

Mental Health and Quality of Life During the COVID-19 Pandemic Among Local Residents in San Isidro, Bohol

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ABSTRACT

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The COVID-19 pandemic is a global pandemic that affects the mental health and quality of life of many people. This study aimed to determine the mental health and quality of life during the COVID-19 pandemic among residents in San Isidro, Bohol, as of Calendar Year 2022, and the study's findings will serve as the basis for the formulation of the proposed intervention program. The study used the quantitative descriptive survey method of research utilizing survey questionnaires that measured residents' profiles, mental health, and quality of life. The resident's profile questionnaire measures the age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, and employment status. To measure the residents' mental health, the study used the stress-allied queries designed by Meo et al., the COVID-19 worry scale designed by Oli Ahmed, and the WHO Quality of Life Scale to measure the quality of life. The study found that the respondents possessed a fair mental health status, and their quality of life was interpreted as good. There was a significant degree of relationship between the mental health status and the respondents' quality of life. It implies that the mental health status of the residents during the COVID-19 pandemic also affects the respondents' quality of life.



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INTRODUCTION

Mental health, a critical component of an individual's well-being, encompasses the ability to recognize one's potential, cope with life challenges, work effectively, and contribute to the community. Mental health's impact of daily life, relationships, and physical health cannot be overstated. Stress, worry, and anxiety further underscore the relationship between mental health and daily routine. Additionally, the World Health Organization (WHO, 2012) defines Quality of Life as a subjective measure of an individual's position in life concerning their objectives, aspirations, standards, and cultural values. It is a multifaceted concept that encompasses health, comfort, and participation in life events, making it highly subjective and varies among individuals.

The nexus of Mental Health and Quality of Life is particularly pertinent to the Master of Arts in Teaching Social Science, which delves into human behavior within social and cultural contexts. As a field rooted in the understanding of social phenomena, it recognizes that these concepts are societal constructs, unlike natural occurrences such as viruses or the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The global crisis has significantly impacted mental health and quality of life, particularly among residents of affected countries, adding a layer of stress and worry to their daily experiences.

In December 2019, the new coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, which was the cause of the COVID-19 pandemic, surfaced in Wuhan, China. The pandemic quickly spread to other countries of the world, including the Philippines, despite efforts to contain it. International and governmental health agencies responded to this worldwide health emergency by enacting lockdown and quarantine protocols to stop the virus's spread. Dhaheri et al. (2021) have documented the extensive effects of social isolation, remote employment, and homeschooling on human health, psychological elements, and overall well-being.

Vitorino et al. (2021) conducted a study in Brazil, a pandemic epicenter, evaluating the impact of COVID-19-induced social isolation on mental health and quality of life. Their findings revealed high levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms, coupled with low levels of quality of life among the Brazilian population. These characteristics were linked to negative mental health symptoms, offering insights that can inform local health policies in dealing with the psychological consequences of COVID-19.

Similarly, in Bohol, Philippines, lockdowns were implemented to contain the virus, adversely affecting the mental health and quality of life of residents. The fear of virus-related fatalities among family members compounds the stress, worry, and anxiety levels. While research on mental health and quality of life during the pandemic exists in small provinces of the Philippines, there is a notable gap in understanding the situation in other affected countries.

This study focuses on San Isidro in Bohol, Philippines, aiming to assess the mental health and quality of life of its residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings are expected to contribute to the formulation of intervention programs tailored to help residents cope with the pandemic's ramifications on their mental health.

To deepen the understanding of stress and emotion, this study incorporates the Theory of Emotion proposed by James and Lange in 1884 and 1885. Their shared understanding emphasizes that emotions manifest only after the body's reaction to stress, highlighting the intricate link between physiological responses and emotional experiences (Coleman, Snarey, 2011). In contrast, the Emergency Theory, proposed by Walter Cannon, posits that emotional responses can occur independently of observable physical changes (Mandler, 1980).

Cannon's theory is further augmented by Philip Bard, who introduces the role of the thalamus in emotional reactions. According to Bard, emotional responses co-occur with physiological reactions, challenging the notion of emotions as by-products of physical responses (Thanapattheerakul, Mao, Amoranto, and Chan, 2018).

