

Needs Status of Community College Students during COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

This descriptive study aims to determine the Status of Iloilo City Community College students during the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of their existence and relatedness needs. The study was conducted in May 2020 involving 151 of the 458 students who are enrolled in the 2nd Semester, AY 2019–2020. Convenience sampling was utilized through the use of Google forms that were sent *via* messenger and the ICCC Facebook page. A researcher-made questionnaire was used and was validated and pilot tested with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.87. Mean standard deviation, Mann-Whitney U, and Kruskal-Wallis Tests were the involved statistical tools. Results revealed that the ICCC students were "Highly Affected" during the ECQ in terms of their Existence and Relatedness Needs. For Existence needs, students have experienced various fears for their health and family members and limited economic mobility due to lack of jobs and business closure. They also had mixed-negative emotions, isolation, being paranoid, unaccomplished, and defenseless which pertains to the relatedness needs. Moreover, the mean status of ICCC students does not differ significantly among groups. It is recommended that the college should provide intervention and student support programs to help students. Likewise, the college may continue to deliver services related to education appropriately and accordingly in this time of the pandemic.

Keywords: Existence needs • Relatedness needs • COVID-19

Introduction

COVID-19 has changed the course of existence worldwide. Problems in various sectors of the community sprouted leaving people felt uncertain and terrified of the worst possible outcomes. COVID-19 is a respiratory disease caused by the novel coronavirus or SARS-COV2 which outbreak started in China's Wuhan City in Hubei province in the last quarter of 2019 that has profoundly shaken the fundamentals in our society [1]. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of a new coronavirus disease in January 2020, COVID-19, to be a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. In March 2020, WHO assessed that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic. It is known to target a person's respiratory system. Infected patients may exhibit symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, and in some cases, muscle pain, and sore throat. Some patients may also be asymptomatic [2].

The first case had arrived within the Philippines from Wuhan on January 21, 2020. On March 16, 2020, the whole island of Luzon (including Metro Manila) was placed under an "Enhanced Community Quarantine". The following day (March 17, 2020), PRRD signed Proclamation No. 929, declaring the Philippines under the State of Calamity for a tentative period of 6 months due to COVID-19. This proclamation enjoins all government agencies and local government units (LGUs) to render full assistance and cooperation and mobilize the necessary resources to undertake critical, urgent, and appropriate responses and measures in a timely manner to curtail and eliminate the threat of COVID-19 [1].

Due to the proclamation classes at all levels in the Philippines were suspended. The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has issued a series of advisories to Higher Education Institutions (HEI). The Commission advised to implement distance education methods of learning for its classes, such as the use of educational technology, to maximize the academic term despite the suspensions; several other public and private tertiary institutions implemented such arrangements for its classes. However, following the announcement of the Enhanced Community Quarantine in Luzon and other areas, colleges and universities suspended mandatory online classes in consideration of the welfare of its students, faculty, and staff. Academic

administration offices continued to operate with a skeleton crew [3]. The resulting disruptions exacerbate already existing disparities within the education system but also in other aspects of their lives. These include interrupted learning, poor nutrition, confusion and stress for teachers, parents unprepared for distance and homeschooling, challenges creating, maintaining, and improving distance learning gaps in childcare, high economic costs, the unintended strain on healthcare systems, increased pressure on schools and school systems that remain open, rise in dropout rates, increased exposure to violence and exploitation, social isolation, challenges measuring and validating learning [4].

The lockdown or popularly coined as Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) caused by COVID-19 may have a bearing on students because it limits access to basic needs, social life, and learning. These experiences cover the existence and relatedness needs of an individual as indicated by the theory of Alderfer. Alderfer's theory is an extension of Maslow's Hierarchy of needs. The Existence Needs comprises of needs that relate to the physiological and safety aspects of a human being. On the other hand, Relatedness Needs refer to social needs (Business Jargon, nd) (Figure 1).

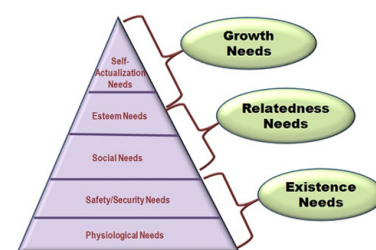


Figure 1. Alderfer's ERG theory.

