25). The age of the mentors ranged from 26 to 79 years old ($M$ = 46.58). The number of years that they have been a mentor ranged from 2 to 30 years ($M$ = 16.33).

**Data collection**

Except for a face-to-face interview with one mentee, all the other 11 mentees were interviewed through video call using a semi-structured interview protocol due to the health restrictions imposed by the government because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Notes were taken down by the interviewer while conducting the interview to capture the nuances that could not be revealed by the audio recording, such as facial expressions, gestures, and other observable behaviors and circumstances.

In the middle of this series of interviews, a worldwide pandemic happened. Because of this, face-to-face interviews were no longer possible. Only one mentee was interviewed in person. The remaining 11 interviews had to be conducted in another way. After agreeing to change some parameters (revising the informed consent form, video recording, transcription, and consent of the interviewees), online video call interviews were approved by the research adviser. Only one interview was done per interviewee and each interview lasted from 16

to 101 minutes. There is a wide range of interview duration since some mentees gave more explanations, and shared more stories, while others are not as talkative as the others. In one case, the interview lasted for only 16 minutes since the rapport-building part was skipped, and because the story of the mentee went straight to the main questions. The researcher took advantage of this to explore the phenomenon of focus.

Here are some interview questions in the interview schedule: "Tell me one time when you sought mentoring," "What were you experiencing at that time?" and "Can you tell me how it is to be a mentee of [name of mentor]?" Some iterative questions that were not in the interview schedule include: "So you consider your mentoring sessions as story time or time to unwind?" "What do you think is the difference between going to your friends and going to your mentor when you have difficulties?" and "What does this mother-daughter relationship that you described mean to you?" These iterative questions were taken from the interview with Beth, and were based on her previous answers.

The conduct of the online interviews transpired similarly to the face-to-face interview, though there were advantages and disadvantages. One advantage was the facility to capture video and audio recordings. With this, the video interview can be played back. As such, there was less notetaking since the interview can be reviewed later on. The video also captured the facial expressions, gesticulations, and changes in intonation and volume of the voice. These can indicate emphasis and importance. They also communicate emotions.

Another advantage of online video call interviews is the flexibility of the venue. The interviewees chose the place where they wanted to be, which could even be in the comfort of their own homes.

In spite of these advantages, there were several drawbacks to this mode of interview. Internet connections

were very slow or even get cut off in the middle of the interview. Thus, questions had to be asked again or replies had to be reiterated. This caused some delay in the response during the conversation.

There were also delays in the video and audio transmissions, usually when the bandwidth of the internet was unstable and fluctuating. With these interferences, simultaneous talking and losing one's train of thought happened. With these taking place, some rectifications were done by reiterating what one just mentioned and at times with one person reminding the other what was last discussed. Online video call interviews also felt different from face-to-face interviews since the actual physical and virtual presences between the interviewer and the interviewee were not the same, but given the circumstances brought about by the pandemic, the use of online video interviews was a necessity.

### Data analysis

Bracketing, or phenomenological reduction, was conceptually developed by Husserl to isolate one's biases so as not to contaminate the essence of what is being studied. To bracket means to reflect and realize one's experiences and biases over the phenomenon being studied, and set them aside (Laverty, 2003). This is often used to validate data collection and data analysis.

However, given that the researcher is involved with youth mentoring for more than two decades, his understanding and experiences as a mentor and mentor trainer cannot be set aside or 'bracketed'. Moreover, LeVasseur (2003, as cited in Z. C. Y. Chan et al., 2013) states that bracketing was found inconsistent and problematic in hermeneutic phenomenology.

According to van Manen (1990), there is no single correct way of analyzing data in hermeneutic phenomenology, but for the coding and gathering of common themes of this research, a revised method for hermeneutic phenomenological analysis used by Sloan and Bowe (2014) was adopted (see Table 2).

The data analysis started with the listening to or viewing of each recorded interview. Changes in volume of voice, changes in intonation, pauses, laughing, facial expressions, repeated words or ideas, and other gestures were noted down. For example, it was noted that Beth mentioned several times during the interview that her mentor is like a second mom to her.

After reviewing the recordings, the interviewer himself transcribed these so that he can remember and reflect more on the conversation that happened during the interview.

After transcribing the interview, the researcher started reading the text of the transcription, taking note of important aspects of the interview. Then an initial wholistic theme was written, with the intention of revising it when needed. Wholistic themes are statements that best de-

**Table 2.** Hermeneutic phenomenological analysis for each transcript

1. Listening to an audio recording or watching a video recording and taking note of certain behaviors; exploring patterns and noting ideas that are often mentioned
2. Transcribing the recording
3. Reading through the text to generate a temporary wholistic theme
4. Going through the text and identifying lifeworld themes (corporeality, spatiality, relationality, and temporality) by van Manen (1997)
5. Re-reading the text and reflecting on the identified lifeworld themes if they are captured in the temporary wholistic theme
6. Refining the wholistic theme to fit the identified lifeworld themes
7. Re-reading again until a more definitive wholistic theme that represents the essence of the interview is generated
8. Generating the wholistic theme
9. Having mentees verify the themes

scribe the essence of the interview transcripts.

Themes for each transcript were identified as "structures of experience." This involved taking a wholistic theme for each individual transcript, which then was followed by selecting and highlighting thematic phrases and statements throughout the transcript. These used van Manen's existentials or theme types that served as guides for reflection on the data under analysis. These existentials are corporeality, spatiality, relationality, and temporality.