Additionally, the Quality-of-Life Theory by Abraham Maslow, presented in his book "Towards a Psychology of Being" (1962), forms a consistent explanation of quality of life. Maslow's emphasis on existentialistic psychology and the fulfillment of human needs underscores the significance of personal responsibility in achieving accessibility, power, happiness, and health, as pointed out by Ventegodt, Merrick, and Andersen (2003). This theory is relevant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, suggesting that self-actualization can be a transformative path for those affected, guiding them to explore their yearnings, wants, and contributions to life.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations offer a worldwide framework for advancing health and wellbeing. With a focus on "good health and wellbeing," Goal 3 highlights the importance of leading a healthy life and being happy at all ages. The UN Development Programme highlights the critical role that the pandemic played as a defining moment for health emergency planning and investment in essential 21st-century public services, while acknowledging that different nations have different capacity to deal with and recover from the COVID-19 catastrophe.

Similar to this, SDG 8 emphasizes full and productive employment, decent work for all, and sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth. This goal supports the establishment and maintenance of respectable occupations, which is in line with the more general goal of promoting wellbeing.

On the national front, Republic Act No. 11036 establishes a National Mental Health Policy in the Philippines, enhancing the provision of Integrated Mental Health Services. This legislative effort underscores the state's commitment to affirming the fundamental right to mental health for all Filipinos, emphasizing the protection and promotion of the rights of individuals utilizing psychosocial health services.

Executive Order No. 168, s. 2014, the Philippines created an Inter-Agency Task Force to manage emerging infectious diseases, empowering the Department of Health to recommend the involvement of the Armed Forces of the Philippines for quarantine enforcement and logistical support during health emergencies.

Related Literature. The COVID-19 pandemic has induced significant fear, worry, and concern globally, impacting diverse population groups. The World Health Organization (WHO) highlights the anticipated rise in psychological distress, depression, harmful substance use, and self-harm due to the implementation of measures such as quarantine. The wellbeing of frontline workers and individuals with existing mental health issues is also a major concern, emphasizing the need for quality care and continuity, as stated in the WHO Europe article "Mental health and COVID-19" (2022).

According to the WHO (2020), stress, anxiety, and dread are normal reactions to perceived or actual risks, particularly in the context of unknowns like the COVID-19 pandemic. Protecting both physical and emotional health is crucial when dealing with issues like homeschooling, temporary unemployment, remote work, and little to no in-person interaction.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, 2023) define mental health as an all-encompassing term that includes social, psychological, and emotional well-being. It affects all aspects of life, including emotions, behaviors, stress reduction, social relationships, and decision-making.

Stress, defined by the Mental Health Foundation (2021), reflects the feeling of being overwhelmed or unable to cope with mental or emotional pressure. Coping strategies have become crucial in managing stress, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, as highlighted by the CDC's article on "Coping with Stress."

Related Studies. Shamblaw et al. (2021) conducted a study in Canada and the US, revealing elevated levels of depression and anxiety during the pandemic. Effective coping strategies, such as the positive frame of wellbeing, are identified as crucial in minimizing adverse mental health implications.

Salari et al. (2020) explored the prevalence of stress, anxiety, and depression in Iran during the pandemic, emphasizing the need for identifying vulnerable populations and implementing targeted mental health strategies. Menard et al. (2021) conducted a diary study in Canada, emphasizing the importance of recovery experiences during lockdowns. Specific experiences, such as psychological detachment, relaxation, mastery, control, pleasure, or

connectedness, were associated with improved mood. Xiong et al. (2020) conducted a systematic review of the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health, highlighting the widespread frequency of adverse mental symptoms and advocating for a comprehensive approach to mental health prevention.

Vitorino et al. (2021) studied the mental health impact of COVID-19-induced social isolation in Brazil, revealing high levels of depressive and anxiety symptoms and low quality of life, providing valuable data for local health policies. Dai et al. (2021) explored the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on physical and psychological health in China, emphasizing the role of emotional regulation as a moderator for overall well-being. Ibarra et al. (2020) investigated the impact of the pandemic on sexual behavior in Spain, Italy, and Iran, emphasizing the need to address psychological, social, and biological factors contributing to increased sexual dysfunction.