The pandemic has economic implications that affect access to the basic needs of students and their families such as food, water, and shelter. It also creates panic and fear of the unknown. Moreover, it also generates a feeling of helplessness and unaccomplished as a result of home quarantine. Students may have experienced elevated starvation, stress, depression, loneliness, and other self-harm behavior as a result of abrupt disruption of

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activities or daily routines, and prolonged home quarantine. Pandemics are not just a medical phenomenon; they affect individuals and society on many levels, causing disruptions. Stigma and xenophobia are two aspects of the societal impact of pandemic infectious outbreaks. Panic and stress have also been linked to outbreaks. As concerns over the perceived threat grow, people may start to collect (and hoard) masks and other medical supplies. This is often followed by anxiety-related behaviors, sleep disturbances, and an overall lower perceived state of health. Individuals with mental illness may be particularly vulnerable to the effects of widespread panic and threat [5].

The Iloilo City Community College has adhered to Government Policies and directives since the start of the pandemic. The College suspended all classes for 2nd Semester AY 2019–2020 on March 16, 2020. The alternative learning strategy was implemented using technology as the medium. However, not all students could utilize electronic technologies. Some students do not have access to the internet since many went home to their provinces and a significant number of them do not have a data load. More so, internet speed and broadband connection in some areas are at times slow, weak, and patchy. The College caters to the youth of Iloilo City who belongs to the marginalized sector of the community. While the virus infects people regardless of wealth, the poor will be the most affected by longstanding segregation by income and race, reduced economic mobility, and the high cost of medical care [6]. Also, the NEDA states that the COVID-19 crisis appears to involve a class dimension: at the onset, the upper-and middle-income classes are the ones directly infected, because they are the ones who travel or are acquainted with ones who have traveled. Currently, the impact on the lower-income classes is mainly through the response measures being undertaken [7].

With this, there is a need for the college to have data on the status of the Existence and Relatedness needs of the ICCC students during ECQ as a basis for the intervention programs to help students cope in these unprecedented and challenging times. According to Bender [8], the Educational institution must establish procedures if students become unwell and implement targeted health education (Figure 2).

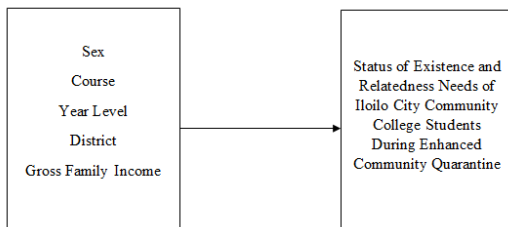


Figure 2. Paradigm of the study.

This study sought to answer the following:

1. What are the top 5 most affected Existence and Relatedness needs of ICCC students during enhanced community quarantine?
2. What is the status in terms of the Existence and Relatedness needs of ICCC Students during Enhanced Community Quarantine when grouped according to sex, course, year level, district, gross family income, and when taken as a whole?
3. Is there a significant difference in the mean Existence and Relatedness Needs Status of ICCC Students during Enhanced Community Quarantine when grouped according to sex, course, year level, district, and gross family income?

Materials and Methods

This descriptive study was conducted from April to May 2020 involving 151 of the 458 students of Iloilo City Community College enrolled in 2nd Semester AY 2019-2020 with a 6.54 confidence interval and 95% confidence level. Convenience sampling was used through the use of Google forms that

were sent via messenger and ICCC Facebook page (Table 1 is the summary of the profile of the respondents). A researcher-made questionnaire was used in the study. It was validated and pilot tested with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.89. Part 1 involves the personal profile of respondents and Part 2 is the rating questionnaire to determine the physiological and psychosocial Status of ICCC students during ECQ. Mean standard deviation, Mann-Whitney U, and Kruskal-Wallis Tests were the statistical tools used in the study [9-12] (Table 1).