Corporeality, or lived body, refers to the phenomenological fact that we are always bodily in the world (van Manen, 1997). When we meet someone, we meet that person through their body. Our physical presence reveals and conceals something about ourselves. It includes feelings of tiredness, happiness, throbbing of the heart, and others. An example is when Beth mentioned that she cried in front of her mentor, "Actually, sir, there are a lot of times when I cried in front of Dr. Barbara [her mentor]."

Spatiality refers to the lived space where one operates and the physical place where the experience took place (van Manen, 1997). In short, it is the space that one feels. This includes the home, school, on land, underwater, and other such places that a person can experience. One's experience of space is pre-verbal, meaning one does not reflect on the space one enters; take, for example, the experience of entering a crowded elevator or entering a huge building. An example is when Beth

said to her mentor on campus, "When I see her around campus, I'm not afraid to say 'Hi!' or like say 'Mom!'."

Relationality refers to lived human relations as one interacts with another person in a shared interpersonal space (van Manen, 1997). This can refer to how one deals with another person, how one is treated or how one treats another person, and other such experiences. For Beth's case, she mentioned during the interview "My mentor is like a mother-figure to me."

Finally, temporality refers to lived time (van Manen, 1997). It refers to subjective time, which is the time that seems to slow down when we are bored or suffering and seems to speed up when we are enjoying ourselves, having a good time, and working in a state of flow. It also means the temporal dimension of past, present, and future. Beth mentioned "There are a lot of things to do, so it's really a matter of balancing my time."

The transcript was read once more to note the phenomenological lifeworld themes of corporeality, spatiality, relationality, and temporality as described and used by van Manen (1997). These lifeworld themes, also referred to here as experiential data, are what van Manen (1997) described as "productive categories for the process of phenomenological question-posing, reflecting, and writing." Only those phrases and statements that fall in any of the above existentials were considered for analysis while considering the wholistic theme (which constituted the hermeneutic circle (van Manen, 1997)). The experiential data were analyzed using computer software called MAXQDA Analytics Pro 2020 in classifying texts as phenomenological lifeworld "themes" or coded segments (the experiential data), and clustering these experiential data into clusters, and then finally into themes.

This process was repeated until a refined and definite wholistic theme that captures the other identified existentials was generated for that particular transcript. This same process was repeated with the other transcripts. The end result was one wholistic theme per transcript.

Once the wholistic theme went through several iterations (three to four re-readings of each transcript), it was then sent to the interviewees for verification. Along with the wholistic theme, the transcript and the lifeworld themes were also sent to the mentees or interviewees for verification. Once feedback was given by the interviewees, the clarifications, comments, and suggestions were incorporated accordingly.

The "world themes" analyzed as experiential data in this study were later grouped to form categories that, in turn, were grouped into themes that emerged from these data. Instead of using the term "codes" to refer to isolated data from transcripts, what is used is "experiential data" (Sloan, 2015).

These "world themes" or experiential data were then used to refine or revise the initially generated wholistic theme, as the case may be. In the end, a more definite

**Table 3.** Analysis by Sloan and Bowe (2014) as used in this study

| Process of analysis |
| --- |
| 1. Taking the wholistic themes from individual transcripts, identified as "structure of experience" |
| 2. "Selective" and "highlighting" approach to statements or phrases throughout the transcript using van Manen's (1997) "existentials." These "existentials" were used to guide reflection on the data under analysis. |
| 3. Extraction and interpretation, with consideration for the wholistic theme constituted as the "hermeneutic circle" (van Manen, 1997) |
| 4. "Hermeneutic reductions," one for each transcript, that represents findings for each participant |

wholistic theme that reflects the essence of the transcript was generated. For the case of Beth, the initial theme was "A mentor is a go-to person when she has personal problems." Eventually, the final wholistic theme for this interview with Beth is "A mother in the University."

The above process was used for this research, and as explained by Sloan and Bowe (2014), is presented in Table 3.

To validate the results, a peer debriefing was done with another researcher doing qualitative research. The latter validated the themes that were formulated from the author's reflections.

The analysis used in this study is deductive in nature. The analysis allowed for the emergence of themes by identifying experiential data. The themes were formed by grouping or clustering the lifeworld "themes" (or experiential data) by their common traits. This clustering made use of the OIT as a framework. The experiential data were clustered into five categories: the four types of motivational regulations of the OIT (external, introjected, identified, and integrated) and intrinsic regulation. The four motivational regulations show the degree of internalization and autonomy of the behavior while intrinsic regulation shows fully autonomous or self-determined behavior.

## Results

Below are the themes categorized using the trajectory of external regulation to intrinsic regulation.

### External regulation
For external regulation, there were only two experiential data under two transcripts. One mentee, a second-year Humanities major named Felipe, shared "It was nice [to do mentoring] because he actually treated me out for lunch at times." The external regulation mentioned by

**Table 4.** Themes under introjected regulation

| |
|---|
| 1.  Feeling important |
| 2.  Feeling more confident |
| 3.  Feeling affirmed |
| 4.  Not feeling being judged |

**Table 5.** Themes under identified regulation

| Important tasks of the mentor | Supporting mentees' needs |
|---|---|
| 1. Advising & giving tips | 1. Academic needs |
| 2. Giving feedback | 2. Emotional needs |
| 3. Encouraging | 3. Spiritual needs |
| | 4. Developing virtues |
| | 5. Decision-making |
| | 6. Maturity |
| | 7. Interpersonal skills |
| | 8. Time management |
| | 9. Professional needs |

the mentee was when they were treated to lunch by his mentor. It was a form of reward, externally regulated, for having attended the mentoring session with the mentor.