Statement of the Problem. The purpose of this study is to determine the mental health and quality of life during the COVID-19 pandemic among the residents of San Isidro, Bohol, as of Calendar Year 2022. The study's findings will serve as the basis for formulating the proposed intervention program.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of the mental health status of the respondents during the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of stress-allied queries, and worrying allied queries?
2. What is the level of the respondent's quality of life in terms of physical health, psychological domain, level of independence, social relations, environment, and spirituality/religion/personal beliefs?
3. Is there a significant correlation between the level of mental health status during the COVID-19 pandemic and the level of quality of life?
4. What recommendations may be formulated based on the findings?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Design. The study used the quantitative descriptive method. In gathering the data, three modified questionnaires were used. To measure the mental health status of the residents during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the study used the COVID-19 Pandemic: Impact of Quarantine on Medical Students' Mental Wellbeing and Learning Behaviors authored by Meo, Abukhalaf, Alomar, Sattar, and Klonoff (2020) and COVID-19 Outbreak in Bangladesh and Associated Psychological Problems: An online survey written by Oli Ahmed and to measure the quality of life of the residents The World Health Organization Quality of Life Assessment (WHOQOL) written by Mick Power and Willem Kuyken on behalf of the WHOQOL Group (Herman, 2021).

Respondents. The study used the simple random sampling among the residents of the 12 barangays of San Isidro, Bohol determined using Cochran's method at a 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error. The inclusion criteria were residents of the said barangays of the said municipality, who were 18 years old and above (both males and females). Excluded in this research were those residents who stayed only less than a year.

Environment. San Isidro is a municipality located in the interior part of Bohol province. It is situated 32 kilometers away from the province's capital, Tagbilaran City, and has a land area of 60.04 square kilometers or 23.18 square miles. The municipality is divided politically into 12 barangays, namely: Abehilan, Baryong Daan, Baunos, Cabanugan, Caimbang, Cambansag, Candungao, Cansague Norte, Cansague Sur, Causwagan, Masonoy, and Poblacion.

Instrument. The research instrument utilized a modified tool adopted from the study of Meo et.al., in their research entitled COVID-19 Pandemic: Impact of Quarantine on Medical Students' Mental Wellbeing and Learning Behaviors, Oli Ahmed in his research entitled COVID-19 outbreak in Bangladesh and associated psychological problems: An online survey and The World Health Organization Quality of Life Assessment (WHOQOL) drafted by Mick Power and Willem Kuyken on behalf of the WHOQOL Group (Herman, 2021).

The study was subjected to face validity, pilot testing, and a reliability test to guarantee consistency and accuracy of measurement by computing Cronbach's Alpha Analysis. The Cronbach Alpha result is as follows: 0.940 and 0.986. This means that the instrument is reliable. The research instrument was encoded in google e-form, and the respondents.

The tool contained three sections. The first section provided the sociodemographic characteristics of the participants: age, sex, civil status, highest educational attainment, and employment status. The second section determines the mental health status of the residents during the COVID-19 Pandemic. It has 19 items using a 4-point Likert scale format with the response ranging from strongly agree (4) to disagree (1). The last section determines the resident's quality of life. It has 96 items using a 4-point Likert scale format with the response ranging from strongly agree (4) to disagree (1). The questionnaire was composed of questions on the dimensions of quality of life, physical health, psychological domain, level of independence, social relations, environment, and spirituality/religion/personal beliefs.

Scale	Responses	Interpretation
4	Strongly Agree	Very Good Mental Health Status
3	Moderately Agree	Good Mental Health Status
2	Slightly Agree	Fair Mental Health Status

1	Disagree	Poor Mental Health Status
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4	Strongly Agree	Very Good Quality of Life
3	Moderately Agree	Good Quality of Life
2	Slightly Agree	Fair Quality of Life
1	Disagree	Poor Quality of Life

Data Gathering Procedure. In the initial phase, official approval was sought to conduct the study. The researcher submitted approval letters to the Dean of the University of Bohol Graduate School, the Vice President for Academics, as well as the barangay officials of San Isidro, Bohol of the 12 barangays, requesting permission for the off-campus study.

Prior to distributing questionnaires, ethical considerations took precedence. Respondents completed informed consent forms, and the research goals were explained to ensure their understanding and voluntary participation. The researcher strictly adhered to health standards, including maintaining physical distance, using face masks and face shields, and providing sanitizers and alcohol for safety.

