

The Implementation of Covid-19 Security Protocols in City of San Fernando, Pampanga

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Abstract

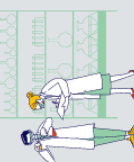
The first case of the Novel Corona Virus came from the reports from the health officials in Wuhan, China in the late part of 2019. Retrospective investigations by Chinese authorities have identified human cases with onset of symptoms in early December 2019. The first reported cases of the virus are said to have links in the wet market of Wuhan city, where majority of the first patients were known to have an association with this market. They are either the store keepers, or customers or just a mere visitor in the place, the reported samples taken in December 2019 revealed, which led to a conclusion that it was in this place that the outbreak started. This prompted the Chinese government to close the market place in the early 2020. Coronavirus is a zoonotic virus causing illness that may range from an ordinary cold to a more serious respiratory disease. Covid-19 is the most recent to make the jump to human infection.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 infection is spread from one person to others via droplets produced from the respiratory system of infected people. According to current data, the symptoms of infection usually appear within two to fourteen days, with an average of five days. The transmission of the virus has reached at least six continents in October 22, 2020, it was estimated that the death toll caused by the said virus peaked to 1.1 million with Italy recording 36,800 deaths. Approximately to 15 countries and territories worldwide have been affected by the COVID-19 disease. Economists had theorized that if the effect of the virus will become a global pandemic, it would put a major blow on economies. It would lead to a loss of 2.4 percent of the gross domestic product or known as "GDP" by the end of 2020. This led the economist to cut down their 2020 forecast of on global GDP to an estimated 86.6 trillion USD compared in 2019, or there is a drop in financial growth of 0.4% or an estimated loss of 3.5 trillion USD in economic output.

The initial reports from televisions and newspapers were that the virus came from Bats which was transmitted to humans, however, upon further investigation they found out that there is a lacking scientific foundation to which explain clearly that the virus actually came from animal. This virus called the Novel Corona Virus also known as "COVID 19". The World Health Organization (2020) reported that the signs of infection are fever, tiredness, sore throat, diarrhea, dry cough, and headache. Many countries were affected including Italy, Mexico, and United States of America, these countries got the greatest number of deaths.

On 30 January 2020, in the Philippine, the Health Department reported the first patient to have contracted the COVID-19 virus in the country, a female Chinese who was admitted in San Lazaro Hospital in City of Manila, however, the first reported local transmission was on March



7, 2020 until it has spread on the all throughout the country. Lockdowns or community quarantines have been imposed although out the country since March 15 2020 in order to minimize or even stop the spread of the deadly disease.

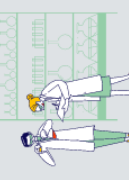
The Philippine government implemented lockdowns and checkpoints on the nationwide as advised by President Rodrigo Duterte to keep all the Filipinos safe from the virus. Different levels of lockdown were executed, the first and strictest is the Enhanced Community Quarantine wherein all classes in different levels were suspended, public transportation were suspended, sea, land, and air travel shall be restricted, public assemblies shall be prohibited, and work from home shall be implemented except for the front liners those that are identified as front liners, lastly, a strict home quarantine shall be observed in all households. Even barangays have checkpoints to ensure that people aren't going out of their houses to prevent the virus to pass on. Particularly those below 21 years old, 60 years old or older, those with immunodeficiency and other health risk are ordered to stay inside their houses. President Duterte signed several Executive Orders for Covid-19. Executive Order no. 108, s. 2020 was signed amending EO No. 21 S 2003, this provided instruction for the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes to allot an emergency. The allotted fund shall be to cover the National Government's financial needs in its response to the COVID-19 virus in the country.

Another executive Order signed was EO No.110, S 2020 that institutionalized also the Comprehensive Social Benefits Program. EO No. 112, S 2020 was also signed, this particular executive order mandates that all those that are considered high risk places in the country should be put to an enhanced community quarantine and those that are not identified as high risk will be put to a General Community Quarantine starting May 1 until May 15, 2020.

One of the programs set by the government was the balik probinsya, bagong pagasa program under EO No. 114, S 2020 which offers those from the provinces working in the cities especially metro manila to go home in their provinces with a promise of a new future. This EO 114, S 2020.