The activity was done because of external rewards or punishments. It was done out of compliance or reactance. From the interview, it seems that this kind of motivation is the least experienced since mentoring is not obligatory. Students are not graded nor are they penalized if they do not attend their mentoring sessions. One activity that manifests as an external motivation is when mentors bring out their mentees for lunch. This is a welcome treat for the mentees, especially if the mentor pays for the lunch of the mentees. This could pave the way for more frequent mentoring sessions since being treated for lunch is a good motivation to go to mentoring, and later on, the mentee realizes that he can get more things from it. These are shown in the succeeding external regulations.

**Introjected regulation**

For introjected regulation, eight experiential data in six transcripts were gathered. Introjected motivation includes the feeling of safety. For the mentees, this means they did not feel that they were being judged for what they were about to say. Fatima, a second-year student majoring in Education mentioned, "I can talk to her about my personal life and problems without being judged." They also had that sense of feeling important. They received affirmations from their mentors, especially when they felt that they were not doing well and were in need of support. They also felt more confident when they had been given this affirmation and encouragement or when the mentor had given them pieces of advice and some reassurance (see Table 4).

In introjected regulation, there is ego-involvement in doing the activity (mentoring conversations). The focus is on the approval from self and from others. The activity is done to preserve one's self-worth, and for ego-enhancement (or the experience of feeling proud). It was evident from the responses of the mentees that they went to mentoring because of the feelings they either get or avoid.

**Identified regulation**

In this research, the motivational regulation in the continuum that received the greatest number of experiential data, which were also cited in all the interviews, is identified regulation or identification. Identification is a more internalized motivation as compared to introjection. In identification, one sees the personal importance of the activity, as well as the conscious valuing of it. There is self-endorsement of goals, and the behavior is performed because it is instrumental in a beneficial outcome to the mentee. There were 67 experiential data found in 12 transcripts that refer to the motivation of identification. Discussed below are the two themes under this regulation: (a) important tasks of the mentor, and (b) supporting mentees' needs.

In identification, there is personal importance and conscious valuing of the activity, and the activity is done because there is self-endorsement of goals. Also, doing the activity is instrumental in a beneficial outcome for the mentee—this enhances the competencies of the mentee. Billy, a second-year Communications major stated, "He does not even have to talk about time management. For me, I learned it from him the way he is. He is a very busy person."

Of the four types of the external motivation continuum, it is the identified motivation that had garnered the most experiential data (67), from all 12 transcripts. Given these numbers, it can be concluded that identified regulation is the reason why most of the respondents are motivated to go through mentoring. It is expected that one of the major goals in mentoring is the achievement or development of certain goals, whether explicitly mentioned in the mentoring conversations or not.

Students enroll in the University not only to learn theoretical and practical concepts about the courses they are taking, but also to learn other skills that are not taught in the classrooms, such as intra- and inter-personal skills, decision-making skills, time management skills, among others. It is through the mentoring conversations that these other skills are developed, and the mentor plays an important role in facilitating the learning of these skills (Lankau & Scandura, 2007). See Table 5 for the themes generated that fall under identified regulation.

**Table 6.** Themes under integrated regulation

| Shared experiences & qualities | What effective mentors do | Integrating personal growth |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Background | 1. Help | 1. Setting goals |
| 2. Experiences | 2. Trust | 2. Growing in spiritual life |
| 3. Interests | 3. Guide | 3. Life lessons |
| 4. Values | 4. Inspire through the mentor's optimism | 4. Developing virtues |
| 5. Traits | 5. Help the mentee see something good in themselves that they had not seen before | |

**Table 7.** Mentees and types of motivation

| Mentee | Year level | Course | Types of motivation | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | External | Introjected | Identified | Integrated | Intrinsic |
| Amos | 5 | Humanities | | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Billy | 2 | Communications | | ● | ● | ● | |
| Chuck | 1 | Political Science | | | ● | ● | ● |
| Dan | 4 | Management | ● | | ● | | |
| Emman | 5 | Management | | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Felipe | 2 | Humanities | ● | ● | ● | ● | ● |
| Amanda | 4 | Economics | | | ● | ● | |
| Beth | 2 | Communications | | | ● | | |
| Celeste | 3 | Education | | | ● | | ● |
| Dette | 4 | Management | | | ● | ● | ● |
| Eve | 3 | Law | | ● | ● | ● | |
| Fatima | 2 | Education | | ● | ● | ● | |
| | | Total | 2 | 6 | 12 | 9 | 6 |

**Integrated regulation**

The next most referred motivation on the continuum is integration found in 30 experiential data from nine transcripts. This is a more internalized motivation as compared to identification. In integration, there is congruence, synthesis, and consistency of those behaviors found in identification. One of the mentees mentioned, "I was already educated of the values but he elaborated more for me to understand how I can apply it better in school." The mentoring behavior is done because the mentee believes that it is important and that it is in harmony with his personal values, beliefs, needs, and identity. See Table 6 for the themes that fall under integrated regulation.

**Intrinsic regulation**

For an intrinsically motivated person, there is inherent enjoyment and satisfaction in doing the activity. The activity is done autonomously and is self-determined. There is a sense of enjoyment in doing the activity. Felipe mentioned, "It's fun to be with him [the mentor] at times. And we'd laugh about stuff also. Enjoyable, it's enjoyable, sir." Intrinsic motivation was found in half (six) of the transcripts, and in 22 experiential data. This is essentially when the mentees mentioned that they enjoyed their mentoring sessions with their mentors. This enjoyment also happened when the mentees unburdened themselves of their problems and concerns during mentoring conversations. This is classified under intrinsic motivation because there was genuine intrinsic motivation to talk to the mentor to unload themselves of some burdens so as to feel better. When one's psychological needs are fulfilled, one feels better (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Table 7 shows the types of motivation that were present in the interview transcripts of mentees. The motivation that was present in all the transcripts is identified motivation. Next, integrated motivation was present in nine out of 12 interview transcripts. Both introjected and intrinsic motivations were present in half (six) of the transcripts. Lastly, external motivation was present in only two transcripts.