Table 1. Profile of respondents.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Entire group	151	100
Sex		
Male	39	25.80
Female	112	74.20
Course		
BSOA	79	52.30
BSTM	72	47.70
Year level		
1 st year	44	29.10
2 nd year	63	41.70
3 rd year	22	14.60
4 th year	22	14.60
District		
Jaro	32	21.20
Lapaz	19	12.60
Lapuz	12	7.90
City proper	20	13.20
Molo	32	21.20
Arevalo	14	9.30
Mandurriao	22	14.60
Gross family income		
Under Php 40 000	111	73.50
Php 40 000 – Php 99 999	30	19.50
Php 100 000 and over	10	6.60

Results and Discussion

Table 2 shows that the top 5 most affected Existence needs of ICCC students during ECQ brought about by COVID-19. The majority of ICCC students had experienced fears (80%). Out of the 12 items, item number 6 “I fear and worry about my health and the health of my loved ones” (M=3.50, SD=0.77) ranked first.” COVID-19 is a health threat and the results revealed that ICCC students are aware of this fact. This awareness is paired with fear and worry. These negative emotions are brought about by item number 8 “I feel I am not prepared to face this pandemic” (M=3.20, SD=0.78) which was ranked second. As a new pandemic, limited information is available for the students to read, understand, and decipher. The students lost control of the situation which makes them more anxious about the pandemic. According to Joelson, some people worry as a form of preparedness. The belief is that one will be ready or better prepared for a dreaded event if one worry about it-that is will prevent them from being caught off guard, stunned, or somehow negatively affected in some way by that event. Students have experienced other fears as stated in item number 11 “I fear being separated from loved ones and caregivers due to the quarantine regime” (M=2.98, SD=0.99) and item number 12 “I fear of reliving the experience of the epidemic” (M=2.89, SD=0.82). Students need to have protection by providing security, order, and stability on how the COVID-19 is being managed. The novelty of COVID-19, number of infected people, mortality rate, and long quarantine or lockdown is the reasons for fear to be top on the list in this study [13-15].

Item number 2 “Our family income was greatly affected that we cannot buy basic needs” is ranked third (M=3.18, SD=0.83). This item is the economic implication of COVID-19 to ICCC students which scarce access to basic needs such as food, shelter, clothing, and rest. The majority of parents or heads of families are working part-time status in private establishments. As the businesses are closed due to community quarantine, jobs were

stopped, and also income was frozen. One major concern is what they will use to buy basic needs for their respective families. Fortunately, the Government provided interventions such as relief goods (rice, canned food, and noodles) and established a community kitchen, financial assistance through the Social Amelioration Program (Table 2).

Table 3 presents the top 5 most affected relatedness needs of ICCC students during ECQ to address the threat of COVID-19. Students have experienced mixed-negative emotions, isolation, being paranoid, unaccomplished, and defenseless.

Students have experienced anxiety and depression that serves as a threat to their mental health of students. The first in rank is item number 1 "I feel sad, stressed, confused, scared, or angry because of COVID-19 (M=3.25, SD=0.82). According to the WHO (2020), it is normal to feel these emotions because of the coronavirus. However, an extreme level of these negative emotions may affect the mental health of students that needs to be addressed. According to Cao (2020), the mental health of college students is significantly affected when faced with public health emergencies, and they require the attention, help, and support of society, families, and colleges. These emotions may be triggered by item number 2 "I suffer from quarantine restriction" (M=2.82, SD=0.94). Being in quarantine prohibits the mobility of students which could have resulted in to change in lifestyle, reduced physical activity, poor diet, and negative well-being. Third on the rank is item number 3 "I panicked upon hearing news update about COVID-19" (M=2.60, SD=0.87). News about COVID-19 in Social media, television, radio, or newspapers can be overwhelming for students thus creating negative thoughts leading to paranoia. Also, David DeSteno in Timsit (2020) stated that the mix of miscalibrated emotion and limited knowledge causes fear of COVID-19. The bottom two are items number 10 "I feel helpless, bored, lonely and depressed due to being isolated" (M=2.59, SD=0.93) and 9 "I feel powerless in protecting loved ones" (M=2.56, Sd=1.02). According to CERC (2019), if community members let their feelings of fear, confusion, and dread grow unchecked during a crisis, they will most likely feel hopeless or helpless. If this happens, members will be less motivated and less able to take actions that could help themselves [16, 17] (Table 3).