As early as 2014, the Inter-Agency Task Force was created under EO No. 168 S 2014, to manage these emerging diseases. Under the said executive order, it recognizes that in order for the government to be efficient in their response to emerging diseases, there is a need for the different sectors to work together to ensure the mobility and preparedness and to stop the epidemic in the country.

The province of Pampanga had also strengthened their boarder control points. Most importantly in Apalit which is the main entry point of Bulacan Province and other areas in the south to Pampanga. Next is San Simon exit which serves as gateway of people from Metro Manila. Candaba, also the entry point going to different municipalities in Bulacan. To ensure public order and safety, the San Fernando Police Office and the Public Safety Coordinating Office of the San Fernando City, Pampanga had established boarder checkpoints in all its entry and exit points. This move is to manage motorists coming from the areas of Metro Manila, and Bulacan who are currently under the Modified Enhanced Quarantine as of August 4, 2020. The boarder control would only allow individuals who has the necessary documents as well as valid identification card. The boarder control is manned on a 24-hour basis and would only be lifted once the MECQ in the Metro Manila and Bulacan will be lifted according to the article of (Arcellaz 2020).



Moreover, the police officers assigned in San Fernando City, Pampanga, imposed strict physical distancing in every vehicle passing the area of their responsibility, it also strictly implemented the mandatory use of face mask as well as face shield of every passenger entering the checkpoint is mandated. In the first implementation of GCQ in San Fernando Pampanga the no back ride is strongly observed by the checkpoints, but the IATF released a memorandum stated that the marriage couple or living as a husband and wife are allowed in the back riding in the motorcycle for provided that there is a barrier in between them. In every checkpoint in the boundaries of San Fernando they strictly implemented the curfew hours from 10pm to 5am to control the flow of the people and prevent the increase number of Covid-19 case.

Checkpoints are necessary during pandemic to ensure that only authorized individuals with important business and transactions are going out of their homes. Implementation of public health protocols are a huge help in our place to guide us and keep us away from the contagious disease. Without these safety protocols and checkpoints, our country will be in great danger. While we are already under the new normal phase, still we must follow the rules of the government, because despite of the relaxed and less strict checkpoint. This study aimed to assess the COVID-19 protocol in Pampanga, particularly, the San Fernando City, Pampanga as its struggles to keep the citizen safe.

2.0 Related Literature

2.1 Theoretical Review

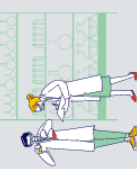
Social Psychological Theory studies scientifically how individual thoughts, feelings, beliefs, intentions and goals which are brought within a social-circumstances either through actual or imaginary reciprocal actions with others. It tries to explain the reasons for individual behavior in the contexts of social situations. According to McLeod (2007), social psychological focuses on the different factors that causes a person to behave or to react in a certain situation. This situation or circumstances are the ones that triggers such reaction from a certain individual person. On Novel Coronavirus Disease, it discusses the people's decision, it includes health behaviors that is dependent on the alignment of the behaviors to their pre-existing values, cultural frameworks and worldviews. It gives emphasis on the purpose of the precedent values on how the people will work on health preventive measures that the government introduced to prevent the spread of the disease. This theory posits that individual with socially oriented values is more inclined to follow the health guideline that were set. On the other hand, self-centered individuals have a less inclined to follow the health guidelines.

Social psychological theory directly shows the social psychological impact of the current pandemic to the lives of people. Each individual has different approach and views towards public health protocols implemented by the government depending on the social context where they belong. People in the same social group likely share the same views and perspective in complying to public health protocols.