The most prominent among the four motivational regulations in this study are identified regulation followed by integrated regulation. As shown in Table 7, identified regulation was apparent in all 12 transcript interviews, while intrinsic regulation appeared in nine transcript interviews. Identification is a more internalized form of external motivation than introjection. In the interviews, there were two major areas that pointed to this motivation—what the mentors did to help their mentees, and those aspects where the mentees got help. The help that mentors gave came in the form of giving pieces of advice, feed-

back, and encouragement; showing a good example; and teaching the skills that the mentors possessed. The help that the mentees received from the mentor were classified as supporting academic needs, emotional needs, spiritual needs, developing virtues, decision-making, maturity, interpersonal skills (social), time management, and professional needs (see Table 5).

Integrated regulation is considered as representing the fullest type of internalization and is the most autonomous compared to the other three. Three major themes surfaced from this type of regulation. One theme was the experiences and qualities shared by the mentors and mentees that facilitate integration. The second theme was on what the mentors did to facilitate integration. Mentors gave help to their mentees; trusted, guided, and inspired them; and helped the mentees realize things that they had not seen before. The last theme, integration, was further enhanced by setting goals with the mentees, sharing their personal and spiritual lives in the conversations, living the lessons told by the mentor, and developing virtues through the help of the mentor. (see Table 6).

The second theme, integration, was further enhanced by setting goals with the mentee, sharing their personal and spiritual lives in the conversations, living the lessons told by the mentor, and developing virtues through the help of the mentor. The last theme was on what the mentors did to facilitate this integration. Mentors gave help to their mentees; trusted, guided, and inspired them; and helped the mentees realize things that they had not seen before (see Table 6).

These are what can be concluded as shared experiences by the interview participants. These experiences cut across the majority if not all of the mentees interviewed. The remaining motivational regulations appeared in half or less than half of the interview transcripts (six transcripts or less).

## Discussion

### External regulation
External regulation takes place when an external demand is complied with and is the most externally motivated regulation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). The behavior is motivated by an external reward or punishment. An example was mentioned earlier; Felipe likes to go to mentoring sessions because his mentor treats him out for lunch during certain mentoring sessions. The free food is the motivation to go to mentoring, even if he may have other internalized motivations to do so. Before mentored pairs meet, the mentees do not have the motivation to see their mentors. They usually have doubts about the trustworthiness of the mentors. But it is important that the mentoring session takes place because some students realize later on that mentoring is worthwhile, as was later

on realized by Felipe, "When I first met my mentor at the dormitory, he looked very strict. But when I started to get to know about him, he is actually fun to be with." As such, external motivations could help in making the mentees meet up with their mentors. And hopefully later on, as the OIT suggests, more internalized and integrated motivations develop (Ednie & Stibor, 2017).

### Introjected regulation
One characteristic of introjected regulation is ego involvement in doing the activity. The activity is performed to preserve self-worth and ego enhancement (Ryan & Deci, 2002). For example, when mentees experienced being affirmed by their mentor, or not being judged, it was introjected regulation at work.

Eve, a third-year Law student, said that her mentor boosted her morale when she was feeling low and down, and that it was good to know that her mentor was at her back. This made her more confident and it inspired her to do better. "So I think that's also one of the things— that she will always be at your back. Having that kind of morale booster from a professor's standpoint is also one of the advantages. You keep being inspired," she said. Eve, as with other students in this study, has received encouragement that boosted her self-esteem.

One thing that mentees did not want to feel was being judged, as verbalized by Fatima: "And I can talk to her about my personal life and problems without being judged. Without the feeling, like I didn't get the feeling that I was being judged."

It was important for them not to be judged by their mentor. The feeling of being judged serves as a barrier for young people to get help (Ijadi-Maghsoodi et al., 2018). The feeling of being judged came from the experiences they had with other people, with their peers, and even with their family. Not feeling judged facilitated the opening of the mentees' personal concerns to the mentor and enabled them to share deeper and more personal matters with the mentor. Finally, introjected regulation leads people to behave in socially acceptable ways so that they feel worthy (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

### Identified regulation
Identified regulation is more internalized as compared to introjected regulation. Here, the mentee saw personal importance in doing the activity of seeking the mentor. The mentee also valued this activity since the pieces of advice one got from the mentor were personally valuable and beneficial. Table 5 shows the themes under this type of regulation.

#### Important tasks of the mentor
There were certain actions or activities of the mentors that facilitated the development of certain skills in the mentees. These actions included giving advice, tips,

feedback, and encouragement. Several studies have shown that mentoring has helped in the social functioning and academic performance of the youth (C. S. Chan et al., 2013; DuBois & Karcher, 2005; Eby et al., 2008). Mentors also influence the professional identity of their mentees (Austin, 2002).

**Advising and giving tips.** Mentors helped mentees learn the skills that mentors possessed. Mentors taught certain skills that mentees may not even be fully aware of. One student, Billy, said that he learned about time management and work ethics by merely looking at how his mentor worked as well as through his examples.