Ethical Considerations. Before initiating the study, strict adherence to a protocol was maintained. The researcher underwent a thorough review by the Research Ethics Committee, obtaining “Clearance to Gather Data” to uphold the principle of doing no harm. Proper authorization and consent were obtained from residents through informed consent forms, signifying their voluntary participation. Throughout the study, the researcher consistently adhered to ethical principles, including anonymity and confidentiality. Participants were well-informed about their rights, the study’s objectives, and were given the option to withdraw at any time. Assurance was provided regarding proper data management and the utmost confidentiality of the acquired information.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Level of Mental Health Status of the Residents During the COVID-19 Pandemic. Amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, an assessment of residents’ mental health status reveals an overall composite mean of 2.2904, categorizing it as “Fair Mental Health Status.” Notably, stress-related queries exhibited the highest composite mean at 2.7581, signifying a “Good Mental Health Status.” Conversely, queries associated with worrying obtained a composite mean of 1.8216, suggesting a “Fair Mental Health Status.”

This assessment sheds light on the mental health status and quality of life experienced by residents amid the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings underscore the need for targeted interventions, particularly in stress

management and psychological well-being, while also acknowledging strengths in social relations and an additional dimension that contributes to an overall positive quality of life. These insights provide valuable information for crafting tailored strategies to support individuals in navigating the complexities of the ongoing pandemic.

Level of Respondents' Quality of Life. Shifting the focus to respondents' quality of life, the collective assessment yields an overall composite mean of 3.2160, interpreted as a "Good Quality of Life." Each dimension contributes distinctively to this holistic understanding. Physical health, with a mean of 2.9068, underscores the importance of addressing aspects that could enhance overall well-being. Following closely, the psychological domain boasts a mean of 3.2979, emphasizing the significance of strategies supporting mental well-being. Dimension 3, pertaining to the level of independence, achieved a mean of 3.2181, indicating a satisfactory level of autonomy and adaptability. Dimension 4, focusing on social relations, garnered a mean of 3.1942, highlighting the positive impact of strong social connections during challenging times. Dimension 5, with a mean of 3.0550, invited further exploration to comprehend its specific influence on respondents' quality of life. Finally, Dimension 6, recording a mean of 3.6253, signified a high level of satisfaction, pointing towards specific areas of strength and fulfillment.

Correlation Between Mental Health Status of the Residents During the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Quality of Life. It shows that the p-value is 0.000, which is less than 0.05 in the level of significance. It indicates that there is a significant degree of relationship between the mental health status of the residents during the Covid-19 pandemic and the respondents' quality of life. It implies that the mental health status of the residents during the covid-19 pandemic also affects the respondents' quality of life. This finding implies the study of Shamblaw et.al., (2021) which concluded that depression and anxiety are significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels and that recognizing effective coping strategies is critical to minimizing the negative mental health implications of COVID-19. Distraction-based coping strategy was affiliated with worse mental health and quality of life. Positive reframing was a particularly resilient coping strategy, and it was linked to mental health and quality of life both cross-sectionally and longitudinally.

Table 1. Degree of Difference Between the Two Dimensions of Mental Health

Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test				
		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
B. Worrying Allied Queries – A. Stress Allied Queries	Negative Ranks	314 ^a	191.29	60063.50
	Positive Ranks	41 ^b	76.26	3126.50

	Ties	10 ^e		
	Total	365		

Test Statistics	
	B. Worrying Allied Queries – A. Stress Allied Queries
Z	-14.713 ^b
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

Ho: There is no significant degree of difference between the two dimensions of Mental Health.

CONCLUSIONS

Anchored on the aforementioned findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

The respondents had fair mental health status. Also, they have good quality of life. There is a correlation between mental health status of the residents during the COVID-19 pandemic and their quality of life. The study by Shamblaw et.al. (2021) found that depression and anxiety are significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels and that effective coping strategies are essential to minimizing the negative mental health implications of COVID-19. Hence, this study shows a need for enhancement program to augment the mental health status and quality of life as those two variables are correlated.

RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings and conclusions, the following are the recommendations:

1. It is recommended that the Department of Health, Local Government Unit, Barangay Officials, and Health workers coordinate to implement programs and activities to help residents cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. The health workers will provide seminar-workshop on how to strengthen emotional acceptance, self-soothing, and therapeutic modalities to effectively address sadness and depression.
6. A proposed intervention program implementation is hereby suggested.

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