2.2 Variable Discussion

2.2.1. Pampanga enhance zoning containment strategy vs. covid-19

The provincial office of the DILG in Pampanga has strengthened its competence in its Local Government Units as well as to its field officers in the enforcement of its zoning containment



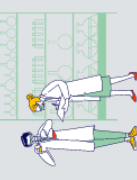
approach to fight covid virus. Thru online, the field officers and the Local Government Units spread awareness to the public on the measures to contain the transmission of the covid-19 virus at a community level. Firstly, they gave emphasis on the value of tests, surveillance and how it is reported in order to prevent the spread of the virus in its early stage of detection. The fast and effective response of the local government unit once the virus is detected plays a very crucial role in their containment approach. This includes tracing of infected individuals and those that came in contact with them and test as well as treat them according to the City Health Officer, Dr. Renely Tungol. Secondly, the Department of the Interior and Local Government together with the Department of Health has revised the manner on how contact tracing is reported (Tecson, 2020)

2.2.2. Troops monitor Negros Occidental borders amid Covid-19 spread

The Philippine Army, through its 303rd brigade who are stationed in the province of Occidental Mindoro continued to provide assistance through border monitoring to help the Inter-Agency Task Force, according to Col. Inocencio Pasaborde, the commanding officer. The governor, Eugene Jose Lacson issued an executive order that directs the borders, the sea ports and airports of the province to be secured. As part of its civil defense, the military assigned in the Negros Occidental area will augment and prioritize the prevention of the covid virus in the area and that he encouraged the residents to cooperate by observing strict social deterrents in order that the virus will not spread. He further stated that while the government and health experts are working for solutions, the military men assigned in Mindoro will continue to uphold their duties as a soldier who is away from their families even during troubled times. The military and other members of the task force with the leadership of PNP will assist in implementing security procedures at checkpoint areas within the province's borders to prevent the intrusion of those who do not. permitted under this executive order, particularly along highways within the borders of Mabinay-Kabankalan, Bayawan-Hinoba-an, San Carlos-Vallehermoso, La Castellana-Canlaon and other possible roads as an entry point, the army commander added. (Ellera, 2020)

2.2.3 Police Planning During Covid-19 Pandemic

The role of the police also changes as the context of the pandemic changes and the needs of the population and the government evolve. The needs of the police staff and the capacity of the organization can also change during the pandemic as they and their families can be hit by the pandemic, at least in the same proportion as the rest of the population. Therefore, planning the police response to COVID-19 is extremely important to address evolving issues related to the preparedness, the response and the recovery from the pandemic. The importance of the planning lies also in the reputational risks that the police can potentially have during the response to the pandemic, knowing that the measures taken today would impact the future relationship between the police and the population after the pandemic. The police should also look to the nonharmful effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and prepare its response to better position itself and enhance its service to the population. The police should consider the windows of opportunities that can be opened during the pandemic at the political and social levels to introduce some critical reforms, such as the digital transformation of the police



management and innovation in investigation procedures, that can sustainably and positively impact the development of the police, once the pandemic is safely behind us (Luna, Brito, & Sanberge, 2007)

2.2.4 Implementation of Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) and travel restrictions

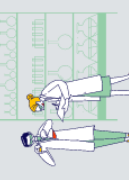
The implementation of a community quarantine started on the month of March 2020 in the National Capital Region (NCR) area. However, with the increasing cases in the nearby provinces, the said health security measure was implemented in the different provinces of Luzon as ordered by the chief executive. During the said quarantine period, all travels were banned to include sea, air and land travels with the exception of those involved in providing the essential services such as those medical personnel and emergency services, transportation of goods. People were encouraged to remain home and instead use the online communication to reach others as well as to do their business transaction and to avoid public gathering in their offices. This restriction will expire on March 14, 2020 but it was extended until the 30th of April upon the recommendation of the Inter-Agency Task Force to the president based (Elsevier, 2020).

2.2.5 PNP assures safety of cops at quarantine checkpoints

Personnel of the Philippine National Police are assigned to man the check-points in the whole Luzon during the enhanced community quarantine period, this is to curtail the spread of the disease, and the management of the Philippine National Police gave its assurance that they will support these personnel who are assigned in the said check-points, the Chief PNP ordered that the paramount consideration is to ensure first the health safety of his men who are on the frontline in the fight. His chief operations Lt. Gen. Guillermo Eleazar stated during one of his visits in a checkpoint that if policemen in the field will be infected with the disease, it would cause a big problem. In order to assure the men on the field, regular meetings are conducted to address all their needs and concerns. Eleazar, who also heads the Joint Task Force JTF Corona Virus Shield, informed that there is a regular rotation of the policemen in order that these police officers will have enough rest since getting them fatigued would mean weakening their defense against the disease (Caliwan, 2020).