> *Billy*: He doesn't even have to talk about time management. For me, I learned it from him the way he is. He's a very busy person. He always sets a schedule. So just by looking at him work, it's kinda inspiring enough for me like you know—Oh, I got to try to be like him in order to be successful.

Mentors also gave some tips on how to study certain subjects and how to approach certain lessons and some professors. Mentors gave several tips on various topics to their mentees, as evident in what Felipe shared during the interview: "I think that one of the problems I actually asked him for help was for my Shakespeare class because it was difficult for me to understand the reading. And especially reciting during class." Giving the right kind of advice is important in mentoring (Bradbury & Koballa, 2007).

**Giving feedback.** Mentees went to their mentors to get feedback on certain issues. Beth, a second-year student majoring in Communication, said that at times she needed to be told if she was not doing something right—"So I need someone to remind me or to tell me, 'Hey, you weren't doing this right.' " This came in the form of feedback from her mentor. The mentee felt bad hearing the feedback, but she knew that it was good for her. For this situation to happen, there has to be a high level of trust in the mentor since students are sensitive to the negative comments given to them by others. However, since the mentees felt safe, knew that the negative feedback was given for their own good, and were assured of the support of the mentor, they were willing to take on the negative feedback (Lactao, 2017). The negative feedback was then transformed into goals of students aimed at self-improvement.

**Encouraging.** Ms. Frida, an employee of the University working in human resources, encouraged her mentee, Fatima, to go through a subject that she was finding difficult. This encouragement was important for Fatima because she eventually passed the subject. "And that gave me strength, and encouraged me to go through

the subject and not to drop it," Fatima said. At times, mentees went to their mentors for reassurance, especially when they felt they are at a dead end or at a roadblock and would not know what to do next. Take the case of Amanda, a fourth-year Economics major. "But then when I go to my mentor, it's more for the deeper things because I go to my mentor for reassurance," she said. Some researchers have suggested that mentors give encouragement to their mentees (Bradbury & Koballa, 2007; Grantham, 2004). When mentors give encouraging words, mentees are motivated to push through and move forward. Giving words of encouragement is a small act with a huge effect on the mentees.

**Supporting mentees' needs**
The needs of the mentees are classified into nine categories: academic needs, emotional needs, spiritual needs, developing virtues, decision-making, maturity, interpersonal skills, time management, and professional needs.

**Academic needs.** Acceptable academic performance is essential for students to stay in the University. Thus, this was a constant concern of students, especially those who needed to reach a certain grade or grade point average. As such, it was inevitable to talk about one's academic performance in mentoring (C. S. Chan et al., 2013; Eby et al., 2008). Fatima was also helped by her mentor in this respect. She consulted her mentor about whether it was a good decision to drop a certain subject or not. She also brought up other matters related to her studies and academic performance.

> *Fatima*: There was a time when I was about to drop a subject because of a certain professor. And then I consulted with her [Fatima's mentor] because I know she can help me. And she can give advice on what I can do.

Another direct way that mentors helped their mentees was through tutorials. This was one of the ways that Mr. Earl, a professor under the School of Management, helped his mentee, Emman, a fifth-year Management major. Mr. Earl was a professor who was good with numbers and finance. Emman sought his help on how to study some subjects related to accounting and finance, and Mr. Earl obliged. "For example, Earl, my mentor, is from the School of Management. He also helps me with things that I don't understand, especially Math. I'm not good at accounting and finance...," Emman said. Another mentee, Billy, recalled running to his mentor for help at the time when he was failing a subject.

> *Billy*: I was failing her subject, and I ran to Dr. Bernard and asked for his advice, like, "Doc, should I drop this class or not because like I feel as though… it's pressuring me and I feel as though that this professor hates me."

**Emotional needs.** Dette, a fourth-year Management student, shared how her mentor helped her open up and speak about what she was feeling. "She's helped me open up more, and that's what I've learned, especially in my 4th year as compared to my 3rd year, I really opened up in my 4th year because of her," she said. This student was not used to talking about her feelings to anyone, and according to her, her mentor was instrumental in helping her to open up. Another student, Celeste, a third-year majoring in Education, mentioned that it was important for her to let out her emotions, and she found the perfect listener in her mentor.

> *Celeste*: I felt really like disheartened and bad about the news so I, I actually ended up, I am a very emotional person, so like when I start to feel a lot of emotions, I have to let it out right away. And Ms. Corazon seems like a very, uhm, warm and approachable person. And I didn't really know her that well, but it was just, it just like came out and she was very comforting, and, uhm open to listening.

Celeste described herself as an emotional person, and it was Ms. Corazon, an employee of the University working under the Office of Student Affairs, who helped her handle her emotions well. Mentors who provide psycho-emotional support to their mentees have better chances of having close and enduring mentoring relationships with their mentors (Rhodes & DuBois, 2008).

**Spiritual needs.** In some cases when students had a sense of spirituality, their mentors who shared the same personal relationship with God were able to help them develop or deepen this spirituality. The University where the mentees study fosters an atmosphere conducive to living one's religious life. Thus, this environment facilitates the prayer life and spirituality that the mentee and mentor share. The mentor can just bring the mentee to one of the chapels in the University, or bring the mentee to a priest for spiritual direction or sacramental confession. They could also attend Holy Mass in the chapel of the University.

For example, Emman was glad that his mentor helped him improve his relationship with God. "I'm really struggling. Yeah, that's the first time I asked him for mentoring—to help me balance my academic life, my social life, and then my relationship with God," he said. Sometime later in the interview, he mentioned something similar. "He can actually help you with other things like, you know, relationship with God, and all those academics," he said. "Maybe not just academics but more spiritual. I do not know what you'd call it… spiritual virtues."