Table 4 shows that the status of ICCC students in terms of their existence needs, relatedness needs, and the overall status of ICCC students during ECQ. Generally, ICCC students were "Highly affected" (M=2.63, SD=0.52) by COVID-19 during ECQ. The same Status has been experienced by students when classified according to various groups except for those who are in the 3rd year level and living in Lapaz with a "moderately affected" status. This deviation is due to the relatedness status of students residing in Lapaz with M=2.29 and SD=0.59 (Moderately affected). Various factors might have contributed to this rating which includes and is not limited to location, the number of cases, the system of implementation of COVID-19 protocol, governance, community support, and services received from the

local government.

The BSOA students felt more affected by COVID-19 with a mean equal to 2.65 (SD=0.53) as compared to BSTM students with a mean of 2.60 (SD=0.51). According to the EHL Sight (n.d.), the tourism service provider must have mastery of essential soft skills which include flexibility and a can-do attitude. These skills enable tourism students to easily adapt to new situations. Also, it can be observed that ICCC BSOA students are more serious than BSTM students who are more outgoing and carefree.

The 4th year students got the highest mean of 2.84 in all groupings. The pandemic has intensified the stressors of 4th-year students. Aside from health concerns, they are also facing problems in terms of the uncertainty of what to do towards degree completion, cost of living, demands of parents and community, and the threat of unemployment.

As mentioned, the underprivileged will be the most affected by COVID-19 due to a decrease in economic activity as they lose their jobs due to business closure. With this, students with gross family income under Php 40 000.00 got the highest mean of 2.64 and SD=0.53. Most parents of students under this category are skilled workers that may be working as house helpers, tricycle or pedicab drivers, vendors, construction workers, and the like (Table 4).

Table 5 further elaborates on the Status of ICCC students at the peak of the pandemic based on the individual mean. The table shows that 13.90% (21 of 156) of the sample is on "Very Highly affected" while there is 41.70% (63 of 156) claim that they have experienced a "Highly affected". These students have the most fears of being contracted with the virus, experienced difficulty with access to basic needs, struggle with restricted movements, striving to adapt to new realities such as limited social interaction, and have an inactive lifestyle. On the other hand, 41.10% (62 of 156) claim that they are "Moderately Affected and only 3.30% (5 of 156) rated themselves as "Not Affected." For ICCC students, the abrupt change and uncertainties in school routines together with the health risks have caused anxiety and fear which if uncontrolled may lead to mental health problems (Table 5).

Table 6 shows that there is no significant difference in the mean Existence and Relatedness needs status of ICCC Students during ECQ when grouped according to sex and course with a p-value greater than 0.05. The Status of ICCC during ECQ is the same for respondents grouped according to sex and course (Table 6).

Table 7 reveals that there is no significant difference in the mean Existence and Relatedness needs Status of ICCC Students during ECQ when grouped according to year level, Home District, and Gross family income. Students have similar feelings, experiences, and perceptions during ECQ even when classified according to the stated groupings (Table 7).

Table 2. Top 5 most affected existence needs of ICCC students during enhanced community quarantine.

S.No	Items	Mean	SD
1	(6) I fear and worry about my health and the health of my loved ones.	3.5	0.77
2	(8) I feel I am not prepared to face this pandemic	3.2	0.78
3	(2) Our family income was greatly affected that we cannot buy basic needs.	3.18	0.83
4	(11) I fear being separated from loved ones and caregivers due to the quarantine regime.	2.89	0.99
5	(12) I fear reliving the experience of the epidemic.	2.89	0.82

Table 3. Top 5 most affected relatedness needs of ICCC students during enhanced community quarantine.

S.No	Items	Mean	SD
1	(1) I feel sad, stressed, confused, scared, or angry because of COVID -19.	3.25	0.82
2	(2) I suffer from quarantine restrictions.	2.82	0.94
3	(3) I panicked upon hearing a news update about COVID-19.	2.6	0.87
4	(10) I feel helpless, bored, lonely, and depressed due to being isolated.	2.59	0.93
5	(9) I feel powerless in protecting loved ones.	2.56	1.02

Table 4. Status of existence and relatedness needs of ICCC students during enhanced community quarantine according to groups.