2.2.6 Control and Prevention

The type of work as well as their exposure and interactions with suspected virus carrier as well as the contamination of their workplace would determine the type of safety and health measures that the workers should have in order to prevent them from contracting the deadly corona virus. Employers should accustom their companies of strategies to prevent and control the spread of the virus based on their work hazard evaluation and the use of a combined engineering and administrative controls. This may include the use of personnel protective equipment, as well as safety protocols in the workplace. Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) protocols on SARS-COV-2 may be adopted and also train and educate employees on the prevention of infection (Smith, 2020).



2.2.7 Pampanga place a draconian border control to curb Covid-19 spread

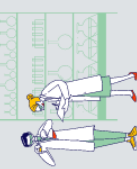
The Pampanga Provincial Government headed by governor Pineda adopted a draconian approach in order to address the spread of the corona virus. Executive Order No. 19-2020 was signed by the Hon. Governor to regulate the movement of people within the province of Pampanga. He ordered the Police Provincial Office to strictly enforce and control as well as manage the borders and that non-Pampanga residents are only allowed entry in the province if their work is in Pampanga as well as if they are working for essential services or products. Barangay officials are also urged to be stern in monitoring the entry and exit of individuals from their respective barangays. Another step that the provincial government is the requirement for Kapampangan workers in Metro Manila to undergo swab testing before they are allowed to enter the province, a provincial ordinance is on the process of being drafted by the Sanguniang panlalawigan for this matter. (Tecson,2020)

2.2.8 Pampanga government commits to strict compliance with health protocols

When the National Task Force against Covid-29 asked the local governments as well as the private sectors to unify their efforts to combat the disease, the provincial government of Pampanga under the leadership of governor Dennis Pineda has been committed in meeting such appeal from the national government. According to the governor, the provincial government together with the LGUs is expeditious in retrieving those infected at the village level and isolating as well as treating them. The business sectors were also advised to comply with the measures that were put in place by the Department of Health. (Tecson, 2020)

2.2.9 Covid-19 in Philippines: Police Deployed to Implement Fresh Lockdowns

The Philippines is one of the countries all around the globe to have imposed the longest lockdown. Every City and municipalities in the provinces all throughout the Philippines were put under lockdown in order to curtail the spread of the deadly corona virus. Borders from regions as well as provinces down to municipalities and barangays were closed with only those working as frontline personnel as well as those delivering with essential products are allowed entry. This happened when the President ordered the lockdown on all parts of the country due to the recorded increase in the number of infected individuals of the deadly virus with 1, 521 new cases with four deaths. The increasing number of infections in a very fast pace is “worrying” according to the World Health Organization representative to the Philippines, Rabindra Abeyasinghe who urged the government to enhance their approach in contact tracing. Meanwhile, Secretary Ano who is one among the key players in the fight against covid announced that the police will be utilized in contact tracing using the tokhang approach where they will be going from every household knocking and appealing to them to cooperate in this trying times to voluntarily submit themselves for quarantine if they are infected of the deadly disease and that they should further report neighbors who are infected and are hiding citing that there is a law that would punish those who fails to report infected individuals. The use of the police strategy of “tokhang” has gained criticism as others view it as another bloody approach. However, secretary Roque said that they are just using such criticism to vilify the administration (Santos, 2020).



2.2.10 STRICTER BARANGAY PROTOCOLS VS COVID-19

A more draconian approach is used in the province of Pampanga when the governor instructed the 505 heads of the barangays not to allow the entry of non-residents in their respective barangays, with the exception only of those who are under emergency, or those who