Emman mentioned several times during the interview how his mentor helped him with his relationship with God. Some years ago, this spirituality was something that Emman would avoid. However, he saw its value through his mentor without the mentor even prompting it. It evolved organically during their conversations.

Chuck, a first-year Political Science student, mentioned in the interview that his mentor, a professor of Communication, helped him with his spiritual formation as well. "Of course, personal struggles, spiritual formation, even. It really does help to have that mentor to guide you in what you're trying to do for yourself in the University," he said.

Spirituality is also an important aspect of the lives of the respondents. It has not been commonly found in research on mentoring, though. Only when there is a common interest between mentors and mentees can spirituality and life of prayer impact them in the course of their mentoring relationships.

**Developing virtues.** Character development, or virtues, was among the other things that mentees learned from their mentors. Emman mentioned that his mentor helped him to work hard by looking at the rewards of this hard work, and by offering this work to God.

> *Emman*: You work hard to excel, and then *mas magaganda yung* rewards *mo kasi* you feel *na* you did your best. *Tapos* you can actually do whatever you want *na* after. And then *yung* opportunity to offer to God. [You work hard to excel, and then the rewards will be sweeter since you feel that you did your best. Then you can actually do whatever you want after. And then the opportunity to offer to God.]

When mentors point out certain weaknesses in the mentees, one course of action is to improve in that point. As in the case of Emman above, his mentor made him realize that he needed diligence and hard work to attain excellence. And added to this, he elevated this diligence to another level by giving meaning to this task by offering this work for God.

**Decision-making.** Decision-making is a skill that one needs in life. School is a place to develop good decision-making skills. In mentoring, students are given the opportunity to consult their mentors regarding decisions they are considering. Billy spoke to his mentor before making a decision on some important matters. "When it comes to critical stuff, like academics, things of that nature, he would be on the list of like people I need to talk to before considering a decision that I have to make," he said.

Mentees learn the decision-making process of their mentors when the mentors guide the mentees in a step-by-step process of problem solving. At times, this is vicariously transmitted by the mentor to the mentee (Lactao, 2017).

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**Maturity.**   Celeste went to her mentor because her mentor offered what she called a "mature perspective" of things.

> *Celeste*: It means a lot to me because it's really nice to just have someone in the school if I'm feeling like if I need advice, or I need help, or I just need someone to talk to, who has like a more mature perspective on things.

Dan, a fourth-year Management student, mentioned that he went to his mentor because Mr. Darren, a professor who finished the same course as Dan, gave him a perspective that he would not have heard from his friends. "I think my mentors have different perspectives towards certain problems that my friends won't know," he said.

As adults, mentors have made life decisions that shaped their maturity. And they can share these life decisions and other experiences that made them mature, or capable of facing one's duties and responsibilities, and also life's challenges.

**Interpersonal skills.**   Felipe's mentor helped him deal with problems that arose among his friends. This was part of his answers when he was asked about the help that his mentor offered him. "If the mentee is open to talking about their problems about their friends—my mentor has actually helped me with those problems," he said. "I actually came to him once for problems with my friends and relationships. He really gave good points and ideas on how I should deal with it, which I really appreciate."

Interpersonal skills or social skills are another set of skills that mentees develop in the mentoring relationship (Lactao, 2017). They appreciate how the mentors facilitate the improvement of their social skills. These concerns are usually in the context of one's group of friends. Mentees share the struggles of keeping friendships loyal and truthful. In turn, mentors ask questions to help them look at things from the perspective of other people. Mentors also give several suggestions on how one can manage the challenges of interpersonal relationships.

**Time management.**   Emman said that his mentor was able to help him balance all the things he had to do, especially at the times when he felt lost and overwhelmed by the quantity of work he had to do (usually during midterms and finals week).

> *Emman*: I remember the first time I asked him for a mentoring session, I was in the middle of, if I recall, midterms. Actually *dalawang beses*, *eh* [I actually went to him twice]. It's usually midterms and finals. And that was the time when I was really struggling with… with really balancing my life.

One of the difficulties of mentoring is setting a common time to meet since both the students and professors are very busy. Students are involved in a lot of extracurricular activities, and mentors usually hold multiple roles in the University—teaching, research, administration, and mentoring, among others. As such, time management is brought up during mentoring conversations. Mentors share how they manage their time, and they also give advice on how students can manage their time.

**Professional needs.**   Professional competencies were also developed in the mentees (Austin, 2002; Kram, 1983). Eve, the student taking up law, mentioned that some of her conversations with her lawyer-mentor revolved around the practice of law.

> *Eve*: Of course I think it's the goal towards achieving a particular profession. Since she's already a lawyer, I'm aspiring to become a lawyer myself. All our discussions would revolve around the study of law, tips, and tricks, on how to go about this particular subject. She has been through those subjects already, in terms of course alignment or of understanding, or how to understand things.

She mentioned that her mentor shared her experiences as a lawyer since she worked for the government and in law firms. Eve's mentor also helped her to study for her law subjects—she shared strategies on how to approach certain classes in law and other issues that she could encounter whether as a law student or as a practicing lawyer. Through mentoring, Eve gets to vicariously live different ways of practicing law through the lens of her mentor. This way, she can better gauge which aspects of lawyering she prefers even before becoming a lawyer.