Groups	Existence needs			Relatedness needs			Overall status		
	Mean	SD	Remarks	Mean	SD	Remarks	Mean	SD	Remarks
Entire group	2.70	0.51	Highly affected	2.53	0.63	Highly affected	2.62	0.51	Highly affected
Sex									
Male	2.80	0.57	Highly affected	2.57	0.75	Highly affected	2.68	0.60	Highly affected
Female	2.66	0.48	Highly affected	2.52	0.59	Highly affected	2.59	0.48	Highly affected
Course									
BSOA	2.74	0.58	Highly affected	2.56	0.63	Highly affected	2.65	0.53	Highly affected
BSTM	2.76	0.51	Highly affected	2.52	0.64	Highly affected	2.59	0.50	Highly affected
Year level									
1 st year	2.67	0.60	Highly affected	2.52	0.75	Highly affected	2.60	0.61	Highly affected
2 nd year	2.68	0.40	Highly affected	2.54	0.55	Highly affected	2.61	0.43	Highly affected
3 rd year	2.62	0.60	Highly affected	2.34	0.58	Moderately affected	2.47	0.52	Moderately affected
4 th year	2.90	0.43	Highly affected	2.77	0.62	Highly affected	2.84	0.49	Highly affected
District									
Jaro	2.70	0.50	Highly affected	2.64	0.63	Highly affected	2.67	0.52	Highly affected
Lapaz	2.58	0.49	Highly affected	2.29	0.59	Moderately affected	2.44	0.47	Moderately affected
Lapuz	2.78	0.42	Highly affected	2.63	0.64	Highly affected	2.70	0.47	Highly affected
City proper	2.87	0.44	Highly affected	2.51	0.69	Highly affected	2.69	0.48	Highly affected
Molo	2.65	0.62	Highly affected	2.56	0.66	Highly affected	2.61	0.59	Highly affected
Arevalo	2.73	0.40	Highly affected	2.71	0.41	Highly affected	2.72	0.35	Highly affected
Mandurriao	2.64	0.51	Highly affected	2.42	0.68	Moderately affected	2.53	0.57	Highly affected
Gross family income									
Under Php 40 000	2.71	0.51	Highly affected	2.54	0.64	Highly affected	2.63	0.52	Highly affected
Php 40 000 – 99 999	2.69	0.44	Highly affected	2.45	0.49	Moderately affected	2.57	0.37	Highly affected
Php 100 000 and over	2.63	0.70	Highly affected	2.62	0.91	Highly affected	2.63	0.78	Highly affected

Table 5. Status of ICCC students during enhanced community quarantine based on individual mean.

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Very Highly affected	21	14.90%
Highly affected	63	41.70%
Moderately affected	62	41.10%
Not affected	5	3.30%

Table 6. Mann-Whitney test result for the significant difference in the mean existence and relatedness needs status ICCC students during ECQ s when classified according to sex and course.

S.No	Category	Mean	Z	P-value	Remarks
A	Sex				
	Male	2.68	-1.09	0.28	Not significant
	Female	2.59			
B	Course				
	BSOA	2.64	-0.76	0.45	Not significant
	BSTM	2.58			

Table 7. Kruskal-Wallis test results for the significant difference in the mean existence and relatedness status of ICCC when classified according to year level, district, and gross family income.

S.No	Category	Mean	Df	Chi-square Mean	P-value	Remarks
A	Year level					
	1 st year	2.59	3	6.07	0.11	Not significant
	2 nd year	2.61				
	3 rd year	2.47				
4 th year	2.84					
B	Home district					
	Jaro	2.67	6	54.64	0.59	Not significant
	Lapaz	2.44				
	Lapuz	2.7				
	City proper	2.69				
	Molo	2.61				
	Arevalo	2.72				
Mandurriao	2.53					
C	Gross family income					
	Under Php 40 000	2.63	2	0.27	0.87	Not significant
	Php 40 000 – Php 99 999	2.57				
	Php 100 000 and over	2.63				

Conclusion

The Iloilo City Community College students were highly affected by COVID-19 both in their existence and relatedness needs. They experienced fear and anxiety that threaten their mental health.

The college has to implement intervention and student support programs to help the students manage and cope with the pandemic. School Administration has to make plans on how to render services as an educational institution by designing an operational system that secures the safety of students as well as personnel and design an instructional delivery that is suited to the current situation and available resources of students.

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