2.4 Research paradigm

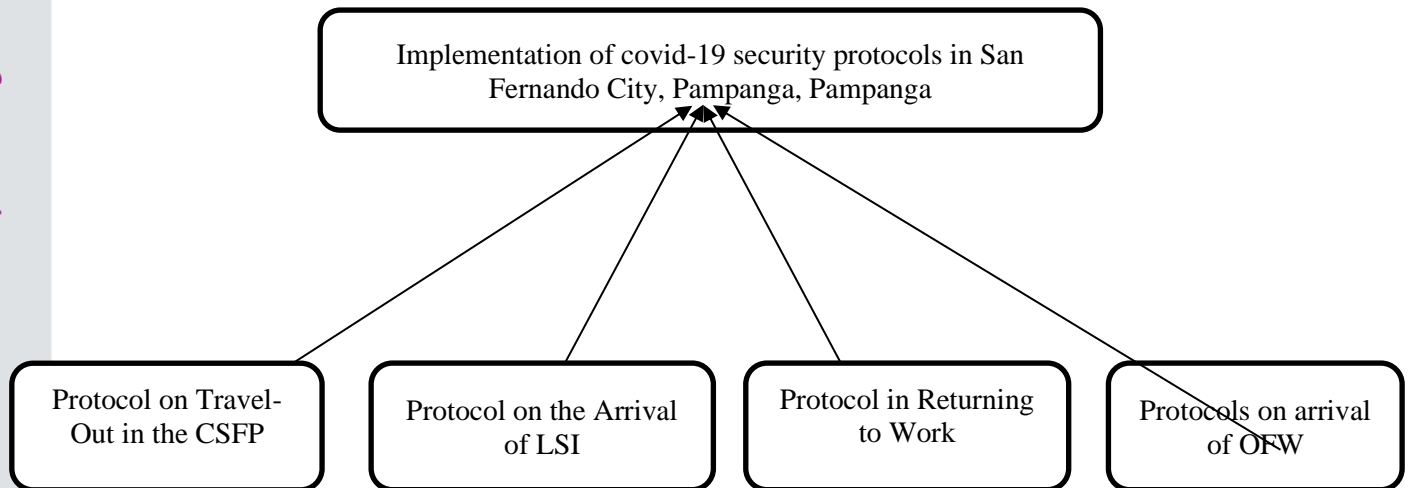


Figure 1. the simulacrum of the study

The figure 1 shows the Implementation of COVID-19 security protocols in San Fernando City, Pampanga. In connection to the implementation significantly evaluates the protocols in terms of travelling out in San Fernando City, Pampanga, arrival of locally stranded individuals, protocols in returning to work and arrival of OFWs.

3.0 Research Methods

3.1 Research Design

Descriptive research was used in this paper, aimed to accurately and systematically describe a particular situation or phenomenon, it can be used in a wide range of research methods to investigate one or more variables.

The particular type of descriptive method utilize was the survey method. One of the methods in the gathering of data in any academic and scientific researches is through the use of the survey where people whom the researchers see as possessing the necessary information are asked. The respondents were asked question based on their interest and opinion. (Juneja, 2015)

3.2 Research Locale

The study was conducted in the City San Fernando, Pampanga.

3.3 Key Informants Selection

The snow ball sampling is a non-probability sampling, this method is commonly used in social sciences when investigating hard to reach groups or individuals. The researchers were able to get samples based on referrals. Existing subjects are asked to nominate further subjects known to them so the sample increase in size until the researchers has enough data to draw conclusive

results. The researchers have chosen 5 respondents from Philippine National Police, 10 Civilian respondents, 5 barangay employees and 5 health workers. The criteria in the selection of the respondents are the following: they must live in San Fernando City, Pampanga, they are actively involved in the implementation of the safety protocols against covid-19 and that their willingness to participate in the undertakings.

3.4 Research Ethics

The following ethical considerations were taken into consideration during the conduct of this research: 1) An informed consent was provided to the respondents explaining the purpose of the study. 2) Confidentiality of information was observed. 3) Proper citation was properly observed to prevent plagiarism; and 4) the right to withdraw statements or answers of the respondents, and the right to refuse to participate was also properly taken into consideration

3.5 Research Instrument

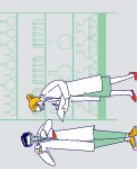
The researchers prepared survey questionnaires based on the protocols being implemented using an online application, this is the primary tool in the data gathering as physical presence and contact is prohibited due to the existing threat of the deadly corona-virus.

3.6 Data Collection

Once there is a referral from known respondents, the researchers contacted them first to confirm if they are willing to participate in the study. If they confirmed, the informed consent was sent to them through either email or through messenger, after they read and understood it and after confirming their willingness by signing the informed consent, the questionnaire link was sent to the respondents using the messenger platform.

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