### Integrated regulation

As a more internalized form from identified regulation, integrated regulation involves congruence, synthesis, and consistency of behavior. The mentees identified the behavior with all other aspects of their life. The behavior was performed because it was seen as something important and in harmony with one's personal values, needs, and identity. In this research, integrated motivation is founded on three concepts: (a) shared experiences and qualities, (b) what effective mentors do, and (c) integrating personal growth, all listed and described below.

### Shared experiences and qualities

People who have similar hometowns and career paths may have shared values. Communities have certain values lived by their members. Persons belonging to the same professions also share similar interests and values. Some mentor-mentee pairs shared things in common,

such as hometowns, experiences, and even an interest in pop culture. One pair with an aforementioned similarity is Eve and Atty. Everlyn, an experienced lawyer and professor of Law, who both came from the same city.

> *Eve*: Yes, because it, aside from the fact that we knew each other before entering law school, she's also from Leyte, from Tacloban. I am from there also. She knows my grandfather. She would also ask how they are, my family members.

Fatima intimated that she had some identical experiences with her mentor, including having strict parents. These shaped their values and behaviors. "We have the same, identical experiences. We came from the same school, we both have strict parents, and those private stuff I can talk to her about," she said. Personal connection is one of the characteristics of successful mentoring relationships. On the other hand, personality differences are a factor in unsuccessful mentoring relationships (Raposa et al., 2019; Straus et al., 2013). Thus it is important that common characteristics and interests are established from the beginning since these pave the way for trust-building. It would be good to discuss these during the first mentoring conversations. Activities that can uncover these shared experiences can facilitate relationship-building.

### What effective mentors do

Effective mentors did several things that helped mentees acquire an integrated motivation to mentoring, like when Emman was tutored in Math by his mentor. Mentors also trust, guide their mentees, inspire them, and help them see something good in the mentees that the mentees are unaware of.

Emman felt the trust given to him by his mentor, and as a consequence, he felt more comfortable trusting him back even more. Emman further shared: "He was the one who initiated talking about his interests first, what he likes and doesn't like. Then his spiritual struggles. So that gave me assurance that I could trust him because he is already putting trust in me." When mentors trust their mentees, the mentees feel the trust and reciprocate this trust to the mentor.

Beth was guided by her mentor on the right decision to make when she was thinking of dropping a subject.

It is clear that Billy was inspired by the optimism of his mentor when he said, "He's not like a half-glass, empty person. He's always half-glass, full. It's inspiring. It makes you look at things hopefully."

At times, mentors help mentees realize something good in them that he may not have seen before, as in the case of Amos, a fifth-year Humanities major. "So something that is good for you, something that you didn't see before, and it means it's something that the mind recognizes as higher difficulty, . . . is that positive intellectual stimulation I'm looking for." Effective mentors are able to uncover good qualities of the mentees that were initially hidden to them. Effective mentors help (Tryon & Winograd, 2011), trust, and guide (Rhodes, 2005) their mentees. They also inspire their mentees through the optimism they manifest. They also make their mentees see some good traits unbeknownst to them.

### Integrating personal growth

Mentors helped their mentees integrate certain behaviors in their lives that led to personal growth through goal-setting, tackling one's spiritual life, sharing life lessons, and developing virtues.

Dette agreed on a set of goals with her mentor, Ms. Dorothy, a professor of History, at the start of the semester. She usually updated her on the progress of these goals during the course of their mentoring sessions throughout the semester. "So it was more of like a catchup-type of thing that made me want to talk to her again. After like setting goals at the start of the semester, I was always like updating her," Dette said.

According to Emman, spiritual formation was something that also got integrated into his life. "He also helps me with my spiritual formation," he said. The mentor suggested to Emman to offer his work as a student to God, a concrete way of integrating his spirituality in his life.

> *Emman*: I remember he kept telling me *na*, "If *nahihirapan ka*, or *hindi mo lang alam*, or *sobrang* down *na* down *ka*, you can offer everything to God." So that's one of the biggest things *na* he taught me. [I remember he kept telling me, "If you are finding it difficult, or if you don't know what to do, or you feel so down, you can offer everything to God." So that's one of the biggest things that he taught me.]

Mentors integrated certain behaviors in their mentees through sharing of life lessons. Mr. Earl taught Emman the value of excellence and having fun as a later reward. "Like one of the values he taught me was [try to] excel now, and then have fun and get your reward later," he said.

Mentors also helped their mentees grow in virtues. In the case of Emman, he was helped in the spiritual virtues. "Maybe not just academics but more spiritual. I do not know what you'd call it. . . spiritual virtues. . . ," he said.

These are more internalized forms of motivation for mentees to seek out their mentors. These themes show that they are more integrated, and are on a more personal level since they are aligned with their personal values and have fully assimilated them (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

**Intrinsic regulation**

When mentees mentioned that their mentoring conversations were enjoyable, they were referring to internal motives. In the mentoring conversations, mentees spoke freely about what they wanted to say during the conversations. The mentor scheduled time in his day to talk to the mentee. The conversations become enjoyable when the mentors were bubbly, not stiff, and manifested trust in the mentee. These conversations were usually light, casual, and free-flowing. There were exchanges of ideas that resulted in the intellectual stimulation of the mentees.

Described below are lived experiences of mentees that showed that they were internally motivated to go to mentoring. This is followed by descriptions of how these conversations were and descriptions of the mentor during this engagement.

Mentees described their mentoring experience as enjoyable. Dette mentioned how she enjoyed the conversation when she was talking to her mentor about the concert she watched. "Like my concert experience. I told her about it, and what I felt during the concert—that it was also fun—she actually felt genuinely interested in it because she understood the topic," she said. Another student, Chuck, described his mentoring conversations as enjoyable, too. "I really found it quite, ah, enjoyable, and I am actually quite grateful for it," he said. These mentoring conversations also served as moments to vent out his frustrations. "So it really is quite free for me to just vent out everything, and he will just listen, and then give advice," he said.

Mentees described these conversations as light, casual, enjoyable, and intellectually stimulating. Amos described his mentoring conversations with Dr. Albert, a professor and prominent figure in theatre, as light but substantial. "So low pressure, high substance. Those are the kind of conversations that I like," he said. He also enjoyed the intellectual stimulation and appreciated the opportunity to share his ideas during those conversations. "I mean, secondarily there is also the intellectual stimulation which you get out of it," he said. Later on, he said "…having a relationship and having a sort of time to share your ideas…"

The mentees did not feel like a burden while talking to their mentors. At times, Celeste felt that she was a burden to her friends when she shared her problems with them. She thought that by sharing her problems with them, she was adding to their burdens, but this was not what she felt when she poured out her heart to her mentor. "So it didn't feel like a burden talking to her…," she said. Celeste knew that her mentor was there to listen to her. She felt better after talking to her mentor. "Ah, I felt better talking to her. I felt happy to finally have a mentor," she said.

During these light conversations, mentees described their mentors as someone who was easy to talk to, who made time for them, who cracked jokes, who was bubbly and not stiff, and who trusted the mentee. Dette said that her mentor was nice and easy to talk to because she shared her college experiences with her. "So it's nice to talk to someone who's already experienced the whole college thing. So it's different. And I feel like it's easier to talk to her than someone who's also struggling at the same time with me."

Mentoring was fun when mentors joked around from time to time for a laugh. This was the experience of Felipe with his mentor, Mr. Fernando, a member of the Management Committee of the University. "Ah…it's interesting [laughs]. It's fun to be with him at times. He can make jokes from time to time. And we'd laugh about stuff also [laughs]. Enjoyable, it's enjoyable, sir."

These were the intrinsic motivations for mentees to attend their mentoring sessions. It was also previously mentioned what the mentees felt and did during these conversations, how enjoyable and worthwhile these conversations were, and what the mentors did to make them enjoyable and intrinsically motivating for their mentees. It is intrinsic regulation that is the most autonomous form of regulation since there is inherent enjoyment and satisfaction in doing the activity (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

## Conclusions

While mentoring programs in educational institutions in the Philippines are gaining popularity, research on this subject is currently at its nascent stage. This study aims to jumpstart interest in research on youth mentoring. As shown in this research, there is evidence that students in a mentoring program are motivated to engage with their mentors. Mentees' needs as supported by their mentors facilitated the internalization and integration of the value of mentoring in their lives. This very much aligns with the OIT, which states that need-support facilitated internalization and integration.

Our findings reveal that mentors play a crucial role in providing need-support in the diverse needs of mentees, including academic, emotional, spiritual, personal, and professional needs. Through giving pieces of advice and tips, feedback, and encouragement, mentors facilitate the internalization of the value of mentoring in the lives of these mentees. This aligns with the proposition of the OIT, which highlights the importance of need-support in facilitating the internalization and integration of behaviors. Our analysis reveals that identified regulation is prevalent among mentees, indicating a strong personal investment in the mentoring process.

Additionally, integrated regulation, the fullest and most autonomous type of internalization, emerged as a significant factor among mentees who perceive mentoring as integral to their personal growth and development.

And as such, they are most likely to endorse mentoring to their friends and classmates, and to even become mentors themselves eventually.

## Recommendations

Based on this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. For existing mentoring programs, especially those in higher education, the results of this study can help guide in selecting mentors, developing mentoring programs (particularly the training modules for new mentors), and re-capacitating mentors with new skills.

   a. Mentors should be taught how to give advice and feedback that are appropriate to the age group that they are mentoring. Mentors should be trained on how to help their mentees and on how to be encouraging in the mentoring sessions. These were evident in the results of identified regulation.

   b. Moreover, various ways of providing help or assistance through identified regulation—academic, emotional, social (interpersonal skills), spiritual, and professional (decision making skills, time management)—should also be part of the mentor training program.

   c. As for other considerations in mentor training, the results under integrated regulation, the fullest type of internalization, could be factored in. These include emphasis on relationship building by discussing shared experiences and shared personal qualities in the mentoring conversations. Setting goals with mentees is important in the mentoring sessions. The mentors also have to see that they trust, guide, and inspire their mentees.

   d. Incorporating training on building relationships and focusing on skills development can greatly push the effectiveness of the mentoring program.

2. Students can be encouraged to participate in a school or community mentoring program if they are given a chance to, with the knowledge and consent of their parents or guardians.

3. For administrators, a University-wide mentorship program can be implemented with cross-sectoral participation of guidance counselors, select school administrators, successful mentors, successful mentees, students, and faculty members across disciplines.

4. Researchers can conduct

   a. development of instruments that measure the motivations of mentees to be mentored,

   b. a phenomenological study on successful graduates who are products of mentoring programs across disciplines, e.g., prolific researchers who are products of mentorship of prolific mentors who are researchers themselves, or notable leaders who are products of mentorship of successful leaders, and

   c. a study using mixed-methods on effects of mentoring on the academic performance and adaptation capacity of students across disciplines.

5. Policy makers can seek government support in creating mentorship programs dedicated to underprivileged youth and youth-at-risk.

6. Non-government organizations can institutionalize a community-based mentoring program aimed at helping underprivileged youth and youth-at-risk.

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# Editorial board

(as of December 2020)